

CONTRASTING THOUGHTS: INTERNALIZATION OF ISLAM WASATHIYAH OF DAYAH ULAMA IN GROUNDING MODERATE ISLAM IN PESANTREN

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Abstract

This research explains the change of contrasting thoughts in pesantren (an Islamic boarding school), which is indicated as radical and terrorist in Aceh Tamiang. Ulama's thoughts and concepts of Pesantren Al-Hidayah influenced the changes after undergoing guidance from the government. This article is field research with a qualitative approach. A case study and phenomenological study were used as the methodology. The research results concluded that the internalization of Islam Wasathiyah at Pesantren Al-Hidayah contained seven themes, including Environmental Islam, Al-Musawat and AlTawazun (justice), AsSamahah (tolerance), Shura (deliberation), Islah and Ihsan (reconciling), Qudwah (role model), and Muthwathanah (nationalism).

Keywords: *Contrasting thoughts, Dayah Ulama, Islam Wasathiyah*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a population with the largest Muslim majority in the world, is often used as a motive that the seeds of the caliphate should emerge in the archipelago. Moreover, Aceh is a province with a Muslim majority and adheres to the principles of Islamic law. It attracts purification circles to

develop radical seeds in the name of Islam. Thus, Aceh is a region in Indonesia that receives special vigilance, especially since Aceh has asked to secede from the Republic of Indonesia. A handful of individuals often exploit the Acehese people's strong understanding of Islam to dissolve nationalism with religious embellishments (Ismail et al., 2021).

In mid-August 2022, eight people were arrested (three of them are the owner and administrator of *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah Kejuruan Muda) because they were suspected of being related and connected to the Islamiyah Network and spreading radical values to the students and congregation (atjehwatch.com, 2022). This is a continuation of the arrest of two *pesantren* teachers (Fiqh and History teachers) previously arrested by Densus 88 in February 2022 (Sindonews.com, 2022). Initial observations found that this *pesantren* forbids Pancasila, including the prohibition of respecting Indonesia's flag during ceremonies.

The results of Muhammad Anshor's research in 2012 entitled; "Competing for the Most Pious: Contestation between Yasin and Sunnah People in Sidodadi, Aceh Tamiang Regency", is a road map (beginning) for this group to spread the values of its preaching. Muhammad Anshor was interested because Sidodadi Aceh Tamiang Village was considered quite advanced and developed. There was still a struggle for religious authority between the two camps. However, the author's latest observations saw that the group suspected of being terrorists had succeeded in controlling the village, and even the village head was one of their people (Ansor, 2016). The case at *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah proves that the cultivation of anti-nationalist values still occurs and has become the seeds of radicalism in the future.

The Aceh Tamiang government, through the MPU, religious counsellors, and various Islamic institutions, summoned all representatives of *pesantren* throughout Aceh Tamiang to conduct outreach about radicalism and the cultivation of national values. Furthermore, the Aceh Tamiang Islamic Sharia Service has created a program that strictly selects prospective teachers at *pesantren* to avoid cases like *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah Kejuruan Muda. The authorities are also evaluating various *pesantren*'s curricula and learning methods to track radical potential that could happen someday. As a result, starting June 2023, this *pesantren* was declared free from accusations of radicalism and terrorism and was again open to the public (accepting *santri* and female students).

Various *pesantren* representatives carried out troops to return to the Republic of Indonesia, and authorities (MPU and the Aceh

Tamiang Islamic Sharia Service) socialized and informed the importance of the moderate Islam concept. Still, traces of radical understanding haunted it, and it was risky to occur again in disguise. This anxiety became the initial foundation for the authors to be interested and focused on researching and studying further to produce objective data and reports. Therefore, this research aims to explore the extent of understanding of Islam *Wasathiyah* of *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah *Ulama* in internalizing moderate Islam. The *Ulama*'s arguments undoubtedly provide conclusions about how the transformation (from radical to moderate) could occur. Is there a contrast in thinking among the *Ulama*, or are the *Ulama* basically not radical and only experiencing external accusations? Even worse, is the internalization of Islam *Wasathiyah* in *pesantren* just a play and a mask?

Literature Review

Studies related to Islam *Wasathiyah*, moderate Islam, and internalization in *pesantren* are not the latest discourse. Many similar research outputs have been published on a national and international scale. Syibran Mulasi et al., in their publication entitled; "Religious Moderation in Aceh: A Strategy for Implementing Islam *Washatiyah* Values in Acehnese Society," informed how religious moderation existed in Aceh before it became popular in Indonesia. This research exemplifies how the Acehnese people have been known for the custom of *peumulia jamee* (glorifying guests) since the time of the past Kingdom (Mulasi, Hamdi, and Riza, 2023). Even though it has similarities in moderate Islam implementation in Aceh, this research does not discuss radical findings in Aceh, especially in *pesantren*.

