

THE INTELLECTUAL TRADITION OF MANDAILING ULAMA IN EAST SUMATRA: Zainal Arifin Abbas, 1912-1979

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Abstract: This study examines the biography, works and contributions of Zainal Arifin Abbas in East Sumatra. The intellectual activity of Zainal Arifin Abbas's in East Sumatra is influenced by parents, teachers, colleagues and those around him. This study examines the biography and contribution of Zainal Arifin Abbas in tradition and intellectual dynamics in East Sumatra. Applying a sociological-historical method, this study establishes that Zainal Arifin Abbas have indeed contributed very significantly in the field of education. Through his personal example, he managed to become a wise educator, initiator of the founding of the modern madrasa, and at the same time a prolific writer. He always showed enthusiasm in studying, integrating knowledge, glorifying teachers, and always giving an understanding of the urgency of religious education to the community. He is also an activist and fought for Indonesian independence.

Keywords: Mandailing, ulama, East Sumatra, Zainal Arifin Abbas

Introduction

Islam has experienced a golden age with a high level of civilization. The quality and influence of this civilization is recognized by other nations. Through this civilization, it is certain that it has sparked the birth of charismatic figures and scholars, including figures who have contributed a lot in the field of Islamic education, for example Abû Hamîd Muḥammad al-Ghazâlî (d. 505/1111), Burhân al-Dîn al-Islâmi al-Zarnujî (d. 591/1195), as well as a number of other figures and scholars.¹ So far, the theories of Western education that are developing today are also likely to be rooted in the strong intellectual tradition of Muslim thinkers in the golden age of Islam.² This is testified by Nakosteen's assertion that Muslim figures and scientists contribute to the development of contemporary Western civilization.³

Muslim scientists contributed a lot in building strong intellectual traditions at both the theoretical and practical levels, including scholars from Indonesia. Azra and Mas'ud noted that from the 17th to 19th centuries, the ulama of the Indonesian archipelago had provided a strong position in regard to intellectual traditions and scholarship.⁴ But unfortunately, the majority of studies on intellectual traditions and networks as revealed are still impressed as 'Java-Centric'.⁵ In this case, Mandailing scholars are relatively little studied when compared with scholars from Java, Minangkabau and other regions in the archipelago.⁶ One of the Mandailing scholars who deserve appreciation as material for study and development is Zainal Arifin Abbas. In quantity, there are indeed some scientists and scholars studying of this Mandailing scholar. However, some scientists only pay attention to the contribution of Zainal Arifin Abbas in the fields of interpretation (*tafsîr*), law and politics. Among these scientific works, for example, were written by M. Jamil and Ja'far,⁷ Ridhoul Wahidi & Rafiuddin Afari,⁸ Abdul Qadir Umar al-Hamidy,⁹

Nadzrah Ahmad *et al.*,¹⁰ and Karel Steenbrink discussing the work of Zainal Arifin Abbas in the aspect of religious comparative studies in Indonesia.¹¹ The study by M. Yakub about Zainal Arifin Abbas focuses on Islamic social intellectual history by emphasizing his intellectual biography alone.¹² Of course there are a number of other works on Zainal Arifin Abbas, but very little discussion of intellectual traditions and their contributions in the field of education.

The limited study about the intellectual tradition of Zainal Arifin Abbas is compounded by the limited access to his works both in the form of books and freelance writings in Islamic magazines. There is no doubt that a number of the works have made constructive contributions to studies concerning Zainal Arifin Abbas. But there are still many who await further research on intellectual traditions and the contribution of Zainal Arifin Abbas, especially in the field of Islamic education. The study of intellectual traditions in the Islamic education setting is interesting topics to be comprehensively and deeply explored in order to better understand it and then take '*ibrah* from it. This study will also uncover historically the events of the past to be applied in the context of ideas and practices of Islamic education in the present. The study of Islamic education will also confirm the construction of idealism and identity for the development of Islamic education today and in the future. Furthermore, studies of Islamic education will also massively supply ideas that are alternative and up to date so that they are no longer dominated by Western education.

Thus, it needs to be emphasized that the background of this study is: firstly, basically the contribution of Islamic education leaders is more ideal to be revealed when compared to the contribution of other educational figures, including education leaders who developed in the West. Secondly, Zainal Arifin

Abbas as one of the Mandailing scholars who is better known as a commentary scholar and politician, apparently contributed to Islamic education because he has written various books on Islamic religion, and contributed as an educator and to the establishment of modern Islamic educational institutions. Third, there is an initial assumption that Zainal Arifin Abbas's educational activities have relevance in the context of today's education. Based on the description above, this paper seeks to answer it by tracing the roots of his intellectual tradition in various existing literature.

