

RECLAIMING THE MIDDLE PATH: HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES OF MODERATE ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN INDONESIAN PESANTREN OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Mohamad Anang Firdaus
Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Wasil Kediri, Indonesia
Email: anangfirdausm@iainkediri.ac.id

Muhammad Abror Rosyidin
Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari Jombang, Indonesia
Email: muhammadabrор@unhasy.ac.id

Abdillah Afabih
Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng, Indonesia
Email: abdillah@tebuireng.ac.id

Hafidz Ilham Bachtiar
Universitas al-Azhar Kairo, Mesir
Email: 320210014280@azhar.edu.eg

Corresponding Author: Mohamad Anang Firdaus

Article history: Received: January 04, 2025 | Revised: April 17, 2025 | Available online: June 10, 2025

How to cite this article: Firdaus, Mohamad Anang, Muhammad Abror Rosyidin, Abdillah Afabih, and Hafidz Ilham Bachtiar. "Reclaiming the Middle Path: Historical Trajectories of Moderate Islamic Education in Indonesian Pesantren of the Sixteenth Century". *Didaktika Religia: Journal of Islamic Education* 13, no. 1 (2025): 1-30. 10.30762/didaktika.v13i1.3548

Abstract: Pesantren have historically been recognized as key institutions in shaping moderate Islamic thought in Indonesia. However, recent shifts in certain pesantren reveal the emergence of more rigid and radical orientations, prompting the need to revisit their intellectual and theological foundations. This study investigates the genealogical roots of pesantren's wasatiyah (moderate) orientation as it developed in the sixteenth century. Employing a qualitative method, this research is grounded in a literature-based analysis of scholarly works on Islamic education and pesantren traditions. Textual sources were selected for their relevance to the development of moderate Islamic thought in Indonesian contexts. The findings reveal three interrelated factors that underpin the emergence of moderation in pesantren: the dialectical engagement between local culture and Islam; a dialogical approach

Copyright: © 2025. The authors.

Didaktika Religia: Journal of Islamic Education is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

embedded in their manhaj thinking; and the theological grounding in Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah. Together, these factors form a framework that supports pesantren as enduring institutions of balanced and inclusive Islamic education. Reaffirming this genealogy is essential in addressing contemporary deviations from pesantren's original ethos.

Keywords: Moderate Islam, Pesantren, Islamic Education, Wasatiyah Thought.

Introduction

Pesantren as mentioned by Nurcholis Madjid is an educational institution that is not only synonymous with the meaning of Islam but also contains the meaning of Indonesian authenticity (indigenous)¹ has become an educational institution that has its own characteristics. Many Muslim scholars believe that pesantrens are a place to foster moderate thinking in Indonesia. Pesantrens are also considered to have contributed to shaping the character of Indonesian Muslims with *wasathiyah* Islamic thinking which stands on the principles of balance, justice, and tolerance. This is as stated by Soebadri and Johns, that pesantrens or Islamic boarding schools in the period between 1200 and 1600 were the spearhead of the development of the Malay Archipelago Civilization, which most determined the Islamic character of the Islamic kingdoms.²

From Soebadri and Johns' statement above, it is known that the formation of pesantrens between the 12th and 16th centuries is important to research, what are the formulas that shape the character of Islamic boarding schools into educational institutions with a moderate style of thinking. The Islamic boarding school, which from the beginning has been spreading the teachings of *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, has made it a central position in "mediating" between the *Tatharruf Yamini* (extreme right) group with its takfiri ideology, and the *Tatharruf Yasari* (extreme left), with its *tasabul* (disparaging) ideology in religion.

The position of pesantrens as guardians of moderate thought makes them important in religious life in Indonesia. Apart from that, the role of pesantrens as a link between communities allows them to

¹ Nurcholis Madjid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren: Sebuah Potret Perjalanan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 4–5.

² Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia, Cet. 8 Rev* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 36.

instill the values of Islamic teachings with a pattern of intense relationships. Therefore, pesantrens are known as Islamic educational institutions that always uphold religious values (pesantren teachings) in society, as well as defending their interests before the authorities.³ Hasyim Muzadi said that to ward off the dangers of radicalism, terrorism, internal conflict, and multidimensional crises, it is necessary to strengthen the character of moderate Islam in the Islamic world.⁴

Pesantren has become the center of education in the archipelago, especially Java. He formed the spirit of Islam in the archipelago which had a moderate and friendly attitude towards local culture and became the forerunner to the number of Muslims in this country becoming the largest and growing rapidly. According to the Dutch report, the number of pesantren in 1885 in Java alone (except the Sultanate of Yogyakarta), reached 14,929 with 222,663 students.⁵

However, in the era of globalization, Umma Farid found that in line with globalization, the face of pesantren in Indonesia is no longer monopolized by traditional groups, but has been colored by new pesantren formed by other Islamic groups with different faces.⁶ The results of this research were then continued by Badrus Samsul Fata, who revealed that violent extremism and terrorist acts in Indonesia for more than a decade involved alumni of different radical pesantrens; four are affiliated with *Jamaah Islamiyyah* (Al-Islam Lamongan, al-Mukmin Ngruki, Al-Muttaqien Jepara, and Darusy Syahadah Klaten), and the other two (al-Manar and Al-Hikmah) are affiliated with *Jamaah Anssar Tauhid* (JAT), and *Jamaah Anshar*

³ Zainal Arifin Thoha, *Jagadnya Gus Dur: Demokrasi, Kemanusiaan dan Pribumisasi Islam*, 4th ed. (Yogyakarta: Kutub, 2010), 236.

⁴ M. Sidi Ritaudin, 'Wawasan Etika Politik, Membangun Sikap Kritis dan Rasional Politik Bangsa', *Jurnal Tapis: Jurnal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 10, No. 2 (4 September 2017): 16, <https://doi.org/10.24042/tps.v10i2.1604>.

⁵ Muhammad Rosyidin and Imron Arifin, 'Integration of Islamic and Indonesian Education in the Perspective of KH. Salahuddin Wahid', *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 18, no. 2 (31 December 2021): 240, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2021.182-02>.

⁶ Umma Farida, 'Radikalisme, Moderatisme, dan Liberalisme Pesantren: Melacak Pemikiran Dan Gerakan Keagamaan Pesantren di Era Globalisasi', *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (27 March 2015): 145, <https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v10i1.789>.

Sharia (JAS).⁷ This means that pesantrens have emerged with a new style with extremist ideology, which is different from the character and style of Islamic boarding schools when Islamic boarding schools were first formed in the 16th century. Therefore, it is important to examine the formula and genealogy of 16th-century pesantrens so that we can find out what factors form the moderate character that pesantren should have.

There are several studies that have been conducted around this theme. Among other things: Abdillah found that pesantren from the past until now still prohibit inclusive, open, and moderate Islam. Therefore, this result also rejects the bad stigma, especially from Western media, which accuses pesantren of being hotbeds of radicalism and terrorism.⁸ Neny Muthi'atul Awwaliyah conducted a study to trace pesantren religious thoughts and movements in the era of globalization. This article examines the movement to spread moderate ideology by pesantren alumni to communities in urban areas, and it is rarely spread evenly to remote areas.⁹

Ismail studied pesantren with various models of education and teaching to produce a generation of moderate Muslims who uphold ethical values, which will accelerate the process of national development in various sectors.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Ajibah Quroti Aini studied that in the millennial era, pesantrens contribute to spreading tolerance in understanding diversity to create a peaceful life, so that they are not easily provoked by hoaxes.¹¹ Meanwhile, Badrus Samsul Fata examines the future challenges of moderate pesantrens,

⁷ Badrus Samsul Fata, 'The Future Challenges of Moderate Pesantren in Indonesia', *AL Fikrah: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (12 February 2023): 48–49, <https://doi.org/10.51476/alfikrah.v3i1.452>.

⁸ Abdillah -, 'Peran Pesantren dalam Mengembangkan Islam Moderat di Indonesia', *Jurnal Yaqzhan: Analisis Filsafat, Agama Dan Kemanusiaan* 5, no. 2 (17 December 2019): 76, <https://doi.org/10.24235/jy.v5i2.5677>.