Regarding contrasting thoughts, Supardi et al., in their journal entitled; "Contrastive Analysis of Concord in Arabic, English, and Indonesian," have described how contrastive variables are most intensely used in linguistic studies. Both implementations are in Arabic, Indonesian, and local languages such as Javanese, Madurese, and Acehnese (Supardi and Jabal, 2023). However, the contrast that the authors mean is not in a grammatical context but a concept of very contradictory thoughts (contrast) towards the same character after experiencing certain events.

Azmi and Zulfiana, in research entitled; "Grounding Moderate Islam: Study of the Internalization of Moderate Islamic Values for the Young Generation," have socialized the importance of moderate Islam in the millennial generation, especially those living in *pesantren* (Azmi and Zulfiana, 2023). This article has a narrative title closest to the authors' variables. Significant differences are found in the variables (millennial and Islam *Wasathiyah*) and the research type (case study). Azmi and Zulfiana conducted research at *Pesantren Al-Fattah* in Lamongan, while the authors focused on *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* in Aceh Tamiang.

Ilmi and Ardiansyah, in a journal entitled; "The Role of *Pesantren* in Preventing Radicalism Movements in West Kalimantan," has revitalized how *pesantren* has a central role in warding off radical seeds in West Kalimantan (Ilmi and Ardiansyah, 2020). This journal is similar to the author's study, especially on anticipating radical potential. The research defines *pesantren* as an educational institution that broadcasts the essence of moderate Islam towards external radical phenomena (outside *pesantren*). In contrast, the authors' research describes how *pesantren* transform themselves from radical claims to becoming moderate internal phenomena (within *pesantren*).

The previous studies above (as far as the authors have observed) show that the authors' research has never been coherent and in-depth, so this article has an original and scientific dimension. Regarding novelty, it lies in the correlation between the variable contrasting thoughts, which includes the ideological maneuvering from *pesantren Ulama*, who are claimed to be terrorists, towards moderate and nationalist *pesantren*.

Conceptual Framework

The concept or theory that the author uses as a scalpel for the analysis of this research starts from variables, including contrast theory, internalization theory, and indigenization theory. Regarding contrast variables, the author's theory is proposed by Brewster (1831). Brewster differentiates colors based on their divisions, such as primary, secondary, and tertiary. When one color and another color are different, it is termed 'contrast'. The most contrasting color is

in the 1800 position, which means the colors are very contradictory (Nugraheny et al., 2018).

The term contrasting thoughts in this research is intended as a significant change from the informant's thoughts. Initially, the *pesantren Ulama* were claimed to be radical and terrorists. However, contrasting thoughts occurred after the government provided training and coaching. Very few theories or ideas conflict with moderate Islamic values when the authors explore the data in the field. Previous research shows that they are very anti-NKRI, reluctant to display photos of Pancasila in their offices, and do not hold flag ceremonies.

Regarding internalization, the authors use the theory initiated by Muhaimin (1996), which states that internalization is a process in which individuals adopt certain norms, values, beliefs, or knowledge into themselves. This is the process of taking information or experience from the external environment and turning it into knowledge or understanding that the individual has internally. It includes receiving information, responding to values, providing meaning, organizing values, and getting used to values (Muhaimin, 1996). Thus, the internalization of Islam *Wasathiyah* in this research means that a community (*pesantren Ulama*) absorbs the concept of Islam *Wasathiyah* during formation to be implemented as a standard for the community itself and socialized to students through the curriculum (Mahmud et al., 2023).

Regarding grounding, the author uses the theory initiated by Santoso (2003). He believes grounding values are essential for academic, ideological, and theoretical. These aim to ensure that indigenized aspects have a local or Indonesian face (Muhaini, 2021). In this research, grounding moderate Islam also aims to ensure that moderate Islamic values are absorbed through local wisdom to be acceptable and minimize rejection. Therefore, since Acehnese people are susceptible to national terms, religious moderation was replaced with Islam *Wasathiyah*.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a field study with a qualitative approach (Noor, 2010). The authors used a phenomenological methodology with *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* Kejuruan Muda as the location that became the center of exploration

of a phenomenal event (the arrest of a terrorist by Densus 88). This research focused on a case study to understand more about religious moderation (*Islam Wasathiyah*) by Dayah Ulama, especially after the arrest of the *pesantren* owner and several teachers.

The primary sources in this research were obtained from direct informants related to Dayah Ulama or teachers and informants outside *pesantren* who had valid data, such as the police, MPU Aceh Tamiang, the Aceh Tamiang Islamic Sharia Service, and parties involved in *pesantren* rehabilitation efforts. Secondary sources were scientific journal publications, especially those published in the last five years.

