

Hasyim Asy'ari's Islamic Thought And Its Influence On Islam In Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the Islamic thought of the prominent Indonesian Muslim scholar KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, whose intellectual contributions played a pivotal role in the dissemination and development of Islam in Indonesia. His scholarly formation, rooted in a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) family tradition and enriched through advanced studies in the Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah, enabled him to establish one of Indonesia's largest and most influential Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). This article examines KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's Islamic thought and its influence on the development of Islam in Indonesia. Employing a library research method, this study analyzes various primary and secondary sources, including KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's own writings, scholarly works discussing his intellectual legacy, and relevant academic journal articles. The findings demonstrate that KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's Islamic thought has significantly shaped the development of Indonesian Islam. His scholarly works continue to serve as authoritative references within Islamic intellectual traditions, particularly in pesantren education. Moreover, the Islamic organization he founded, Nahdlatul Ulama, has evolved into the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, reflecting the enduring relevance and influence of his religious thought. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge while inspiring scholars and the wider Muslim community to further explore the intellectual heritage of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari.

Keywords: Hasyim Asy'ari; Islamic Thought; Nahdlatul Ulama; Indonesian Islam.

Introduction

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's intellectual thought occupies a central position in the evolution and formation of Islamic thought in Indonesia. As a highly respected Muslim scholar (*ulama*) and distinguished intellectual, he profoundly influenced the religious outlook of Indonesian Muslims. Born in the nineteenth century in Jombang, East Java, Hasyim Asy'ari was raised within a pesantren environment deeply rooted in traditional Islamic scholarship. His early exposure to pesantren culture laid a solid foundation for the development of his profound religious worldview.

His extensive educational journey, encompassing studies in numerous pesantren across Java as well as in the Holy City of Makkah, provided him with a comprehensive mastery of Islamic sciences. His scholarly travels throughout the Indonesian archipelago and the Hijaz further enriched his understanding of Islamic teachings and deepened his intellectual perspective. Throughout his life, he consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to developing a theological framework firmly grounded in the traditions of classical Sunni Islam.

Hasyim Asy'ari's intellectual framework, which harmonized Islamic theology with broader dimensions of Islamic thought, became one of the most influential theological foundations of Indonesian Islam. One of his most significant contributions was the integration of the pesantren tradition with a moderate religious outlook that rejected extremism while promoting tolerance, social harmony, and peaceful coexistence among religious communities. His theological perspective, emphasizing adherence (*taqlid*) to one of the four Sunni schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*madhhab*), also played an essential role in shaping the religious identity of Indonesian Muslims.

Within the broader context of Islamic development in Indonesia, Hasyim Asy'ari's thought continues to provide an important intellectual foundation for promoting a moderate, tolerant, and adaptive understanding of Islam in response to changing social conditions. His comprehensive and inclusive theological vision offers valuable guidance for Indonesian Muslims in interpreting Islamic teachings within contemporary social, political, and spiritual contexts.

Based on the foregoing background, the primary research question addressed in this study is: How did KH. Hasyim Asy'ari conceptualize Islamic thought, and what has been its influence on the development of Islam in Indonesia?

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's Islamic thought and examine its influence on the development of Islam in Indonesia.

Method

This study employs a library research approach. Data were collected through a comprehensive review and critical examination of theories and scholarly discussions presented in various sources relevant to the research topic. According to Mestika Zed, library research consists of four essential stages: preparing the necessary research tools, compiling a working bibliography, organizing the research schedule, and systematically reading

and recording research materials (Zed, 2004, hlm. 14).

The data collection process involved identifying, compiling, and reconstructing information from a wide range of documentary sources, including books, archival records, magazines, historical documents, scholarly journals, official documentation, newspapers, and other publications concerning the intellectual thought of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (Simandjuntak & Sosrodihardjo, 2014). The collected data were analyzed using **content analysis** and descriptive analysis. Relevant literature obtained from various references was critically examined to construct well-supported arguments and research propositions. Throughout the research process, particular attention was given to the systematic procedures of library research, including data collection, critical reading, data organization, and the preparation of appropriate research instruments, thereby ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings.

