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Transmission of knowledge from Mā Warā' Al-Nahr to Nusantara: The central Asia Ulama network and its influence on Islamic intellectual traditions in the Malay archipelago - 18th-19th century

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the transmission of Islamic knowledge from Central Asia (Mā Warā' al-Nahr) to the Malay Archipelago (Nusantara), focusing on the role of Central Asia's ulama networks in shaping Islamic intellectual traditions from the 18th to 19th centuries. Challenging dominant narratives that prioritize the Arab-Haramayn axis, the research repositions Central Asia as a critical yet understudied contributor to Southeast Asia's Islamic thought. Using socio-intellectual historical analysis, the paper reconstructs scholarly linkages through primary sources such as ijazah (teaching certificates), travelogues, and manuscripts by Nusantara scholars like Nawawi al-Bantani, Abdussamad al-Palimbani, and Yusuf al-Makassari. Findings reveal that Central Asia influence—mediated through Haramayn scholars—permeated Sufism (notably the Naqshbandiyya order), theology (Maturidi rationalism), and jurisprudence, institutionalized via pesantren curricula and kitab kuning (classical texts). The study identifies three transmission mechanisms: pedagogical certification, textual trade networks, and institutional adaptations of Bukharan educational models. Key results demonstrate how Central Asian ideas were localized, such as the synthesis of Samarqandi catechisms into Malay-Javanese contexts. By highlighting Persianate intellectual currents and non-Arab networks, the research complicates homogenized accounts of Islamization, emphasizing Nusantara's adaptive agency in transregional knowledge exchange.

KEYWORDS: Bukhara ulama network, Islamic intellectual traditions, Haramayn intermediaries, Maturidi theology, Naqshbandiyya order

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Introduction

The Islamic intellectual traditions of Southeast Asia emerged from a complex interplay of local and transregional networks, with scholarly exchanges facilitated by trade, pilgrimage, and educational migration. While the Arab-Haramayn axis—centered on Mecca and Medina—has dominated historiographical narratives (Azra, 2002). Central Asia, particularly Bukhara in Transoxiana, played an equally pivotal role in shaping Islamic thought in the Malay Archipelago (Hak et al., 2024). Bukhara's prominence as a center of Islamic learning since the Samanid era (9th–10th centuries) positioned it as a hub for theology, jurisprudence, and Sufism, attracting scholars from across the Muslim world. By the 18th century, intensified spice trade routes and Hajj pilgrimages created conduits for intellectual exchange between Bukhara and maritime South Asia (Levi & Sela, 2010). Despite this, mainstream scholarship often marginalizes Central Asia's contributions, framing the Archipelago's Islamization as a derivative of Arab intellectualism. This oversight underscores the need to re-evaluate the pluralistic origins of Southeast Asian Islamic traditions through a broader geographical lens.

The 18th and 19th centuries marked a transformative period for Islamic education in the Malay Archipelago, driven by returning scholars from a medium place connected to Central Asia. Scholars like Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari adopted al-Maturidi into his book (Iqbal, 2021). The adaptations coincided with the rise of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), which institutionalized *kitab kuning* as core texts, like manuscript of Asmarakandi in Pesantren Darul Ulum Tuban and Pesantren Kempek (Jandra, 2009, p. 53). Thus, the region's Islamic intellectual history cannot be fully understood without acknowledging Bukhara's role as a catalyst for institutional and ideological reform.

Prevailing studies on Islamic scholarly networks in Southeast Asia disproportionately emphasize the Arab-Haramayn axis, framing it as the exclusive source of religious authority. This Eurocentric and Arab-centric bias obscures the contributions of non-Arab intellectual hubs like Bukhara, reducing the complexity of knowledge transmission to a unidirectional flow. For instance, Azyumardi Azra's seminal work *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (2004) meticulously traces scholarly lineages to Mecca and Medina but neglects the Bukharan connections of figures like Yusuf al-Makassari. Similarly, Peter Riddell's *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World* (2001) acknowledges Transoxiana's historical significance but stops short of analyzing its direct impact on Southeast Asian institutions. Such omissions perpetuate a homogenized narrative that overlooks the adaptive agency of Archipelago scholars in selectively integrating Bukharan ideas. Consequently, the dynamic interplay between Central Asian scholarship and local socio-religious contexts remains underexplored, necessitating a paradigm shift in historiographical approaches.

The homogenization of scholarly networks also stems from methodological limitations in existing literature, which often relies on Arabic-language sources while marginalizing Persian and Malay texts. Bukharan scholars frequently composed works in Persian, a lingua franca in Transoxiana, yet few studies analyze how these texts were translated or adapted in Malay intellectual circles. For example, Abdussamad al-Palimbani's *Tuhfat al-Raghibin (n.d.)*, a Sufi treatise influenced by Bukharan Naqshbandi teachings, demonstrates linguistic and doctrinal adaptations tailored to Malay audiences. Such localized reinterpretations challenge the notion of passive knowledge reception, highlighting instead the creative synthesis of transregional ideas. Furthermore, the role of female scholars and non-elite actors in sustaining these networks remains virtually unexamined, reflecting a gendered and class-based bias in historical records. Addressing these gaps requires interdisciplinary methodologies that incorporate manuscript analysis, oral histories, and network theory to reconstruct a more inclusive intellectual history.