⁹ Neny Muthi'atul Awwaliyah, 'Pondok Pesantren Sebagai Wadah Moderasi Islam di Era Generasi Millenial', *Islamic Review: Jurnal Riset Dan Kajian Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (30 April 2019): 59, <https://doi.org/10.35878/islamicreview.v8i1.161>.

¹⁰ Ismail Ismail, 'Pesantren, Islam Moderat, Dan Etika Politik Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam', *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars*, no. Series 2 (22 April 2018): 585, <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v0iSeries>.

¹¹ Ajibah Quroti Aini, 'Islam Moderat Di Pesantren: Sistem Pendidikan, Tantangan, Dan Prospeknya', *Edukasia Islamika: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 2 (12 December 2018): 218, <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v3i2.1689>.

especially how the global Islamic political movement has fueled radicalism and religious fundamentalism in contemporary Indonesia.¹²

Meanwhile, Abdurrahman Kasdi examines the genealogy of moderate thought in the idea of Indonesian Islam which was born from the Walisongo Islamic spirit, which was then continued by the *ulama* of *Ablussunnah wal Jama'ah* with a tolerant, peaceful, open, and accommodating vision of Indonesian culture. He also concluded the importance of knowing the Islam Nusantara formula which implies an Islam that is friendly to the archipelago.¹³

From the previous studies above, research regarding the genealogy of *wasathiyah* Islam developed by pesantrens has been carried out by Kasdi to examine the genealogy of Indonesian Islam with a *wasathiyah* character from the perspective of the Walisongo historical chronicle. Moreover, other research further explores the forms of Islamic boarding school moderation in the millennial era, the challenges faced by pesantrens today, and the challenges of pesantrens in maintaining the moderating role of Islamic thought in the future. This article has not explored in depth the formula and genealogy of moderate Islamic thought which has been a factor in forming the moderate character of pesantrens since its founding in the 16th-century.

This article will try to answer questions regarding the genealogical formula of *Wasathiyah* Islam that pesantren had in the 16th century from a philosophical perspective that examines Islamic boarding schools from cultural, sociological, and theological aspects so that pesantrens are known as Islamic educational institutions with moderate religious understanding and can synergize with local Indonesian traditions and culture, and be able to become an agent of change and development in social society in Indonesia.

The method for writing this article is qualitative research with literature review, namely researching and analyzing books and scientific essays on the theme of moderate thought and moderate Islamic thought which is related to Islam developing in Indonesia. Data sources are grouped into two categories, namely primary sources and secondary sources. The primary source in this research is the

¹² Fata, 'The Future Challenges of Moderate Pesantren In Indonesia', 37.

¹³ Abdurrohman Kasdi, 'The Role of Walisongo in Developing the Islam Nusantara Civilization', *Addin* 11, no. 1 (2017): 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.21043/addin.v11i1.1973>.

works of Yusuf al-Qardhawi, which are used as a theoretical basis in formulating the roots of moderate Islamic thought. Apart from that, the primary sources used in this research are books on the themes of *Wasatiyah Islam* and Islam Nusantara. Meanwhile, secondary sources are works or books that have the same theme of discussion about pesantrens and books and articles on Islamic thought that have a correlation with the research title, in order to sharpen and strengthen the arguments in this research.

The Concept of Moderation in Islam

Linguistically, moderation comes from the English language moderation which means a moderate attitude, an attitude of not exaggerating.¹⁴ Language expert Raghīb al-Asfahani said that *wasatiyah* comes from the word *wasath*, which means something that is between two extremes, while that comes from *awsat* which means middle point.¹⁵ The word moderation comes from the Latin *moderateio* which means moderation (not excessive or insufficient). In the book “The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam (Oxford University Press, 2015)” Mohamad Hasyim Kamali emphasizes that moderation in Arabic “*wasathiyah*” cannot be separated from the keywords balanced and justice.

Linguistically, as explained by al-Asfahani, *wasathiyah* comes from the word *wasath* which means middle. Sometimes the word is used for something that has two opposite ends. It can also be used for something that is balanced, which protects against wasteful and stingy attitudes.¹⁶ Etymologically, the word *wasathiyah* is equivalent to the word fair. From this linguistic understanding, Yusuf al-Qardhawi explained that Islam as a religion with a moderate character (*wasathiyah*), teaches Muslims to avoid extreme actions (*tatharruf*) between two opposing groups. Muslims should be able to adhere to a moderate and straight *manhaj*, which is the path taken by people from the group of prophets and pious people, who are pleased with Allah SWT, and who receive favors from Him.¹⁷

Al-Qardhawi then explored the meaning of moderation in several Islamic teachings which would later become a reflection of

¹⁴ John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, *English-Indonesian Dictionary* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2002), 384.

¹⁵ Raghīb al-Asfahani, *Mufradat Alfaz Al-Qur'an* (Damaskus: Dar al-Qalam, 2012), 879.

¹⁶ al-Asfahani, 879.

¹⁷ al-Asfahani, 879.

the essentially moderate nature of Islam. Islamic teachings in all their scientific knowledge have become accustomed to conducting dialogue between two or more opposing opinions. Then Islamic teachings began to be understood from various perspectives which ultimately required combinative cooperation between two different things. For example, Islamic preaching often describes combinative cooperation between two opposing things. Islam does not only teach strengthening spiritual aspects and neglecting material aspects, between *rabbaniyyah* and *insaniyyah* aspects. But Islam combines the two.¹⁸

At the doctrinal level, in relation to *manhaj wasathiyah*, al-Qardhawi also explained that Islam emphasizes strengthening and balancing aspects of Islamic teachings which have two dimensions, such as spiritual and material aspects, *rabbaniyyah* and *insaniyyah* aspects, the world and the hereafter and aspects -other aspects that are an inseparable part of Islamic teachings themselves. Here the moderate position shown by Islam is to be able to take advantage of the advantages and avoid the disadvantages of these two confrontational aspects. Islam cannot take sides on one side and avoid the other side so it will be extreme.¹⁹

In Mohammad Hashim Kamali's view, balance and justice are the basic principles of moderation in religion. A religious person must not have extreme or even radical views by only seeing things from one point of view but must be able to find a middle point from these two points of view so that in relations between religious communities a harmonious and comfortable relationship will be created.²⁰

The meaning of *wasathiyah* can essentially be said to both lead to something that is positioned in the middle (*wasath*) which has the spirit to mediate between two extremes, or two things that appear contradictory. This spirit of mediation, collaboration or compromise is the starting point in formulating a genealogy of moderate Islamic thought in Islamic boarding schools.

Formula of Moderate Islamic Thought in Pesantren

¹⁸ Yusuf al-Qardhawi, *Al-Khasa'is al-'Ammah al-Islamiyyah* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al - Risalah, 1985), 5–6.

¹⁹ al-Qardhawi, 40–41.

²⁰ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatīyyah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

In Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) view today, Islamic boarding schools should start to make improvements in all aspects, such as pesantren education, starting from the vision, mission, goals, curriculum, management, and leadership which must be improved and adapted to developments in the era of globalization. However, on the other hand, Gus Dur also hopes that pesantrens will be able to maintain their identity as guardians of classical scientific traditions. In the sense of not completely dissolving with modernization, but taking something that is seen as a positive benefit for development.²¹

The classical science in question is a tradition that has developed since the founding of pesantrens, from the roots of the genealogy of thought and its paradigm which has moderate characteristics. This tradition is important in efforts to maintain the moderate thinking character of pesantrens. If classical scientific traditions are displaced due to modernization and globalization, pesantrens have the potential to lose their identity as Islamic educational institutions that always guard moderate thinking. It is from this starting point that the search for the genealogical formula of pesantrens as a factor in forming the character of moderate Islamic thought becomes important.

As in the hadiths of Rasulullah SAW regarding the goals of education, it can be stated that there are at least four basic goals, namely first, forming and developing scientific circles. Second, self-serving to Allah SWT. Third, get goodness which is manifested in the form of pious deeds. Fourth, directing the destination of its implementation to the afterlife (*ukhrawi*). Fifth, develop human nature according to the stages of growth and development in the social environment.²²

In relation to the aims of education, education should be drawn philosophically backward in order to obtain a clear, straight line forward. The identification of education based on its objectives (*maqashidi*) by Ibn Ashur is described in 4 fundamental value principles which are then referred to as *maqashidi* education, namely *al-fitrah* (the principle that humans have potential), *al-samahah* (the principal of easy/fun education), *al-musawah* (the principle of

²¹ Faisol, *Gus Dur & Pendidikan Islam: Upaya Mengembalikan Esensi Pendidikan Di Era Global*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Ar-ruzz Media, 2011), 46–47.