Results and Discussion

1. Biography Of Kh. Hasyim Asy'ari

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari was born Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari on 14 February 1871 (24 Dhu al-Qa'dah 1287 AH) in Gedang Village, approximately two kilometers east of Jombang, East Java (Khuluq, 1998, hlm. 46). He passed away in Jombang on 25 July 1947 (7 Ramadan 1366 AH) due to complications associated with hypertension. His father, Kyai Asy'ari, founded the Keras Islamic boarding school (*Pesantren Keras*) in Jombang, while his grandfather, Kyai Usman, was a renowned Islamic scholar and the founder of Pesantren Gedang, established in the late nineteenth century. His great-grandfather, Kyai Sihah, was also the founder of Pesantren Tambakberas, one of the oldest and most influential pesantren in Java (Herry, 2006, hlm. 31).

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari was the third of eleven siblings. His father originated from Demak, whereas his mother, Nyai Halimah, was the eldest daughter of Kyai Usman. Genealogically, Hasyim Asy'ari traced his lineage to Sunan Giri (Raden 'Ain al-Yaqin) through Jaka Tingkir (Sultan Hadiwijaya). Consequently, he was widely recognized as a descendant of both the Muslim rulers of Java and the Majapahit royal lineage, reflecting his noble family background (Rifai, 2009).

2. Educational Background

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari received his earliest education within the pesantren environment, particularly under the guidance of his father and grandfather. At the age of five, he began studying at **Pesantren Gedang**, where he was immersed in Islamic learning and the practice of religious devotion. Growing up in such an environment cultivated his simplicity, discipline, and lifelong commitment to scholarship. In 1876, when he was six years old, his father established Pesantren Keras, where Hasyim Asy'ari continued his religious education. This formative experience profoundly shaped both his intellectual character and his devotion to Islamic teachings (Rifai, 2009).

Recognized for his exceptional intellectual ability and remarkable memory, Hasyim Asy'ari was entrusted by his father to assist in teaching at the pesantren while still in his early teens. At approximately fifteen years of age, he embarked on an educational journey across Java, studying at several prominent pesantren, including Pesantren Wonocolo, Pesantren Siwalan Panji, Pesantren Langitan, Pesantren Trenggilis, and later under the guidance of the distinguished scholar Kyai Kholil of Bangkalan, Madura.

Following his studies in Java, Hasyim Asy'ari traveled to Makkah to perform the pilgrimage (*Haji*) and pursue advanced Islamic studies. Rather than immediately returning to Indonesia after completing the pilgrimage, he chose to remain in Makkah for several years to deepen his understanding of various Islamic sciences, particularly Hadith, which became one of his principal scholarly specializations. His profound interest in Hadith scholarship was later reflected in numerous works devoted to Prophetic traditions (Misrawi, 2010, hlm. 44).

During his studies in the Hijaz, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari learned under several internationally renowned scholars, including Shaykh Syatha, Shaykh Dagistani, Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Darustani, and Shaykh Muhammad Shu'ayb al-Maghribi. He also studied under prominent Indonesian scholars residing in Makkah, among them Shaykh Mahfudz al-Tarmasi, Shaykh Mahmud Khatib al-Minangkabawi, and Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani. The breadth of his educational experience provided him with a comprehensive and authoritative understanding of Islamic scholarship, which profoundly influenced the development of his religious thought.

Throughout his life, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari remained closely connected to Islamic educational institutions. His experiences within the pesantren tradition, both in Indonesia and the Hijaz, significantly shaped his educational philosophy. He advocated a classical model of Islamic education that emphasized normative religious teachings, scholarly ethics, disciplined learning, and the transmission of authentic Islamic knowledge. He regarded these principles as the essential foundation for restoring the intellectual and moral excellence of the Muslim community.

3. Scholarly Works

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari was an exceptionally prolific scholar whose writings were predominantly composed in

Arabic. His works encompass a wide range of Islamic disciplines, including Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), theology ('aqidah), and Sufism (tasawwuf). To this day, many of his writings remain core reference texts within pesantren curricula throughout Indonesia.