This study aims to systematically map the scholarly connections between Bukhara and the Malay Archipelago by reconstructing biographical, textual, and institutional linkages across the 18th and 19th centuries. Utilizing primary sources such as travelogues, teaching certificates (*ijazah*), and correspondence, it traces the trajectories of scholars like Nawawi al-Bantani, who studied under Bukharan ulama before establishing influential pesantren in Java. (Khalid, 2007).

Methodology

This research employs a socio-intellectual historical analysis approach through historical sources and texts of Nusantara scholars (Azra, 2002). The purpose of this approach is to reconstruct the relationships and networks between Nusantara scholars and Central Asian scholars. The Nusantara scholarly network adopted

content related to Sufism, Hadith, Theology and jurisprudence sourced by Central Asian scholars through the intermediation of Haramayn scholars. Through this approach, these relationships can be identified in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, and transmission processes. The data sources utilized are the works of Abdussamad al-Palimbani, Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, Nawawi al-Bantani, Yusuf al-Makassari, Abdul Wahab Bugis. To supplement these primary data, this research also employs secondary data from relevant books and journal articles. This historical research is conducted in four stages. First, literature and manuscripts are collected and read heuristically. Subsequently, the researcher verifies the collected literature and data by conducting cross-source comparisons. After verification, the researcher analyzes and interprets the texts to identify nodes, density, centrality, network effects, and embeddedness. Finally, the reconstruction results are presented in a structured manner, beginning with an explanation of Central Asia as a source of knowledge transmission, followed by the factors connecting Nusantara scholars with Central Asian scholars, and concluding with the contents adopted from this intellectual exchange.

Result and Discussion

A. Central Asia as Knowledge Source

The development of Islamic scholarship in Bukhara commenced with the establishment of the Samanid Dynasty. This historical period marked a significant turning point for the region, transforming it from a peripheral territory into a central hub of intellectual exchange. The Samanids, who initially adhered to Zoroastrianism before converting to Sunni Islam following the Arab conquests and the fall of the Sasanian Empire, fostered an environment conducive to scholarly pursuits. Their patronage of learning institutions and scholars catalyzed the emergence of Bukhara as a preeminent center of Islamic knowledge production, particularly in the disciplines of hadith (prophetic traditions), fiqh (jurisprudence), and tasawwuf (Sufism) (Fayzullayevich & Axtamovich, n.d., p. 53).

Bukhara, Samarkand, and other Central Asian cities situated along the Silk Road experienced substantial cultural and intellectual exchanges from the earliest periods of their development. These urban centers functioned as crucial nodes in a vast network that facilitated the transmission of ideas, manuscripts, and scholarly methodologies across geographical boundaries (Hak et al., 2024). The strategic positioning of these cities enabled the confluence of diverse intellectual traditions from Greece, Arabia, Persia, and India, creating a uniquely cosmopolitan scholarly environment (Fayzullayevich & Axtamovich, n.d.). This multicultural foundation contributed significantly to the distinctive character of Central Asian Islamic scholarship, which would later influence Muslim communities throughout the world, including the Nusantara archipelago.

The intellectual development in Bukhara and Samarkand did not initially occur through formal institutional frameworks but rather through informal networks of scholars and their disciples. These knowledge circles, often centered around prominent religious figures, mosques, and private residences, fostered intimate teacher-student relationships that facilitated comprehensive transmission of textual and practical knowledge. Over time, these informal educational arrangements evolved into more structured institutions like madrasas, which became instrumental in systematizing and preserving the intellectual traditions that emerged from this region. This organic development of educational practices allowed for flexibility and innovation in pedagogical approaches while maintaining rigorous standards of scholarship (Bosworth, 1996; Makdisi, 1981).

Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 870 CE), born in Bukhara, emerged as one of the most influential hadith scholars in Islamic history. His magnum opus, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, became the preeminent collection of authenticated prophetic traditions and is widely regarded as the most authoritative hadith compilation in Sunni Islam. This monumental work, comprising approximately 7,275 hadith narrations including repetitions, represents the culmination of al-Bukhārī's meticulous methodology of hadith verification. His rigorous criteria for authentication established new standards for hadith scholarship and significantly influenced subsequent developments in Islamic jurisprudence and theology. Al-Bukhārī's intellectual legacy extends far beyond Central Asia, reaching distant regions including the Nusantara archipelago, where his work continues to be venerated and studied intensively.

The transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* to Nusantara exemplifies the complex networks of knowledge circulation that connected Central Asia with Southeast Asia. Prominent Nusantara scholars such as KH Hasyim Asy'ari, Sheikh Mahfud Termas, and Soleh Darat received authorization (*ijazah*) to teach this text through

chains of transmission (*isnād*) that traced back to al-Bukhārī himself (Faisal, 2018; Ghozali, 2024). These authorization chains typically involved intermediary scholars from the Haramayn, who had connections to Bukhara's scholarly traditions. While direct connections between Nusantara scholars and Bukharan educational centers are not extensively documented, the intellectual lineages preserved through these chains of transmission maintained the authoritative connection to Bukharan scholarship. This textual transmission represents a significant dimension of the intellectual relationship between Central Asia and the Nusantara region.