DISCUSSION

Radical Claims at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah*

The research data shows a dualism in indicating radical *pesantren*. The first group is *pesantren* outsiders, especially the Aceh Tamiang government's representatives, responsible for neutralizing the radicalism content. This group emphasized that ideologically, this *pesantren* was initially radical. They believe every individual in this *pesantren* does not recognize the state ideology and even consider Pancasila to be *thogut*. This group showed the evidence through SMS and WhatsApp messages, where the old *mudir* (who had been arrested by Densus 88) rebuked the lectures of government preachers who taught nationalist values.

The second group, insiders, said this *pesantren* is not radical, but the radicals are around three teaching staff. In interviews, this group stated that this *pesantren* belongs to the village and the people. It is suspected that the three arrested people were hiding and living as ordinary residents in *pesantren*. They stated that the suspicion of terrorism was not based on a strong basis but just speculation because there was no flag ceremony on Monday. According to them, almost all *pesantren* in Aceh do not hold flag ceremonies.

Another suspicion is the accusation of terrorism due to the flow of funds obtained by *pesantren*. According to Densus 88, *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* received financial donations (grants) from ISIS, which is currently recognized as an international terrorist movement. This *pesantren* emphasized that they received the funds, but not because they

had a structured relationship with ISIS. *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* only opened a general request for donations, but they did not suspect one of the funds was from ISIS.

Kesbangpol Aceh, represented by the Head of Home Affairs, said that there was a blunder from the Aceh Tamiang Government in seeing the radicalism and terrorism at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah*. According to him, before Densus 88 intervened, Babinsa and community officials should have had a role. If radicalism cases force Densus 88 to intervene, it shows that local authorities are not working correctly.

"There was a blunder in monitoring politics and religious sects in Aceh Tamiang during an extreme incident until Densus 88 intervened. Where is Babinsa? Where are the village officials? A religious institution under the Republic of Indonesia has no flag ceremony or display of photos of the President and Vice President. The community should have realized this early unless it already has them all. I am afraid this second indication is true." (Arsy, Interview with the Head of Political Affairs, Kesbangpol Aceh, 2023).

This *pesantren* was not disbanded or dismantled. When researchers conducted observations and interviews starting in July 2023, this *pesantren* was officially declared nationalist and free from indications of radicalism and terrorism. The government made this statement after it successfully underwent a quarantine process and assessment by a special team.

Contrasting Thoughts

'Contrasting thoughts' is rarely used in research or past reference narratives. The author deliberately uses this term as the novelty of a theory within the scopes of thought and *Islam Wasathiyah*. The term contrast was first used by Brewster when he grouped colors, making it easier for users to select and determine the colors to implement. Primary and mixed colors are useful in various aspects of the artists and the digital era (Gautama, Santosa, and Swandi, 2019).

In this study, contrast is a noun that refers to a sharp difference or opposition between two or more things. It includes differences in color, characteristics, properties, or other aspects of the compared objects or concepts. In visual arts, photography, graphic design, or written language, contrast is often used to highlight significant differences between

opposing or different elements in the context of aesthetics and meaning (Wangsa, Indrani, and Nilasari, 2015). Contrast can also highlight differences in points of view, themes, or characteristics between two compared objects, ideas, or concepts.

Therefore, 'contrasting thought' is a change in thought patterns, which differs between initial and final constructions depending on the extent of the differentiating axis. In the contrast theory proposed by Brewster, opposite colors have an angle of 180°. Colors also have contrast at different angles; the closer the colors are, the smaller the angle (Meilani, 2013). For example, light yellow and dark yellow, even though these two colors are both yellow, contrast has different angles.

In terms of thinking, contrast is the author's analogy that thinkers, especially at the research location, do not abandon their old concepts but add and develop them based on the situation. Therefore, internalization occurs between concepts outside and old concepts (Nuddin, Zainuddin, and Kartiko, 2024). This fusion made thinkers (Dayah Ulama) vary in mapping the extent to which moderate Islam was lenient and their basic ideology could be tolerated.

For example, implementing *aqidah* and culture at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* is not as loose as in other areas. For *Pesantren Al-Hidayah*, culture and Islam are a unity that cannot be separated. Like a coin, it is one unit despite having different faces. Determining Islam and culture is permissible and essential if it does not deviate from Islamic principles (Helmi, 2021). Therefore, *Pesantren Al-Hidayah Ulama* divided points in the internalization of Islam and culture. First, cultural internalization must not touch the *aqidah* since *aqidah* is permanent, sacred, and cannot be shifted based on cultural interests. Therefore, if a culture tries to change the principles of *aqidah*, it will be rejected. Then, cultures that are against *aqidah* must be Islamized.