Among his most influential works are:

1. *At-Tibyān fī Nahy 'an Muqāṭa'at al-Arḥām wa al-Aqārib wa al-Ikhwān* (On the Prohibition of Severing Family and Social Relationships).
2. *Ādāb al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim* (The Ethics of Teachers and Students).
3. *Al-Risālah al-Jāmi'ah* (A Comprehensive Treatise on Death, Resurrection, Sunnah, and Innovation).
4. *Al-Qānūn al-Asāsī li Jam'iyyah Nahdlatul Ulama* (The Foundational Constitution of Nahdlatul Ulama).
5. *Al-Mawā'iz* (Religious Admonitions Encouraging Muslim Unity).
6. *Ḥadīth al-Mawt wa Ashrāṭ al-Sā'ah* (Prophetic Traditions on Death and the Signs of the Last Day).
7. *Ad-Durar al-Muntathirah fī al-Masā'il al-Tis' 'Asharah* (Scattered Pearls on Nineteen Religious Issues).
8. *Al-Risālah al-Tawḥīdiyyah* (A Treatise on Sunni Theology).

In addition to these scholarly books, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari delivered numerous speeches and religious addresses that were subsequently published in newspapers. The diversity and breadth of his writings demonstrate his enduring contribution to the development of Islamic thought and his role in providing intellectual guidance for Muslim society (Hadziq, 1995, hlm. 145).

4. The Islamic Thought of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari

The Islamic thought of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari encompasses several major branches of Islamic scholarship, particularly Sufism (Tasawwuf), Theology ('Aqidah), and Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh). His intellectual framework is firmly rooted in the tradition of Sunni Islam (Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah), which he regarded as the authentic continuation of the teachings transmitted by earlier Muslim scholars, especially the *Wali Songo*. He consistently defended the traditional Islamic scholarly tradition because he believed that it was increasingly challenged by emerging modernist interpretations of Islam.

According to Hasyim Asy'ari, traditional Islamic thought differs fundamentally from modernist approaches in both methodology and theological orientation. Consequently, his writings consistently reflect the epistemological framework of classical Sunni scholarship, which he considered to be the most reliable foundation for preserving authentic Islamic teachings.

Sufism (Tasawwuf)

Among KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's most significant contributions to Islamic spirituality is his reformulation of Sufism within the framework of orthodox Sunni Islam. In works such as *Ad-Durar al-Muntathirah fī al-Masā'il al-Tis' 'Asharah* and *At-Tibyān fī Nahy 'an Muqāṭa'at al-Arḥām wa al-Aqārib wa al-Ikhwān*, he strongly criticized deviations that had emerged within certain Sufi practices. Importantly, his criticism was directed not at Sufism itself but at excessive and doctrinally unsound practices introduced by some Sufi practitioners.

Rather than rejecting Sufism altogether, Hasyim Asy'ari advocated a moderate (tawassut) approach to spiritual life. He emphasized that spiritual purification should remain firmly grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah and should never lead to exaggeration or innovations (*bid'ah*) that deviate from authentic Islamic teachings. He deliberately avoided being addressed as a Sufi master and discouraged his students from excessive involvement in mystical brotherhoods if such involvement distracted them from sound Islamic scholarship (Zutas, 2017, hlm. 16–31).

His conception of Sufism primarily aimed at moral refinement and spiritual discipline. In many respects, his ideas closely resemble the ethical Sufism developed by Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. According to Hasyim Asy'ari, genuine Sufism should cultivate virtuous character rather than speculative metaphysical doctrines. He outlined four fundamental principles for those seeking to follow a Sufi path:

- avoiding unjust rulers;
- honoring those devoted to seeking the Hereafter;
- assisting the poor and needy; and
- consistently performing congregational prayers.

These principles demonstrate that, for Hasyim Asy'ari, Sufism was inseparable from ethical conduct and social responsibility (Madjid, 1994).