The study of hadith collections from Central Asian scholars, particularly al-Bukhārī's work, became a foundational component of curriculum in Nusantara's traditional Islamic boarding schools. This educational practice reflects the profound influence of Central Asian hadith scholarship on Southeast Asian Islamic intellectual traditions. The integration of these texts into pesantren curricula facilitated the dissemination of Central Asian methodological approaches to scriptural interpretation and legal reasoning throughout the Nusantara region (Hak et al., 2024). Furthermore, the chains of transmission connecting Nusantara scholars to Bukhārī through Haramayn intermediaries conferred legitimacy upon local religious authorities and situated them within broader networks of Islamic scholarship, thereby reinforcing their credibility within their communities.

In the field of theology, the source of Central Asian influence also came from Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (853M-944M) was the main figure of the Maturidiyah school of theology and was known as a defender of the Ahlussunnah doctrine with a strong rational approach. Sheikh Abdullah bin Muhammad Niyazi al-Bukhārī. As a teacher of Sheikh Yasin al-Fadani (1916M—1990M), a prominent Minangkabau scholar based in Mecca, Sheikh al-Bukhārī maintained the transmission of Central Asian intellectual traditions to Nusantara scholars well into the twentieth century (Imawan, 2024). This ongoing connection demonstrates the remarkable durability of these scholarly networks despite significant political, social, and intellectual transformations in both regions. Sheikh al-Fadani's position as a respected authority among Nusantara scholars studying in the Haramayn allowed him to function as a crucial intermediary, facilitating the continued integration of Bukharan intellectual traditions into Malayan Archipelago Islamic discourse during a period of rapid modernization and reform (Qurtuby, 2020).

Abu al-Laits al-Samarqandi (944M—983M), whose full name was Nasr bin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Ibrahim, was a great scholar of the Hanafi school known by the title Imām al-Hudā. He was a jurist, mufasir, Sufi, and was once considered a muhaddis although his capacity in hadith is questioned by some scholars such as al-Dzahabi. He learned from a line of scholars connected to Abu Yusuf, a disciple of Abu Hanifah, and was an important figure in the scholarly tradition in Transoxania. Among his famous works are *Baḥr al-'Ulūm in* tafsir, *Tanbih al-Ghafilin in targhib wa tarhib*, *Khizānat al-Fiqh*, *al-Muqaddimah fi al-Fiqh*, and *Bustan al-'Arifin* in Sufism (Husayna & Muhammad, 2023; Iqbal, 2021). Several other works are still in manuscript form and cover the fields of fiqh, creed, tafsir and fatwa. There is a confusion in some Western literature that refers to him as Hanbali, whereas he was clearly Hanafi. Regarding the year of his death, there are different opinions, but the most common is 373 A.H. Abu Layth gained wide attention in various Muslim worlds through his works, including the archipelago. His work entitled *Bayān 'Aqīdah al-Uṣūl* which contains Maturudiyah-Hanafi theology was studied in the archipelago in the 16th-19th centuries (Jandra, 2009). The Nusantara scholars studied his thoughts even though they were different from the Syafi'i school of thought brought from Haramayn. Another figure who became one of the sources of the tarekat tradition of the Nusantara scholars was Sheikh Bahauddin Naqshbandi (1317-1388 CE). In the 14th-15th centuries, Islamic scholarship in Uzbekistan reached a new phase under the Timurid Dynasty, with Samarkand as the center of civilization. This period was characterized by the rapid development of science and Sufism. The Naqshbandiyya order distinguishes itself through its emphasis on silent dhikr (remembrance of God), strict adherence to the Shari'ah, and cultivation of conscious awareness of divine presence (*muraqaba*) (Buehler, 1998; Subtelny, 2007). The Naqshbandiyya order reached the Nusantara archipelago through networks of Sufi transmission, primarily via scholars who had studied in the Haramayn, namely Abdurra'uf Singkili and Yusuf Maqassari.

The enduring influence of Central Asian Islamic scholarship on Nusantara intellectual traditions manifests in multiple dimensions, including textual transmission, methodological approaches, spiritual practices, and institutional models. This influence operated primarily through indirect channels, with scholars from the Haramayn serving as crucial intermediaries in the transmission process (Hak et al., 2024). Despite geographical distance and linguistic differences, the intellectual connection between Central Asia and Nusantara persisted

through carefully maintained chains of transmission that preserved the authoritative link to foundational texts and methodologies originating from Bukhara, Samarkand, and other Central Asian centers of learning. The continued relevance of these connections into the modern period demonstrates the remarkable resilience of traditional knowledge networks in the face of colonial interventions, nationalist movements, and globalizing forces (Azra, 2002).

