

Karamat as Religious Legitimation: Ulama Authority in the Manuscript Sejarah Syekh Abdurrauf and Syekh Burhanuddin

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Article History: Submitted 25/05/2026; Revised 10/06/2026; Accepted 30/06/2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v15i1.888>

Abstract

This study examines the manuscript *Sejarah Syekh Abdurrauf and Syekh Burhanuddin, Dua Orang Pembangun Islam di Aceh dan Minangkabau*, focusing on *karamatas* a mechanism for constructing *ulama* authority. It employs a qualitative descriptive method integrating philological and critical hagiographical approaches, supported by the theoretical frameworks of charismatic authority and symbolic capital. The findings reveal three interrelated dimensions of authority construction: intellectual and legal authority, built through *sanad*, *fatwa*, *rihlah*, and the Haramain–Aceh–Minangkabau scholarly network; spiritual and charismatic authority, constructed through *kashf*, *adab*, *khidmah*, the teacher's mandate, and extraordinary events; and social and institutional authority, represented through royal acknowledgment in Aceh and acceptance by customary elites within the Minangkabau *nagari* system. The analytical contribution of the manuscript lies in its representation of the transmission of authority from Sheikh Abdurrauf to Sheikh Burhanuddin across two distinct political and cultural settings, integrating these three dimensions within a single textual structure *Karamat* thus functions not merely as a collection of miraculous narratives, but as a textual mechanism that connects transregional scholarship, Sufi discipline, and institutional recognition within a specific Aceh–Minangkabau model of *ulama* authority.

Keywords: *Islamic manuscript; karamat; Sheikh Abdurrauf; Sheikh Burhanuddin*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji naskah *Sejarah Syekh Abdurrauf dan Syekh Burhanuddin, Dua Orang Pembangun Islam di Aceh dan Minangkabau*, dengan fokus pada *karamat* sebagai mekanisme pembentukan otoritas *ulama*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan filologi dan hagiografi kritis, serta kerangka otoritas karismatik dan modal simbolik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga dimensi yang saling berkaitan. Pertama, *sanad*, *fatwa*, *rihlah*, dan jaringan Haramain–Aceh–Minangkabau membentuk otoritas intelektual dan hukum. Kedua, *kashf*, *adab*, *khidmah*, mandat guru, dan peristiwa luar biasa membentuk otoritas spiritual dan karismatik. Ketiga, naskah menampilkan dua bentuk pengakuan institusional, yaitu pengakuan kerajaan di Aceh dan penerimaan elite adat dalam tatanan nagari Minangkabau. Kekhasan naskah ini terletak pada penggambaran transmisi otoritas dari Syekh Abdurrauf kepada Syekh Burhanuddin melalui dua lingkungan politik dan budaya yang berbeda. Dengan demikian, *karamat* berfungsi sebagai

mekanisme tekstual yang menghubungkan keilmuan transregional, disiplin sufistik, otoritas kerajaan, dan pengakuan adat dalam model otoritas *ulama* Aceh–Minangkabau.

Kata Kunci: *Naskah Islam; Karomah; Sheikh Abdurrauf; Sheikh Burhanuddin*

Introduction

The authority of *ulama* in Aceh and Minangkabau was shaped not only by mastery of religious knowledge but also by scholarly networks, spiritual genealogy, and narratives of sainthood and *karamat*. Both regions occupied central positions within transregional networks connecting the Haramain with Sumatra, particularly through the transmission of *Syattariyah* teachings and the development of *dayah* and *surau* traditions (Bradley, 2014; Bruinessen, 1994). Within these settings, *Karamat* narratives positioned *ulama* as figures of intellectual, spiritual, and social authority, while pilgrimage traditions and collective memory sustained their religious significance within local communities (Hidayat, 2023a). This relationship between scholarly transmission, spiritual distinction, and social recognition provides the immediate context for examining the authority of Sheikh Abdurrauf and Sheikh Burhanuddin.

Existing scholarship on Islam Nusantara has examined these figures through several distinct but largely separate concerns. Studies of Sheikh Abdurrauf have primarily emphasized his intellectual works, legal authority, and transregional connections with the Haramain, including his contributions to Qur'anic exegesis and the *Syattariyah* order (Azra, 2004; Riddell, 2001; Fathurahman, 2008). Research on Sheikh Burhanuddin, by contrast, has concentrated on *surau* traditions, Basapa pilgrimage practices, and the spread of tarekat networks in West Sumatra (Hidayat, 2023b). More broadly, scholarship on religious institutions such as *surau* and *dayah* has shown that these spaces reproduce symbolic authority and communal legitimacy beyond their educational functions (Ricci, 2011; Bruinessen, 1994). Yet across these bodies of work, *karamatis* consistently treated as a complementary element within Sufi biography or hagiographical narrative, rather than as a central mechanism of authority formation (Howell, 2001).