Unlike certain forms of speculative or pantheistic Sufism that had developed in parts of the Indonesian archipelago, Hasyim Asy'ari embraced the orthodox Sunni Sufi tradition represented by al-Junayd al-Baghdadi and Imam al-Ghazali. His understanding was also influenced by the Neo-Sufi reform movement that flourished in Makkah and Madinah during the nineteenth century, which sought to purify Sufism from excessive metaphysical speculation while reaffirming its grounding in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Consequently, Hasyim Asy'ari regarded authentic Sufism as a means of attaining moral excellence through sincere adherence to Islamic teachings rather than through esoteric speculation. His approach significantly

influenced pesantren traditions throughout Indonesia, where Sufism has generally been practiced within the doctrinal framework of orthodox Sunni Islam.

Theology (Tawhīd) and Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah

Within the field of Islamic theology, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari composed two significant works on the doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*: *Ar-Risālah al-Tawhīdiyyah*, a treatise on *tawhīd* (Islamic theology), and *Al-Qalā'id fī Bayān Mā Yajibū min al-'Aqā'id*, which presents the fundamental obligations of Islamic creed in the form of didactic poetry.

He explained that belief in the oneness of God (*tawhīd*) comprises three distinct levels. The first level refers to the affirmation of divine unity commonly held by ordinary believers. The second involves a deeper knowledge and understanding of God, typically possessed by learned scholars (*ahl al-zāhir*). The third represents the highest level, emerging from one's innermost spiritual experience. This stage can only be attained by Sufis who have reached profound *ma'rifah* (gnostic knowledge) of God and have come to perceive the Divine Reality (*ḥaqīqah*) (Muhaemin, 2013, hlm. 319).

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari cited a prophetic tradition (ḥadīth) in which the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) stated that faith (īmān) is the deed most beloved to God, whereas associating partners with Him (shirk) is the gravest and most detestable sin. Drawing upon the views of several Muslim scholars, he argued that belief in the oneness of God (*tawhīd*) necessarily presupposes faith; consequently, an individual who lacks īmān cannot genuinely affirm the doctrine of divine unity.

On this theological basis, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari expressed strong criticism of Communism. In his address at the 17th Congress (Muktamar) of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) on 24 May 1947, he voiced his concern over the ideological threat posed by Communism, which he believed had the potential to undermine the younger generation's commitment to Islamic teachings. In his view, Islam is not merely concerned with liberating humanity from the worship of beings other than God through the doctrine of *tawhīd*; it also seeks to advance the social, political, and economic conditions of communities that have been left behind.

Furthermore, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari asserted that Islam seeks to cultivate the spirit of Muslim brotherhood by eliminating distinctions based on lineage, social status, wealth, or nationality. He regarded Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwwah islāmiyyah*) as the foundation of a democratic social order that upholds the dignity and equality of all human beings. According to him, this principle has been an integral part of Islam since its earliest development. By preserving and strengthening *ukhuwwah islāmiyyah*, social injustice is expected to be eradicated, thereby fostering a more just and harmonious society (Harianto, 2019, hlm. 138).

In line with KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's theological thought, Achmad Shiddiq (1979) argued that the creed (*'aqīdah*) of Muslims should be grounded in the principle of *tawassuṭ* (moderation or the middle path). This principle emphasizes the need to maintain a balanced approach between rational inquiry and reliance on the textual authorities of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Such balance is achieved by preserving the authenticity of Islamic doctrine from external influences while refraining from declaring other Muslims to be unbelievers (*takfīr*) merely because their beliefs have not yet attained doctrinal purity. Accordingly, harmonizing faith and reason constitutes an inseparable component of the foundational principles of Islam (*uṣūl al-dīn*). This perspective underscores the importance of maintaining a balanced relationship between reason and revelation, while safeguarding the authenticity of Islamic teachings in both the understanding and practice of religious belief (Shiddiq, 1979, hlm. 41).