²² Muhammad Abror Rosyidin and Mukti Latif Muhammad, 'Tujuan Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Hadis', *Nabawi: Journal of Hadith Studies* 2, no. 2 (31 March 2022): 196, <https://doi.org/10.55987/njhs.v2i2.52>.

education for all), and *al-hurriyyah* (the principle of freedom in education).²³

Freedom (freedom) in education means that it cannot impose limits, or dichotomies that can dwarf knowledge. This freedom has given birth to many Islamic scientists who emerged to disrupt civilization. These freedoms, of course, include freedom of opinion, freedom of knowledge, freedom to teach, freedom to write, and freedom to think.²⁴

This *maqashidi* education shows the side of moderation which was also applied in educational institutions that developed in the medieval period, including pesantrens. Pesantrens allowed students at that time to not be limited to studying the Koran from Kiai, whatever knowledge they had. The scope of potential is also enlarged, so that students are free to choose which science they want to study. Of course, Islamic boarding schools provide curriculum directions to help students develop. In pesantrens there are also no caste distinctions for learning. Everyone from all walks of life is allowed to study at pesantrens.

There are 3 factors that form the genealogical formula for pesantrens as Islamic educational institutions that have the character of Moderate Islamic thought, namely:

1. Dialectics of Culture and Religion

Bernard HM Vlekke said that Islam came to the archipelago with the fact that culture and local wisdom traditions had been built up among the people of the archipelago.²⁵ This was confirmed by Abdullah who assessed that from the beginning Islam entered the archipelago not in an “original” form as in Arabia, but that it had interacted with other non-Arab cultures such as Persia, India and

²³ Mohamad Anang Firdaus, *Menggagas Pendidikan Maqasidi, Konstruksi Pemikiran Maqasid Ibn Ashur Sebagai Paradigma Pendidikan Islam* (Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2021), 214.

²⁴ Mohamad Anang Firdaus, ‘The Maqasid Thought of Ibn Ashur and Development of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies: Searching of The Correlation of The Concept’, in *INCRE 2020: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Religion and Education, INCRE 2020, 11-12 November 2020, Jakarta, Indonesia* (European Alliance for Innovation, 2021), 157.

²⁵ Bernard H.M Vlekke, *Nusantara: Sejarah Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2016), 27.

China. This fact then adds a new pattern to Islamic thought developing in Indonesia.²⁶

Gus Dur seems to have understood the above facts for a long time, to the point that he expressed this concept with the term “Indigenization of Islam”. Gus Dur stated that the Indigenization of Islam was not ‘Jawanization’ or syncretism. Because Islamic indigenization only considers local needs in formulating religious laws, without changing the law itself.²⁷ So according to him, it is not correct if the reality is that Indonesian Islam has mixed Islamic teachings with local culture.

Accommodation of local needs does not stop in the legal area, but also in the cultural area. So, even though the ‘Meru’ roof is a roof inherited from Hindu architecture, it can be borrowed for mosque architecture through the process of Islamization. The Demak mosque was formed with the ‘Meru’ roof which was converted to Islam. From nine layers of Hindu perspective, there are three layers of Islamic perspective which symbolize the three stages of Islam; Faith, Islam, and Ihsan. Iman is belief in Allah, which is perfected through the practice of Islamic law until it reaches the peak of Sufism called Ihsan.²⁸

Apart from the negative conclusion, Gus Dur also explained the negative definition of Islamic indigenization. He explained that in this process (Indigenization of Islam), the assimilation of Islam and culture must not occur, because assimilation means the loss of original characteristics. Islam must remain true to its Islamic nature. The Koran must remain in Arabic, especially in prayers, because this has become the norm. However, it must be realized that adapting Islamic teachings to the realities of life is only permitted as far as the cultural side is concerned. In the matter of marriage guardian, the adoptive father is still not the marriage guardian for his adopted child. This provision is a religious norm, not a habit.

Because of the strict principles in Islamic law, custom cannot change the text itself but only change or develop its application and indeed the application will change by itself. For example, the

²⁶ Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Pemikiran Ummat Islam Di Nusantara: Sejarah Dan Perkembangannya Hingga Abad Ke-10* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1990).

²⁷ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Pribumisasi Islam: Dalam Pergulatan Negara, Agama, Dan Kebudayaan* (Depok: Nusantara, 2001), 117.

²⁸ Syaiful Arif, *Humanisme Gus Dur: Pergumulan Islam Dan Kemanusiaan*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Ar-ruzz Media, 2013), 105.

Prophet Muhammad SAW never designated rice as an object of zakat, but wheat. Then the ulama defined wheat as qutul balad, a staple food. And because of that definition, wheat turned into rice in Indonesia²⁹

Islam Nusantara is a unique Indonesian style of Islam, a combination of Islamic theological values with local traditional values, culture, and customs in the country. The character of Nusantara Islam shows the existence of local wisdom in the archipelago which does not violate Islamic teachings but instead synergizes Islamic teachings with local customs which are widely spread throughout Indonesia. The presence of Islam is not intended to destroy or challenge existing traditions. On the other hand, Islam came to enrich and Islamize existing traditions and culture gradually (gradually). It could take decades or several generations. The meeting of Islam with Indonesian customs and traditions then formed social systems, educational institutions (such as Islamic boarding schools), and the sultanate system. This tradition is what is then called Nusantara Islam, namely Islam which has merged with the traditions and culture of the archipelago.³⁰

In another language, KH. Salahuddin Wahid (Gus Sholah) uses the word Indonesian Islam for what people mean by Islam Nusantara. Looking at the history of the intersection of religion and state, KH. Salahuddin Wahid (Gus Sholah) has a thought, namely a combination of Islam and Indonesianism which provides an understanding that Muslim Indonesian citizens do not need to be confused about whether they are Muslim Indonesians or Muslims living in Indonesia. For Gus Sholah, Islam and Indonesia have been integrated, there is no need to contradict them. According to Gus Sholah, the conflict between the two can actually influence conflicts based on SARA. So providing space for religious and cultural expression for the people of their country is a necessity for Indonesia, seeing that they are also obliged to love their country.³¹

Gus Sholah once got a story from his friend, a lecturer from the University of Indonesia. His friend asked his UI colleague whether he was an Indonesian Muslim or an Indonesian Muslim. Most people answer that being Indonesian is a matter of this world

²⁹ Wahid, *Pribumisasi Islam: Dalam Pergulatan Negara, Agama, Dan Kebudayaan*, 119–20.

³⁰ Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Masterpiece Islam Nusantara : Sanad Dan Jejaring Ulama-Santri (1830-1945)* (Jakarta: Pustaka Compass, 2016), 240.

³¹ Salahuddin Wahid, *Memadukan Keislaman Dan Keindonesiaan, Esai-Esai Kebangsaan* (Jombang: Pustaka Tebuiireng, 2017), 64.

only, and in the future (afterlife) it is more about the Islamic side. Gus Sholah believes that as a Muslim and Indonesian, there is no need to be conflicted. That is the moderation side of Islam in Indonesia.³²

Walisongo carried out cultural modifications with Islamic teachings as a form of appreciation for local culture so that Islam came without eliminating local traditions that are still alive today. Sunan Kudus's prohibition for the Kudus Muslim community from eating beef is enough of an example of how the first generation of Islamic preachers taught Islam while respecting developing cultural values. The Walisongo assimilation and acculturation process is not carried out by integrating Islamic culture with local culture, but they take local cultural instruments to fill them with Islamic values. This is done because Islamic theological values are standard "*tsawabil*" and sacred, which cannot be combined with local theological values.

In theoretical discourse, what Walisongo did within the framework of Khaled Abou El Fadl's thinking can be understood as an effort not to position Islam like a frozen monument, instead they placed it in the perspective of a dynamic and active faith. Consequently, they appreciate the achievements of the past but they (consciously) live in the present.³³ Khaled's conception of Islamic moderation lies in a Muslim's awareness of his doctrinal beliefs and the reality of where and when he lives. This conception forms a dialectical perspective, such as specific legal aspects-moral ideals (Rahman), historicity-normativity (Rahman, Amin Abdullah), normative-empirical (Mukti Ali), al-Kitab-at-tanzil (Syahrur) and aspects another opposite in the face of Islam.