This analytical separation has left a significant gap. Previous scholarship has not sufficiently explained how a single manuscript can narratively connect scholarly transmission, spiritual distinction, and institutional recognition within a continuous genealogy of authority linking two *ulama* across distinct political and cultural settings. Few studies have examined the manuscript *Sejarah Syekh Abdurrauf and Syekh Burhanuddin, Dua Orang Pembangun Islam di Aceh dan Minangkabau* (hereafter SSSB) as a primary textual source for this purpose. Noranda et al. (2024) provided an important transliteration, but the relationship between its hagiographical narratives and the formation of religious authority remains insufficiently analyzed. This article addresses three

questions arising from that gap: (1) How does the SSSB manuscript construct the scholarly authority of Sheikh Abdurrauf and Sheikh Burhanuddin through *sanad*, *fatwa*, *riḥlah*, and transregional *ulama* networks? (2) How do its *Karamat* narratives construct their spiritual and charismatic authority? (3) How does the manuscript represent the social and institutional recognition of that authority within Aceh–Minangkabau religious culture?

This article argues that *Karamat* in the SSSB manuscript serves as a symbolic mechanism linking intellectual transmission, Sufi discipline, and social recognition in the construction of *ulama* authority. The manuscript presents a specific Aceh–Minangkabau model structured across three interrelated dimensions: *sanad*, *fatwa*, *riḥlah*, and scholarly networks establish intellectual authority; *adab*, *khidmah*, *kashf*, and miraculous events construct spiritual and charismatic authority; and royal acknowledgment, customary elites, and religious institutions represent its social recognition. Through this integrated textual structure, *Karamat* functions as a form of symbolic capital that positions the *ulama* as moral, spiritual, and cultural authorities and as the mechanism by which a coherent genealogy of authority is transmitted from Sheikh Abdurrauf to Sheikh Burhanuddin across the Aceh–Minangkabau world. Communal and institutional reception is examined only insofar as it is represented in the manuscript or documented in relevant secondary sources.

Literature Review

***Karamat*, Sainthood, and Hagiographical Tradition**

Within the tradition of Sufism, *Karamat* occupies a central position in the construction of Islamic sainthood. In classical Islamic thought, it is understood as an extraordinary event granted by Allah to *awliyā'* as a sign of spiritual proximity and divine favor (Schimmel, 1975; Ernst, 1997). Within broader socio-cultural contexts, however, *karamat functions* as a symbolic representation of moral authority, spiritual legitimacy, and communal recognition, operating at the intersection of theology, social power, and collective memory (Hidayat, 2023a; Howell, 2012). Abdul Karim (2017) demonstrates that *karamat* narratives in Sufi traditions foreground ascetic discipline, obedience, piety, and devotion, thereby positioning the *wali* as an ideal religious figure. In this sense, *karamat* is inseparable from the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Islamic authority more broadly (Alatas, 2023; Knysh, 2000).

From a hagiographical perspective, Peter Brown (1981) argues that sainthood narratives function as literary and social constructions that organize memory, ritual, and legitimacy within religious communities, rather than as straightforward historical accounts of miraculous events. This insight is directly relevant to the present study: rather than evaluating the historicity of *Karamat* episodes in the SSSB manuscript, the analysis treats them as textual strategies through which the manuscript

organizes collective memory and constructs the authority of Sheikh Abdurrauf and Sheikh Burhanuddin. Assmann (2011) further demonstrates that hagiographical texts shape perceptions of holiness through symbolic narratives that are continuously reproduced by followers across generations. In the Indonesian context, Christomy (2008) shows that narratives surrounding *wali* (saints) and sacred sites function as dynamic cultural texts mediating between spirituality, identity, and local authority structures, a pattern that Fathurahman (2019) connects to the broader reproduction of Sufi legitimacy across the Malay-Indonesian world. Taken together, these perspectives establish that *karamat* narratives operate within processes of social recognition and symbolic power, providing the hagiographical framework within which the SSSB manuscript is analyzed.

Charismatic Authority and Symbolic Capital

Max Weber's concept of charismatic authority provides the primary framework for examining how the SSSB manuscript attributes exceptional religious qualities to the two *ulama*. Charisma, in Weber's formulation, is an authority grounded in the recognition of extraordinary qualities that distinguish a religious figure from ordinary social actors (Weber, 1978: 241–242). In this study, the concept is operationalized through specific narrative markers in the manuscript: *kashf*, the opening of the *hijāb*, extraordinary journeys, miraculous events, and obedience and service to the teacher represent spiritual distinction, while royal acknowledgment, engagement with customary elites, and the represented acceptance of religious teaching indicate how that distinction acquires social recognition. Weber's framework is therefore applied not to classify the two *ulama* as charismatic figures in a typological sense, but to analyze how the manuscript narratively transforms scholarly credentials, Sufi discipline, and *karamat* into a legitimate basis for religious obedience and leadership (Howell, 2012).