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's theological thought is firmly rooted in the intellectual tradition established by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and Abū Maṣ'ūr al-Māturīdī. Accordingly, his theological orientation belongs to the Sunni tradition, which seeks to reconcile the opposing positions of those who emphasize human free will and those who advocate theological determinism. In this regard, Ash'arite theology may be understood as a synthesis of diverse theological schools. Moreover, by integrating rational inquiry with divine revelation in addressing theological questions, the Ash'arite tradition was able to preserve itself from the excessive influence of Hellenistic philosophical thought.

According to KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah refers to those scholars who are deeply grounded in Qur'anic exegesis (tafsīr), the Prophetic Sunnah, and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), while remaining faithful to the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn). He further maintained that, in the contemporary period, these scholars are represented by those who adhere to one of the four Sunni schools of law (madhāhib): Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī.

This doctrinal orientation constitutes one of the defining characteristics of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which identifies itself as the adherent, guardian, and promoter of the tradition of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. NU embraces this theological framework because it is consistent with the organization's objectives, particularly in fostering solidarity among Indonesian Muslim scholars. This commitment is expressed through adherence to one of the four Sunni legal schools and the preservation of pesantren curricula in accordance with the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, namely, adherence to the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad and the scholarly consensus (ijmā') of the Muslim community.

According to Michael Laffan, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* refers to Muslims who consistently and steadfastly adhere to the Sunnah of the Prophet and the normative practices of his Companions in matters of doctrine, religious practice, and ethics. From this perspective, organizations other than NU may also be regarded as belonging to *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, provided that they fulfill these doctrinal criteria. Conversely, any theological orientation that departs from these principles is considered inconsistent with the doctrinal foundations of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (Laffan, 2005, hlm. 18).

In essence, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari employed the term *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* as a means of safeguarding Islamic doctrine from the reformist tendencies promoted by modernist Muslim movements. This, however, should not be understood as an outright rejection of reform. Rather, he consistently sought to eliminate doctrinal deviations and dispel doubts in the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Moreover, the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* movement should not be viewed merely as a reaction against theological sects such as the *Shī'ah*, the *Khawārij*, and the *Mu'tazilah*. Instead, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari maintained that its origins can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. From that period until the present, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* has been characterized by three fundamental doctrinal and behavioral features:

First, al-tawassuṭ (moderation), which signifies that a Muslim is expected to adopt a balanced and moderate approach in all aspects of life, avoiding both excess and extremity. Second, al-i'tidāl (uprightness or justice), which denotes the obligation to uphold justice and remain steadfast in the pursuit of truth in every sphere of life. Third, al-tawāzun (balance), which refers to maintaining harmony and proportionality in one's conduct by integrating the various dimensions of life in a balanced and equitable manner (Khuluq, 2018, hlm. 67).

In the realm of theology, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari firmly adhered to the theological formulations developed by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī and Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, whom he regarded as representing the most authoritative expression of Sunni theology. Consequently, Muslims who embrace KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's theological perspective are inclined to adopt the same theological framework that he espoused. This orientation is likewise reflected among members of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), who continue to uphold the theological legacy inherited from KH. Hasyim Asy'ari.

Furthermore, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari understood *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* as the authentic doctrinal tradition founded upon adherence to the example of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (*al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*), as preserved within the four Sunni schools of law (*madhāhib*). Accordingly, his theological outlook was firmly situated within the Sunni intellectual tradition, characterized by a strong commitment to the doctrinal principles and scholarly heritage transmitted by the classical Muslim theologians and jurists.

Fiqh

One of the most distinctive aspects of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's legal thought concerns his conception of *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning) and *taqlīd* (adherence to established legal authority). He maintained that Muslims should adhere to one of the four Sunni schools of law (*madhāhib*). According to Bruinessen (1999), KH. Hasyim Asy'ari elaborated this position, along with other fundamental legal principles, in *Muqaddimat al-Qānūn al-Asāsī li al-Nahdlatul Ulama*. This work is regarded as the product of *ijtihād* undertaken collectively by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari and other Muslim scholars, based upon the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad (van Bruinessen, t.t., hlm. 37).

