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An Analysis of Hamka's Selected Historical Works

Hafiz Zakariya*

Abstract

Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah was a prolific scholar who wrote more than one hundred books on various themes through various media. The existing literature has significantly covered various aspects of Hamka's ideas. Though Hamka was learned in various spheres of knowledge, one of his favourite subjects was history. However, Hamka's discourse on history is found wanting. Thus, this paper discusses Hamka's contributions to history with special reference to *Sejarah Umat Islam and Antara Fakta dan Khayal Tuanku Rao*. Hamka's most profound work on history is *Sejarah Umat Islam*. Hamka who had sharp eyes and a high degree of historical mindset was very critical of the so-called history books but departed from the true nature of historical inquiry. For Hamka, one such work was by M.O. Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao: Terror agama Islam Mazhab Hambali di Tanah Batak, 1816-1833*, published in 1964. Hamka criticised this work due to several conspicuous factual inaccuracies. Among the important issues were M.O. Parlindungan's claims about the Shiah influence in Minangkabau and some fantastic claims about the Padri movement. Therefore, in 1974, he wrote a book, *Tuanku Rao: Antara fakta dan khayal*, and took Parlindungan to task. This paper starts with a brief discussion of Hamka's profile and education. Then, it examines Hamka's role and contribution as a historian by discussing his two major works on history: *Sejarah Umat Islam and Antara Fakta dan Khayal Tuanku Rao*.

Keyword: HAMKA, historical, Minangkabau, Padri, Tuanku Rao

Introduction

Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, better known by his acronym Hamka – a Minangkabau-born prominent Indonesian Islamic scholar needs no introduction. He was a multi-dimensional figure: scholar, activist, preacher, bureaucrat, politician, writer, and prolific scholar who wrote more than one hundred books on various themes through various media: religious works, journalistic writings, and novels. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential Indonesian writers in the

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twentieth century. The existing literature has significantly covered various aspects of Hamka's ideas. However, comparatively, Hamka's discourse on history is found wanting. Thus, this paper examines Hamka's role and contributions to history. It first provides a brief profile of Hamka, the Minangkabau milieu, and his contribution to the historiography of Islam in the Malay world. Discussion of Hamka's historical focuses on his two major works: *Sejarah Umat Islam* and *Antara fakta dan khayal Tuanku Rao*.

Hamka's Brief Profile

Hamka, or his full name, Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, was born on 17 February 1908 near Danau Maninjau, West Sumatra (Hamka, 2016). He was the eldest child of his father's second wife, Syafiah whom he married after the first wife (Syafiah's elder sister) passed away in Makkah. Hamka was born into an established Minangkabau family with a strong tradition of Islamic learning and leadership. Hamka's father, Dr. Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, known as Haji Rasul, was one of the leading Minangkabau reformists in the early twentieth century. Hamka wrote a famous autobiography of his father entitled *Ayahku*. Hamka's paternal grandfather, Shaykh Amrullah was an Islamic scholar and a shaykh of the Naqshabandiyyah Sufi order. During his life, Shaykh Amrullah married eight wives (at different times) and had forty-six children and the most well-known among them was Hamka's father, Abdul Karim (Wan Sabri, 1998). Hamka's family had not only been actively engaged in Islamic learning but was also active in Islamic reform for three generations (Rusjdi Hamka, 1962 and Hadler, 1998). His great-grandfather, Abdullah 'Arif, better known by his epithets Tuanku Nan Tuo at Kota Tua Empat Kota and Tuanku Pariaman.

Abdullah 'Arif, or Tuanku Pariaman was one of the leaders of the Padri movement (Hamka, 2006). Because the Padri movement is divided into two factions: the moderate and the radical, it is relevant to identify Tuanku Pariaman's position. Initially, Tuanku Pariaman's view resembled the moderate wing of the reform spearheaded by Tuanku Nan Tuo at Kota Tua Empat Angkat Agam, who was widely regarded as the *guru besar* to the Padris as a whole. Accordingly, he rejected the militant faction led by Tuanku Nan Renceh. However, after Minangkabau was conquered by the Dutch in 1821, Tuanku Pariaman joined the militant Padris in waging wars against the Dutch (Hamka, 2016, 60). In brief, Hamka hailed from a distinguished Minangkabau family well-respected for its Islamic learning, reputation, and reformist contributions.

