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# Democratization of *Mazhabiyyah* and Reconciliation of Politics

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#### **Abstract**

In the history of Indonesia's struggle to reach its independence, soldiers, scholars, and students had played great roles. Islamic figures such as Ulama' and santri were among those heroes with notable contributions. Although many are not recognized regarding its huge numbers, some has nailed their names nationally for their influential political and religious thoughts. This article tries to explore the political and religious thoughts' of Abdul Wahid Hasyim's contribution to the establishment of Islam in Indonesia and the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia. His involvement since the Dutch colonial period, the Japanese occupation, until the independence, shows a santri's struggle for national independence. The result shows that in the context of religion and politics, there are some interesting thoughts delivered by Abdul Wachid Hasyim. His writings on both aspects, religion and politics, predominantly reflect efforts to democratizing different mazhab which led to the modernization of Mazhabiyyah. Wahid Hasyim tried to democratize mazhabiyah differences which previously often cause conflicts and disintegration among Muslims. Wahid Hasyim believes that mazhabiyah differences cannot be obstacles for the unity of the Muslims. On the contrary, these differences can be reformulated to be transformed into a greater concept for the future of Islam. Moreover, he brought about the importance of reconciling political thoughts which can spread unity to the Muslims and Indonesia as a nation. Indonesian Muslims were no longer disintegrated simply due to political issues. He also struggled to reconcile political conflicts involving Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia.

#### **Keywords:**

Democratization, Mazhabiyyah, Reconciliation of politics

#### Introduction

It is obvious that the struggle of the Indonesian independence is not an easy task. History proves that almost all elements of the nation had contributed to the achievement of the independence, including soldiers, scholars, and students. Some central Islamic figures had also presented paramount contribution during the era of the independence struggle, such as *ulama*' and *santri*. Unfortunately, the roles of these figures are forgotten after the independence. Their influences are often considered as less crucial than those performed by veteran fighters. (Djaelani 1994: 1)

Nationalism has been an intensive topic of discussion in 1945. At that time, many Western scholars, such as Wetheim, Mintz, and Dahm, assumed that the most dominant factor in emerging nationalism in Indonesia is the Western education model provided by the Dutch government, -which had been implemented in Indonesia since the beginning of the 20th century. This assumption—in some extents—is true, but indirectly neglecting the growing of the national spirit among the *ulama*, scholars, and students who rarely experienced Western model of education. Their nationalism had grown in *pesantren*: a traditional education that positions Islam and its values as the main basis. Most of them went to Arab for pilgrimage and study. After they returned from Arab, they often acted as the agents of change and renewal for the community, nation, and country. (Suminto 1985: 3)

This paper explores the political and religious thoughts' of KH Abdul Wahid Hasyim, a Muslim scholar from Tebuireng, in his contribution to the establishment of Islam in Indonesia and the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia. His involvement since the Dutch colonial period, the Japanese occupation, until the independence, shows a *santri*'s struggle for national independence.

## **Track Record and Intellectual Traces**

Abdul Wahid Hasyim was born on 5 Robiul Awwal 1333 H (June 1, 1914 AD) in Tebuireng, Jombang, East Java. He is the eldest son of Hadratus Shaikh (Hasyim Asyʻari). Abdul Wachid Hasyim plays an important role in the process of modernization in Tebuireng. Under the guidance of his father, he learned Arabic and the basic knowledge of *fiqh* and *tawhid* at night, while in the morning he studied at Madrasah Salafiyyah in Pesantren Tebuireng (Yunus 1926: 365). He grew to be a smart person. At the age of 13, Wachid Hasyim had been asked to teach junior students.