Dayah Ulama at Al-Hidayah exemplifies this with *peusijek*. This local culture may not be adopted if the process is directed against God or an opponent of Allah SWT. Therefore, *puesijek* experiences internalization of Islam, namely cultural Islamization (Marzuki, 2011). Thus, the concept of moderation in Islam that *Pesantren Al-Hidayah Ulama* understand is cultural internalization and cultural

Islamization. As for culture or local wisdom, which is limited to social matters, without touching on the principles of *aqidah*, the law is *mubah*.

Second, social Islam is a concept of moderate Islam, which *Pesantren Al-Hidayah Ulama* understand as fairness between monotheism and *muamalah*. *Pesantren Al-Hidayah Ulama* tends to be close to Muhammadiyah circles in this dimension. However, the implementation of their worship is often close to *Salafiyah* circles (MQ, *Mudir Interview during Pesantren Al-Hidayah's development*, 2023).

According to *Pesantren Al-Hidayah Ulama*, a person is not perfect if he is indifferent to the social conditions of his neighbors. *Tauhid* is not only a matter of the heart and words but must also be implemented in deeds. The actions that best reflect the condition of Muslims are their social relationships (UH, *Al-Hidayah Teacher Interview*, 2023).

"If a Muslim is not social, then he is out of Muslim status in his life. Even though this status is not the same as being a disbeliever in denying Allah, practically, he is considered an infidel in his actions. Likewise, Muslims do not pray Friday prayers at the mosque 3 times in a row. If it is done intentionally, not because he is sick or on a journey, then he is an infidel. Well, moderate Islam should also be like that. It must be in the middle; it is serious in fiqh worship, and social worship." (ZA, *Al-Hidayah Teacher Interview*, 2023)

Indigenization of Moderate Islam

Indigenization of moderate Islam is another term for implementing moderate Islam through a cultural approach and local community habits (Muhammad, 2022). In this research, the Dayah Ulama, as indigenous citizens, were asked to package the values of religious moderation programmed by the government so that they could absorb the local language and parables. Therefore, the points of Islam *Wasathiyah* of Dayah Ulama were born. The points were different, but the essence was still the same. For example, they are more suitable to use environmental Islam instead of *muwathanah*. Similarly, the terms deliberation and *shura*, the Ulama at this *pesantren* have different dictionaries. However, it is still relevant to religious moderation's value.

The indigenization of moderate Islam is also expanded in the interpretive studies in

pesantren. *Pesantren Al-Hidayah Ulama* describe moderation as closely related to the text interpretation. Interpreting the Qur'an must be fair; justice not only looks at the verses textually but also the environmental dimensions (Islamiyah, 2022). This aligns with the Islamic concept of the environment, which states that local cultural conditions must be an important part of an interpretation.

"For example, the Prophet said that the best way to eat is with three fingers. So, it is not ideal if interpreted in Aceh because the three fingers were used to eat the Arabs food at that time (dates). In Aceh, it is not ideal to eat rice. Therefore, the interpretation system must be conditioned; eating with three fingers is interpreted as eating carefully so that it does not scatter." (UH, Teacher Interview at Al-Hidayah, 2023).

The statement above shows that the *Ulama* of *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* are not rigid and textual in understanding the text. They accept current developments as an important dimension. This is different from the perspective of outsider informants, who believe the *Ulama* at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* are rigid and textual. They interpret verses according to the verses' sound and cases in their time. For example, the Islamic government system does not have the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila: Allah SWT and the Qur'an as references to Islam. Therefore, all parties who recognize Pancasila and the Constitution as a guide to life are misguided. Pancasila was defined by the pre-arrest Densus 88 *Ulama* as *toghut*.

"They do not accept the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. For them, Muslims should make Allah SWT their goal and the Qur'an their law. When I finished my studies at pesantren, I got an SMS that night that I had deviated and believed in toghut." (MQ, *Mudir* Interview for Development Period, 2023).

The information above shows that there has been a significant change in the concept of *Ulama* thought at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah*. This may be because of the effects of continuous coaching or the different teaching staff. The most worrying is that if it is just a play, the *Ulama* still rejects the concept of moderation, but they are camouflaging themselves so as not to be seen as radical.