Methodology

This study will reveal the intellectual tradition of the Mandailing scholar (*'ulamâ'*) in East Sumatra, namely Zainal Arifin Abbas. This study is a research of a figure¹³ that is carried out through historical methods¹⁴ and social history approaches.¹⁵ This study of Zainal Arifin Abbas's educational contribution includes his biography, intellectual adventures, his works, and his particular educational contributions.¹⁶ The procedure in this study includes four steps, starting from heuristics, source criticism, analysis or interpretation of data, and historiography.¹⁷

Results and Discussion

Life and Childhood of Zainal Arifin Abbas

Talking about Zainal Arifin Abbas without explaining the background that surrounds his life will give an incomplete image, because Zainal Arifin Abbas is a scholar who is a product of a historical journey in which various socio-political and cultural contributions shape his character and thoughts. He lives, interacts, dialogues, and follows with the era until finally playing an important role in various aspects of life such as

religious, socio-political and Islamic education. All of it was noted in his lifetime, namely the 20th century.

Zainal Arifin Abbas was born in Kampung Lalang. This village is included in the area of the Serbanyaman District, Deli Hilir, East Sumatra (now Kampung Lalang located in Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province) on March 12, 1911 to coincide with 23 Rabiul Awal 1330.¹⁸ This region was formerly part of the Deli Sultanate.¹⁹ He is a scholar who was born from the couple Muhammad Abbas and Rajiah Binti Abdullah Lubis from the Hasibuan clan, from the South Tapanuli regions.²⁰ Zainal Arifin Abbas's father and mother are descendants of Mandailing. Culturally, Mandailing tribes like to migrate outside the area for various matters, one of them is studying. Thus it is not surprising if it is found that their tribe gets a better position in the midst of society such as Islamic religion teachers, *kadis* or royal officials and those who become traders with middle to upper of wealthy categories. In fact, some people from the Mandailing tribe make a positive contribution to the development of Islam in East Sumatra.²¹

Zainal Arifin Abbas's father is a Deli Spoorweg Mastschappij (DSM) railroad employee that operating in the Sultanate of Deli, East Sumatra. In 1922, Muhammad Abbas was dismissed from *DSM* because his leading on the mass strikes of the railroad employees.²² However his dismissal did not make him discouraged. When dismissed, with third-class education from the *Sekolah Rakyat* (SR), Muhammad Abbas began to turn his attention to the world of education. He taught at the schools around his residence at the time and was also appointed as a lawyer because of his expertise in the field of law.²³

Zainal Arifin Abbas comes from the descendants of ordinary people who are religious. He is the eldest son of five siblings. His siblings named Zaitun Abbas, Siti Rafi'ah Abbas, Abdul

Hadi Abbas and Fatimah Abbas. It is known that the Islam intellectual spirit of Zainal Arifin Abbas was obtained through the tradition taught by his parents in addition embrace Islamic studies. At first Zainal Arifin Abbas had difficulty in understanding religious studies, but gradually he succeeded in mastering various scholars in the field of religion. All this depends from the support of Zainal Arifin Abbas parents and the willingness and intensity of high learning makes him able to master every lesson very well.²⁴

The Intellectual Adventure of Zainal Arifin Abbas as a Student and Teacher

Zainal Arifin Abbas's formal education began at Methodist Boy School in Binjai, precisely in 1919 when he entered the age of 7. However, he only spent a year in this school. Then he moved to Anglo Chinese School in Medan in 1920. When his parents were dismissed by DSM in 1922, Zainal Arifin Abbas's was also dismissed by the school. It is known that Zainal Arifin Abbas's school is related to the company of his father worked when his father was dismissed affected the continuity of Zainal Arifin Abbas's education.²⁵ Yet at that time Zainal Arifin Abbas had sat in fourth grade and had undergone 2 months of the year in progress.

After being dismissed from his school, Zainal Arifin Abbas continued his education the Binjai Arabiyah School with the help of his grandfather named Lebai Adam since 1924 to 1930. Although the name of institution looks like a public education institution, but this institution is known as a religious school and led by prominent scholars in Binjai, such as KH. Abdul Karim Tamim and Shaykh H. Abdul Halim Hasan.²⁶ At the Binjai Arabiyah School, Zainal Arifin Abbas studied from morning till noon. While in the afternoon until the evening, he studied at the Islamic Madrasah in Bandar Senembah Binjai under

Abdul Wahab bin Musa. After spending four (4) years, he finally obtained his Ibtida'iah Diploma from the Arabiyah School, after passing the Ibtida'iah *syahadah* exam in 1930.²⁷

Formally, Zainal Arifin Abbas only got education at the Ibtida'iah level. But informally, Zainal Arifin Abbas often visited prominent scholars in East Sumatra. He was noted intensively studying informally to Shaykh Abdul Halim Hasan, KH. Abdul Karim Tamim, and H. Muhammad Noor Ismail. To Shaykh Abdul Halim Hasan, he studied the *Bidâyah al-Mujtahid* and *al-Asybah wa al-Nazhâ'ir*. With KH. Abdul Karim Tamim, he studied the book of *Shabban al-Mulâwiy*, while with H. Muhammad Noor Ismail, Zainal Arifin Abbas studied the books of *Tafsîr al-Jawâhir* and *Itmâm al-Wafâ'*. Other teachers are Fakih Saidi Idris, H. Abdullah Umar, Shaykh H. Samah.²⁸ All of these teachers were scholars who lived during the Langkat Sultanate.²⁹ It is even known that KH. Abdul Karim Tamim is the Mufti of the Langkat Sultanate and H. Muhammad Noor Ismail is Mufti at the Langkat Hulu.³⁰