B. Nusantara Ulama and Connecting Networks to Central Asia

The arrival of Islam in the Nusantara archipelago remains a highly contested topic in Southeast Asian historiography. Various theories—rooted in historical, sociological, and anthropological approaches—have been proposed, each drawing on distinct types of evidence. Instead of pointing to a singular route of transmission, recent scholarship tends to acknowledge that Islam spread through multiple channels at once, with diverse patterns of influence depending on the region and period. The spread of Islam in the Nusantara archipelago was a complex and gradual process involving multiple channels. The widely endorsed Trade Theory holds that Islam was introduced by Arab and Persian traders as early as the 7th or 8th century. According to Reid (1993), Indian Ocean trade networks enabled the flow of both goods and religious ideas, with Muslim communities forming in port cities. This is supported by gravestones found in Leran (1082 CE) and Pasai (13th century). Azra (2004) notes that these early settlements played a key role in peacefully disseminating Islam through commercial relationships.

The Gujarat-Indian Theory, advanced by Snouck Hurgronje, G.W.J. Drewes, and Ricklefs (2008, p. 3), emphasizes links with Indian Islam, especially visible in funerary art and manuscripts. Meanwhile, the Persian Theory by Johns (Johns, 1961) credits Persian Sufis for introducing Islamic concepts, and Tan (Tan, 2009) argues in the Chinese Connection Theory that Admiral Zheng He's 15th-century expeditions helped propagate Islam, as seen in Chinese-influenced mosque architecture. The Sufi Missionary Theory, proposed by Geertz and Johns (1961, p. 14), highlights how Sufism's flexible, mystical approach and tolerance for local traditions made Islam more approachable, leading to the rise of Sufi orders (*tarekat*) and syncretic practices. Material evidence such as the Fatimah bint Maimun tombstone (Tjandrasasmita, 2009) and diverse epigraphic styles (Guillot, 2004, p. 112) point to multiple Islamic influences. From a sociological perspective, Hefner (2011) and Lombard (1996, p. 132) suggest that Islam's spread was aided by its alignment with shifting economic and political dynamics. Anthropologically, Bowen (1993, p. 28) emphasizes how local cultures reinterpreted Islamic teachings, creating regionally distinct expressions of the faith. As Laffan (2011, p. 203) concludes, Islam's emergence in Southeast Asia was not marked by conquest but by centuries of gradual cultural adaptation and integration.

What are the connecting cities between the scholars of Central Asia and the archipelago? Haramayn, Egypt, Yemen and India were the cities that connected the scholarly traditions. Egypt has served as a pivotal hub of Islamic scholarship since the classical era (650–1280 CE), a role it sustained well into the modern age. During the 19th and 20th centuries, Al-Azhar, Egypt's preeminent Islamic institution, became a critical bridge linking scholars (ulama) from Central Asia and the Nusantara archipelago (present-day Southeast Asia) (Azra, 1999). These connections unfolded through two primary channels: direct interactions between Nusantara scholars and Egyptian academics in Egypt. Two influential Nusantara scholars, Abdul Mannan of Tremas and Nawawi al-Bantani, were instrumental in fostering these ties. Abdul Mannan, founder of Pesantren Tremas and grandfather of the renowned cleric Mahfuz al-Tarmasi, traveled to Egypt alongside Nawawi al-Bantani to study under Ibrahim al-Bayjuri, the 19th-century head of Al-Azhar. Al-Bayjuri's *Fatḥ al-Qarīb*, a seminal work on Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), gained widespread prominence in Nusantara. His scholarly network extended to Central Asia, evidenced by his commentaries on texts by authors from the region, such as *Ta'liqat* on al-Zamakhshari's *Tafsīr al-Kashshaf* from Khwarizm, *Hāshiyah* on Abu Laith al-Samarqandi's *Matn al-Samarqandiyyah* from Samarkand, and *Hāshiyah* on al-Turmudhi's *Shamail Muhammadiyyah* from Termez (Hak et al., 2024). Additionally, Abdul Mannan and Nawawi pursued studies in Ḥaramain under Muhammad Shatha (d. 1848 CE), an Al-Azhar-educated scholar who taught there. This dual engagement—both in Egypt and Ḥaramain—underscored Egypt's enduring intellectual influence and its role as a nexus for cross-regional Islamic scholarship during this period (Hak et al., 2024).

Haramayn, a prominent center of Islamic scholarship during the 19th and 20th centuries, served as a crucial nexus for establishing networks between scholars from the Nusantara (Indonesian archipelago)

and Central Asia. This connection primarily developed through chains of knowledge transmission (*sanad*). Two distinguished Nusantara scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries played pivotal roles in strengthening these networks: Nawawi al-Bantani (1813-1897) and Abdul Samad al-Palimbani (1704-1789) (Azra, 2002). Both pursued their Islamic education in Haramayn under the guidance of scholars who possessed established knowledge chains linked to Central Asian ulama. Their studies focused on major hadith compilations including *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Ibn Majah, and Sunan An-Nasa'i*. Notably, Nawawi al-Bantani held a significant position in the transmission chain of *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, while Abdul Samad al-Palimbani studied under prominent Haramayn scholars specializing in hadith studies (Hafidhuddin & Qudsy, 2021).