"To this day, I am not sure that the old Ulama changed their ideology. They are still rooted in the old principles, but because the situation

does not allow them to emerge, they preach in silence. The proof is that they were unhappy with us when the Aceh Tamiang government appointed us as supervisors. They did not like what we taught; they just wanted to teach the students. Thus, I was suspicious; in the end, we did not train them for long because we saw they did not want to change their ideology." (MQ, *Mudir* Interview during *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* coaching, 2023)

This statement was directly denied by one of the Aceh Tamiang DPRK candidates. According to him, this *pesantren* did not have a radical ideology but the old *mudir* elements who were arrested. The previous supervisors had a dialogue and met him, so his presentation led to a radical concept. If this *pesantren* was radical, it would not be possible to still exist today. Densus 88 can dig up information to its roots. The release of this *pesantren* from accusations of being radical is clear evidence that this *pesantren* is not radical. However, a handful of individuals within it are radical and have been arrested (SS, interview, *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* supervisor during coaching, 2023).

Internalization of Islam Wasathiyah through Pesantren Ulama Understanding

The understanding of Islam *Wasathiyah* by *Dayah Ulama* is very diverse. One of the most common is the concept of *wasathiyah*, which has been claimed to have existed since the time of the Prophet and only emerged recently (Zulkhairi, 2022). *Pesantren* admits that Islam *Wasathiyah* existed during the time of the Prophet. Today, it is a re-definition and re-interpretation, especially in response to Indonesia's increasingly narrowing concept of religion and statehood.

Dayah Ulama at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* admit that Islam *Wasathiyah* is not a new product but a treasure that has existed since the time of the previous Prophet. Other informants also mentioned that Islam *Wasathiyah* values were prevalent during the time of the Prophet, including *Islah* or reconciliation. The Prophet loved peace and did not preach with his sword before starting with his words and morals (Zuhdi, 2019). Even if he had to fight, the Prophet did not fight non-Muslims but acted in self-defense or retaliation against non-Muslims who wanted to fight the Prophet.

The information above shows that Rasulullah has implemented many principles of Islam *Wasathiyah*, including conciliatory

(*islah*), deliberative (*syura*), and exemplary (*qudwah*) (Anzaikhan, Bahri, and Sufrizal, 2023). The discourse above indicates that the *Ulama* of *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah uphold the value of loving peace, including maintaining peace among Muslims or between Islam and the state. The division of the nature and principles of Islam *Wasathiyah* is reflected in several sub-headings as below.

1. *Environmental Islam*

Environmental Islam is a term used by *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah *Ulama* to reflect that Islam constantly adapts to the developments of the times, including Indonesia's condition today. Islam is in contact with the culture and environment where these teachings exist. Many environmental features influence the characteristics of the application of Islam in various sectors, such as local culture, customs, community habits, community work, and teachers' mindsets (Mailin, Sazali, and Dharma, 2023).

Environmental Islam provides concrete evidence that Islam is essentially not rigid and does not easily convert other Muslims to infidels. Environmental Islam tries to internalize Islamic principles; some points can be contextualized, and others cannot (Irfanullah and Fuad, 2022). *Ulama* at *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah stated that the *aqidah* should not be internalized in Islamic teachings because it is strict, strong, and binding.

Therefore, social relations, relationships of mutual assistance, matters of social *fiqh* (not *fiqh* of worship), and current issues such as politics and the state system could be internalized. The *Ulama* at *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah distinguish permanent and dynamic matters by considering how the Prophet consulted with his friends. For example, in politics and war, it was common for the Prophet to ask friends for their opinions regarding war strategy.

2. *Al-Musawat and Al-Tawazun*

These two terms are part of the Islam *Wasathiyah* concept understood by the *Dayah Ulama* at *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah. Both are other names for the term justice that Muslims today must have. *Al-Musawat* is a form of fair attitude that contains values of equality. The meaning refers to the Islam *Wasathiyah* principle. We are all creatures created by God,

all one nation, and all human beings (Nasir, Muhibuddin, and Al-Khalidi, 2023).

This concept must be implemented contextually, especially when meeting with groups of different ethnicities, races, and religions. If a Muslim has the *Al-Musawat* characteristic, he certainly does not easily disbelieve in other people, can accept differences, and believes in differences as *sunnatullah* (Syarifuddin, 2020). Among Muslims who do not have this characteristic, a sense of suspicion and hatred will be born as the seeds of intolerance towards different groups.

"Adil Al-Musawat is taught in the students' daily lives. Students are not allowed to make friends based on ethnicity, status, or wealth differences. Everyone is considered equal and taught to be independent, with no favoritism. As for responding to plural life, students from North Sumatra in this pesantren live side by side with followers of the Christian religion. Al-Musawat's concept of fairness was instilled from an early age to ensure that students do not sever their relationships with their neighbors even though they have different religions" (YES, interview with *Dayah Ulama* of Al-Hidayah, 2023).