Hamka's education

Mentalities, or *weltanschauung* do not exist in isolation from the larger socio-historical contexts, but rather they have emerged as reactions and responses to problems and challenges that occur in any given society. Thus, the history of ideas must be firmly placed within the historical milieu which produces such ideas. Gilbert (1974, p.94) observed:

“Intellectual history cannot claim to be the true or only history...It exists only in connection with, and in relation to, the surrounding political, economic, and social forces. The investigation of subjects of intellectual history leads beyond the purely intellectual world, and intellectual history per se does not exist”.

Similarly, to understand Hamka's *weltanschauung*, it is relevant to analyse factors that might play significant roles in shaping his mind, especially his educational background. In Hamka's context, education encompasses not only formal learning but also informal learning acquired through life experiences such as self-learning and involvement in society. Moreover, according to Irfan (Hamka's son), informal learning played a more important role in the formation of Hamka's ideas and worldviews (Irfan, 2015).

Hamka's first teacher was his father, Abdul Karim Amrullah. Hamka learned from him the fundamentals of Arabic language and memorisation of the Qur'an (Aljunied, 2018). His father who studied in Makkah was a prominent religious teacher in Maninjau. Students flocked to his *surau* to study Islam with him. Although Haji Rasul was already a renowned '*alim* in Maninjau; in 1912, he and his wife moved to Padang at the urge of his reformist colleague Abdullah Ahmad to help with spreading reformism there, especially in publishing *al-Munir* reformist periodical. *Al-Munir* reformist periodical aimed to disseminate reformist ideas in Minangkabau in particular, and the East Indies in general (Hamka, *Kenang- Kenangan Hidup*, 1966). Two years later, Haji Rasul was on the move again, to teach Islam at Padang Panjang. This time Hamka joined his family and moved to Padang Panjang. In Padang Panjang, his half-sister, Fatimah further taught him to read the Qur'an, and perform prayer (*solat*) (Hamka, 1966).

According to his son, Irfan, Hamka received his formal education in 1916. Around the age of eight, he was enrolled in the government school called the *Volkschoelen* School (Sekolah Desa). However, the quality of education in the school was inferior to the Government school, attended by the Dutch and Indonesian officials' children (Wan Sabri, 1998). The duration of study at this school was three years (Azra, 1997); however, Hamka did not complete his

education at Sekolah Desa (Irfan, 2015). In the same year i.e., 1916, Hamka was enrolled in the evening religious school, the Diniyah, founded by a reformist scholar, Zainudin Lebai Al-Junusi in 1915. However, Hamka was uninterested in religious learning, and while at the Dinniyyah, he was primarily considered a “naughty boy” (Wan Sabri, 1998). Then, in 1918 Hamka was enrolled in another reformist school, Madrasah Tawalib in Padang Panjang. Nevertheless, Hamka remained uninterested in all the religious subjects offered there (Wan Sabri, 1998). Hamka only enjoyed two subjects Arabic poetry and history (Fitri, 2020). Again, he did not complete his studies here (Irfan, 2015). In 1922, he returned to study Islam at a madrasah in Parabek, Bukittinggi, which again went incomplete. As a result, he spent most of his time learning on his own, especially through readings (Irfan, 2015). The formative period in Hamka's life, which probably shaped his *weltanschauung* occurred when Hamka was twelve years old. He spent most of his time exploring the world of knowledge in the rental library of Labai al-Junusi. Hamka was particularly interested in foreign novels translated into Indonesian, literary books published by Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur (later Balai Pustaka), history books, and the Indonesian periodical, *Bintang Hindia* (Wan Sabri, 1998 and Fitri, 2020).

Besides, self-learning, Hamka also learned directly with various ulama whom he met in West Sumatra, Java, and Makkah. Moreover, his involvement in holding responsibilities in various organisations, and appointments to important positions also played important roles in the formation of his ideas and the enhancement of his experience.

Given his lack of formal qualification as an *'alim*, “Hamka has been criticised as a scholar without any formal training or real expertise in any field of Islamic knowledge.

Although he wrote on various aspects of Islam, his detractors insisted that he was never recognized as an alim in Islamic studies” (Aljunied, 2018, p. 3).