In 1931, Zainal Arifin Abbas, with the Arabiyah School teachers and the Binjai cadre, learned to Shaykh Hasan Maksum³¹ in *Halakah/Halaqah* way. Zainal Arifin Abbas studied the *Tafsîr Jalâlain*, the work of Jalâl al-Dîn al-Mahallî (d. 864/1459), and Jalâl al-Dîn al-Suyûthî (d. 911/1505), *Minhâj al-Thâlibîn* by Muhy al-Dîn al-Nawawî to chapter *Rahn*. Both books are studied every Friday start at 08.00 to 11.00 AM at the al-Mashun Grand Mosque, Medan. Then Zainal Arifin Abbas also studied the books of *Fath al-Mubîn* and *Syarh Matn al-Arba'în*, which was the work of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hajar al-Haytamî on Friday starting at 01.00 until 02.00 PM at the Masjid al-Mashun Medan. While the book *Shahîh al-Bukhârî* and the book *al-Badr al-Thali' fi Halli Jam' al-Jawâmi'* by Jalâl al-Dîn al-Mahallî are studied every

day, except Fridays from 08.00 to 11.00 AM at the Shaykh Hasan Maksum residence.³²

In addition to studying the religious sciences, Zainal Arifin Abbas also received political education, the press and journalism from his teacher named Djamaluddin Adinegoro. Informally, he also received English lesson from Mr. Ridwan at Binjai.³³ When viewed from Zainal Arifin Abbas's intellectual escapade, he is not only mastered science in the religious dimension, but also proficient in the dimensions of common sciences. This shows that he considers that the common sciences are as important as religious sciences. In the course of his life, Zainal Arifin Abbas has presented himself as a Muslim scientist who has strong faith and motivation in the development of science. He is a figure who is wanted to know for knowledge, his passion is reading, so that when he traveled from Medan to Binjai to get the school, on the train he kept reading books. Reading the Qur'an is a charity that he never left. This shows that he is a Muslim intellectual figure who is nationalist and religious.³⁴ His scholars are reflected in the journey of life and his work, as well as its influence on society at that time. Because he is a figure who contributes a lot of ideas and offers solutions in the problems of the surrounding community so that it becomes an oasis in the midst of the community.

Zainal Arifin Abbas's Career: From Politics to Academics

Zainal Arifin Abbas was known as a freedom fighter and powerful politician of his time. It was noted that he was a member of the BOMPA during the Japanese colonization in 1943. As an independence fighter, Zainal Arifin Abbas was the first raiser Indonesian flag in Binjai city with Shaykh Abdul Halim Hasan, Abdurrahim Haitami and several others. The

first raising of the Indonesian flag was carried out at the intersection of Kebun Lada Binjai, Perintis Kemerdekaan road to be precise. The flag rising was carried out by Djamaluddin Adinegoro via telegram and AR. Sutan Mansyur from Bukit Tinggi. This historic event took place solemnly during the day, at 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM.³⁵

He was also involved in various organizations of freedom fighters, such as: Deputy Commander of the IX Division of Hezbollah Armed Forces in East Sumatra with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1945. He was also the general chairman of the Battalion KM 20 Front Medan Area and Medan West at Area covering Sei Sikambing-Sunggal-Kampung Lalang from November 28, 1945 to July 21, 1947, and became the commander of the retaliatory command in the battle of December 28, 1946 against Dutch troops on the West Medan Front covering the Sei Sikambing-Padang Bulan-Medan-Binjai railroad. This attack took place between 05:00 pm and 07:00 pm.³⁶

Zainal Arifin Abbas was the deputy commander of the IX Division of the Hezbollah armed forces of the Sumatra Commander of the Langsa region, East Aceh during the independence wars on July 21, 1947 and December 19, 1948. He also served as a staff of the Aceh, Langkat and Tanah Karo Military Governors with the rank of Major in 1947 and Kutaraja in 1950, and since 5 November 1949 he resigned from the Sumatran commando. After quitting the TNI he became the head of the broadcasting/information department at the North Sumatra Governor's office based in Kutaraja, Aceh.³⁷

Zainal Arifin Abbas's career is not only in the military, but he is also the leader of political parties and Islamic organizations. In the political field, Zainal Arifin Abbas was deputy chairman of the Masyumi Party in Kutaraja, Aceh in 1948, deputy chairman II of the Masyumi Party in North Sumatra, in Medan in 1952,

and general chairman of the Masyumi Party of North Sumatra in Medan from 1957 to 1958. In 1971, Zainal Arifin Abbas became general chairman of the North Sumatra Indonesian Muslim Party (PARMUSI) and chair of the North Sumatra United Development Party (PPP) in 1977. He was also a member of the North Sumatra DPRD from PPP with member number 4/DPRD -SU/1978 and became a member of the MPR-RI regional envoy with No.B-674 1977-1979. At that time PPP won 7 seats represented by Zainal Arifin Abbas, Hasan Basry Batubara, Raswief Thaata, M. Kamaluddin Lubis, Dja'far Nasution, Ahmad Fuad Said, and Djalaluddin Noor.³⁸