Weber's framework, however, accounts for the recognition of charismatic qualities without fully explaining how that recognition accumulates as durable social power. Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic capital addresses this complementary dimension. Where Weber illuminates the moment of charismatic recognition, Bourdieu explains the structural conditions under which such recognition is converted into authority that persists across institutions, texts, and generations. According to Bourdieu, religious authority is produced through the social acknowledgment of symbolic legitimacy, and practices such as pilgrimage, genealogical transmission, ritual commemoration, and honorific titles function as symbolic resources that reproduce the authority of religious actors within society (Hidayat, 2023a). Within this framework, *karamat* operates as symbolic capital that transforms spiritual distinction into socially recognized power, its effectiveness depending on validation by established institutions and authoritative actors (Bourdieu, 1991). This perspective is particularly relevant to understanding how *ulama* authority in Aceh and Minangkabau

has been reproduced through surau networks, tarekat traditions, and collective memory across generations (Fathurahman, 2008; Azra, 2004).

Reception, Collective Memory, and Religious Authority

Reception theory provides the methodological complement to the Weberian and Bourdieuan frameworks by explaining how religious texts acquire different meanings across changing socio-historical contexts. Hans Robert Jauss (1982) introduces the concept of the "horizon of expectation," arguing that readers interpret texts according to the cultural values, historical experiences, and communal assumptions prevailing within their societies (Kryeziu, 2022: 394). Wolfgang Iser (1978) extends this by demonstrating that readers actively participate in producing textual meaning through processes of interpretation and concretization, such that no text carries a single fixed significance. Applied to religious literature, this framework allows hagiographical narratives concerning saints, *ulama*, and karamat to be understood as dynamic cultural texts whose meanings are continuously negotiated by communities over time, rather than as stable historical records.

In this study, reception theory serves a specific and bounded function. It is not employed to reconstruct the full history of how communities have read the SSSB manuscript, but rather to interpret how the manuscript itself represents the reception of the two *ulama*'s authority, and how secondary scholarship documents the ways in which that authority has been sustained through pilgrimage, tariqa affiliation, and communal commemoration. Claims about contemporary reception are therefore limited to practices explicitly documented in secondary sources. This methodological boundary is necessary because the study is grounded in textual analysis rather than ethnographic fieldwork, and because reception, as Jauss (1982) emphasizes, is always context-dependent: the authority represented in the manuscript does not translate uniformly into social practice, but is rearticulated through the specific cultural and institutional repertoires of Aceh and Minangkabau, respectively.

Method

The primary object of this study was the digital reproduction of the SSSB manuscript, with the transliteration prepared by Noranda et al. (2024) used as a supporting source for comparing and verifying textual readings. The SSSB manuscript was jointly authored by Abdur Rauf Pakiah Malano of Air Hangat, Sijunjung, and Abdul Manaf. Its colophon dates its completion to 15 March 1968 CE (15 Dzulhijjah 1387 AH) at Surau Gadang Batang Kabung, Koto Tangah, Padang. The manuscript comprises 116 pages, with a cover measuring 20 × 15.5 cm and paper measuring approximately 14.5 × 13 cm, written in Malay in both Jawi (Arabic-Malay) and Latin scripts. The digital reproduction is legible and the manuscript appears to be in relatively good condition. It is currently preserved at

Surau Simaung in Sijunjung and is catalogued by DREAMSEA under the code DS 0043 00078. As a twentieth-century material record, it preserves and transmits religious memory concerning seventeenth-century *ulama*.

The manuscript was treated as a discursive text constructing religious authority, sainthood, and collective memory within the socio-religious landscape of Aceh and Minangkabau, rather than as a transparent historical document. Its selection was significant for two reasons. First, it represents a relatively neglected source that records intellectual transmission, spiritual narratives, and the symbolic construction of *ulama* authority within the Malay-Indonesian Islamic tradition. Second, unlike studies that treat Sheikh Abdurrauf and Sheikh Burhanuddin separately, the SSSB manuscript constructs a continuous genealogy of religious authority linking Aceh and Minangkabau, representing the transmission of scholarly and spiritual authority through *sanad*, master-disciple relations, *rihlah*, *adab*, and *karamat* within a single textual structure. Originating from the surau tradition of West Sumatra, a region historically connected with the *Syattariyah* order and the scholarly networks linking Aceh, Minangkabau, and the Haramain, the manuscript provided an important textual space for examining the intersection between local religious traditions and transregional Islamic intellectual networks.

Data collection was conducted through close reading of the manuscript to identify passages related to intellectual transmission, scholarly debate, spiritual practice, tariqa networks, *karamat* narratives, and the representation of *ulama* authority. Passages were selected when they explicitly contained textual markers relevant to the research questions, including fatwa, *sanad*, *rihlah*, *adab*, *khidmah*, *suluk*, *kashf*, miraculous events, royal acknowledgment, customary recognition, and references to religious institutions. These criteria guided the selection of five principal episodes as the primary textual evidence: the Ramadan debate, the opening of the *hijab*, the durian episode, the rain miracle, and the meeting with the *niniak mamak*. Selected passages were then classified according to three interrelated analytical dimensions, e.g., intellectual transmission, spiritual-*karamat* narratives, and communal-institutional recognition, each identified by its specific textual markers and analyzed for its narrative function and contribution to the construction of *ulama* authority. Evidence derived directly from the manuscript was distinguished throughout from historical context and contemporary practices documented in secondary literature.