Fascinatingly, Wahid Hasyim did not only focus on religious study materials from classical Islamic books. In 1929, he had begun to learn Dutch and English languages. His persistence in study led him published some of his thoughts in various magazines, such as Penyebar Semangat, Daulat Rakyat, Kullu Syaiin wal Dunya, al-Itsnain, Pandji Pustaka, Ummul Qura, Sautul Hijaz al-Lata'if al-Musyawarah, etc. These magazines were largely published by nationalist groups in the Middle East (Dhofier 1985: 105). Later, in 1932-1933, Wahid Hasyim went to Mecca for pilgrimage and developed his religious materials. After his return from the Holy Land (Arab), he proposed a radical change in the educational system of Tebuireng to his father. Hadratus Syaikh did not approve his son's proposal because he believed that the radical changes would only create chaos among the leaders of pesantren. On the other hand, his proposal on establishing Madrasah Nidhaniyah was approved. The establishment of this school was held in 1934 in which the teaching generally covered 70% of overall curriculum. In the same year, Wahid Hasyim built a library with 500 titles of books, mostly about religion. The library also subscribed various magazines and newspapers published in 1930s, both by modernist and traditionalist Islamic organizations, even nationalist groups. Wahid Hasyim's willingness to subscribe magazines and newspapers from various private groups showed his progressive and tolerant attitudes to ideological, social, and political issues (Dhofier 1985: 106).

In 1938, Wahid Hasyim was an active figure in NU (Nahdlatul Ulama). He believed that his involvement into NU would strengthen the power of this organization. He had pioneered a struggle for NU by starting from the grassroots, such as building a branch secretary of NU Cukir. After that, he was appointed as the chairman of NU branch of Jombang. Since then, Wahid Hasyim prefered to be a politician rather than as religious head of *pesantren* to fight for Islam and religious freedom in Indonesia (Dhofier 1985:104-105).

In 1943, Japanese government established an office of occupation *Shumubu* (Office of Religious Affairs) in Jakarta. In 1944, Wahid Hasyim was appointed to be the head of *Shumubu* to represent his father as the official head until Japanese left Indonesia in 1945. Before that, Japanese government established Investigation Agency of Indonesian Independence (BPKI), and Wahid Hasyim was the member of this agency. In BPKI, Wahid Hasyim was a very influential person. His intellectual capacity was able to bridge differences between adherents of traditional Islam, modern Islam, and secular nationalists. Therefore, he was chosen as one of the nine members of BPKI sub-committee who had a duty to formulate a preamble draft for the Constitution (UUD) of the Republic of Indonesia.

When Sukarno formed his first cabinet on September 1945, Wahid Hasyim was appointed as the Minister of State,<sup>1</sup> (Kahin 1952: 139) as well as in Syahrir cabinet in 1946. In 1946, when *Kiai* Mahfoudz Siddiq died, Wahid Hasyim replaced his position as the chairman of Tanfidziyah NU. Subsequently, in 1947, he replaced his father as the director of Tebuireng (Dhofier 1985: 107) After the handover of the sovereignty and the establishment of the United Republic of Indonesia (RIS), Wahid Hasyim was appointed as the Minister of Religious Affairs in Hatta cabinet 1950. This position was continuously entrusted to him for three times in the

<sup>1</sup> He was mandated as Minister of State in the first cabinet of Republic of Indonesia between August 31, 1945 and November, 14, 1945.

cabinet of: Hatta, Natsir, and Sukiman.<sup>2</sup> (Ma'sum 1994: 326) see also (Maarif 1996: 40).

Wahid Hasyim is a figure of prominent *santri* and nationalist. His hobby in writting short essays, which were then published in various newspapers and magazines, made him famous as a reputable journalist (Atjeh 1954: 192). He wrote about a various issues, including religion, politics, education, mystical, social, cultural, and so forth. His essays appeared in various local and national newspapers since Dutch, Japan, revolution, and develop mentalism eras. He wrote essays about a preface to welcome published books, speeches that he would convey in important meetings for Muslims' struggle, and long sermons that contains an appeal for Muslims to continue their struggles as he did.

In the context of religion and politics, there are some interesting thoughts delivered by Abdul Wachid Hasyim. His writings on both aspects, religion and politics, predominantly reflect efforts to 1) democratizing different *mazhab* and 2) reconciling political thoughts that can spread unity to the Muslims and Indonesia as a nation.