In the field of Islamic organization, it was noted that Zainal Arifin Abbas was incorporated in the organization where intellectuals and scholars gathered in Medan, namely the Ikhwan al-Shafa in 1936. This organization was often equated with ICMI today.³⁹ He was also on the committee for the establishment of the Perguruan Taman Siswa Binjai in 1936, became a board of the Higher Islamic Council (MIT) in Binjai in 1943. He was also active as an administrator of the al-Jihad Mosque Foundation on Medan Baru, even as the chairman of BKM al-Jihad Mosque in Medan Baru, Jalan Abdullah Lubis, Medan in 1960. The famous one is that he was the head of the PB Al-Ittihadiyah Islamic community organization center which was based in Medan in 1960-1962, and was a member of the Advisory of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), and an advisor MUI in North Sumatra Province in 1975-1977.⁴⁰

From the description above, it shows that Zainal Arifin Abbas is involved in various aspects of the background and organization of both socio-political and Islamic organizations. This reflects that Zainal Arifin Abbas has the ability to explore or develop himself. It means that Zainal Arifin Abbas is actively able to develop himself into a charismatic, reliable organization.

Dawam Rahardjo revealed that Zainal Arifin Abbas was comparable to big figures such as H. Munawar Cholil, Hasbi As-Shiddieqy, Buya Hamka, Ahmad Hasan or Abu Bakar Aceh. Furthermore, Dawam revealed that the thought development of the figures was seen from the education undertaken by the figures, some started from the public track, and then the *madrassa* or *pesantren* even continued their education to foreign countries such as the Middle East or Europe.⁴¹

Zainal Arifin Abbas not only had a career in the socio-political aspect, but he also had a brilliant career in the educational aspect. His career in the educational aspect began with his appointment as an teacher assistant at the Binjai Arabiyah School in 1930. A decree assigning him was issued by the Syar'iyah Binjai Court headed by KH. Abdul Karim Tamim.⁴² At the Binjai Arabiyah School, he was assigned as a teacher of religion and science. In 1931, Zainal Arifin Abbas obtained a diploma then taught *nahw*, *sharf*, and jurisprudence from Shaykh Hasan Maksum.⁴³ This diploma at the same time completes capacity and makes it a capable figure of the knowledge. Note at that time, obtaining a diploma from a Shaykh was not an easy matter, because it was rare for students to obtain a diploma from a respected scholar. Granting this diploma is based on a direct assessment of Shaykh Hasan Maksum as a teacher and is considered an excellent achievement.

While teaching at the Binjai Arabiyah School, Zainal Arifin Abbas was appointed as the leader of the Madrasah Arabiyah School in Kampung Lalang, Medan, 1939-1940 before it, Madrasah Arabiyah School Kampung Lalang was founded on March 1931. This madrasa was built on the proposals of the community who feel that Islamic education is important for their children. Standing on the *waqf* land of Zainal Arifin Abbas's parents, namely Muhammad Abbas, the construction of this madrasa

building began in 1936 with the contribution of Datuk Muhammad Hasan, a Serbanyaman vizier, Sunggal. The madrasa building committee was chaired by Datuk Ahmad, prosecutor of Kerapatan Sunggal. The community and elements of government included in the committee structure was the head of Lalang Village named Mohammad Loewi, a Datuk van Sunggal and Muhammad Nur Arsyad, and the head of the Sunggal Volkschool named Muhammad Yunus.⁴⁴

The majority of the teaching staff of this *madrasa* is alumni of the Binjai Arabiyah School. Therefore, it is not surprising that the education system is applied in learning oriented towards the Arabiyah School system. The learning process in this madrasa takes only place in the afternoon. The number of students is around 60 people. Among the teachers who teach at this madrasa are Zainal Arifin Abbas and Ibrahim Nurdin. It is a proud achievement that Zainal Arifin Abbas has initiated the founding of the El Hidayah Education. This madrasa was officially launched by the Serbanyaman, Sunggal, namely Raja Tengku Hasan. At the appointment, the majority of invitations came from the Binjai Arabiyah School, such as Shaykh Abdul Halim Hasan, Abdur Rahim Haitami, and KH. Abdul Karim Tamim, the leader of the Binjai Madrasah Arabiyah School.⁴⁵

Zainal Arifin Abbas's career in education continued, it was happen in 1948-1950, as a teacher at the Modern Islamic School, Langsa. He did it along with his involvement in 'resistance' DI/TII. His interrelation with Daud Beureueh, made him as a trustee of Nanggroe in Aceh. Therefore, he was willing to join the DI/TII troops who lived in the jungle.⁴⁶ Then in 1962, he was appointed as the Dean of the Sharia Faculty of UISU after previously serving as a lecturer at the university, and had been the UISU's Vice Chancellor from 1970-1974. The pinnacle of his academic career was when he served as Chancellor of the Al-