This research integrated philology, critical hagiography, and the sociology of religion as complementary methodological approaches. The philological approach was employed to verify textual readings, terminology, transliteration, and manuscript references, ensuring textual accuracy and contextual precision. Critical hagiography was applied to analyze *karamat* narratives as literary and symbolic constructions representing spiritual distinction and religious legitimacy, rather than as

supernatural accounts to be evaluated for historical veracity. The sociology of religion provided the broader analytical perspective for examining how these textual representations contribute to the construction and social recognition of *ulama* authority.

Each theoretical framework was operationalized through specific textual features. Weberian charismatic authority was applied to narrative markers of exceptional spiritual distinction, e.g., *kashf*, the opening of the *hijāb*, extraordinary journeys, obedience and service to the teacher, and the teacher's mandate, as well as to representations of social validation, such as royal acknowledgment and customary recognition. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital was applied to examine how scholarly genealogy, Sufi lineage, and spiritual reputation are converted into socially recognized legitimacy through the manuscript's narrative structure. Reception theory was applied to interpret how the manuscript represents communal acknowledgment of authority, and how secondary scholarship documents the sustained recognition of Sheikh Abdurrauf and Sheikh Burhanuddin through pilgrimage, *surau* and *dayah* traditions, and tarekat networks. Claims about contemporary reception were therefore grounded exclusively in practices documented in secondary sources, given that this study is based on textual analysis rather than ethnographic fieldwork.

Results

Figure 1.
Opening Text of the manuscript



Source: Dreamsea (DS 0043 00078).

Based on a close analysis of the manuscript shown in Figure 1 above, the findings of this study can be categorized into three main themes, including: the Intellectual transmission in Haramain-Aceh-Minangkabau networks, Spiritual-*karamat* narratives, and Communal-institutional recognition.

Intellectual Transmission: *Sanad*, *Fatwa*, *Rihlah*, and Haramain-Aceh-Minangkabau Scholarly Networks

The manuscript constructs intellectual authority through scholarly debate, the transmission of legal knowledge, and interactions among *ulama* across regions. The episode discussed below represents the dynamics of *ikhtilaf* and the circulation of legal arguments between the Middle East and Aceh.

In the manuscript, the transmission of a legal debate from the Middle East to Aceh is represented as receiving royal acknowledgment, as shown in the following passage:

“Maka pergilah beliau menghadap raja Aceh yaitu Sultan[ah] Safiatuddin, setelah tiba di hadapan raja Aceh, diceritakanlah oleh Syekh Abdurrauf perselisihan puasa yang terjadi di tanah Makkah antara ulama Arab dengan Syekh Hadhramaut ...” (Ms: 13).

Translation: *“Then he went to appear before the king of Aceh [Queen], namely Sultan[ah] Safiatuddin. After arriving in the presence of the king of Aceh, Sheikh Abdurrauf related the disagreement over fasting that occurred in the land of Makkah between the Arab ulama and Sheikh Hadhramaut ...”*

The quotation indicates that Sheikh Abdurrauf transmitted a legal debate from the Middle East to the Aceh court. Within the manuscript, this episode constructs his authority through two interrelated elements: his access to transregional scholarly knowledge and the presentation of that knowledge before Sultanah Safiatuddin. The narrative, therefore, positions fatwa, scholarly mobility, and royal acknowledgment as the foundations of his intellectual and legal authority.

Spiritual-Karamat Narratives: *Kashf*, the *Durian* Episode, the Rain/Famine Episode, *adab* and *Khidmah*

The spiritual dimension stands out strongly in the manuscript, especially through stories of *karamat*, showing that spirituality and *adab* (proper conduct) are not merely moral elements but a pathway to divine illumination within a Sufi framework. *Karamat* becomes a symbol of spiritual achievement and recognition of a disciple's depth of knowledge and *adab*. Several accounts of *karamat* are quoted in the manuscript, which then create a narrative of *kewalian* (sainthood) or sanctity of the figure, as in the following quotation:

“...dipandangnyalah ke arah langit. Sewaktu itu terang-benderanglah kelihatan oleh beliau segenap alam, artinya teruslah penglihatan beliau sampai ke Lauḥ Mahfūz. Dan apabila beliau memandang ke bawah, maka tersuluh pula penglihatan beliau ke sījīn, artinya ke bawah bumi yang ketujuh.” (Ms: 27–28)

Translation: *“...he looked towards the sky. At that moment the whole universe became clearly visible to him, meaning that his sight extended all the way to the Lauḥ Mahfūz. And when he looked down, his sight was also illumined to sījīn, that is, to beneath the seventh earth.”*

This quotation shows how *karamat* is represented as a form of *kashf* (unveiling of the veil) that enables a disciple to behold the cosmic order, from the *Lauḥ Mahfūz* to the deepest layers of the earth. Within the manuscript's Sufi framework, the lifting of the *ḥijāb* is represented not as a spontaneous gift, but as the result of obedience to Allah and observance of *adab* toward the teacher. Thus, *karamat* is not only a marker of Sheikh Abdurrauf's personal distinction but also serves as evidence of the depth of spiritual *riyāḍah* (disciplined practice) and the legitimacy of his position as a *wali* who has undergone a series of disciplines in knowledge and *suluk* (spiritual wayfaring). In addition to the story of the lifting of the veil, the manuscript is also colored by other accounts of *karamat*, such as in the following quotation:

“Setelah tiba di Aceh, kiranya durian tiada pula berbuah, artinya tiada musim berbuah. Sungguhpun demikian beliau cahari juga bersungguh-sungguh serta menyerahkan diri kepada Allah Subḥānahū wa Ta‘ālā. Dengan takdir Allah yang fa‘ala limā yurīd, maka bertemulah sebatang durian yang buahnya hanya sebuah pula, tetapi luar biasa besarnya. Maka beliau ambillah durian itu lalu beliau bawa sekali. Dengan iradat dan qadarat Allah, tiada lama antaranya sampai pulalah beliau kembali ke hadapan guru beliau di Madinah serta mempersembahkan durian itu; kemudian diulang...” (Ms: 28–29)

Translation: *“When he arrived in Aceh, it turned out that the durian trees were not bearing fruit, meaning it was not the fruiting season. Nevertheless, he continued to search diligently while entrusting himself to Allah Subḥānahū wa Ta‘ālā. By Allah's decree—fa‘ala limā yurīd—he came upon a durian tree with only a single fruit on it, but extraordinarily large. He took that durian and brought it along with him. By Allah's will and power, it was not long before he returned to his teacher in Madinah and presented the durian to him; then the story continues...”*

The above quotation shows how the text constructs the figure of Sheikh Abdurrauf within a hagiographical frame as both a *wali* and an authoritative *murid tarekat* (disciple of a Sufi order), by

emphasising total obedience to his teacher, surrender to Allah, and the blessing of knowledge as the source of supra-empirical capacities categorized as *karamat*. Rather than merely presenting a marvelous tale, this narrative functions as a rhetorical device to affirm the spiritual and intellectual legitimacy of Sheikh Abdurrauf within Sufi scholarly networks: the master–disciple relationship is positioned as a link in the chain of *barakah* transmission, while *karamat* is used as a sign of divine ratification of his authority that transcends the limits of empirical reason.

Although the narratives in this manuscript are of considerable value as representations of collective memory and the community's spirituality, it must be emphasized that not all of its contents can be accepted straightforwardly as historical fact. Some of these stories, particularly those concerning spiritual experiences and extraordinary events, should therefore be read as hagiographical representations rather than accepted straightforwardly as historical fact. One example is the story of Sheikh Abdurrauf's journey to Egypt, which the manuscript states occurred during a time when the region was afflicted by famine. The *karamat* story about this famine is related in the manuscript as follows:

“Dengan sebentar itu juga seperti lautan besarlah dalam negeri itu oleh karena sangat lebatnya hujan. Walaupun begitu, beliau tertekun juga pada sembahyang beliau, Syekh Abdu al-Rauf, beserta khutbahnya, dengan khusyuk dan tawadhu’ kepada Allah Subhānahū wa Ta’ālā. Setelah sudah beliau sembahyang dan membaca khutbah, hujan pun berhenti. Maka disongsong oranglah beliau ke tengah padang, tiada basah sedikit juga.” (Ms: 31–32).

Translation: *“In a short time the whole country became like a vast ocean because of the very heavy rain. Even so, he remained engrossed in his prayer and sermon, Sheikh Abdu al-Rauf, with humility and devotion (khusyuk and tawadhu’) before Allah Subhānahū wa Ta’ālā. After he had completed the prayer and delivered the sermon, the rain stopped. Then the people came out to welcome him in the middle of the field, and he was not even the least bit wet.”*

This quotation shows how the text constructs Sheikh Abdurrauf as both a *wali* and an authoritative *ulama* through his *karamat*: his supplication and performance of *ṣalāt al-istisqā’* result in an extraordinary downpour of rain so that the country becomes like an ocean, while he himself remains in a state of *khusyuk* and *tawadhu’* and is not touched by the rain at all. Within the manuscript's hagiographical narrative, this event functions to affirm his sainthood and spiritual proximity to Allah, displays spiritual steadfastness amid an extreme situation, and affirms his moral authority before the king and people of Egypt, who then fulfil their promise by giving him gold, explicitly linked to the Qur’anic command “*ūfū bi al-‘uqūd*” (fulfil the covenant). In this way, *karamat*, the ethic of fulfilling

promises, and the respect of the ruler are combined to present Sheikh Abdurrauf as a paradigmatic spiritual and social figure.