# The Modernization of Mazhabiyyah

According to Wahid Hasyim, the genuine teachings of Islam are those set by Allah and His Messenger. The only way to judge the truth of a religion is by considering whether the religion is in accordance with human nature or not. Furthermore, religion prepares human for the survival in the world and hereafter. In terms of Islam, God has created human and given them guidances through Quran and Sunnah. God's commandments, according to Wahid Hasyim, will always be in accordance with human nature and laws of nature.

<sup>2</sup> Hatta cabinet has taken place from December 20, 1949 untill September 6, 1950, while Natsir cabinet from September 6, 1950 to April, 27, 1952, and Sukiman cabinet from April 27, 1951 to April 27, 1952.

Unfortunately, Indonesian Muslims are often in disharmony condition. According to Wahid Hasyim, this happens because of the excessive fanaticism of Muslims on the certain thoughts (mazhab) (Hasyim 1955 in Sanusi 1985: 43). Fanaticism is a way of ignoring—or even radically—rejecting different thoughts. There are two groups who generally come from this category. The first group are those (traditional group) that strongly stands for Islamic laws, while the second group are those (the moderns) who follow Western thought in a strict way. Wahid Hasyim divides the groups as 1) those who maintain mazhab system and 2) those who reject it (anti-mazhab).

In *Demokrasi, Oposisi dan Masyarakat Madani*, Huwaydi Fahmi says that there is nothing to worry about *mazhab* and those who hold on it. The crucial problem should be given to their response to *mazhab* itself. The excessive fanaticism in certain *mazhab* often lead to conflicts and disintegrations (Huwaydi 1996: 74). It will also intimidate the basic principles of democracy in this country. Consequently, it leads to the decline and degradation among Indonesian Muslims.

In fact, according to Huwaydi, those who hold "Islam without mazhab" have often created wrong perceptions. The Islamic groups "without mazhab" often disturb religious worship practiced by Muslims "with mazhab". In fact, the existence of the school is a necessity and should be fertilized for the renewal of ijtihad and the development of thoughts. Although mazhab is sometimes accepted in inappropriate way (for instance, the mazhab is regarded as a "religion" for most of its adherents or often led to disputes or controversy), it does not mean that Muslims should be banned from activities that lead them to the enlightenment of thinking. For the benefits of increasing Islamic thoughts, mahzab should be allowed to develop in society. However, it must be concerned that mahzab cannot be treated as "God" so that it would not create any problems which cause disharmony among Muslims. Thus, the gap among mazhab followers should be bridged and straightened.

Wahid Hasyim becomes one of the Islamic scholars who tried to fight for the aforementioned ideal principle. In some of his writings, it is clear that Wahid Hasyim tried to democratize *mazhabiyah* differences which often cause conflicts and disintegration among Muslims. According to Wahid Hasyim, the existence of some *mazhab* is a reality that we cannot avoid. If there are differences among them, it is reasonable because every pioneer of *mazhab*, such as Imam Syafi'ie, Imam Hambali, Imam Malik, and Imam Hanafi; has various outcome of *ijtihad* but there is actually one purpose: to give instructions and facilitate '*ubudiyah* for Muslims in order to ground worship to Allah SWT. Indeed, Muslims, either those with or without *mazhab*, should have senses of mutual understanding and toleration each other. Wahid Hasyim believes that to achieve this purpose, Muslims must apprehend and tolerate the differences of these *mahzabiyah* (Latifah and Alfian 2005: 517).

Recently, in some countries where the Muslims and non-Muslims live side by side, it is frequently seen that Muslims are far behind in every aspect rather than non-Muslims. In fact, in the early Islam period, Muslims had various tremendous triumphs. The historical records announced that this glory could be achieved because Muslims always relies themselves on Islamic values. At that time, Islam succeeded in uniting Arab tribes, liberalizing them from barbarism to civilization, changing their obstinate into loving characteristic, as well as removing pagan tradition and replacing it with worshipping Allah SWT. In the past, Muslims were known credible, both as the leaders of the East and West countries for approximately 8 or 9 centuries. However, due to the unfavorable splitting during Caliph Uthman and Ali, there was nothing in the world which could avoid Muslims from deterioration (Arsalan 1984: 97).