Cultural assimilation with the dialectical pattern above also has a correlative side to the theory of *ijtihad tathbiqi-istinbathi* developed by Imam al-Syathibi. According to him, if *ijtihad istinbathi* focuses on how to create law (*insya' al-hukm*), then *ijtihad tathbiqi* focuses on aspects of implementing the law (*tathbiq wa tanzil al-hukm*). According to al-Syathibi, *ijtihad* in terms of its work process can be divided into two forms, firstly *ijtihad istinbathi*, namely an effort to research the *'illat* (reason) contained in the text, and secondly, *ijtihad tathbiqi*, namely an effort to research a problem where the law is to be identified and applied in accordance with the ideas contained

³² Salahuddin Wahid, *Berguru Pada Realitas, Refleksi Pemikiran Menuju Indonesia Bermartabat* (Malang: UIN-Maliki Press, 2011), 210.

³³ Khaled Abou El Fadl and Helmi Mustofa, *Selamatkan Islam Dari Muslim Puritan* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2006), 130.

according to the text, this second *ijtihad* is also called *tabqiq al-Manat*.³⁴

2. Dialogical Philosophy in *Manhaj* (Method) Thinking

As written by Aboe Bakar Atjeh, Wahid Hasyim once said that Indonesian Muslims are different from Muslims in other countries who choose Islam for their living needs in this country by using a blended philosophy (synthesis).³⁵ The meaning of Wahid Hasyim's statement was then detailed by Aboe Bakar Atchek that the meaning of a blended philosophy is the synthesis of 4 Sunni schools of thought: *Hanafiyyah*, *Malikiyyah*, *Syafi'iyah*, *Hanbaliyyah*, and from each, the best interpretation is chosen to be combined.

What Wahid Hasyim said about Indonesian Islam being born through a synthesis process provides an understanding that Islam developed in Indonesia through dialogic processes between Islamic traditions and local traditions. This seems to encourage the birth of Islamic thought that is *tawasut* (moderate), not extreme right or left, always balanced, inclusive, tolerant, able to live side by side with adherents of other religions, and able to accept differences. This Nusantara Islam model can be proven by how Islam entered the archipelago through vernacularization and was followed by an indigenization process so that Islam became embedded in Indonesian culture.³⁶ The character of Islamic Archipelago is considered by some Islamic thinkers to be worthy of being used as an alternative in building an Islamic world civilization capable of creating harmony on earth.

Jamil Abdul Aziz in his research regarding the genealogy of the emergence of pesantrens as Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia divides it into three opinions. Firstly, Islamic boarding schools originate from the Islamic *tarekat* (religious order of sufism) tradition. Secondly, pesantren originate from the Middle Eastern educational model. Third, pesantrens originate from the Hindu-

³⁴ Abu Ishaq al-Syathibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Ushul al-Shari'ah* (Cairo: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2008), 89.

³⁵ Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*, Cet. 8 Rev, 159.

³⁶ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Melacak Akar-Akar Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam Di Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 12–15.

Buddhist educational tradition.³⁷ From the three patterns of the emergence of pesantrens above, it actually illustrates to all of us that the birth of pesantrens in Indonesia was achieved through a dialogical process between Islam, tarekat traditions, Middle Eastern educational traditions, and Hindu-Buddhist educational traditions.

First, the emergence of pesantrens in Indonesia is considered to originate from the tarekat tradition, a tradition that has developed in Islam since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. This view is based on the many activities of the tarekat led by kiai in the early days of the spread of Islam, such as *suluk*, or in the form of worship in mosques under the guidance of kiai.³⁸ This opinion is also supported by Zamakhsyari who believes that pesantrens, especially in Java, are a combination of *madrassa* and centers of *tarekat* activities, not between Islam and Hinduism.³⁹ For this reason, the kiai provides special rooms to accommodate the students. Shaikh Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Sunan Gresik) was the first cleric to build a *tarekat* institution which became the forerunner to the establishment of pesantren. Sunan Gresik gained momentum when the Majapahit throne fell (1293 – 1478 AD). Islam is also developing very rapidly, especially in coastal areas which happen to be centers of trade between regions and even between countries.⁴⁰

Second, pesantrens in Indonesia take the pattern of “kuttab” educational institutions. an educational institution during the Umayyad era which was originally only a reading and writing institution with the “halaqah” system. In the next stage, this institution experienced rapid development, because it was supported by community contributions and there were plans that had to be adhered to by educators and students.⁴¹ This opinion is almost the same as the opinion that states that Islamic boarding schools were adopted from Middle Eastern Islamic educational institutions, namely al-Azhār in Cairo, Egypt.

³⁷ Jamil Abdul Aziz, ‘Pesantren: Genealogi, Dinamika, Dan Nasionalisme’, *IQ (Ilmu Al-Qur’an): Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 01 (2018): 140–142, <https://doi.org/10.37542/iq.v1i01.11>.

³⁸ Haji Abdul Aziz Dahlan, *Ensiklopedi Hukum Islam*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 1997), 103.

³⁹ Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*, Cet. 8 Rev, 25.

⁴⁰ Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif: Menuju Sikap Terbuka Dalam Beragama*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: AN Teve & Mizan, 1997), 23.

⁴¹ Muhaimin, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam* (Bandung: Trigenda Karya, 1993), 298–99.

Martin Van Bruinessen, one of those who supports this version, is of the view that pesantren tend to be closer to one of the models of the education system in al-Azhār. This means that, according to this opinion, there are similarities in terms of conveying religious knowledge, namely through the halaqah method, where kyai and santri gather in one place to recite the recitation. This group doubts the veracity of the opinion which states that mandala institutions and dormitories that have existed since the Hindu-Buddhist era are places where textual teaching practices such as in pesantrens take place.⁴²

Third, pesantrens were born as a result of acculturation and adaptation from the “mandala” and dormitory systems of Hindus in the archipelago in the pre-Islamic period. The dormitory is provided as a place to teach the teachings of Hinduism as well as a place to develop cadres who spread this religion.⁴³ From this point of view, pesantrens are seen as the result of innovation by Islamic preachers in the first era. Until it is concluded that pesantrens are an Islamic education system that adopts the Hindu-Buddhist education system and turns it into Islamic education.⁴⁴⁴⁵

Agus Sunyoto stated that pesantrens are the result of the Islamization of the local education system which originated from the Hindu-Buddhist era in the archipelago. At that time, many local educational institutions in the form of hermitages and hamlets were established to educate *cantriks*.⁴⁶ Several historians have also provided supporting data for this opinion, such as CC. Berg, as quoted by Zamakhsyarie Dhofir, said that the term “santri” itself comes from “shastri”, an Indian language, which means a person who knows the sacred books of Hinduism, or a scholar who is an expert in Hindu religious scriptures.⁴⁷

If the pesantren education model that first developed in Indonesia is compared with how Islam first entered Indonesia, then the two will meet in Sufism. Because it is the Sufism approach that

⁴² Hanun Asrohah, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*, 1st ed. (Tangerang: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999), 184.

⁴³ Dahlan, *Ensiklopedi Hukum Islam*, 104.

⁴⁴ Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*, Cet. 8 Rev, 10.

⁴⁵ Madjid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren : Sebuah Potret Perjalanan*, 5.

⁴⁶ Agus Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo: Buku Pertama Yang Mengungkap Wali Songo Sebagai Fakta Sejarah*, 1st ed. (Depok: Pustaka IIMaN, Trans Pustaka, LTN PBNU, 2012).

⁴⁷ Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*, Cet. 8 Rev, 18.

allows Islam to dialogue with the wisdom of local traditions and culture. This was also confirmed by Aksin Wijaya, who stated that researchers who adhered to Islam came to Indonesia with a Sufism approach, having a flexible aspect in viewing Islam. This flexibility gives birth to the ability to compromise with tradition. This will be difficult to do if the penetration of Islam into the archipelago is carried out using an *ansich* Islamic legal tradition (*fiqh*) approach.^{48,49,50}

This opinion sounds reasonable because if we look at the historical chronicle of the entry of Islam into Indonesia, it is discovered that at that time the domination of Islam in the Middle East as the center of world civilization had experienced a setback due to the fall of Baghdad to the Mongol rulers in 1258. In these times Muslim scientists are increasingly turning to the discipline of Sufism,⁵¹ thus making Sufism appear more dominant, until in later years, Sufism teachings became the main approach in the spread of Islam in Indonesia and the world.