Another concept of justice is *Al-Tawazun*, which has a different dimension from *Al-Musawat*. *Al-Musawat* is fair and tends to be equal, while *Al-Tawazun* is proportional. This means that justice sometimes reflects different or equal positions, like a piece of cake being divided equally. Proportional justice is based on the rights and responsibilities of each person (Murdan, Amir, and Nurdin, 2022). For example, parents' pocket money differs for their elementary and college children. If they give the same amount, then parents are not being fair.

Similarly, *Al-Tawazun* is related to the concept of the state. According to the *Ulama* at *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah, people cannot sacrifice religion for the state, and vice versa; both must be proportional. Sometimes, the focus is on the religious dimension, and there are times when the focus refers to the concept of religion. One should not sacrifice religion for state motives. For example, a nationalist defends the country beyond his religious principles. He became a liberal Muslim with a free character because he wanted to implement his love for the country; this attitude is not proper.

Conversely, sacrificing the country for religion is also unjustified. Another example is changing state ideology. This concept gives rise to disobedience towards the state, radicalism, and even terrorism. A wise attitude in religion is born through understanding the two fair concepts above and looking for a middle ground that can be implemented without injuring each other.

"Students must be Tawazun in responding to the love of their homeland and religion. Both should not interfere but support and strengthen each other. A state without religion will become a liberal sovereignty, while religion without a state will lose the peace of the people in worship. Because the state protects its religious adherents in religious rituals, no one can disturb them." (ZA, interview with Teacher at Dayah Al-Hidayah, 2023).

3. As-Samahah

As-Samahah is used by *pesantren* as a form of tolerance. *As-samahah* means mutual cooperation and respect for each other's differences in ethnicity, race, politics, and even religion. *As-samahah* was born as a projection of the recent proliferation of Islamic concepts (Abee, Nasution, and Abas, 2019). Students who understand *As-samahah* will be wise in society and not be easily misled and misrepresented.

Political developments have become increasingly sharp in the past decade. As a result of the political coalition between Islamic and nationalist parties, society has become divided. People who do not understand the concept of *As-samahah* tend to be the targets for legislative candidates. One house and another make noise and do not reprimand each other because of different political lords. Even though people bleed to defend their lord, those being defended work together and share seats (positions).

"Teachers must understand the importance of As-samahah. Apart from our environment being close to the Christian population of Sumatra, mutual cooperation between other religions' adherents will avoid religious conflict. When students return home, they must socialize with the community. They should not be reluctant towards non-Muslims in muamalah. In political matters, many local legislative candidates often create divisions among the people. The As-samahah attitude is an alternative to prevent this division." (YES,

interview with Management at Dayah Al-Hidayah, 2023).

Recently, especially in Aceh, religious friction between Muslims and non-Muslims has rarely occurred. Internal conflicts occur more often among fellow Muslims who have different Islamic sects. *Mazhab* differences not only damage social affairs but also often influence the concept of trade and *muamalah*. For example, a Muslim wants to buy his neighbor's trade product, but because he knows his neighbor has a different sect, he decides not to buy it.

"In responding to mazhab differences, breaking ties because of different Islamic sects is not permissible. Social relations must still be maintained. People must not be reluctant to buy or sell something because they know their neighbor has a different sect. Many still sell to the same sect and do not sell products to the different group" (AH, interview with teacher at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah*, 2023).

4. Syura (Deliberation)

Dayah Ulama at Al-Hidayah use *syura* to define the concept of sovereignty based on deliberation. In simple terms, deliberation is a dialogue of perceptions to reach a peaceful, family-accepted decision. Further, deliberation is a severe concept for a country in determining the people's representatives and their leaders (Syafieh, Muhaini, and Syufyan, 2022). Indonesia is a country based on Pancasila. The *syura* concept adopted is a democratic system in which the majority vote is the victory vote.

Dayah Ulama at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* recognize that Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution are forms of mutual agreement in a large assembly called the state. Therefore, it does not have to be an Islamic state. It is based on Islamic values, so the collective agreement cannot be disturbed, even if religion is the reason. As explained previously, the Prophet did not decide anything related to state affairs; the Prophet was open and asked for the opinions of his friends. This shows that state affairs are not final conditions; there are still very open deliberation and agreement opportunities.

The next problem is the acceptance of the deliberation's result with grace. For example, when legislative candidates lost the election, people still asked for what had been donated. Unscrupulous legislative candidates even

withdrew assets that had been donated to the prayer room, such as fans, sound systems, or prayer mats. Their disappointment drowned out their shame; they are immature in deliberations. The deliberation principle is mutual agreement, which means that the majority vote is the indicator; the fewest votes must accept it gracefully.