According to Irfan (2015), despite his lack of formal qualifications, Hamka's scholarship has been widely acknowledged through the conferment of honorary doctorates by Al-Azhar University, Universitas Profesor Dr. Moestopo Beragama, and the National University of Malaysia (UKM). In addition, he was appointed to various important positions in Indonesia. Among the notable appointments were the Dean of Faculty of Usuluddin at Universitas Profesor Dr. Moestopo Beragama in Jakarta (1968), Ketua Majelis Ulama' Indonesia, MUI [Chief the Indonesian Council of 'Ulama']

(1975-1979) and the Chairman (Ketua Umum) of Yayasan Pesantren Islam al-Azhar (1979).

Hamka's Contributions to History

The scholar of Hamka's repute and fame has attracted extensive attention. A Google search has listed 9,810,000 results on Hamka as of 25 September 2023 at 4.50 PM. A similar search at Google Scholar on Hamka has listed 76,300 results. This demonstrates that Hamka has a huge appeal: at both the popular as well as academic levels today. To date, there are extensive works on Hamka in English, Indonesian, and Malay. Given Hamka's versatile talents, these works deal with various aspects of Hamka's roles as a man of letters, poet, activist, politician, poet, preacher, Sufi, educator, exegete, and *faqih*. Because of Hamka's *magnum opus* in the Qur'anic commentary through his 30-volume *Tafsir al-Azhar*, a great deal of attention is given to his contribution to the Qur'anic commentary. Among the notable works on Hamka are those of Wan Sabri Wan Yusof (1998), Mashitah Ibrahim (2000), A. Alfiyah (2017), H. Hidayati (2018), and M. Yunan Yusof (1990), *Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir Al- Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990) and James R. Rush (2016) *Hamka's great story*.

In brief, the majority of existing studies on Hamka focus on his contributions to the various aspects of Islamic thought such as Sufism, *tafsir*, kalam, and shariah. Because of Hamka's vast interests, his published writings are quite extensive covering a wide array of subjects/disciplines including history. However, as Murni Djamal (2002, p. 10) rightly states that Hamka's role as an Indonesian historian "yang sampai sekarang tidak ditelaah di tingkat yang patut" [to date Hamka's role as a historian has yet to be studied at the proper level it deserves]. Despite Hamka's popularity, his contributions to history have not received due attention he deserves. Among the few works, which analyse Hamka's contributions to history are those of M.Redzuan Othman "Sumbangan HAMKA dalam penulisan Sejarah Melayu di Alam Melayu" (2008) and Khairudin Aljunid's "Writing reformist histories: A cleric as an outsider history maker" (2015). Whereas M. Redzuan Othman (2008) focuses on Hamka's contributions to historical writings on the Malay world especially through *Sejarah Umat Islam* Aljunid (2015) demonstrates that Hamka was a cosmopolitan public historian who was actively engaged in the production of reformist histories to foster a rethinking of commonplace assumptions about society.

According to Sidek Fadhil (2008), Hamka was a pioneer among the local scholars in reconstructing Islamic history in the Malay world. Hamka's

effort to empower Islam in the region is significant because Islam has been marginalised in the discourse of the history of the Nusantara for so long. This was partly because most writings on Islam in the Malay world (since the 19th to the early 20th centuries) were dominated by Western scholars as represented by Moquette, Pijnappel, Marrison, T.W. Arnold, Snouck Hurgronje, R.O. Winstedt, and others. As a result, Islam in the Malay world has been misrepresented by some Orientalists.

Several leading Orientalists have claimed that Islam which developed in Southeast Asia is not a substantial one instead, it is the “peripheral Islam” not worthy of scholarly attention. In other words, they contend that Islam in Southeast Asia is “syncretic Islam” influenced by local customs and pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, which differ from the “pristine” Islam that emerged and developed in the “heartlands” of Islam (Zakariya, 2017). Such an attitude privileges the “center” at the expense of the “periphery”. This worldview is apparent in the works of the pre-eminent Dutch Orientalist, Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936). Snouck Hurgronje received academic training as an Arabist instead of Islam in the Netherlands.

Consequently, his academic training and focus on Arabs had significantly shaped his worldview (Fogg, 2014). During the 1960s and the 1970s, only a handful of local scholars such as Hamka, S.Naquib al-Attas, and Taufik Abdullah were active in the discourse on Islam in the Malay world.