Nurcholish Madjid when stating that *pesantrens* have the meaning of Indonesian authenticity (Indigenous) because they come from the Hindu-Buddhist tradition, still does not deny that *pesantrens* are closely related to Islamic traditions, namely *tarekat*. Islam came to this region (Indonesia) through the Sufi movement and religious congregations.⁵² Sufism activities in *pesantrens* are developing in Indonesia, such as accommodating the poor who wish to perform *wirid* or *suluk*. In its development, it became the center of economic activity, and education, and even the forerunner of influential political powers. These *Zawiyah* or boarding houses in turn developed into Islamic boarding schools (*pesantrens*).⁵³

The existence of differences of opinion regarding the emergence of Islamic boarding schools is proof that *pesantrens* were

⁴⁸ Aksin Wijaya, *Menusantarakan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak Pergumulan Islam Yang Tak Kunjung Usai Di Nusantara, Cetakan Ketiga* (Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta: Nadi Pustaka, 2015), 48–49; 3rd ed. (Yogyakarta: Nadi Pustaka, 2015), 48–49.

⁴⁹ Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996), (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996), 21–22.

⁵⁰ Ratno Lukito, *Tradisi Hukum Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2008), 127–32.

⁵¹ Wijaya, *Menusantarakan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak Pergumulan Islam Yang Tak Kunjung Usai Di Nusantara, Cetakan Ketiga* (Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta: Nadi Pustaka, 2015), 48–49; 49.

⁵² Nurcholis Madjid, *Islam Agama Peradaban: Membangun Makna Dan Relevansi Doktrin Islam Dalam Sejarah* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2008), 91.

⁵³ Nurcholis Madjid, *Pesantren Dan Tasawuf in Pesantren Dan Pembangunan* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1995), 104.

born from a dialogical process between Islamic traditions, Middle Eastern traditions, and Hindu-Buddhist traditions. This also proves that Islamic boarding schools are able to harmonize various traditions and have flexibility in accommodating universal wisdom and values across traditions. Philosophically-paradigmatically, this is the strength of Islamic boarding schools or pesantrens in their function as educational institutions with moderate religious thinking.

Pesantrens, with their history of accepting local culture, also identify their potential to receive other knowledge apart from religious knowledge. In Baghdad, for example, during the Abbasid era, educational institutions were formed that could integrate religion and science. So scientists were born who were not only experts in religious knowledge but also came with the latest science and technology knowledge packages at that time. In fact, they are not only experts in scientific theory but also find new findings that are practical and can be developed in their next lives.⁵⁴

3. Understand *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*

In his book, treatise of *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari wrote that at the beginning of the spread of Islam in Indonesia, the Islamic community flourished in only one sect, *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, with the same *madhhab* (school) in its *aqidah*, Sufism and *fiqh*. KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari said:

“Initially, Muslims in Indonesia adhered to the same ideology and *madhhab*. They have the same references and sources. In the field of jurisprudence, they all follow a very noble school of thought, namely the School of Imam Muhammad bin Idris (al-Shafi'i). In the field of *ushuluddin*, they follow the Imam Abul Hasan As-Ash'ari *Madhhab*. And in the field of Sufism they follow the *Madhhab* of Imam Al-Ghazali and Imam Abul Hasan Asy-Syadzili”.⁵⁵

From the statement by Rais Akbar Nahdlatul Ulama, it was discovered that KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari has provided clear boundaries for the *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* school of thought by mentioning several names of role model scholars who must be followed in each scientific field. It is stated that Indonesian Muslims,

⁵⁴ Muhammad Abror Rosyidin, 'Interaksi Pesantren Dengan Sains dan Teknologi', *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 4, no. 1 (25 May 2021): 64, <https://doi.org/10.30659/jpai.4.1.53-73>.

⁵⁵ Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari, *Risalah Ahl Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah* (Jombang: Maktabah al-Turats al-Islami, 1994), 9.

who belong to the *Ablus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* sect, have the same intellectual criteria as Muhammad bin Idris al-Syafi'i in the field of *fiqh*, Abu al-Hasan Al-Asy'ari in the field of *ushuluddin*, al-Ghazali and Abu al-Hasan al-Syadzili in the field of *Sufism*.

Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari's statement above was motivated by the emergence of Islamic renewal movements carried out by a number of groups in the world, and which had entered Java, especially the Wahhabism movement in the Hijaz. This group was strengthened by the indoctrination of Islamic renewal by Abduh, Al-Afghani, and Rashid Ridho, so that in the archipelago new sects emerged. These madhhab, apart from eliminating the madhhab system, also prohibit *taqlid* against those *madhhabs*. Even though religious laypeople are far from reaching the rank of *mujtahid*. For Kiai Hasyim, lay people are allowed to apply *taqlid* to that Madhhab of thought, because of their laymanship. If ordinary people are allowed to perform *Istidlal* with all their limitations, it will of course cause damage to understanding.

If we look at the Islamic intellectual tradition which developed with contrasting debates between sects and schools of thought, the author finds something interesting about the names mentioned by KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari, in relation to moderate Islamic thought. That these names are figures who have succeeded in moderating between two opposing poles of thought. Not only that, their thoughts have also succeeded in influencing religious thought and life in the world, to this day.

Below we will briefly explain the contributions of the *ulama* mentioned by KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari in his book, which is also the main direction of Indonesian Muslims, which has given a moderate color to the religious life of Indonesian Muslims.

Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i: Moderation Figure between *Ahl Ra'yi* and *Ahl Hadith*

As has been understood, the development of *fiqh ijtiha*d during the Companions era has given rise to two different styles, namely the traditionalist and rationalist styles. In the first style, what is meant is that *fiqh* in the Companions school of thought is oriented towards the provisions of the texts (especially the *Sunnah*) in formulating a law. The consideration of the use of texts in this group is quite dominant so it seems very textual. But in practice, this group cannot avoid using *Ra'yu* (opinion). This textualist tradition in the formulation of law was later inherited by generations of *tabi'in* and *Imam* of Madhhab scholars. Many factors influence the *ulama* to be

more inclined to use texts rather than *Ra'yu*. One of them is the legacy of some friends who often use and refer to texts in their *ijtihad*. In the history of the growth of Islamic law, this group is known as *Ahlul Hadith* (people of hadith). This name could be because Medina and several areas of the Hijaz were areas where the transmission of hadith flourished. In this place, senior friends live.

Ra'yi experts are those who belong to the Islamic thought movement founded in Baghdad, Iraq, who in taking a *fatwa* on the science of jurisprudence think more dominantly with reason than hadith). Shaykh Abdul Fattah Shalih Qudaisy al-Yafi'i stated that many Hadith expert scholars previously claimed, "The group of survivors (*al-firqah al-najiyah*) are Hadith experts."⁵⁶ This statement aims to eliminate Ahli *Ra'yi* from the *Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah ranks*. However, al-Imam al-Syafi'i succeeded in placing the polemic in a compromise frame, by combining hadith and *fiqh*. Al-Qadhi 'Iyadh in *Tartib al-Madarik* explains the confession of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal from among Hadith experts on this issue.

If the *Ahlul Hadith* figure is Imam Malik and the *Ahlul Ra'yi* figure is Imam Abu Hanifah, then Imam Syafi'i can be said to be a figure from both. Because Imam Syafi'i studied with Imam Malik and had discussions with Imam Abu Hanifah's students. After Imam Malik died in 179 AH, Imam Syafi'i experienced economic difficulties, so he had to work to make ends meet. With the help of the Qurayshi people, he was accepted by the Mayor of Yemen, who was visiting Medina, to work in his area. His period of work in Yemen did not last long, because in 184 H he had to be brought to Baghdad on charges of being involved in the political activities of the Shia group that opposed the caliph. His presence in the capital gave him a good opportunity to get to know the Hanafiyah cleric, Muhammad Ibn Hasan Al-Syaibani (d. 189 AH). Who at that time became qadi of the Abbasid kingdom. After being free from these accusations, he took advantage of the opportunity to study the ins and outs of the science of jurisprudence that developed in the *Ahlul Ra'yi* sect. Imam Syafi'i admitted that he received a camel load of knowledge from Muhammad Ibnu Hasan. Apart from that, Muhammad also provided financial assistance to Imam Syafi'i. In this way, Imam Syafi'i could clearly see the strengths and weaknesses of the two schools.