In later periods, the role of Sufi scholars from the Indonesian Archipelago as teachers to Arab students was also documented. One notable example is Syekh 'Abd al-Samad bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jawi (known as al-Palimbani) who taught Al-Ghazali's *Ihya Ulum al-Din* to 'Abd al-Rahman bin Sulayman al-Ahdal (d. 1835), a prominent Yemeni sayyid intellectual. This fact is directly reported by al-Ahdal in his biographical work, *al-Nafas al-Yamanī wa al-rūḥ al-ruhānī fī ijāzat al-qudat bani al-Shawkānī* (1979). This interaction illustrates that the intellectual networks between Nusantara and Yemen were bidirectional: not only did Nusantaran scholars study in Yemen, but they also became sources of knowledge for Arab-Yemeni intellectuals, particularly in Sufi studies and classical Islamic scholarship.

The transmission of Islamic knowledge between Nusantara (Southeast Asia) and the *Mā warā'a al-nahr* regions via Yemen has occurred at least since the mid-17th century, when Syekh Yusuf al-Makassari studied in Yemen under two teachers of the Naqshbandi Sufi order before performing the Hajj and settling in Mecca and Medina. However, the earliest evidence of this Islamic scholarly transmission dates back much earlier, as recorded in the works of Abdullah As'ad al-Yafi'i (d. 1367 CE), discussed in the research by R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan titled *Sufi Scents across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam* (2005, pp. 185–208). Their study highlights the role of Yemeni hagiography in shaping the early history of Islam in Southeast Asia.

Another route for the spread of Tasawwuf originating from Transoxania, like the Naqshabandiyah, was India. Initially spreading to Persia and India, these two regions became stations for the transmission of knowledge from ma wa wara'a nahar to the archipelago. This transmission experienced important developments through figures such as Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624), known as *Mujaddid Alf Tsani* (Reformer of the Second Millennium). Sirhindi emphasized the purity of tawhid and the orthodoxy of the Shari'a, which later became the hallmark of the Naqshabandiyah-Mujaddidiyah branch. From India, this teaching spread to the Holy Land of Mecca and Medina through scholars who resided or performed the pilgrimage (Riddell, 2001). One of Ahmad Sirhindi's main disciples from the archipelago was Ahmad Khatib Sambas where he was a scholar from West Kalimantan who received the Naqshabandiyah-Mujaddidiyah Tariqah diploma in Mecca. He then taught this order to his students from various parts of the archipelago, such as Shaykh Ismail of Minangkabau and Shaykh Abdul Karim of Banten (Van Bruinessen, 1992).

C. Transmitted Knowledge Content

1. The Transmission of Naqshbandiyya Sufism and Ethical Teachings

The Naqshabandiyah Order is one of the most important Sufi orders in the history of Islam, with wide influence from Central Asia to Southeast Asia. It has its roots in the Transoxania region through its central figure, Baha'uddin Naqshbandi (d. 1389). Its teachings emphasize silent or inner remembrance (*dzikr khāfī*), strict adherence to Islamic law, and active participation in social life. These characteristics make it different from many other tariqahs that tend to emphasize the practice of ecstasy and solitude (Trimingham, 1971). The spread to the archipelago occurred through the intellectual and spiritual paths of scholars who studied in the Middle East, especially in Mecca. One of the key figures was Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (d. 1875), a scholar from West Kalimantan who received a certificate of the Naqshabandiyah-Mujaddidiyah Order in Mecca. He later taught this order to his students from various parts of the archipelago, such as Sheikh Ismail of Minangkabau and Sheikh Abdul Karim of Banten (Van Bruinessen, 1992).

Syaikh Abdus-Samad Al-Palimbani was an influential 18th-century Islamic scholar from Palembang who became a key figure in Indonesia's anti-colonial resistance. Recognized in Arabic biographical dictionaries

for his scholarly reputation in the Holy Land, he made significant contributions to the independence struggle by writing *Nasīḥah al-Muslimīn fī Fadā'il al-Jihād*, the first jihad treatise by a Nusantara scholar and sending motivational letters to Javanese rulers encouraging resistance against foreign powers. His works directly inspired major resistance movements, including the Aceh War through adapted *Hikayat Perang Sabil* chronicles and the Menteng War in Palembang where his followers actively fought Dutch forces, establishing him as an exemplary figure for cultivating nationalism among Indonesia's youth (Hafidhuddin & Qudsy, 2021).

In the Malaya archipelago, Naqshabandiyah developed rapidly in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Java. In West Sumatra, it became part of the structure of pesantren and surau, which strengthened the Islamic identity of the Minangkabau people. In Kalimantan, it survives in the Muslim Dayak and Sambas Malay communities. Meanwhile, in Java, the tariqah network was assimilated into the pesantren tradition and played a role in the Islamic renewal movement (Laffan, 2011). The transmission of Naqshabandiyah teachings in the archipelago is done through a tariqah *sanad* system that connects a student to his teacher continuously up to the founder of the tariqah. This mechanism ensures spiritual legitimacy and maintains the authenticity of the teachings. In addition, local adaptation to local cultural values contributed to the tarekat's acceptance in various Islamic communities in Southeast Asia (Howell, 2001).