Communal-Institutional Recognition: Royal and Customary Authority in Aceh and Minangkabau

In addition to depicting the authority of Sheikh Abdurrauf, who interacted directly with the political power of the Aceh Sultanate, this manuscript also presents how that authority was translated into the socio-political context of Minangkabau through the figure of his disciple, Sheikh Burhanuddin. After returning from Aceh and after some time teaching in Tanjung Medan, Sheikh Burhanuddin is depicted as returning to his home *nagari* (village polity), Sintuk, and making meeting forums with *niniak mamak* (customary leaders) and *cerdik pandai* (local intellectual elites), one of the main arenas of his *da'wah* (Islamic preaching). As expressed in the following quotation:

“Maka datanglah beliau ketempat rapat niniak mamak serta orang cerdik pandai menurut adat maka beliau terangkanlah agama Islam yang beliau bawa dari Aceh supaya orang sintuk membuang agama yang batil menukar dengan agama hak...” (Ms: 60–61)

Translation: *“Then he came to the meeting place of the niniak mamak and the cerdik pandai according to custom, and there he explained the religion of Islam that he brought from Aceh so that the people of Sintuk would abandon the false religion and replace it with the true religion...”*

This quotation shows that the first parties Sheikh Burhanuddin faced were the *niniak mamak*, as customary leaders, and the *cerdik pandai*, as the elite custodians and interpreters of the *nagari*'s social order. His presence before them indicates that the *dawah* he brought from Aceh was carried out by reading and utilising the existing structures of authority: the scholarly and charismatic authority of an *ulama* was placed in dialogue with institutionalized customary authority. Thus, the meeting with the *niniak mamak* can be read as an initial structural step: a negotiation at the level of the customary elite that prepares the social foundation for the broader spread of Islamic teachings among the inhabitants of Minangkabau *nagari* in subsequent stages.

Thus, the SSSB manuscript presents three interwoven narrative layers: intellectual transmission, spiritual-*karamat* narratives, and communal-institutional recognition. The intellectual narrative forms a discursive space that shows how interactions among *ulama*, *sanad*, *fatwa*, *rihlah*, and transregional scholarly networks become the foundation for the development of local Islamic thought and scholarly authority. The spiritual narrative reveals how *adab*, *khidmah*, *kashf*, and miraculous events underpin the charismatic and symbolic authority of an *ulama*. Meanwhile, the narrative of communal and institutional recognition shows how scholarly and spiritual authority is represented

through royal acknowledgment, customary elites, teaching centers, and religious networks in Aceh and Minangkabau. Taken together, these three dimensions render the manuscript not merely a historical text, but a cultural archive that connects intellectual authority, Sufi discipline, and social recognition within an Aceh–Minangkabau model of *ulama* authority.

The relationships among the three analytical dimensions are summarized in Table 1. Rather than presenting the manuscript episodes as isolated themes, the table shows how particular forms of textual evidence contribute to the construction of scholarly, charismatic, and institutionally recognized authority.

Table 1.
Analytical Synthesis of *Ulama* Authority in the SSSB Manuscript

Analytical Dimension	Primary Manuscript Evidence	Key Concept	Form of Authority Constructed	Analytical Implication
Intellectual transmission	The Ramadan debate presented before Sultanah Safiatuddin (Ms: 13); references to fatwa, <i>sanad</i> , <i>rihlah</i> , and Haramain–Aceh scholarly connections	Scholarly transmission, legal mediation, and transregional <i>ulama</i> networks	Scholarly and legal authority	Scholarly genealogy, legal knowledge, and transregional connections establish Sheikh Abdurrauf's intellectual credibility. His appearance before the royal court also represents the political recognition of religious knowledge.
Spiritual- <i>karamat</i> narratives	The opening of the <i>hijab</i> and vision of the Lauh Mahfuz and Sijjin (Ms: 27–28); the durian episode (Ms: 28–29); the rain miracle (Ms: 31–32)	<i>Adab</i> , <i>khidmah</i> , <i>kashf</i> , spiritual discipline, and divine favor	Spiritual and charismatic authority	The narratives transform obedience, discipline, and piety into signs of divine authorization. <i>Karamat</i> therefore functions as a textual mechanism that distinguishes the <i>ulama</i> from ordinary religious actors and legitimizes their spiritual leadership.
Communal-institutional recognition	Sheikh Abdurrauf's audience with the Acehnese ruler (Ms: 13); Sheikh Burhanuddin's meeting with the <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>cerdik pandai</i> (Ms: 60–61)	Royal acknowledgment, customary recognition, and institutional negotiation	Social and institutional authority	The manuscript represents <i>ulama</i> authority as gaining recognition through established political and customary structures. Authority is therefore constructed not only through personal knowledge and spirituality, but also through interaction with the royal court and nagari leadership.

Source: Analytical synthesis based on the SSSB manuscript.

Table 1 demonstrates that the three forms of authority are interconnected rather than independent. Intellectual transmission provides the scholarly foundation of legitimacy, spiritual-*karamat* narratives transform scholarly and ethical distinction into charismatic authority, and communal-institutional recognition represents the acknowledgment of that authority within political and

customary structures. Practices such as *Basapa*, *ziarah*, *haul*, and the continuing role of *surau* or *dayah* are not treated here as direct manuscript evidence but are discussed in the discussion section based on relevant secondary studies.

Discussion

***Karamat* as a Mechanism for Legitimizing Scholarly Authority**

Karamat in the SSSB manuscript functions as a narrative device that weaves scholarly and spiritual authority into a single field of meaning, rather than presenting miraculous events as isolated biographical episodes. A critical hagiographical reading of the opening of the *hijab* through devoted service (*khidmah*) to the teacher (Ms: 27–28) reveals that this episode operates on two simultaneous levels: as didactic discourse affirming *adab* and *khidmah* as prerequisites for spiritual elevation within the Sufi path, and as a literary strategy that naturalizes the status of *kewalian* (sainthood) as the legitimate culmination of disciplined practice. The text thereby shapes the reader's horizon of expectation regarding who deserves religious obedience and on what grounds, transforming *karamat* into a bridge between individual biography, ritual authority, and social reception.