The Dayah Ulama at Al-Hidayah recognize that deliberation is crucial in organizational life. In fact, according to them, the caliber of their *pesantren* is very small, and they often hold deliberations with students, teachers, or administrators. Hence, deliberation can be found anywhere if there is a joint choice or decision.

"We accept the government's decision regarding our previous pesantren as a joint deliberation. Therefore, even though we are suspected of being radical pesantren, we follow various procedures and mechanisms to clear the accusations. We accepted the results of the deliberations with grace, thank God, now our pesantren has been declared completely free from exposure to radicalism." (Si, Mudir Dayah Al-Hidayah, 2023)

This statement shows that the *pesantren* leadership is the party that receives the deliberations' results. Even though claims of terrorism and radicalism were very detrimental to *pesantren*'s good name, he accepted them gracefully. This resulted in hundreds of students being declared back to the Republic of Indonesia during the period when three teachers were arrested by Densus 88.

5. *Islah and Ihsan*

Based on the exploration, *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah Ulama have a concept close to Muhammadiyah. For Al-Hidayah Ulama, Islamic professionalism must have the characteristics of *Islah* and *Ihsan*. They are a combination of words for reconciliation and kindness. *Islah* and *Ihsan* show a more comprehensive range of reconciliation for Muslims and non-Muslims (Muntasir, Zulkarnaen, and Hidayat, 2023). Both a conciliatory attitude towards non-Muslims and relations between non-Muslims.

"Islam is not indifferent to the welfare of infidels. Islam even pays attention to this. The proof is when the Bani Najran group visited Medina, they entered the Nabawi Mosque and performed Christian-style worship by facing

*East, even though it was Ashar time. The Companions tried to reprimand the Bani Najran group. However, the Prophet intervened and allowed the Christians to worship even though they were in the mosque. The Prophet's reconciling attitude lies in the Prophet's efforts to intervene with friends who wanted to reprimand non-Muslims. We often call this *islah* and *ihsan*."* (ZA, Teacher at Dayah Al-Hidayah, 2023)

The interview above reflects that the Ulama of *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah have *wasathiyah* values in the context of reconciliation. Reconciling in the story of the Prophet does not mean mixing faith and the practice of worship. Instead, it is information from the Prophet that reconciling issues that are 'wide-ranging' in the assembly is crucial. It is in accordance with another informant:

"The Al-Quran Surah Al-Mujjadi verse 11 states that we must be free in the assembly. If the field here is only for Muslims, then Islam is narrow; the broader Islam is rahmatan lil alamin. Islam is for the world, including non-Muslims. Thus, providing space for non-Muslims to worship is permissible, even if that place is a mosque. Likewise, if non-Muslims are lost or need help finding a place of worship due to certain conditions, we are ready to accept them at pesantren as long as it does not damage Islamic principles." (AH, Teacher at Dayah Al-Hidayah, 2023)

Therefore, Muslims are not prohibited from worshipping in the church if it is clean, just sharing a place on Allah SWT's vast earth (Elvinaro, Syarif, and Rohmana, 2022). *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah Ulama do not question this phenomenon. According to him, Muslims and non-Muslims will reach a high level of tolerance if non-Muslims are maintaining security or guarding the parking lot of Muslims who are praying Eid prayers. If this condition can be implemented, no Muslim will have to miss the Eid prayer, which is only held twice a year.

6. *Qudwah (Role Model)*

A role model is an implemented theory at *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah. Role models are highly emphasized in theoretical frames and implementation, especially in teaching. The *qudwah* is reflected in the student's daily life (learning and teaching). For example, the curriculum includes the *Aqidah Ahklak* book and the Al-Ghazali *Ihya Ulumuddin* book. The teachers highly emphasize moral

determination. The culture of respecting *Tengku* is an intensity that is highly considered in *pesantren*.

"We are focused on developing our students' morals because morals are inherent in children's daily lives. When a child is on holiday, for example, he will return with his parents. If his morals do not change (become better), his education has failed to build children's morality. On the other hand, students must be more polite when returning to their respective homes. The way of speaking, for example, speaks gently with parents, is obedient, does not say 'ah', and is light-hearted in helping with what is needed." (UH, interview with Teacher at Dayah Al-Hidayah, 2023).

Students are also asked to obey their *ustadz* and *ustadzah*. For example, they must greet the *ustadz* when entering and leaving class. The Al-Hidayah *Ulama* taught students that morals are the entrance to teachers' knowledge. This means that if students do not respect and obey their teachers, then the blessings and quality of that knowledge will be reduced significantly (Wildan, 2022). Therefore, morals are above knowledge, the hadith of the prophet and a characteristic of studying at *Pesantren* Al-Hidayah.