Moreover, Shaykh Yusuf Maqassari not only joined the Khalwatiyah order, but also took allegiance to a number of other orders. In his book, *Safinah Al-Najat*, he details the names of teachers and their lineages from the Qadiriyah, Naqshabandiyyah, Shattariyah, Ba'alawiyah, and Khalwatiyah orders. One of his teachers in the Naqshabandiyyah was Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad 'Abd Al-Baqi Al-Mizjaji Al-Yamani and a caliph of Taj Al-Din Zakariya-an Indian wahdat al-wujud adherent who died in 1642. Unlike Ahmad Sirhindi, who rejected this doctrine, Taj Al-Din maintained the doctrine of the unity of being, which was also believed by other teachers of Shaykh Yusuf (Abdullah, 1980, pp. 76–77). Most likely, Yusuf also studied with another Naqshabandi shaikh, 'Abd Al-Karim Al-Lahuri from India. His work, *Mathalib Al-Salikin*, was adapted from Al-Lahuri's teachings and contains metaphysical discussions of divine attributes as well as nuances of *wahdat al-wujud*, although it does not feature Naqshyabandiyah characteristics. In addition, Ibrahim Al-Kurani in Medina as the main Shattariyah teacher after Ahmad Qusyasyi, was also one of his mentors. Al-Kurani is known to have had Nusantara disciples, including 'Abd Al-Ra'uf Singkel, who combined Shattariyah, Naqshabandiyyah and wahdat al-wujud teachings with wide influence in the Islamic world (Van Bruinessen, 1992).

Unfortunately, the explicit treatise of Shaykh Yusuf on the Naqshbandi order, *Al-Risalah al-Naqshbandiyyah*, remains inaccessible. According to Abdullah (1980), the manuscript contains classical meditative techniques inherited from 'Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghujdawani, along with guidelines for performing dhikr (remembrance of God). However, references to the Naqshbandi order in Yusuf's other writings are mostly descriptive rather than practical, making it difficult to determine to what extent he actually taught this order (Abdullah, 1980).

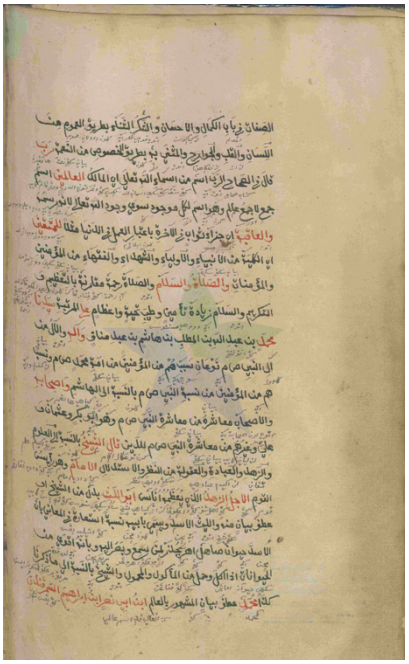
Van Bruinessen suggests that Shaykh Yusuf formulated his own Sufi system, integrating elements from various orders, particularly the Khalwatiyya. Yet his Arabic works contain few concrete explanations of doctrine or meditation techniques, making it difficult to map out his system in detail. Most of his writings center on general Sufi concepts (often tinged with wahdat al-wujud, the oneness of being), moral exhortations, and stories of famous Sufi figures. One consistent theme he emphasizes is the absolute obedience of a disciple to their shaykh, even if the shaykh errs. To reinforce this teaching, Yusuf frequently cites figures such as Ibn al-'Arabi and Junayd al-Baghdadi (Van Bruinessen, 1992).

Only a small portion of his writings offer practical guidance, such as instructions on the dhikr of "*la ilaha illallah*" leading up to the highest form, "*hu, hu*". According to Abu Hamid from Ujungpandang, the influence of the Naqshbandi order in Shaykh Yusuf's Khalwatiyya may be seen in two aspects: the use of silent *dhikr* (in contrast to the vocal dhikr practiced in other Khalwatiyya branches), and the emphasis on *laṭ'if*—subtle energy points in the body, similar to the chakra concept in Hinduism. A more in-depth study of current practices of this tariqa might shed further light on the synthesis initiated by Shaykh Yusuf (Oberhammer, 1983).

2. Central Asian Theological Influences: The Samarqandi Tradition

The work of Abu Layth al-Samarqandi (d. 983 CE), *Bayan 'Aqīdah al-Uṣūl* or *Masā'il*, is one of the most well-known Islamic catechism texts in a question-and-answer format, especially popular in 19th-century Southeast

Asia. In Batavia (modern-day Jakarta), the text was received by Javanese communities through bilingual (Arabic–Malay) manuscripts copied in Salemba, Batavia, in the early 19th century. This manuscript provides evidence of the transregional transmission of Islamic knowledge from Samarkand to the Malay Archipelago, as well as its adaptation to the local context. Abu Layth al-Samarqandi, a Hanafi jurist from Central Asia, wrote *Bayan ʻAqidah al-Uṣūl* as a basic guide to Islamic belief and worship. The text spread to the archipelago via networks of scholars and trade, becoming a key reference in Islamic education, especially in Java. Its presence in Batavia reflects the intellectual dynamics of Islamic thought even within the colonial capital of the Dutch East Indies.