Besides prolific writings in various spheres of Islamic sciences, Hamka also contributed significantly to historical writings. Aljunied sums up Hamka's contributions as follows:

“Hamka dedicated much of his energy to writing histories that are still widely read among Muslims in the Malay world. His corpus includes well-trodden themes such as the global history of Islam, great Muslim personalities, and the history of spiritual movements in Islam (Aljunied, 2018, p. 103).”

Hamka's most extensive work on history is entitled *Sejarah Umat Islam*. This book was reprinted numerous times both in Indonesia and Malaysia. My copy of this book is the Malaysian version published by PTS Publishing House in 2016. This thick book comprises 1080 pages. It is a comprehensive account of Islamic history written in Indonesian. The 2016 edition comprises seven parts/volumes. Part One provides a historical background of Arabia in terms of geography, population, and the situations before the advent of Islam. Part Two focuses on Muhammad s.a.w. It describes the geopolitics of Arabia before

Muhammad, the biography of Muhammad, and his prophethood and mission in Arabia. The book starts its discussion with pre-Islamic Arabia, Islam during the time of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. Part Three discusses the various Islamic governments from the Rashidun Era, the Umayyad, Abbasid, Islam in Andalus, Islamic kingdoms in North Africa, and Islam in Egypt, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula. Part Four describes the growth and development of Islam on the Eastern frontier, especially in Persia. While Part Five discusses the growth and rise of Islam in India and Afghanistan; Part Six focuses on the Ottoman state from its birth to the fall of Constantinople. Part Seven focuses on the development of Islam in the Malay world. It starts by discussing the Malay world before the advent of Islam, the coming of Islam in the Malay world, the early Islamic kingdoms: Samudra-Pasai and Melaka, the coming of Islam in Java, the rise of Muslim kingdoms in Java, Islam in Aceh in the sixteenth century, The Kingdom of Johor in the sixteenth century, the growth of Islam in Maluku, the struggle against colonialism in the 17th century, The Kingdom of Banten, Major warriors during the 17th century and finally the Kingdom of Johore in the 17th century (Hamka, 2016).

Originally, *Sejarah Umat Islam* comprised 4 volumes. Volume 1 was published in 1950, volume 2 in 1952, Volume 3 in 1960, and Volume 4 in 1961. Its Malaysian edition was published for the first time in 1965 (Rahmi Nur Fitri, 2020). Hamka's work is admirable because he managed to produce a comprehensive and global history of Islam. This was important because most of the existing literature on Islamic history both in the Muslim world as well as in the West, during Hamka's time focused on the experiences of the so-called "central Islamic lands" (Arab-centric) at the expense of the frontiers, which were regarded as insignificant and peripheral. Most of the traditional scholarship on Islamic history tends to be Arab-centric and provides very little discussion on non-Arab lands. Hamka's *Sejarah Umat Islam* in terms of its scope and coverage may be comparable with the celebrated works by Western scholars such as Marshall G. S. Hodgson *The Venture of Islam* 3 Vols (1977) and Lapidus *A History of Islamic Societies* (1990). Aljunied (2015, p. 16) sums up Hamka's *Sejarah Umat Islam* as follows:

"A monumental work that resulted from two decades of research (from 1939 till 1961). This book was the first global history of the Muslim peoples to be written in the Malay-Indonesian language"

In addition, Hamka's *Sejarah Umat Islam* is unique in its presentation of a vast history of the Muslims in an "interconnected and

comparative way, rather than in separate distinct regional or national units (Aljunied, 2015, p. 18)".

Besides, *Sejarah Umat Islam* there are other works of Hamka, which deal with history. A bibliometric study of the collection of Hamka's works at Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia has identified 10 other Hamka works that deal with some aspects of history. These works deal with history, biography, and important documentation of historical figures or organisations (Zawiyah Baba and Hasan, 2014).

These works are as follows:

1. Ayahku (1957).
2. Pembela Islam: Tarih Abu Bakar Sidik (1929).
3. Ringkasan tarikh Islam (1929).
4. Sejarah Islam Sumatra (1938).
5. Dari Perbendaharaan lama (1969).
6. Fakta dan Khayal Tuanku Rao (1970).
7. Sayid Jamaludin al-Afghani (1970).
8. Kenang-Kenangan Hidup (1979).
9. Muhammadiyah melalui 3 zaman (1946).
10. Kenang-Kenangan di Malaysia (1957).