The concept of *qudwah* must also be exemplified by *ustadz* as teachers. If teachers want students to perform morning prayers in the congregation, the *ustadz* must be present first. The *ustadz* is an exemplary object that the students must follow. An exemplary order in lecture material will not be significant if there are no real examples from the *ustadz*. Likewise, the *ustadz* must reflect an ideal figure, including speaking gently and politely, using kind words, and avoiding bad words. *Ustadz* and teachers are permissible to be angry with students if necessary, but the anger of moral people is certainly not the same as hoodlums.

The voice can be loud, but do not swear or curse in negative terms. When punishment is given to students, it must be moral and have educational value. For example, when students make mistakes or are not disciplined, the punishment is to write 10 verses from the Qur'an or memorize certain verses. Apart from the fact that witnesses will have a deterrent effect, memorizing deposits will make them increase their memorized knowledge. Some

sanctions are physical exercises, such as rotating the field by running 3 laps. It will train the students physically so they are healthier and stronger. These sanctions are given after observing that the students are healthy and have no problem exercising.

7. *Muthwathanah* (Nationalism)

Another Islam *Wasathiyah* value that can be found in the thoughts of Dayah *Ulama* is their nationalism concept. The nationalist character of these *Ulama* continues to refer to the records and what was exemplified by the prophet, namely the caliphate system. They stated that such a format was the ideal form of government for Islam because the Prophets and apostles exemplified it. However, the Al-Hidayah *Ulama* say the caliphate system is not an obligation. There are exceptions if it is a *shura* or mutual agreement (Inayatillah and Kamaruddin, 2023).

They assert that Muslims should love their country, which is *sunatullah* and in the heart of every human being. The proof is that loyal humans want to go home, build their hometown, or meet their relatives and neighbors in the village. This is the most minimal indicator of nationalist awareness without even realizing it (Mukmin, 2021). It is the same as the students. They hope to enter *pesantren* as a source of pride when they return home as *ustadz*, *imams*, or religious figures. This is a small portrait of an individual's nationalism.

The most obvious love for one's country or *mutawatir* in the treasures of the Indonesian nation can be seen in the sporting dimension, especially when the Indonesian national football team enters international competitions, such as the Asian Cup, AFF Cup, U-17 World Cup, and World Cup qualifiers. Without fanatical calls, the Indonesian people were united and supported it in droves by watching directly at the stadium or on television and smartphones. Indonesian people deliberately remember their match schedule, shifting routine agendas because they want to see matches between their country, Indonesia, and other countries. With a sense of love for the country, people can be that enthusiastic about watching football.

"The Indonesian people are very nationalistic; the simple proof is that when the National Team is about to compete, some are willing to fly to the match stadium. Others

deliberately buy special packages to be seen on their smartphones, and quite a few deliberately go to coffee shops to watch the match more enjoyable. All of this is a form of support for the homeland in varying capacities. Pesantren often plan to watch together when the National Team has a serious match schedule (tournament). Apart from instilling a spirit of nationalism in students, it can also entertain them amid the stress of teaching and learning." (Si, interview, *Mudir Dayah Al-Hidayah*, 2023).

The statement above shows that nationalism is most ideally transferred through sports. This is proven by the students who always participate in sporting events (football) even though they are local. Apart from impacting the students' physical health, they will be attractive to future students if they can achieve their goals. Interest in start-up *pesantren* usually does not come from the students but from their parents who send them to *pesantren*. It could be because the child is naughty, challenging to manage or not accepted at another school. Through sports, it is possible to increase the interest of prospective students to board and study at *pesantren*.

CLOSING

The contrasting thought of the *Dayah Ulama* at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* is a shift in ideology and perspective after receiving guidance from the government and local religious experts. The *Ulama*, who were previously exclusive, considered *Pancasila toghut*, and were reluctant to carry out flag ceremonies, have now transformed into very moderate and nationalist. Along the way, the concept of religious moderation underwent a process of indigenization to suit the sect and culture of society, where it is more acceptable to use the term *Islam Wasathiyah*.

After a coaching period, understanding *Islam Wasathiyah* at *Pesantren Al-Hidayah* has 7 main components. First is Environmental Islam, an Islamic concept of *wasathiyah* as another name for *muwathanah*. Environmental Islam is a condition of Muslims who accept the combination of religion and culture if it does not disturb the *aqidah* principles. Second is *Al-Musawat* and *Al-Tawazun*, which are fair towards others, including non-Muslims. Third is *As-Samahah*, another meaning of tolerance. Fourth is *Shura*, the values of deliberation,

including accepting the Indonesian government pattern based on democracy. Fifth is *Islah* and *Ihsan*, which means to reconcile in goodness. Sixth is *qudwah*, which means example and providing a role model. Seventh is *muwathanah*, which means love of the homeland.

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