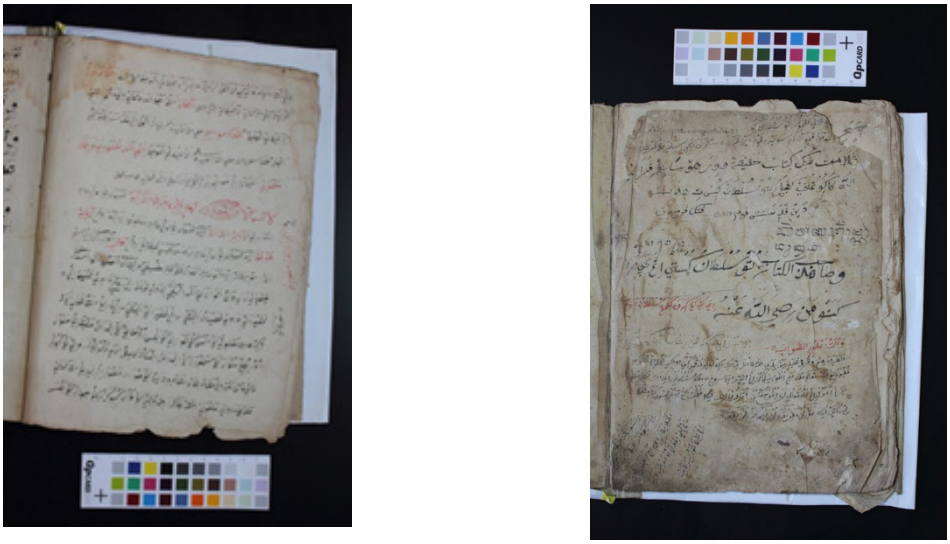
Kitab *Bahjah al-`Ulum fi Syarh fi Bayan `Aqidah al-Ushul, Syarah Sittin Mas`alah, al-Miftah fi Syarh Ma`rifah al-Islam, at-Tilmisani, Fath al-Mubin bi Syarh Umm al-Barahin, wa Syarh Umm al-Barahin*

Based on the analysis of the *Bahjah Al-'Ulum* manuscript, the core theological thought in this work adheres to the Ash'arite school that emphasizes the supremacy of revelation over reason and Allah's absolute sovereignty over all human actions. The concept of faith (*īmān*) in this manuscript is defined as "*tasdiq, taqrir, and amal*" - which means believing absolutely, acknowledging in the heart, and practicing everything that comes from divine revelation. The manuscript explicitly rejects Mu'tazilite views by stating that "human reason will not conform to the guidance of *sharia* (revelation)", and affirms that Allah possesses eternal attributes, exercises absolute will without being bound by any particular purpose, and that the Qur'an is the eternal speech (*kalam*) of Allah, not a created being. This theological perspective reflects Sunni orthodoxy that became mainstream in traditional Javanese pesantren, where revelation is regarded as the primary source of religious knowledge that cannot be challenged by human rational capacity (Firmanto, n.d.).

Manuscripts in the British Library's collection (*From Samarkand to Batavia*, n.d.) are bilingual Arabic–Malay copies transcribed by Duljabar, a scribe from Cirebon, for a certain Tuan Alperes in the Salemba neighborhood. The colophon reveals that the manuscript was copied under the guidance of a local teacher, reflecting an informal educational network in Batavia. Although the scribe humbly refers to his handwriting as "like chicken scratch," his calligraphy reveals a refined mastery of the craft. *Masa'il Samarqandi* was used as a foundational text for teaching *aqidah*, *shari'a*, and rituals. What sets the Batavia manuscript apart is its interlinear Malay translation—a relatively rare feature compared to the more common Javanese versions (Laffan, 2011). This suggests a need for religious instruction among the Malay-speaking Muslim community in Batavia, many of whom may not have been fluent in either Javanese or Arabic.

Additionally, the manuscript includes appendices with practical guidelines on funeral and marriage rites, underlining its function as a daily religious guide. The dissemination of Samarqandi's work in Batavia was closely linked to the role of pesantren and coastal Javanese scholars such as those in Cirebon, a hub of Islamic knowledge transmission. Similar manuscripts are found in pesantren collections in Ponorogo and Cirebon (EAP211/1/4/11), illustrating a pattern of spread through traditional educational routes (*From Samarkand to*

Batavia, n.d.).



Source: (Kesultanan Kanoman, 14-16M)

This Naqshabandiyah manuscript, attributed to Sheikh Baha'uddin serves as a spiritual guide covering essential Sufi practices. The text explores congregational dhikr methods, prayers for preparing for death, and the spiritual conditions that draw one toward God. It examines the heart as a mirror of the spirit and outlines the seven ascending levels of mystical attainment. Preserved on European paper measuring 28 by 20.5 centimeters, with text covering 25 by 17.5 centimeters, this compact manuscript contains fundamental teachings from the Islamic mystical tradition on the soul's journey toward divine union (Kesultanan Kanoman, 14-16M).

Despite colonial rule, Muslim communities preserved religious texts, particularly favoring accessible works like *Masā'il*. The strategic use of Malay language for Islamic texts in this multiethnic city reflects efforts to reach diverse audiences. The manuscripts illustrate the emergence of Betawi Islam, which combined broader Islamic traditions with local characteristics. Specifically, a Malay translation of *Bayān 'Aqīdah al-Uṣūl* shows how Central Asian Hanafi Islamic thought reached the Malay world (Jandra, 2009). The translator Duljabar's work exemplifies how religious scholars adapted texts for urban Muslim communities, positioning Batavia as an important center within global Islamic intellectual networks while maintaining religious identity under colonial conditions (*From Samarkand to Batavia*, n.d.).