Ittihadiyah Islamic Institute in 1970 to 1979 and became an educator at the North Sumatra State Islamic Institute (IAIN) with the rank of Head of the Academic Associate in the *'Ulûm al-Qur'ân* course in 1975 until death.⁴⁷

In fact, Zainal Arifin Abbas is not only skilled in the socio-political, religious and educational fields, but he is also proficient in entrepreneurship. It was noted that he had opened Luhur printing the largest trade business in Medan at that time. This Trade Business coordinates other publishers, such as the printing Kaproko Company, Indonesia, Madju, and Kumango that have published scholar's books in North Sumatra. This printing shop is located on Sutomo street, Medan. He pioneered this trading business with Usman Pelly who later also was a Professor in the Anthropology of State University of Medan. But in fact it should be noted that this printing press belonged to the Masyumi Party, which was personally named at the Ummat foundation and Abdul Hakim who was the Governor of North Sumatra in 1967. This trading business was inspired by Zainal Arifin Abbas's ability in the field of advertising after previously serving as editorial staff publishing the monthly of Islamic magazine "Menara" in Langsa, East Aceh in 1948-1950.⁴⁸

If explored in depth, historical facts will be found that in fact Zainal Arifin Abbas is not only a capable figure of warriors in the religious, socio-political and economic fields. But he is also capable and has an important role in the education system in East Sumatra. Through the ideas he expressed, he managed to become an educator from the Ibtida'iyah level up to college, and even became a leader in Islamic tertiary institutions. Thus, the career that Zainal Arifin Abbas went through illustrates that he is able to align the intensity of religious science with modern science.

Monumental Work of Zainal Arifin Abbas

As a scientist and scholar, his works cover several themes although the majority is on Islamic studies. In this section, the works of Zainal Arifin Abbas will be revealed in the form of books and articles in well-known Islamic magazines at that time.

First is *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Karim*.⁴⁹ This work is the most monumental of Zainal Arifin Abbas. Written with his teacher, Shaykh Abdul Halim Hasan and his colleague, Abdurrahim Haitami, this book discusses the interpretation of the Qur'an. This book is known as *Tafsir Ulama Tiga Serangkai*. This book has not been finished writing due to several factors, namely experiencing difficulties arising from lack of paper, World War II, and fear that the printing press was seized by the invaders so that the interpretation by these three scholars was stopped at the seventh chapter of al-An'âm verses 38-39. In addition, another factor causing the interruption of interpretation of the triads is their respective confusion in the publication of other books and the involvement of the three in various Islamic and social organizations in fighting for Indonesian independence. Initially, 20 manuscripts were published in the form of magazines published once a month. This publication began on April 1937. After reaching 12 publications—equal to 240 pages—the publication was doubled two times a month, and this condition continued until 1941. Volume 1 of this book was reprinted 6 times since 1937 until 1941. It was also printed in Jawi language for use by Malaysians. This book was published in 1383/1963 as a whole volume by Firma Islamiyah, Medan.⁵⁰ This commentary book contains the motivation of the resurrection of the people to fight the invaders. The specialty of this book lies in the ability to interpret verses that are qualified and different from others on that era. A few people praised for this great work ranging

from local to national scholars. This interpretation is even the subject of a doctoral dissertation study from al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. It is no exaggeration that, according to Abdul Qodir, the interpretation of the triad is the best interpretation of Indonesian scholars, surpassing Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* and that of Hasbi al-Shiddiqy.⁵¹ But this certainly needs to a further comparative study.

Second is *Ilmu Tasawuf*.⁵² This book was first printed in Indonesia in 1979, the second printing was in 1984 and the third was in 1988. Previously, this book was printed in Malaysia in 1974, 1975, 1977 and 1979 that published by Pustaka Amani Press. At first this book was printed in Jawi Arabic language then later printed in Latin/Malay. In the preface it is stated that this work is aimed at the community, not only the Indonesia people, but also the Malaysia people.

Third is *Perkembangan Fikiran Terhadap Agama*.⁵³ This book was written in 1956 and consists of two volumes. This book tends to study philosophy because the references used are books by Muslim philosophers or Western philosophers of the 2500 BC era. The main ideas on this book are related to the development of thought towards the religion of the 2500 BC era until the time of the book was written. In general, the study in this book leads to the comparison of religion, philosophy, cultural history, and issues related to the development of religious thought. This book is distributed throughout Indonesia, especially Islamic religious colleges. In fact, this book becomes a compulsory book in the history course of Islamic thought and becomes a mandatory reference on a national scale for PGA (*Pendidikan Guru Agama*) students.