Muslims had ever experienced a sensational glory but today they are left behind. According to Wahid Hasyim, this happens because they began to leave the essential Islamic values (Wahid hasyim in Sanusi 1985:

60). The prescription to revive Islam is to return to Al-Quran and Sunnah, which reflects Islam without fallacy, heresy and *bid'ah*.

If Muslims intend to struggle by taking inspiration from Al-Quran, they can stand in the same level with other nations from Europe, America, and Japan, both in education, science, politics, and economy. Moreover, they can maintain their own religion. Contemporary Muslims are expected to implement and interprete the innovations created by the early Muslim scholars. This means that they do not need to build school of thoughts, such as schools of *fiqh* or Islamic theology, as done by Al-Asy'ari, Al-Maturidi, or Al-Ghazali. Contemporary Muslims are wished to creatively implement the theological values in *mazhab* into the real and new life. In short, contemporary Muslims are directed to reformulate the meaning of Islam into the rapid and unpredictable change of the world (Abdurrahman Wahid in Sanusi 1985: xiii). If these strategies can be fulfilled, the triumph of the Islamic era may be achieved again.

Wahid Hasyim believes that *mazhabiyah* differences cannot be obstacles for the unity of the Muslims. On the contrary, these differences can be reformulated to be transformed into greater concept for the future of Islam. Ziauddin Sardar says, a Muslim Pakistan futurologist and architect, says contemporary Muslim intellectuals should evolve to be figures who master every field and able to a necessary synthesis" (al-Fayyadl 2003: 22). The passive and fatalistic mentality as inheritances of determinism in scholastic theology must be immediately ignored. Muslims should fully recognize that they have freedom to realize their goals and ideas. Freedom is certainly not a tyrannical freedom but a productive freedom allowing Muslims to create opportunities in the future yet unimaginable in the present.

Nowadays, Muslims' perseverance and loyalty to Islam has disappeared. Islam is not merely an activity of praying, fasting, and *zikir*. In order to gain better condition, it is important for Muslims to implement

jihad, fighting for doing God's will by accomplishing their souls, bodies, and treasures. However, jihad cannot exclusively be interpreted as if everything had to be completed in the form of war and destruction. The bloody tragedies among Muslims, such as terrorism and destruction of worship places of other religions, are actually a form of "primitive anxiety" (Angst) in terms of illusion and romance for the past glory. Jihad must be constructively interpreted as serious efforts to design anticipations for many impossible things in the future.

Wahid Hasyim believes that the problem of *mazhabiyah*, which has long been a source of disintegration among Muslims, should be stopped. There are lots of more important works than just blaming other Muslims with different *mazhab* and theology. The more crucial problems are stupidity, poverty, and the low level of economic situation which slowly destroy Muslims' faith.

# The Reconciliation of Politics

Islam is known as an anti-violence, anti-cruelty and anti-oppression religion. In order to achieve this mission, Wahid Hasyim thinks that Muslims should take the political strategy (Hasyim 1949). Wahid Hasyim has strong commitment to fight for Islam in Indonesia through the political arena, and he had involved in politics since the Dutch colonization.