In this context, *ijtihād* functions as a fundamental mechanism for preserving the continuity and dynamism of Islamic law, allowing it to evolve as a living legal system capable of responding to contemporary challenges and societal developments (Al-Farizi, 2014, hlm. 215). By contrast, *taqlīd* refers to adherence to the legal opinions of a recognized authority without independent knowledge of the evidentiary basis or underlying legal reasoning. For example, a person who follows the legal opinions of Imam al-Shāfi'ī without knowing the textual evidence (*dalīl*) or legal proof (*ḥujjah*) upon which they are based is regarded as a *muqallid* (one who practices *taqlīd*) (Misno, 2014, hlm. 19). These two principles are therefore complementary rather than contradictory. *Taqlīd* provides a legitimate framework for those who are not qualified to engage in *ijtihād*. Without such a framework, it would be both unrealistic and excessively burdensome to expect every Muslim to attain the level of a *mujtahid*—that is, a scholar qualified to exercise independent legal reasoning (Abdelaal, 2012).

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's conception of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* affirms that, although *taqlīd* was originally discouraged, it becomes permissible for those who lack the capacity to exercise *ijtihād* and are therefore unable to employ independent reasoning in interpreting the textual sources of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He maintained that the prohibition of *taqlīd* applies only to those who possess the qualifications necessary to perform *ijtihād*, even if only within a particular field of expertise. For individuals who do not possess such qualifications, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari considered it both reasonable and legitimate to adhere to one of the four Sunni schools of law (*madhāhib*).

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which upholds this principle, emphasizes that the qualifications required for *ijtihād* are rigorous and cannot be attained easily. At the same time, the organization encourages its members to deepen their religious knowledge so that they may gradually move beyond the level of *taqlīd*. Nevertheless, NU maintains

that ordinary Muslims who are not qualified to engage in *ijtihād* may legitimately practice *taqlīd* by following one of the four Sunni schools of law—*Ḥanafī*, *Mālikī*, *Shāfiʿī*, or *Ḥanbalī*. This position is supported by reference to a Prophetic tradition stating that differences of opinion among the Muslim community constitute a mercy (*rahmah*), and that imposing a single opinion upon all believers is inconsistent with the spirit of Islamic teaching.

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari further explained that adherence to one of the four Sunni schools of law is beneficial for the Muslim community because each generation of scholars builds upon and develops the intellectual legacy of its predecessors. The *Tābiʿūn*, for example, derived their religious understanding from the Companions of the Prophet, while subsequent generations continued this uninterrupted chain of scholarly transmission. This process of teaching and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge has provided Muslim scholars with a continuous and authoritative intellectual tradition. Indeed, Islamic teachings cannot be fully understood except through revealed knowledge (*naql*), transmitted continuously from one generation to another through authoritative texts, together with *istinbāt* (juristic reasoning) carried out within the methodological framework of the established legal schools.

In the context of *fiqh al-siyāsah* (Islamic political jurisprudence), KH. Hasyim Asy'ari understood it as the discipline concerned with governance, statecraft, and political administration in Islam, examining issues in light of the general principles derived from the Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah, and the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*). He actively participated in matters of state because of his concern over the potential fragmentation of the Indonesian nation. Consequently, he consistently advocated the unity of Indonesian Muslims and encouraged collective action in safeguarding the nation's interests. He warned that disunity would inevitably lead to weakness, defeat, and failure, ultimately becoming a source of social and political decline. Accordingly, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari repeatedly called for national and religious unity, recognizing the fragmented condition of the Muslim community during his time and the urgent need for solidarity in the struggle to build and preserve Indonesia.

According to Nizar, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's call for unity was founded upon two fundamental principles. The first is national unity, which emphasizes solidarity based on a shared national identity. The second is religious unity, which is grounded in a common Islamic faith. Accordingly, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's vision of unity was directed toward realizing the ideals of the Indonesian nation through the preservation of national cohesion and religious solidarity (Nizar, 2017, hlm. 63–74).