⁵⁶ Abdul Fattah Shalih Qudaisy al-Yafi'i, *Fi Al-Thariq Ila al-Ulfah al-Islamiyah* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah Nasyirun, 2010), 181.

Speaking about Shafi'i, Abu al-Walid ibn Abi al-Jarud, a scholar expert in *Fiqh* in Makkah, said:

"Leadership of jurisprudence in Medina was in the hands of Malik bin Anas, Al-Shafi'i had visited him and studied with him for quite a long time. The leadership of Jurisprudence in Iraq fell into the hands of Imam Abu Hanifah, Al Shafi'i having taken, by direct hearing, a load of camels from his student, Muhammad Ibnu Hasan. In this way, he has accumulated the knowledge of *ahlul ra'yi* and the knowledge of *ahlul hadith*. After that he carried out processing (*tasharrafa*), laid the foundations (*ushul*), and formulated the rules so that all the ulama (*al-muwafiq wa al-mukhalif*) recognized them. He also became famous and obtained a high position and degree."⁵⁷⁵⁸

After studying in Baghdad for two years, al-Syafi'i returned to Mecca as a great scholar. This period is a refinement of the previous learning period, and on the other hand, is preparation for the birth of the Syafi'i school of thought. As a synthesis between the two streams. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal said:

"We continued to criticize *Abli Ra'yi*, while they also continued to criticize us until al-Shafi'i came. He dissolved the polemic between us.' Imam Ahmad meant that al-Shafi'i adhered to and used authentic *atsars*. 'I see that among the opinions or *ra'yu* there are those that are needed and become the basis for sharia laws. Apart from that, *ra'yu* is a legal analogy (*qiyas*) for the propositions and is taken from the propositions. I also know how to take it, its ties to *'illat* and its limitations."⁵⁹

Based on the moderating role developed by al-Imam al-Syafi'i, polemical groups can understand each other's positions and attitudes. Al-Qadhi 'Iyadh said:

"The expert scholars finally understood that valid opinions or *ra'yu* are a branch of *dalil*. On the other hand, *Abli Ra'yi* scholars understand that there should be no branches (*ra'yu*) unless they are based on the main point (*dalil*), and must prioritize the *sunnah* and authentic *atsars* first."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi', *Al-Risala* (Cairo: Mustafa Bab al-Halabi, 2008), 7.

⁵⁸ Al-Hassan Shahid, *Dirasah Fi Manhaj Al-Naqd 'inda al-Imam al-Syathibi* (Beirut: al-Ma'had al-'Alamy li al-Fikr al-Islamy, 2012), 100.

⁵⁹ al-Qadli 'Iyadh, *Tartib Al-Madarik Wa Taqrib al-Masalik*, vol. 1 (Mohamadia: Fadhalah al-Muhammadiyah, 1983), 91.

⁶⁰ 'Iyadh, 1:91.

Historically, those who supported Muslims were those who had a moderate understanding or *tawassuth*. In other words, the history of Muslims has always been guarded by moderation.

Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari: Moderation Figure between *al-'Aqliyyah* and *al-Nashshiyah*)

Seeing this public fact, al-Asy'ari attempted to reconcile the various paradigms of thought at that time. Hamudah Gharabah in Abu al-Hasan al-Asy'ari explains:

“Al-Ash'ari saw that the Mu'tazilah methods would lead to the destruction of Islam, while the *muhadditsin* (experter of Hadith) and *musyabbihah* methods would lead to a decline. At the same time, the unity of the people will be torn apart, and the seeds of division among the people will continue to be planted. Therefore, the best step, the *'aqliyyun* (rationalist) and *nashshiyun* (textualist) groups must meet at the *wasath* (moderate) school of thought which can look at the heart and restore order, while respecting the text and reason at the same time.”⁶¹

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali: Moderation figure between Sufism and Sharia

However, among tens or even hundreds of Al-Ghazali's works, it seems that *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* has had quite a strong influence in the Islamic world. This book is like an encyclopedia which summarizes the main issues in Sufism combined with Islamic law and Islamic jurisprudence.⁶² Al-Ghazali, according to *Simuh*, was a great scholar who was able to formulate a compromise between Sharia and essence or Sufism into a new building that was quite satisfactory for both parties, both legal experts and especially Sufi circles. Al-Ghazali ties Sufism to the postulates of revelation from both the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet.

Al-Ghazali views that Sufism and law must be linked to spiritual life so that there is a close relationship.⁶³ Al-Ghazali only presented to mankind a summary of the characteristics, conditions,

⁶¹ Hamudah Gharabah, *Abu Al-Hasan al-Asy'ari* (Cairo: al-Azhar al-Syarif Majma' al-Buhuts al-Islamiyah, 1973), 66.

⁶² Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 2000), 202.

⁶³ Simuh, *Tasawuf Dan Perkembangannya Dalam Islam*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019), 138.

and realities that a Sufi should live. In Fazlur Rahman's view, al-Ghazali has given rise to a new type of religious literature, namely the science of the inner meaning of faith (*'ilm asraruddin*) which is a major contribution in basing sharia with lasting spiritual foundations, or as al-Ghazali said with the basis of a complicated and difficult middle ground between the freedom of all (of the pure rationalists) and the frozenness of the Hanbalis.⁶⁴

However, the dualism between outer and inner cannot be eliminated, and the fragile balance between the two is characterized by the conflict between Sufism and sharia.⁶⁵ According to al-Ghazali, the teachings of Sufism are based on obedience to sharia, starting from birth rules, such as the pillars of Islam, to the moral behavior of fellow creatures of God. In the process of dialogue between Sufism and strict sharia, Amin Abdullah concluded that, with full empathy, al-Ghazali stated that ethics is the pinnacle of practical knowledge. Anyone who cannot control and direct his soul will suffer.⁶⁶

Abu al-Hasan al-Syadzili: Figure of Moderation between Asceticism and Hedonism

The Sufism offered by al-Syadzili follows the path of Sufism in the same direction as Imam al-Ghazali,⁶⁷ namely a Sufism based on the al-Quran and hadith, leading to asceticism, straightening of the soul, and moral formation. This style of Sufism is considered moderate and offers a more moderate concept of asceticism. According to al-Syadzili, asceticism does not mean shunning the world, because basically, asceticism is emptying the heart of anything other than Allah.⁶⁸ So, continued al-Syadzili, there is no prohibition for students from being busy looking for wealth, as long as their hearts do not depend on it.

The teachings of Sufism according to al-Syadzili include, among other things, the testament conveyed by his teacher, namely

⁶⁴ M.M Syarif, *Para Filosof Muslim* (Bandung: Mizan, 1991), 136.

⁶⁵ Margaret Smith and Amrouni, *Pemikiran Dan Doktrin Mistis Imam Al-Ghazali* (Jakarta: Riora Cipta, 2000), 182.

⁶⁶ Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas Atau Historisitas* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996), 34.

⁶⁷ Shihab, *Islam Inklusif: Menuju Sikap Terbuka Dalam Beragama*, 32.

⁶⁸ Abdul Halim Mahmud, *Abu Hasan Al-Syadzili* (Cairo: Dar al-Turats al-'Arabi, n.d.), 105.

al-Masyisyi, which, if summarized, will lead to five things which were then formulated by al-Syadzili to become the foundation of Sufism as follows: (1) Devotion to Allah is born and inner self which is realized by being *wara'* and *istiqamah* in carrying out Allah's commands, (2) consistently following the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, both in words and deeds, which is realized by always being alert and behaving in a noble manner, (3) turning his heart away from creatures. Both in acceptance and rejection, by being patient and surrendering to Allah, (4) being pleased with Allah, both in times of sufficiency and shortage, which is realized by accepting what is or *qana'ah* (conviction) (5). returning to Allah, whether in happy or difficult situations, which is realized by giving thanks in happy situations and taking refuge in Him in difficult situations.