Fourth is *Peri Hidup Muhammad Rasulullah saw*.⁵⁴ This work can be regarded as a masterpiece of Zainal Arifin Abbas. This book was printed for the first time in 1950, then the

second in 1951. Sequentially, this book was printed for the third time in 1955, 1960, 1965, until the sixth in 1966. The title of this book is the Indonesian version, while the publication in Malaysian version titled *Sejarah Perjuangan Rasulullah saw.* In the Malaysian version, it was printed in 1968 and 1982. This book was written in 20 years of his life. The changes of the title in the Malaysian version also have implications for the contents and spelling. This book consists of 10 (ten) volumes with varying thicknesses. Each reprinted then the book has significantly increased the number of pages due to the addition of reference sources. This book contains about the birth history of the Prophet, and then his death examined the events before the time of being the Prophet, such as the history of Mecca in the time of the Prophet Ismail as., Jurhum era, Qathura era, as well as the birth and death history of the Apostle as quoted by historians and scribes. Buya Hamka even said that the work of Zainal Arifin Abbas was able to complete the work of ‘Abbâs Maḥmûd al-‘Aqqâd and famous writer Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal.⁵⁵

Fifth is *Kitabus Shalat*.⁵⁶ This book consists of 673 pages and was first printed in 1962. This book consists of 6 Chapters, namely: the meaning of prayer, the prayer times, the *makruh* times in prayer, azan according to Imam al-Rafi‘î, and the terms of prayer. In the introduction, he explained briefly the life history of Imam al-Shâfi‘i and Shâfi‘i scholars. Furthermore, the preamble of this book contains about the introduction of the Shâfi‘i school of thought, conveying the opinions of other Islamic school scholars about prayer, and providing explanations for holding to the school. Then this book is not the result of pure thoughts of Zainal Arifin Abbas, but the results of excerpts from the book of *al-Muhadzdzab* by al-Imâm Abî Ishâq al-Syîrâzî (w. 476/1083), *al-Majmû‘ Syarḥ al-Muhadzdzab* by al-Imâm al-Ḥâfîzh al-Fâriq Abî Zakariyâ’ Yahya Muḥy al-Dîn ibn

Syaraf al-Nawawî (d. 676/1277), *Fath al-‘Azîz Syarh al-Wajîz* by al-Imâm Abî al-Qasam ‘Abd al-Karîm al-Rafi‘î (w. 623/1226), *al-Talkhis al-Habir* by al-Imâm al-Hâfîzh Ahmad ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalânî (w. 802/1448), and the book *Tahdzib al-Asmâ wa al-Lughah* by al-Lajah Imâm al-Hâfîzh al-Fâriq Abî Zakariyâ’ Yahya Muhy al-Dîn ibn Syaraf al-Nawawî (d. 676/1277).

Sixth is *Kaifiyat Sembahyang*.⁵⁷ This book contains procedures for purification and procedures for praying from beginning to end. This book is different from the previous book because this book only provides an explanation of the procedure of prayer without reference to the proposition and only follows the Shâfi‘i school. This book not only discusses the issue of the procedure of performing the five daily prayers, but also discusses Friday prayers, corpse prayer, rawatib prayer, duha prayer, ‘id prayer, and tahajud prayer. This work was first published by Firma Rahmat Medan in 1964.

Seventh is *Sejarah Puasa dan Hikmahnya*.⁵⁸ The first printing of this book was in 1962 and was published by publisher Firma Rahmat Medan. This book contains the problems of fasting, such as the history of fasting in the past, the history of fasting in the celestial book, the wisdom of fasting and the procedures for implementing fasting. The explanation of fasting begins with the elaboration and interpretation of al-Baqarah verse 183. In addition of the Qur’an and Hadith basics, Zainal Arifin Abbas also explores this work by reinforcing the opinions of philosophers and health experts. The conclusion of this book is that fasting which is prescribed in Islam is fasting which has the best and most perfect value in its implementation. The sources of this book’s references are the opinions of ‘Abbâs Maḥmûd ‘Aqqâd, Muḥammad Fârid Wajdi, and Shaykh Musthafa al-Marâghî in *Tafsîr al-Marâghî*.

Eighth is *Buku Pelajaran Agama Islam*.⁵⁹ This book is written to be used as teaching material for junior and senior high school students. This book contains explanations of faith and monotheism, worship, morals, tarikh of Islam, the Qur'an, and Hadith. This book has an easy-to-digest language style for junior and senior high school children. However, Steenbrink criticizes this book by calling it an incomplete and confusing book that not only presents material in chaos and without internal consistency, but more than it that it often errors in its analysis. But further, according to Steenbrink that this book is the only book on the topic available at the time and with the decision of the Ministry of Religion then this text book was printed twice.⁶⁰

Ninth is *Terjemahan Tarikh Tasyrî' al-Islamy*. The original title of this book is *Târîkh Tasyrî' al-Islâmy* by M. Chudary Bey. Zainal Arifin Abbas translated this book into Indonesian in two years from 1938 to 1939. It was published by Maktabah Muhammad Ali ibn Muhammad al-Rawi Penang, Malaysia. After being translated, the thick of this book is being 500 pages.