Abu Laits al-Samarkandi's influence is widespread throughout the Islamic world, particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, where adaptations of his works have been widely accepted. In Indonesia, the Amarakandi text is used in pesantren throughout the archipelago, especially in Java's traditional Salafi pesantren, with key works including *Tanbihul Ghafilin* and *Qatrul Gaits* by Muhammad Nawawi Al-Jawi (1992). *Tanbihul Ghafilin* circulates in Malaysia and has been translated into Indonesian by Abu Imam Taqyuddin with the title *Tanbihul Ghafilin: Pembangun Jiwa dan Moral Umat* (2012), while in Yogyakarta, *Qaṭr al-Gayth* is used in nearly all pesantren in the province, serving as mandatory curriculum for second-year students at Krapyak (studied during Ramadan) and also taught at Pondok Wahid Hasyim, Condong Catur, and Pondok Pesantren Pandana (Jandra, 2009, p. 63).

Al-Samarqandi's works demonstrate remarkable endurance across centuries and regions, from 10th-century Central Asia to becoming foundational texts in Southeast Asian Islamic education. The bilingual Arabic-Malay manuscripts in 19th-century Batavia exemplify how scholarly and trade networks facilitated transregional knowledge transmission, while local adaptations through vernacular translations enabled these classical texts to serve diverse Muslim communities. The continued use of al-Samarqandi's works in contemporary pesantren across Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei illustrates the dynamic nature of Islamic intellectual tradition—one that bridges classical scholarship with local needs while preserving religious identity even under colonial rule.

3. The Study and Reception of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Southeast Asia

Hadith Studies in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago have evolved through five historical phases, closely linked

to the intellectual ties between local scholars and the centers of Islamic learning in the Haramayn (Mecca and Medina). From the 8th to the 12th centuries, Arab and Persian contact with the Archipelago was primarily commercial, without significant religious engagement. It wasn't until the 13th to 15th centuries that Islam began spreading through Sufi missionaries and Muslim traders. However, during this period, scholarly focus remained largely on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and mysticism (*tasawwuf*), as seen in the works of scholars like al-Raniri and al-Singkili (Azra, 1999).

The 16th and 17th centuries marked a pivotal turn, when scholars from the region such as Nuruddin al-Raniri, Abdurrauf al-Singkili, and Yusuf al-Maqassari undertook scholarly journeys (*rihlah 'ilmiyyah*) to the Haramayn. There, they studied hadith under renowned scholars like Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani, thereby acquiring chains of transmission (isnad) that connected them to the early generations of hadith transmitters (Azra, 2002). In the 18th and 19th centuries, prominent scholars such as Nawawi al-Bantani and Mahfuz al-Tarmasi not only authored important works on hadith and *mustalah al-hadith* (the science of hadith classification), but also taught in the Haramayn. Their contributions were central to the formation of a genealogical tradition of hadith scholarship in the Malay-Indonesian world. The final phase, from the 20th century to the present day, is characterized by the institutionalization of hadith studies within Islamic higher education. However, as noted by Azyumardi Azra, Ramli Abdul Wahid, and M. Atho Mudzhar, academic attention to hadith remains relatively limited compared to other Islamic disciplines (Azra, 2002; Mudzhar, 2002; Wahid, 2005). Only a handful of scholars, such as Mahfuz al-Tarmasi and Yasin al-Fadani, are formally recognized as hadith experts (*muhaddithin*), while the majority of other scholars lack complete scholarly legitimacy in hadith—either in the form of recognized isnad or widely acknowledged written contributions.

Conclusion

This study conclusively demonstrates the transmission of Islamic knowledge from Central Asia to the Nusantara through documented scholarly networks and textual evidence. Foundational works such as al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* reached Southeast Asia through ijazah chains connecting Nusantara scholars like KH Hasyim Asy'ari, Sheikh Mahfud Termas, and Soleh Darat to Bukharan traditions via Haramayn and Egyptian intermediaries. al-Samarqandi's *Bayan 'Aqidah al-Usul* was copied in bilingual Arabic-Malay manuscripts in 19th-century Batavia. The Naqshbandiyya Sufi order from Bahauddin Naqshbandi also reached the archipelago through Yusuf al-Makassari and Abdurra'uf Singkili, while scholars like Nawawi al-Bantani studied Central Asian texts through their teacher Ibrahim al-Bayjuri in Egypt.

Material evidence including British Library manuscripts, ijazah certificates, and works such as *Tuhfat al-Raghibin* and *Safinah Al-Najat* proves that Central Asian intellectual traditions became institutionalized in Nusantara's pesantren system through concrete adaptations: Samarqandi's catechism was translated into Malay, al-Bukhārī's hadith methodology was integrated into traditional curricula, and Maturidi theological rationalism influenced local Islamic discourse. Future research should examine underrepresented actors like female scholars, conduct comparative analysis of Persian-Malay manuscripts, and employ digital humanities tools to map scholarly networks more comprehensively.

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