Al-Syadzili's Sufism thought does not encourage his students to abandon their worldly professions, clothing, food, houses, and proper vehicles to foster a sense of gratitude to Allah SWT.⁶⁹ Al-Syadzili does not ignore the practice of Islamic law but instead offers ideal positive Sufism in the sense that in addition to trying to get closer to Allah SWT without having to abandon his social activities. Because social activities in Islam are aimed at realizing the benefit of the people which can also be a step in getting closer to Allah.

Moderate Thought of *Pesantren Tebuireng*

Pesantren Tebuireng, established in 1899 by Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari, is known as a boarding school that upholds moderate values or wasathiyah Islam in Indonesia.⁷⁰ As one of the largest centres of Islamic education, this pesantren not only produces scholars but also develops thoughts that emphasise harmony between religion and social life. The moderate concept known as wasathiyah thrives in Tebuireng, characterised by tolerance, justice and balance.

Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari started this tradition by emphasising the importance of maintaining Muslim unity and integrating traditional values with Islamic law. Through his works, Kiai Hasyim is considered to have a great mission to unite

⁶⁹ Mahmud, 115.

⁷⁰ jasminto, 'Integrating Religious Moderation and Local Cultural Preservation: The Synergy Of Islamic Education And Sufism At Pesantren Tebuireng', Vol. 7, 1 (Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars (AnCoMS), Surabaya, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v7i1.470>.

Indonesian Muslims. According to Gus Kikin's reading, Hadratussyaikh's works were written with the aim of uniting Muslims and fighting Dutch colonialism which had narrowed the space for Islamic propagation.⁷¹

The moderate concept was then continued by KH Abdul Wahid Hasyim, who combined religious and modern education to answer the challenges of the times.⁷² As a national figure and the first Minister of Religious Affairs from among the *pesantren*, he became the link between Islam and Pancasila. In his struggle, Kiai Wahid Hasyim championed Islamic values within the framework of the modern state, emphasising that religion and nationality need not be contradicted. He also encouraged the *pesantren* education curriculum to include general sciences, opening *santri* to global developments.⁷³

The next generation, such as KH Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), brought the idea of pluralism that places Islam as a mercy for all humans (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*).⁷⁴ He said that Islam was not only about personal worship but also how to contribute to creating peace in society. In his role as President of Indonesia, he championed the rights of minorities and encouraged interfaith dialogue as a path to harmony. Gus Dur showed that moderation is a strength in building a multicultural nation.

KH Salahuddin Wahid (Gus Sholah) is still in line with his predecessors, who uphold unity with a moderate attitude. He showed this attitude in responding to various phenomena that emerged at that time. One of them is his attitude towards the rejection of the GP Ansor management of several preachers suspected of being affiliated with Wahabi. Instead of siding with one of the camps, he prefers to be moderate, respect differences and not blame each other. He asserted that instead of spending our time arguing about different interpretations of Islam and attacking each

⁷¹ KH. Abdul Hakim Mahfudz et al., *Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari Pemersatu Umat Islam Indonesia*, III (Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2024), XIII.

⁷² Muhamad Basyrul Muvid, 'The Modernization of Madrasah in the Millennial Era of KH Abdul Wahid Hasyim Perspective', *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 32, no. 2 (25 July 2021): 223–46, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v32i2.1411>.

⁷³ Salahuddin Wahid, *Menjaga Warisan Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari* (Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2020), 54–67.

⁷⁴ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Negara Demokrasi*, Cet. 1 (Jakarta, Indonesia: Wahid Institute, 2006), 78.

other, we should improve the morals of Muslims and catch up in various fields.⁷⁵

In the contemporary era, Pesantren Tebuireng remains consistent in maintaining its *wasathiyah* or moderate attitude. This consistency is reflected in the attitude and role shown by KH Abdul Hakim Mahfudz. As the caretaker of Pesantren Tebuireng, Gus Kikin is moderate in responding to issues or phenomena that occur. One form of his moderate attitude is when responding to the *habib* polemic that is happening in Indonesia. Instead of leaning towards one group, he prefers to take the middle way by offering a more solutive offer without having to drag on the debate. Referring to the book *Al-Mawaidz* by Kiai Hasyim, he stated that ‘arguing with each other over things that are not fundamental is something that is really detrimental to Muslims. The real strength of the Muslim Ummah will only emerge if it is able to unite and not be scattered. This unity will only be realised if Muslims realise the things that should be the priorities of their struggle’.⁷⁶

Moderation, although not a standardised concept that is explicitly formulated or followed, has become a valuable legacy of the Tebuireng *Pesantren* figures. The thoughts and values of moderation that they instilled remain relevant to this day, with the main goal of creating ummah unity as a path to peace for all of nature.

Conclusion

The concept of moderate has the meaning of *wasat*, namely something that is between two extremes, while the one that comes from *amsat* has the meaning of the middle point, or moderation, which means moderate (not too much or too little), balanced and fair (justice). This etymological concept was then developed by several modern Islamic thinkers to show how religious balance can operate linearly between text and reality, so that a dialogic process occurs between the two. From this theoretical concept, this research comes to the conclusion that there are at least three factors that form the genealogical formula that forms moderate or *wasathiyah*

⁷⁵ Salahuddin Wahid, *Gus Sholah; Berpikir, Bertanya, Berkarya untuk Indonesia (Kumpulan Refleksi KH. Salahuddin Wahid)*, ed. Ahmad Faozan (Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2024), 136–38.

⁷⁶ KH. Abdul Hakim Mahfudz, ‘Prioritas Perjuangan Umat Islam’, *Majalah Tebuireng*, November 2024, 5–6.

thinking patterns in education developed by pesantrens. These three factors are the dialectic of culture and religion, dialogical philosophy in the way of thinking, and the understanding of *Ablus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*. These three factors make pesantrens an Islamic educational institution that has the characteristics of *wasatiyah* Islam. Furthermore, the Islamic thought of pesantren contributes to shaping the character and moderation of thinking of Indonesian Muslims, which is reflected in their religious life.

References

- Abdillah. 'Peran Pesantren Dalam Mengembangkan Islam Moderat di Indonesia'. *Jurnal Yaqzhan: Analisis Filsafat, Agama Dan Kemanusiaan* 5, no. 2 (17 December 2019): 76–86. <https://doi.org/10.24235/jy.v5i2.5677>.
- Abdullah, Abdul Rahman Haji. *Pemikiran Ummat Islam Di Nusantara: Sejarah Dan Perkembangannya Hingga Abad Ke-10*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1990.
- Abdullah, Amin. *Studi Agama: Normativitas Atau Historisitas*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996.
- Aini, Ajibah Quroti. 'Islam Moderat Di Pesantren: Sistem Pendidikan, Tantangan, Dan Prospeknya'. *Edukasia Islamika: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 2 (12 December 2018): 218–33. <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v3i2.1689>.
- Arif, Syaiful. *Humanisme Gus Dur: Pergumulan Islam Dan Kemanusiaan*. 1st ed. Yogyakarta: Ar-ruzz Media, 2013.
- Asfahani, Raghīb al-. *Mufradat Alfaẓ Al-Qur'an*. Damaskus: Dar al-Qalam, 2012.
- Asrohah, Hanun. *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam*. 1st ed. Tangerang: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999.
- Asy'ari, Muhammad Hasyim. *Risalah Abl Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah*. Jombang: Maktabah al-Turats al-Islami, 1994.
- Awwaliyah, Neny Muthi'atul. 'Pondok Pesantren Sebagai Wadah Moderasi Islam di Era Generasi Millennial'. *Islamic Review: Jurnal Riset Dan Kajian Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (30 April 2019): 36–62. <https://doi.org/10.35878/islamicreview.v8i1.161>.
- Aziz, Jamil Abdul. 'Pesantren: Genealogi, Dinamika, Dan Nasionalisme'. *IQ (Ilmu Al-Qur'an): Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 01 (2018): 137–53. <https://doi.org/10.37542/iq.v1i01.11>.