Without going into the details of the above works, the next section deals with Hamka's criticism of the Indonesian Batak writer, Maharadja Onggang Parlindungan's work *Tuanku Rao*.

Parlindungan's *Tuanku Rao*: The catalyst for Hamka's *Antara fakta*

To understand the polemics between Parlindungan's *Tuanku Rao* and Hamka's *Antara fakta*, it may be best to start with relevant background information that sparked these polemics. The main subject matter under discussion is the Padri military invasions in Tanah Batak, 1816-1833. The author of this work was Ir. M.O. Parlindungan, the Indonesian Batak public figure. He was not a professional historian but trained in the West in chemistry and earned an *Ir.* qualification. After completing his studies he returned to Indonesia during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. Because he qualified as a chemist and possibly had the capacity for explosive technology, he was given the responsibility in the war against the Dutch in Surabaya and east Java. After Indonesia achieved independence, in 1950, he was appointed as the Director of Pabrik Sendjata dan Mesiu [national military and industrial firm] under the Indonesian army (Barubara, 2013).

M.O. Parlindungan wrote *Pongkinagolngolan Sinambela Gelar*

Tuanku Rao: Terror agama Islam Mazhab Hambali di Tanah Batak, 1816-1833 (Henceforth, *Tuanku Rao*). It was first published in 1964. *Tuanku Rao* is primarily an exposé of the atrocities committed by the Padris during their invasion of Tanah Batak, 1816-1833. According to Parlindungan, the narrative in this book contains a lot of untold histories, including crimes committed by his forefathers and suffered by his ancestors during the military invasion centuries ago. The writer himself who hails from Tanah Batak tells the stories of injustice and atrocities experienced by his ancestors during the Padri invasion of Tanah Batak, 1816-1833. The Padri invasion was led by its leading lieutenants such as Tuanku Rao, Tuanku Lelo, and Tuanku Asahan. Parlindungan mentioned that he is a descendant of Tuanku Lelo (Idris Nasution) whom he referred to as the “war criminal” and a big rogue with animalistic behaviour during the Padri invasion. This book, thus, detailed the uneasy stories of atrocities committed by the Padris who came from Minangkabau as well as the Batak converts and collaborators. Besides, this book contains information about the Batak history, the history of Minangkabau, and the Islamic history of Minangkabau (Parlindungan, 2007).

In terms of organization and style, this book is not an academic work. The author mentioned that this book was compiled and not written by himself who was neither a historian nor a man of letters. Rather, the writer was an army retiree specialising in armament (Parlindungan, 2007). The language used is mixed up between standard Indonesian, colloquial, and occasional long English sentences. It also provides no citations or notes. The author himself acknowledged that this book was originally meant to be read by his two sons only because it contains some family stories, which he is not proud of. Another feature of this book is it was written in the style of storytelling. This was because the story was usually narrated orally by his father during the fasting month, after breaking the fast every day. Normally, the full story would be completed in 29 days of *Ramadhan*.

The author stated that this work is based on his father, Sutan Martua Radja’s old manuscripts (hereafter, SMRM). These manuscripts are a lot and they contain information about the history of Batak, Minangkabau history, and Islamic history in Indonesia including SMR family secrets. The author mentioned that Sutan Martua Radja was a history teacher at Normaal school Pematang siantar and the papers given to him were the results of 90 years of research, conducted from 1851 to 1941. The section of the book, which deals with the history of Shiah in Minangkabau is from pages 118 to 123. It is claimed that this book is

based only on 20% of the SMRM papers because the rest of it, namely 80% was burnt by his father. The author was incensed with the Padris who brought about terror and atrocities in the Tanah Batak which victimized the author's people including his ancestors. However, his contempt of the Padris had influenced his depiction of the image of Islam in Minangkabau, which is not based on history, and rather has distorted the historical fact. Contradictory to the widely accepted fact, the author claimed that initially, it was Shiah Islam, not the Sunni that reached and established itself in Minangkabau. He mentioned that Shiah Qaramitah had dominated Minangkabau politics for 300 years. He added that in 1513, Shiah had a strong influence and ruled Pagarruyung. Moreover, the Shiah University was established in Ulakan and there were more than 1800 Shiah mullahs in Minangkabau. Parlindungan says:

“1803. Agama Islam/Mazhab Syiah/Aliran Karmatiyah [sic.] sudah meresap di kalangan orang-orang Minangkabau sampai ke segala pelosok-pelosok. Itulah jang dengan pedang habis dibasmi oleh orang-orang Islam/Mazhab Hambali di dalam “Gerakan Islam Kaum Putih” 1803-1807. [TR, 123]

“Lihat Q.9. Agama Islam/Golongan Syi'ah/Aliran Karmatiyah lewat Qambay/Gujarat dan Pariaman, berkembang di seluruh Alam Minangkabau di dalam periode 1513- 1803, selama 300 tahun. Itulah yang inbloody massacres dengan pedang dibasmi habis oleh orang-orang Islam/Mazhab Hambali, di dalam Gerakan Islam Kaum Putih 1803-1807. Akibatnya sejak medio abad ke XIX hingga kini, agama Islam/Mazhab Syafi'i dapat berkembang di Alam Minangkabau (TR, 105)

Parlindungan does not provide citations or clear sources to support his contestation concerning this issue. However, it appears that Parlindungan's theory is based on the celebration of *tabut* and *Basapah* (to come out *en masse* on the last Wednesday of Safar). The *tabut* ritual refers to the practice of going out of the house in mass on the day of Ashura carrying a mock coffin of Husayn. Parlindungan claimed that the Hanbali Sunni Islam had supplanted Shiah Islam in the nineteenth century. The efforts of the Sunni preachers in the nineteenth century had succeeded in replacing the Shiah Islam, which reached and established itself in Minangkabau since the sixteenth. In presenting his ideas and arguments Parlindungan did not provide any citation in a footnote or in-text citation to facilitate readers to analyse the strength of his arguments. At the same time, Parlindungan's claim is not supported

by credible sources and it rests solely on Parlindungan's claim of having access to SMRM papers. This makes it difficult for readers to properly evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of his arguments and claims.

Hamka's *Antara fakta*

Hamka first read Parlindungan's *Tuanke Rao* while being imprisoned from 27 January 1964 to 23 January 1966. He read it for months and found a lot of issues and inaccuracies in Parlindungan's work (Hamka, 1974). As a Minangkabau native, Hamka was especially critical of M.O. Parlindungan's contestation on the Shiah influence in Minangkabau. Therefore, in 1974, he wrote a book, *Antara fakta dan khayal Tuanke Rao*, (henceforth, *Antara fakta*) specifically to refute the views of Parlindungan.

From a historical perspective, Parlindungan's *Tuanke Rao* relies on very weak sources and contains a lot of factual errors. Hamka who had a close relationship with Parlindungan, after his release from prison, mentions that every time he asked Parlindungan to show the source of information he used in the book, Parlindungan mentioned that it had been burned.

The author himself acknowledged that he inherited only 20% of his father's papers whereas the remaining 80% of the papers were purportedly burned by his father in 1941. Hamka concludes that "*kurang lebih 80% dari isi buku itu adalah tidak benar, dan secara agak kasar boleh disebut dusta*" (Hamka, 1974, p. 1). Thus, he publicly repudiated Parlindungan's work, and this criticism was published in *Antara fakta dan khayal Tuanke Rao* in 1974.

Hamka was appalled by Parlindungan's dramatic claims about Shiah's influence in Minangkabau. Hamka argues that Parlindungan's story about Syiah Qaramitah dominance in Minangkabau from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries was actually "*khayal*" a fantasy not based on fact.

In a seminar on the advent of Islam in Minangkabau in Padang, attended by both Hamka and Parlindungan, Hamka presented his facts and arguments to object to Parlindungan's claim that before the advent of the Padri in 1803, the Minangkabau people were Syi'ah Qaramitah. During the seminar, Parlindungan justified his stance on two feeble arguments: the celebration of Tabut Hasan-Husin in Minangkabau and the observation of Basapah, namely to come out *en masse* on the last Wednesday of Safar. Hamka adds that during the seminar he presented his counterpoints that Parlindungan's two arguments are very weak in demonstrating Syiah Qaramitah's influence throughout Minangkabau for three centuries, but

Parlindungan did not rebut Hamka's arguments until the end of the seminar and admitted that he lost in the debate (Hamka, 1974). Hamka adds in *Antara fakta* that the celebration of Tabut Husin and Hasan in several Minangkabau towns: Padang, Pariaman, and Padang Panjang does not necessarily indicate the presence of Syiah influence. The tabut Husin was celebrated possibly out of love and respect for the grandsons of the prophet.