In addition to the books above, Zainal Arifin Abbas also actively writes in several media, such as *Menara*, *Panji Islam*, *Pedoman Masyarakat* and *Pewartu Deli*. The first media was Langsa's publication and other was Medan's publication. The latest media, *Pewartu Deli*, is a media led directly by Djamaluddin Adinegoro, teacher and mentor Zainal Arifin Abbas in politics, the press and journalism.

Zainal Arifin Abbas: Reflection on Intellectuality

Zainal Arifin Abbas's biography clearly shows that he was a very active figure and intensely involved in various aspects of

history that gave attention to him. It will be elaborated again some of the most important points of ideas and it is a reflection of his intellect in order to reinforce individual capacity, degree of character, role quality, and relevance of his contribution to history.

In the intellectual and educational sphere, Zainal Arifin Abbas's ideas and contributions which are very relevant can be seen in seven entry points as a form of intellectual reflection which he has done very impressively, as follows:

1. The Passion for Science

The intellectual biography of Zainal Arifin Abbas can be seen that he is a figure who is very diligent and serious in learning. This can be proven by the time span that he went through in his education, which began in 1919 to 1934. Obviously this is not a short time. He studied in the morning, noon, even at evening. His diverse abilities show that he obtained various scientific fields not only from one teacher, but from many teachers.⁶¹

If interpreted the relation to Zainal Arifin Abbas did in the past, he really wanted to show the next generation that the spirit in studying is a necessity. He lived in an era that witnessed an extraordinary dynamic of religious thought. As a child of that era, he has played an important role as an exemplary figure that is always passionate about studying. In fact, a few people give praise to him because of his tenacity and sincerity in studying. Praise in addition to its shortcomings has built a construction of Islamic education; in this case the spirit he has done has burst and become '*ibrah* not only in Indonesia, but to the neighboring country.

2. The Classification of Sciences

As a religious and scientific teacher at the Binjai Arabiyah School, it shows that Zainal Arifin Abbas is a person who has never dichotomized science. Similar to his teacher, Shaykh Abdul Halim Hasan, Zainal Arifin Abbas also assumed that knowledge originated from God Almighty, therefore to build a nation that is civilized requires knowledge. In this case not only religious knowledge, but also must study general sciences.⁶² Despite the fact that the percentage of Zainal Arifin Abbas is more inclined to the religious sciences as written in many works. At least, his study of the press sciences, journalism, and politics until English language has shown that he is not anti-general sciences.

3. Respect for Teacher

Honoring the teachers is necessity that must be done for someone who is learner for knowledge. Zainal Arifin Abbas often quoted Imam al-Nawâwî's opinion in *al-Majmû' Syarh al-Muhadzdzab* that a learner of knowledge on various occasions must glorify his teacher. One form of glorifying the teacher is as the saying "bucket comes to the well" (learner come to the teacher), he applied in his life that a student should come to the teacher and then the student learns seriously about what is conveyed by the teacher. Likewise, Zainal Arifin Abbas, from morning, afternoon to evening, he went to the teacher in turns only to study. This is what underlies that he is a figure who always glorifies his teacher. Perhaps it is not excessive if in this level called *rihlah 'ilmîyah*, which is walking to visit a place to study.⁶³ In this context, although it is still in the same region, namely East Sumatra, visiting teachers is a form of honored by Zainal Arifin Abbas's sincerity in studying, besides this is a form of dynamism and cosmopolitanism of a scientist.

4. Writing and Publishing Books

Zainal Arifin Abbas is a prolific writer, and this reinforces his capacity as a great intellectual. From several sources obtained no less than at least ten titles of volumes he has written. In several literatures it is explained that he was a person who always actively wrote down his ideas and was happy to publish his views in various media that existed at that time. For someone who lives in a time of serious turmoil and is full of struggle activities, the list of works as revealed above shows that he is a person who has high productivity. In addition, the titles of these works indicate considerable attention in their scope and are responsive to the development of diversity in their day. In other words, he is a person who is sensitive to a series of direct experiences and real needs that he experiences in his society.

To disseminate his ideas and thoughts, Zainal Arifin Abbas created a joint printing with his friend Tengku Burhanuddin named Firma Rahmat since 1975.⁶⁴ This printing was a medium to disseminate the works and ideas of his thoughts to the public. In the context of today's education, he has indeed made an innovation in education that aims to disseminate education.

5. The Wisdom Educators

Zainal Arifin Abbas is a wise educator. He is not only teaches in formal institutions, but also in non-formal institutions. In formal institutions, he actively teaches at Binjai Arabiyah School, Kampung Lalang Arabiyah School, Sharia Faculty of UISU Medan, Al-Ittihadiyah Islamic Institute, and Sharia Faculty of IAIN North Sumatra. While in non-formal institutions he actively fills recitation in the *majelis taklim* scattered in East Sumatra.⁶⁵ How large the number of teaching activities he undertakes, actually shows that he is a figure of educators who are always

waiting for his presence in the midst of his students. In the writer opinion, this education section seems to be the most important part of the historical contribution of Zainal Arifin Abbas. The role carried out by Zainal Arifin Abbas in this field includes a direct role as a teacher and manager of an educational institution that he endeavors throughout his life, as well as his role in formal-organizational. As an educator, the success of his students who spread in various directions is an indisputable witness of the wisdom, sincerity, greatness and strength of his teachings.