Weber's framework clarifies the transition from spiritual distinction to recognized authority. Within the SSSB manuscript, *kashf* and extraordinary events do not establish authority solely because they are miraculous; their legitimizing force derives from their connection to *adab*, the teacher's mandate, scholarly competence, and acknowledgment by rulers or customary elites. The manuscript thus represents charisma as relational rather than purely personal: exceptional qualities become authoritative only when acknowledged by socially significant actors. This pattern corresponds directly to Weber's argument that the recognition on the part of those subject to authority determines the validity of charisma (Weber, 1978: 242).

The SSSB manuscript's analytical contribution lies in its representation of a three-stage process of authority construction: *karamat* narratives attribute extraordinary spiritual qualities to the *ulama*; recognition by rulers, teachers, disciples, and customary elites constructs those qualities as charismatic authority; and their integration with scholarly genealogy and institutional acknowledgment converts that charisma into symbolic capital. This process confirms, through textual evidence, Weber's argument that charisma depends upon recognition and Bourdieu's position that symbolic power becomes effective only when socially acknowledged (Weber, 1978: 241–242; Bourdieu, 1991). Where previous scholarship has treated *karamat* primarily as a miraculous motif, biographical ornament, or element of devotional memory, the SSSB manuscript presents it as a textual mechanism that connects scholarly transmission, Sufi discipline, and institutional legitimacy

within a single hagiographical structure (Brockopp, 2005; Kurniawan et al., 2019; Faisal et al., 2022; Schmidt, 2021).

Symbolic Capital and the Religious Field in Aceh–Minangkabau

Viewed through Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, the SSSB manuscript demonstrates that scholarly knowledge and spiritual distinction do not automatically become socially effective forms of authority; their value depends on recognition within particular political, religious, and customary fields. In Aceh, Sheikh Abdurrauf's presentation of the Ramadan legal debate before Sultanah Safiatuddin represents the conversion of transregional scholarly competence into publicly acknowledged authority through the royal court (Ms: 13). In Minangkabau, Sheikh Burhanuddin's engagement with the *niniak mamak* and *cerdik pandai* represents a structurally different process, in which religious authority enters into negotiation with the customary organization of the *nagari* (Ms: 60–61). The manuscript thus presents two locally specific mechanisms of symbolic conversion: royal recognition in Aceh and customary recognition in Minangkabau. In both cases, *karamat* functions as a symbolic resource whose social effectiveness depends on validation by established institutions and authoritative actors, rather than on its miraculous content alone.

These processes of symbolic conversion are embedded within transregional scholarly networks connecting the Haramain, Aceh, and Minangkabau. The Ramadan debate episode illustrates how fatwa and scholarly mobility acquired symbolic force specifically through royal acknowledgment within the Acehnese court, a pattern consistent with Mukti Ali's observation that fiqh and Sufi traditions developed through *ulama* networks in Indonesia (Ali, 1992: 19–20; Chambert-Loir, 2017). Azra (1998, 2004) and Fathurahman (2004, 2016) demonstrate that such networks transmitted spiritual prestige and local legitimacy alongside religious knowledge. The SSSB manuscript adds a hagiographical dimension to this scholarship by integrating *fatwa*, *rihlah*, master–disciple relations, scholarly genealogy, and *karamat* within a single Aceh–Minangkabau model of *ulama* authority (Damanhuri, 2013; Laffan, 2022). Its distinct contribution lies in representing the same scholarly and spiritual genealogy as undergoing different processes of symbolic conversion within two regional fields of authority.

Textual Representation and Communal Reception

The third dimension of the Discussion concerns the relationship between the authority constructed in the SSSB manuscript and its documented reception in Acehnese and Minangkabau communities. Reception theory, as applied in this study, does not claim direct causal continuity between the manuscript and contemporary practice; rather, it provides a framework for examining how the forms of authority textually represented in the SSSB manuscript correspond to, and in some respects

diverge from, the cultural repertoires through which each *ulama's* authority has been historically sustained (Jauss, 1982; Warning, 1979: 9–12).

The correspondence is substantial but asymmetrical. The SSSB manuscript constructs Sheikh Abdurrauf's authority primarily through his scholarly genealogy, legal competence, and royal acknowledgment within the Aceh Sultanate. Secondary studies confirm that this is precisely the dimension of his authority that has been most durably preserved in Acehnese collective memory: his position as mufti, his identification as Syiah Kuala, his association with Tarjuman al-Mustafid, and the *hadih maja* "*Hukôm bak Syiah Kuala*" all sustain a reception centered on intellectual-juridical and saintly authority (Fathurahman, 2008; Faqih et al., 2022: 72). The manuscript's textual construction and the Acehnese horizon of reception are therefore closely aligned: royal-juridical legitimacy in the manuscript corresponds to royal-juridical memory in communal practice.