When the Dutch came into the archipelago, there were many resistances against them. According to Clifford Geertz, among those many resistances, four of them were performed by students: Padri War, Java War, Banten War, and Aceh War (Saridjo 1979: 48). All of these wars took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Indonesian Muslim nationalism wass only based on the motto *Hubbul Wathan min Al-Iman* (loving homeland is a part of faith) (Kuntowijoyo 1997: 15). In Hamka's perspective, Indonesian fighters, such as Tuanku Imam Bonjol, Pangeran Diponegoro, and Tengku Chik Ditiro, deserved as heroes of their homelands. Futhermore, their

strunggles are referred as the origins of people's struggle for nationalism (HAMKA 1994: 31). Meanwhile, in Taufik Abdullah's point of view, Muslims' roles have actually begins from the empire periods as the first power against Dutch colonialism, followed by people's resistance led by scholars SI (Serikat Islam), until the establishment of militias during revolution (Abdullah 1987: 27). In this case, Islam as the opponents of colonialism in Indonesia had emerged long before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Unfortunately, when SI became the icon of Islamic political movements at that time, many Muslims were disintegrated, and it was caused some internal factors. The disintegration firstly came when Indonesia was at the portal of independence. On December 7, 1944, members of BPUPKI, including Wahid Hasyim, held its councils in two sessions, from 28 May to 1 June 1945 and from 10 to 17 July 1945. This council was driven by two groups, nationalists and Islamists, who persisted on their own opinions in formulating Constitution. Although Wahid Hasyim was the youngest member of the committee, he was in the group of Islamists who are able to refute arguments promoted by nationalist groups.

This endless debate finally led them to a need in forming a committee of nine, a small committee consisting of four representatives of Islam (including Wahid Hasyim) and five of the nationalists and non-Muslims. When they succeeded in formulating Jakarta Charter which the first article contains "Divinity with an obligation for Muslims to carry out Shari'a" on June 22, 1945, but shortly after that, on August 18, 1945, this article raised a controversy. BPUPKI was eventually replaced by PPKI which discussed the controversy and planned for replacement. Unfortunately, only two representatives of Islam were sitting, Wahid Hasyim and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo. After many debatable considerations, the first principle of Jakarta Charter was finally removed and replaced with "Belief in One Supreme God". At that time, according to Hatta, Wahid Hasyim attended to this meeting. However, when he asked about it, Wahid

Hasyim commented that "a phrase 'One Supreme God' is accordance with monotheism in Islam, and replacement of that previous phrase will satisfy the Islamists. Islam recognizes only Belief in One Supreme God." <sup>3</sup>

Actually, his statement was none other than his effort and reflection that Indonesian Muslims were no longer disintegrated simply due to political issues. In his speech on 4-6 November 1951 in Jakarta, Wahid Hasyim argued that Muslims' contribution for the independence against colonialism was indeed very great. However, it does not mean that after the Indonesian independence, this state would be an Islamic state (Sanusi 1985: 148). This misunderstanding, according to Wahid Hasyim, emerged from Unification Theory between religion and state to implement Shari'a in Indonesia. The Republic of Indonesia is not an Islamic state. In fact, according to Wahid Hasyim, Indonesia government basically agreed with separation between religion and state in the sense of that the government does not intervene any religious affair, but the government merely serves religious purposes in accordance with principles of Pancasila.

Furthermore, Wahid Hasyim argued that separation between religion and state is just a theoretical ideal, and it can never be applied in anywhere else except atheist (Tim Kementerian Agama 1951). Most people wished to survive Islamic laws (Shari'a) by building an Islamic state. However, with the presence of Republic of Indonesia, all citizens, including Muslims, should receive it as their nation-state. The most important thing is that Muslims could freely practice their faith. The inclusion of One Supreme God and People Sovereignty into Pancasila has provided an ideological position to Indonesian people to mutually give freedom in practicing

<sup>3</sup> Wahid Hasyim's attendance in that meeting is still controversial. According to Hatta, Wahid Hasyim has attended to this meeting, as well as Kasman Singodimedjo. However, for Prawoto Mangkusasmita, Wahid Hasyim has never attended to this meeting. It is also said by K.H. Isa Ansyari in the front of Konstituante 1957.

<sup>4</sup> K.H.A. Wahid Hasyim, "Tugas Pemerintah terhadap Agama" (a speech delivered in Conference between Minister of Religious Affairs and Committee of Non-Politic Organization in Jakarta, 4-6 November, 1951)

worship. The integration between these two principles, according to Wahid Hasyim, has led to a compromise: Muslims' desire to revive religious law was allowed, but the principle of democracy must be maintained. Thus, this desire cannot be a reason to harm other groups. (Hasyim in Sanusi 1985: 148).