5. The Influence and Contemporary Relevance of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's Thought in Indonesian Islam

The influence of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's theological thought on Islam in Indonesia has provided a solid foundation for the development of a moderate, inclusive, and scripturally grounded Islamic tradition based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. One of his most significant contributions was the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which emphasizes adherence (*taqlīd*) to one of the four Sunni schools of law (*madhāhib*). KH. Hasyim Asy'ari championed the *pesantren* as the primary institution for Islamic learning, thereby strengthening the tradition of classical Islamic education while promoting a moderate and tolerant understanding of religious practice. He firmly rejected religious extremism and consistently advocated the principle of moderation as an essential characteristic of Islam.

Beyond the religious sphere, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari opposed social and political fragmentation within Indonesian society and called upon Muslims to preserve unity. He emphasized that both national solidarity and religious cohesion constitute fundamental pillars for the development of a united Indonesian nation. In the realm of Sufism, he advocated a form of Islamic mysticism that remained firmly rooted in orthodox Sunni principles, while rejecting doctrinal innovations and practices that deviated from the authentic teachings of Sunni Islam.

The influence of his theological thought has established a durable foundation for the religious identity of Indonesian Islam, not only in the sphere of religious life but also in the country's socio-political development. His ideas continue to shape the intellectual outlook, religious practices, and institutional traditions of Indonesian Muslims, demonstrating their enduring significance in contemporary Islamic discourse.

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's theological thought also retains considerable relevance in the contemporary context for several reasons. First, the values of moderation and religious tolerance that he consistently promoted remain indispensable in countering religious extremism and fostering respect for religious diversity. At a time when interreligious tensions and conflicts continue to emerge in various parts of the world, his vision of moderation provides an important theological and ethical framework for promoting peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

Second, his contribution to the development of *pesantren* as centers of traditional Islamic scholarship continues to play a pivotal role in preserving authentic and rigorous religious learning. *Pesantren* remain essential institutions for cultivating a sound understanding of Islam grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah while transmitting the classical scholarly tradition to succeeding generations.

Furthermore, his support for *taqlīd* within the framework of the four Sunni schools of law has reinforced the religious identity of Indonesian Muslims. This position remains particularly relevant in preserving Indonesia's rich Islamic intellectual heritage amid the challenges posed by globalization. Likewise, his unequivocal rejection of religious extremism continues to offer an important theological response to contemporary manifestations of

radicalism and violent religious ideologies.

Finally, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's call for the unity of the Muslim community and his emphasis on national and religious solidarity continue to provide an important foundation for strengthening social integration within Indonesia's pluralistic society. His vision is particularly pertinent in an era that demands peaceful coexistence, interfaith cooperation, and mutual respect among diverse religious and cultural communities. Accordingly, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's theological thought remains an enduring intellectual and moral framework for fostering an inclusive, moderate, and tolerant society capable of responding constructively to the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Conclusion

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari made profound intellectual and practical contributions to both Islamic thought and the development of Indonesian nationalism. In the field of Islamic thought, his intellectual legacy is firmly rooted in the tradition of classical Sunni Islam. His major contributions encompass the fields of Sufism (taṣawwuf), theology (kalām), and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). In the sphere of nationalism, his ideas were reflected in a political vision that sought to unite Indonesian Muslims in their struggle against colonialism. This vision was realized through the establishment and strengthening of institutions such as pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and other Islamic organizations that served as platforms for preserving Muslim solidarity and national unity.

During the early period of his public career, however, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari was neither a political activist nor an outspoken opponent of colonial rule. At that stage, he showed little interest in promoting political doctrines and generally did not object to colonial policies, provided that they did not threaten the preservation of Islamic teachings and institutions. His nationalist outlook therefore remained relatively low-profile in comparison with the more overtly political orientation of secular nationalist leaders. Nevertheless, although he rarely confronted the colonial authorities directly, his religious guidance, educational initiatives, and institutional policies were perceived as potential threats to colonial interests. Consequently, he was frequently subjected to pressure and intimidation by the colonial government. Despite these challenges, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari remained steadfast in his commitment to pursuing policies and initiatives aimed at advancing the welfare (maṣlaḥah) of Indonesian Muslims.

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