Even at the organizational level, Zainal Arifin Abbas can be said to be a very important figure. The Binjai Arabiyah School (1922) which later metamorphosed into the al-Ishlahiyah Binjai Islamic College and included the establishment committee of UISU Medan (1952) was a place for his dedication which clearly had contributed greatly to the development of Islamic education in this country. The record in 1940s, Arabiyah School students numbered about 100 people.⁶⁶ Even UISU Medan experienced progress in various fields when it was led by Zainal Arifin Abbas. This is because in addition to UISU Medan located in the center of Medan, it is also the only Islamic education institution for tertiary level in North Sumatra at that time. In the early 1970s there were other Islamic tertiary institutions, including the State Islamic institutions of North Sumatra (IAIN).

6. Urgency of Worship Education

Zainal Arifin Abbas is a scholar who has a great interest in religious education. Zainal Arifin Abbas's work is recorded in the topic of religious education studies, namely the *Kitabus Salat, Kaifiyat Sembahyang*, and *Puasa dan Hikmahnya*. Zainal Arifin Abbas in his works has a great quantification and attention in the introduction of *mahdhah* worship education to the community.

Through the books he wrote, he showed the religious education has a very significant urgency as a rule of people's lives. Therefore, it is very natural when we say that Zainal Arifin Abbas is an Islamic thinker who is concerned in the field of worship education.

7. Initiating the Establishment of Modern Madrasa

Zainal Arifin Abbas's activity in the field of education also gave birth to his ideas in establishing a modern madrasa in Kampung Lalang, Medan. Inspired by his teacher and supported by his parents, Muhammad Abbas, he founded a madrasa with a modern education system called Madrasah el-Arabiyah or Arabiyah School Kampung Lalang Medan. This naming is exactly the same as the educational institution where he taught at Binjai.⁶⁷ This step was taken as a form of modernization in Islamic educational institutions. The purpose of establishment this madrasa is a madrasa able to adjust the conditions and developments of the times. The Community around it gets new hope with the establishment of this madrasa. The naming this madrasa is an integration of Arabic and English simultaneously. In addition to naming, the education system that is run classified as modern with a religious and general curriculum, a classical system, a variety of methods, competent educators, heterogeneous students, self-funding by the community and donors, as well as a modern evaluation system.

Conclusion

Based on the description above, this study concludes that Zainal Arifin Abbas is a charismatic Mandailing scholar who succeeded in initiating a dynamic academic atmosphere in East Sumatra. He succeeded in building a scientific tradition by establishing a madrasa as a form of attention for Kampung

Lalang people in Medan. He has a number of students scattered in various directions and dedicates it to the benefit of religion, nation and state. Zainal Arifin Abbas is also an independence fighter who on various occasions became warlords of the Indonesian independence struggle in East Sumatra. The accumulation of roles and contributions made in various contexts and moments has made him worthy of being a national hero, whether people want to admit it or not.

Zainal Arifin Abbas is a charismatic Mandailing scholar who not only dedicates himself in the academic aspect, but also in the organizational aspect. He was recorded active in various religious organizations, socio-political, to education. Not all scholars are able to play all roles like him. Therefore, he has an extraordinary ability as an educator, organizational, to become the leader of political parties and legislators.

Zainal Arifin Abbas has bright ideas and contributes to the world of education. Through his works that are spread in the Islamic field, especially in the disciplines of interpretation, jurisprudence and education, as well as he has given an example that build up to a number of important historical-intellectual intellectual reflections such as exemplary in the spirit of seeking knowledge, the idea of the classification of science, writing and publishing books, wise educators, the urgency of religious education, and the idea of the establishment of a modern madrasa.

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³³ Dewan Harian Cabang Angkatan 45, *Catatan Pelaku Sejarah*, p. 10.

³⁴ Yakub, "Sejarah Sosial Intelektual Islam Zainal Arifin Abbas," p. 99.

³⁵ Dewan Harian Cabang Angkatan 45, *Catatan Pelaku Sejarah*, p. 12.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12. See also, Ja'far Ja'far, "Pemikiran Politik Islamisme Moderat Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah," in *al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Filsafat*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2019.

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⁴⁴ Muaz Tanjung, "Some Islamic Education Institutions in Deli Kingdom in 1912-1942, Medan, Indonesia," in *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Vol. 22, Issue 8, August. 2017, p. 68.

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⁴⁶ Jamil and Ja'far, "Pemimpin Perempuan dan Non-Muslim Perspektif Ulama Tiga Serangkai," p. 152.

⁴⁷ Dewan Harian Cabang Angkatan 45, *Catatan Pelaku Sejarah*, p. 12.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁹ Abdul Halim Hasan, et al., *Tafsir al-Qur'anul Karim*, Vol. I-VI (Medan: Firma Islamiyah, 1963).

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