However, Hamka adds that the *tabut* was not celebrated in the predominantly Syiah states such as Iran and Iraq. Thus, Hamka argues that respect for the grandsons of the Prophet through observation of the *tabut* does not entail adherence to Syiah doctrine. Moreover, Azyumardi Azra states that the *tabut* celebration in Pariaman involved the shaking and moving of a coffin which contained a replica/skeleton representing Husayn. He states that von Rankel (1914) convincingly argues that the *tabut* ceremony is not an indication of Shiah's religious influence among the Minangkabau people. Moreover, the *tabut* ritual was not introduced in Minangkabau by Persians but rather brought by Sepoy soldiers from northern India who joined English soldiers in West Sumatra in 1750-1825. The local Minangkabau people were influenced by the *tabut* not as a religious ritual but as a festival, *pesta keramaian*, mass celebration, and social function. Furthermore, the *tabut* ceremony in Minangkabau differs remarkably from the *ta'ziyeh* celebration in Persia officially celebrated in Iran since the Safavid time.

As regards the *Basapah* (to come out *en masse* on the last Wednesday of Safar), Hamka had categorically maintained that it is not part of Syi'ah religious ritual. After going through the major books on Syi'ah rituals and doctrines, Hamka did not find anything in Syi'ah, which placed special attention on the month of *Safar*. Conversely, Hamka stated beliefs and rituals associated with *Safar* can be traced to the custom of pre-Islamic Arabia (*Jahiliyyah*). Thus, Hamka argues that it is obvious that *Basapah* is not part of the Syi'ah ritual or belief and should not be accepted as an indicator of Syi'ah's influence and dominance in Minangkabau during the pre-Padri era.

Besides, providing a rebuttal of Parlindungan's arguments on Syi'ah influence in Minangkabau and the Padri wars in Minangkabau and Tanah Batak, in *Antara fakta*, Hamka has also identified a lot of factual inaccuracies that appeared in Parlindungan's *Tuanku Rao*. Hamka accomplished this through the mechanism of comparative history or cross-referencing of the facts presented in *Tuanku Rao* with the widely accepted historical facts as presented in the authoritative works.

Conclusion

Hamka was a rare talent ever produced by the *ummah* of the Malay world. His loss may well be regarded as *patah belum tumbuh, hilang sukar diganti*. Hamka's interesting life, career, and activities continue to attract both academic and popular attention. His published works also are all-encompassing covering a wide array of disciplines and genres. Because of Hamka's multi-dimensional talents and voluminous contributions to various fields of Islamic knowledge, his contribution to history a subject that was dear to him, sometimes is forgotten or overlooked. Though not formally trained as a historian, Hamka's historical writings meet the standard of historical research. As a result, both academics and non-academics have used Hamka's works on history as a main reference. This paper provides a preliminary analysis of Hamka's role and contributions as a historian. It demonstrates how Hamka has made important contributions to Islamic historiography in the Malay world. Hamka cautioned his readers that local sources, though useful, tend to heavily mix facts and legends, fantasies, and realities that need to be thoroughly examined. Thus, it needs a thorough verification; to compare to other local sources. In so doing, Hamka resorts to the strict discipline of historical inquiry. Hamka's criticism of Parlindungan's work demonstrates his emphasis and insistence on adherence to the true nature of the historical inquiry, which is committed to the principle of finding and communicating true information based on rigorous analysis of reliable sources. Historical facts need a thorough verification of sources. Any true historian must know what sources he is using and reveal the full identity and information of the sources he is using to present his historical accounts. Historians also must be cautious and even skeptical of their sources and do not accept the sources (even the primary ones) at their face value. Conversely, these sources should be treated critically by comparing them with other independent sources. This thorough investigation is known as, cross-referencing. Hamka was not formally trained in the rigorous historical methodology, yet through his rigorous and detailed criticism of Parlindungan's work, he demonstrates his sharp eyes and a high degree of historical consciousness. For that, Hamka continues to amaze us and he deserves our respect.

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