The case of Sheikh Burhanuddin reveals a more instructive divergence. The SSSB manuscript foregrounds his authority through the meeting with the *niniak mamak* and the transmission of *Syattariyah* discipline from Sheikh Abdurrauf, emphasizing customary negotiation and scholarly lineage as the primary grounds of his legitimacy (Ms: 60–61). Documented reception in Minangkabau, however, centers predominantly on pilgrimage: the *Basapa* tradition at Ulakan, *ziarah*, *Syattariyah* rituals, and the continuity of *surau* networks (Nuridin, 2010: 3; Hidayat, 2023a). The manuscript's emphasis on customary negotiation as the initial condition of authority thus corresponds to a reception culture that has subsequently shifted toward pilgrimage and *tariqa* affiliation as its primary mode of commemoration. This divergence is analytically significant: it suggests that the forms of authority a manuscript represents and the forms communities subsequently emphasize are not identical but are rearticulated through different institutional repertoires over time.

The genealogy of authority is the same; the cultural instruments through which it is reproduced differ between royal-juridical memory in Aceh and pilgrimage-tarekat memory in Minangkabau. Figure 2 illustrates this documented form of communal reception in Minangkabau.

Figure 2.
Basapa Tradition in Minangkabau



Source: ANTARA Foto, 2024.

The two patterns of reception are therefore related but not identical. Sheikh Abdurrauf is remembered predominantly through scholarly, legal, royal, and saintly associations in Aceh, whereas Sheikh Burhanuddin is more visibly commemorated through pilgrimage, tarekat affiliation, and the institutional continuity of the Minangkabau surau tradition. These differences do not establish a direct causal continuity between the SSSB manuscript and contemporary practices. Rather, they show that the genealogy of authority represented in the manuscript corresponds to different local repertoires of remembrance: royal-juridical memory in Aceh and pilgrimage-tarekat memory in Minangkabau. The same scholarly and spiritual lineage is therefore rearticulated through distinct political and cultural institutions.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the SSSB manuscript functions as a hagiographical text that simultaneously serves as an intellectual genealogy, a devotional narrative, and a symbolic instrument of religious legitimation, rather than as a straightforward historical account of two prominent *ulama*. Its central finding is that authority in this manuscript is constructed through the structured interaction of three dimensions: intellectual transmission, through *sanad*, *fatwa*, *rihlah*, and transregional scholarly networks; spiritual and charismatic authority, through *adab*, *kashf*, *khidmah*, and *karamat* narratives; and social and institutional recognition, through royal acknowledgment in Aceh and customary negotiation in Minangkabau. These dimensions are not presented as discrete elements but are integrated within a single textual structure that transmits a coherent genealogy of authority from Sheikh Abdurrauf to Sheikh Burhanuddin across two distinct political and cultural settings. The manuscript thereby extends the study of *ulama* networks beyond the circulation of knowledge, demonstrating how scholarly competence, spiritual distinction, and institutional recognition are combined in text to produce legitimate religious authority.

The broader implication of this finding concerns the analytical status of *karamat* in the study of Islam Nusantara. Where previous scholarship has treated *karamat* primarily as a devotional motif, a biographical ornament, or a secondary element of Sufi narrative, this study shows that it operates as a productive analytical category for examining how Islamic manuscripts construct, integrate, and transmit religious authority. This reorientation has consequences for how the field approaches similar sources. Scholars working on hagiographical manuscripts from the Malay-Indonesian world need to attend not only to the historical or biographical content of *karamat* episodes, but to their narrative function within the textual architecture of authority: how they connect scholarly genealogy to spiritual distinction, and how they position that distinction in relation to political and customary structures of recognition. The Aceh-Minangkabau model identified in the SSSB manuscript, in which the same scholarly and spiritual lineage undergoes different processes of symbolic conversion within two regional fields of authority, suggests that comparable patterns may be recoverable from other manuscript traditions across the archipelago, provided the analytical framework moves beyond content description toward structural and symbolic interpretation.

This study is necessarily limited by its focus on a single manuscript and its reliance on textual analysis rather than ethnographic observation. Its findings represent one hagiographical construction of *ulama* authority and cannot be generalized to the full diversity of *karamat* narratives in the Malay-Indonesian tradition, nor do they establish how the two *ulama*'s authority has been received and renegotiated by contemporary communities.

Three directions for further research follow from these limitations. First, comparative manuscript analysis examining related hagiographical texts from the *Syattariyah* tradition in Aceh, West Sumatra, and Java would allow scholars to assess whether the three-dimensional model of authority identified here is specific to the SSSB manuscript or characteristic of a broader textual tradition. Second, ethnographic fieldwork among *Basapa* pilgrimage communities in Ulakan and among *dayah* networks in Aceh would make it possible to examine how the authority represented in manuscripts such as the SSSB is renegotiated, selectively emphasized, or transformed in living ritual practice. Third, a codicological study of the manuscript's transmission history, including the undocumented transfer from Surau Gadang Batang Kabung to Surau Simaung, would situate the text more precisely within the institutional networks through which its religious authority has been preserved and reproduced.

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