These attitudes reflect that Wahid Hasyim strongly commit to the reconciliation of politics by compromising religious and democratic issues in Indonesia. Since the formulation of BPKI to PPKI, Wahid Hasyim was one of those who tried to struggle for the religious harmony among Indonesian people. In short, he uses political strategy to reconcile the differences, not only for the national government but also for all Indonesian people.

His political struggle for citizens (not only for Muslims) can also be seen in his policies when he served as the Minister of Religious Affairs. Although Wahid Hasyim is a Muslim when dealing with public interests, he never segregated religious differences. His political involvement is not only to reconcile the controversies and disintegrations among Muslims but also to perform his duty as the representatives of Indonesian people in serving public interests, including non-Muslims. As an example, Wahid Hasyim gave Islamic schools Rp. 1,- subsidy for each child while giving Rp. 4,- subsidy for each child of non-Muslims. According to Wahid Hasyim, Ministry of Religious Affairs was established to protect religious liberty and maintain harmonious relations among different religious communities (Lapidus 2000: 340).

The political conflict was probably difficult to settle and reconcile. However, religious affairs are still the major concerns for Wahid Hasyim. According to him, if Indonesian people with different religions could live in harmony, political conflict may easily overcome. In the political arena, Wahid Hasyim also focused on social religious issues (Hasyim in Sanusi 1985: 148). Either the government or the people should not interfere

other personal religious affairs, such as worship, household, political beliefs, customs, etc. The government also should not intervene personal religious affairs in every religious community, such as building mosques, churches, and other worship houses.

### **Conclusion**

The struggle for independence is not easy. Wahid Hasyim has shown it throughout his life. His intellectual records, by studying in boarding school of Tebuireng until serving as Minister of Religious Affairs, has made him realize that there are many unfinished public issues. He realized that he could not continue to devote ourselves in school and merely focus on Islamic teaching, while in other areas there are many people who need his *jihad*. He began his intellectual career by becoming secretary NU Branch of Cukir, then he served as one of the members of the nine committee BPUPKI 1945. Wahid Hasyim repeatedly received many challenges, not only from non-Muslims but also from Muslims, since the time he fought for the nation-state. However, he has strong commitment to solve this disintegration and conflict for the bright future of Indonesia.

One major issue was disintegration between Indonesian Muslims due to the different *mazhab*. Most of Muslims refused to believe in a particular *mazhab*, while others strongly held on the certain *mazhab*. For this issue, Wahid Hasyim tried to democratize such different perceptions by arguing that one of Indonesian Muslims' weaknesses was because they were too easy to negatively perceive others with different views. In fact, according to Wahid Hasyim, if they understood that they were united by one religion, namely Islam, such disintegration was not going to happen. The fanaticism to particular *mazhab* is also a source of disintegration among Muslims.

Besides democratization of *mazhab*, Wahid Hasyim also struggled to reconcile political conflicts involving Muslims and non-Muslims in

Indonesia. His reconciliation, for instance, can be seen when he approved a change to the first principle of Jakarta Charter, "Divinity with an obligation for Muslims to carry out Shari'a" with the words "Belief in One Supreme God". For Wahid Hasyim, the phrase Belief in One Supreme God is more pluralist and will not harm Muslims because it reflects a basic principle of monotheism in Islam. This reconciliation can also be seen when he served as Minister of Religious Affairs to provide more subsidies to non-Muslim students than Muslim students.

His struggle was over in the incident Cimindi (Cimahi-Bandung) on 19 April 1953 where a car accident should make Wahid Hasyim hospitalized in Bandung. On that day too, precisely at 10:30 pm, Wahid Hasyim was dead at 39 year old. Since then, he was awarded as a National Hero of Indonesia.

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