- Azra, Azyumardi. *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Melacak Akar-Akar Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam Di Indonesia*. 1st ed. Bandung: Mizan, 1994.
- Bizawie, Zainul Milal. *Masterpiece Islam Nusantara: Sanad Dan Jejaring Ulama-Santri (1830-1945)*. Jakarta: Pustaka Compass, 2016.
- Dahlan, Haji Abdul Aziz. *Ensiklopedi Hukum Islam*. 1st ed. Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 1997.
- Dhofier, Zamakhsyari. *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai Dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia, Cet. 8 Rev.* Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011.
- Echols, John M., and Hassan Shadily. *English-Indonesian Dictionary*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 2002.
- El Fadl, Khaled Abou, and Helmi Mustofa. *Selamatkan Islam Dari Muslim Puritan*. Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2006.
- Faisol. *Gus Dur & Pendidikan Islam: Upaya Mengembalikan Esensi Pendidikan Di Era Global*. 1st ed. Yogyakarta: Ar-ruzz Media, 2011.
- Farida, Umma. 'Radikalisme, Moderatisme, dan Liberalisme Pesantren: Melacak Pemikiran dan Gerakan Keagamaan Pesantren di Era Globalisasi'. *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (27 March 2015). <https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v10i1.789>.
- Fata, Badrus Samsul. 'The Future Challenges of Moderate Pesantren in Indonesia': *AL Fikrah: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (12 February 2023): 37–52. <https://doi.org/10.51476/alfikrah.v3i1.452>.
- Firdaus, Mohamad Anang. *Menggagas Pendidikan Maqasidi, Konstruksi Pemikiran Maqasid Ibn Ashur Sebagai Paradigma Pendidikan Islam*. Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2021.
- . 'The Maqasid Thought of Ibn Ashur and Development of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies: Searching of The Correlation of The Concept'. In *INCRE 2020: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Religion and Education, INCRE 2020, 11-12 November 2020, Jakarta, Indonesia*. European Alliance for Innovation, 2021.
- Gharabah, Hamudah. *Abu Al-Hasan al-Ash'ari*. Cairo: al-Azhar al-Syarif Majma' al-Buhuts al-Islamiyah, 1973.
- i, Abdul Fattah Shalih Qudaisy al-Yafi'. *Fi Al-Thariq Ila al-Ulfah al-*

- Islamiyah*. Beirut: Mu'assasah al -Risalah Nasyirun, 2010.
- Ismail, Ismail. 'Pesantren, Islam Moderat, Dan Etika Politik Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam'. *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars*, no. Series 2 (22 April 2018): 585–94. <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v0iSeries>.
- ‘Iyadh, al-Qadli. *Tartib Al-Madarik Wa Taqrib al-Masalik*. Vol. 1. Mohamadia: Fadhalah al-Muhammadiyah, 1983.
- Jasminto. 'Integrating Religious Moderation and Local Cultural Preservation: The Synergy of Islamic Education and Sufism At Pesantren Tebuireng', Vol. 7. 1. Surabaya, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v7i1.470>.
- Kamali, Mohammad Hashim. *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Kasdi, Abdurrohman. 'The Role of Walisongo in Developing the Islam Nusantara Civilization'. *Addin* 11, no. 1 (2017): 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.21043/addin.v11i1.1973>.
- Lukito, Ratno. *Tradisi Hukum Indonesia*. 1st ed. Yogyakarta: Teras, 2008.
- Madjid, Nurcholis. *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren: Sebuah Potret Perjalanan*. Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997.
- . *Islam Agama Peradaban: Membangun Makna Dan Relevansi Doktrin Islam Dalam Sejarah*. Jakarta: Paramadina, 2008.
- . *Pesantren Dan Tasawuf in Pesantren Dan Pembangunan*. Jakarta: LP3ES, 1995.
- Mahfudz, KH. Abdul Hakim. 'Prioritas Perjuangan Umat Islam'. *Majalah Tebuireng*, November 2024.
- Mahfudz, KH. Abdul Hakim, Mohamad Anang Firdaus, M. Rizki Syahrul Ramadhan, and Ilham Zidal Haq. *Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari Pemersatu Umat Islam Indonesia*. III. Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2024.
- Mahmud, Abdul Halim. *Abu Hasan Al-Syadzili*. Cairo: Dar al-Turats al-'Arabi, n.d.
- Muhaimin. *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*. Bandung: Trigenda Karya, 1993.
- Muvid, Muhamad Basylul. 'The Modernization of Madrasah in the Millenial Era of KH Abdul Wahid Hasyim Perspective'. *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 32, no. 2 (25 July 2021): 223–46. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v32i2.1411>.

- Noer, Deliar. *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996). Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996.
- Qardhawi, Yusuf al-. *Al-Khasa'is al-'Ammah al-Islamiyyah*. Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 1985.
- Rahman, Fazlur. *Islam*. Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 2000.
- Ritaudin, M. Sidi. 'Wawasan Etika Politik, Membangun Sikap Kritis dan Rasional Politik Bangsa'. *Jurnal Tapis: Jurnal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 10, no. 2 (4 September 2017): 12–30. <https://doi.org/10.24042/tps.v10i2.1604>.
- Rosyidin, Muhammad Abror. 'Interaksi Pesantren Dengan Sains Dan Teknologi'. *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 4, no. 1 (25 May 2021): 53–73. <https://doi.org/10.30659/jpai.4.1.53-73>.
- Rosyidin, Muhammad Abror, and Mukti Latif Muhammad. 'Tujuan Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Hadis'. *Nabawi: Journal of Hadith Studies* 2, no. 2 (31 March 2022). <https://doi.org/10.55987/njhs.v2i2.52>.
- Rosyidin, Muhammad, and Imron Arifin. 'Integration of Islamic and Indonesian Education in the Perspective of KH. Salahuddin Wahid'. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 18, no. 2 (31 December 2021): 227–56. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2021.182-02>.
- Shafi', Muhammad ibn Idris al-. *Al-Risala*. Cairo: Mustafa Bab al-Halabi, 2008.
- Shahid, Al-Hassan. *Dirasah fi Manhaj Al-Naqd 'inda al-Imam al-Syathibi*. Beirut: al-Ma'had al-'Alamy li al-Fikr al-Islamy, 2012.
- Shihab, Alwi. *Islam Inklusif: Menuju Sikap Terbuka Dalam Beragama*. 1st ed. Jakarta: AN Teve & Mizan, 1997.
- Simuh. *Tasawuf Dan Perkembangannya Dalam Islam*. 1st ed. Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019.
- Smith, Margaret, and Amrouni. *Pemikiran Dan Doktrin Mistis Imam Al-Ghazali*. Jakarta: Riora Cipta, 2000.
- Sunyoto, Agus. *Atlas Wali Songo: Buku Pertama Yang Mengungkap Wali Songo Sebagai Fakta Sejarah*. 1st ed. Depok: Pustaka IIMaN, Trans Pustaka, LTN PBNU, 2012.
- Syarif, M.M. *Para Filosof Muslim*. Bandung: Mizan, 1991.
- Syathibi, Abu Ishaq al-. *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Ushul al-Shari'ah*. Cairo: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2008.
- Thoha, Zainal Arifin. *Jagadnya Gus Dur: Demokrasi, Kemanusiaan Dan Pribumisasi Islam*. 4th ed. Yogyakarta: Kutub, 2010.

- Vlekke, Bernard H.M. *Nusantara: Sejarah Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 2016.
- Wahi, Salahuddin. *Gus Sholah; Berpikir, Bertanya, Berkarya untuk Indonesia (Kumpulan Refleksi KH. Salahuddin Wahid)*. Edited by Ahmad Faozan. Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2024.
- Wahid, Abdurrahman. *Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Negara Demokrasi*. Cet. 1. Jakarta, Indonesia: Wahid Institute, 2006.
- . *Pribumisasi Islam: Dalam Pergulatan Negara, Agama, Dan Kebudayaan*. Depok: Nusantara, 2001.
- Wahid, Salahuddin. *Berguru Pada Realitas, Refleksi Pemikiran Menuju Indonesia Bermartabat*. Malang: UIN-Maliki Press, 2011.
- . *Memadukan Keislaman Dan Keindonesiaan, Esai-Esai Kebangsaan*. Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2017.
- . *Menjaga Warisan Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari*. Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2020.
- Wijaya, Aksin. *Menusantarakan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak Pergumulan Islam Yang Tak Kunjung Usai Di Nusantara, Cetakan Ketiga (Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta: Nadi Pustaka, 2015), 48–49; 3rd ed. Yogyakarta: Nadi Pustaka, 2015.*