

AL-QUR'AN AND THE UNITIES: THE STUDY OF AHMAD SANUSI AND AHMAD HASSAN 'S THOUGHTS IN INDONESIA

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas penafsiran dua ulama yang berjasa dalam gerakan nasional Indonesia tentang persatuan dengan menggunakan ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an tentang persatuan. Ahmad Sanusi dan A. Hassan telah banyak menarik minat masyarakat Sunda dengan penafsiran Al-Qur'an yang efektif dan juga menghormati norma dan nilai-nilai lokal. Meski dikenal sebagai tekstualis, Ahmad Sanusi menggunakan ijtihad untuk menafsirkan Al-Qur'an. Sementara itu, A. Hassan adalah seorang ulama produktif pemikir Islam modern di Indonesia. Dengan membandingkan pemikiran kedua ulama ini, penulis berusaha menemukan hubungan yang mendalam antara tradisi Islam klasik dan modernitas kolonial dalam konteks lokal Indonesia melalui analisis interpretasi mereka terhadap ayat-ayat tentang kesatuan dalam Al-Qur'an. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis, artikel ini mengeksplorasi perbedaan dan persamaan pandangan yang dikemukakan oleh dua ulama ini dan mengaitkan pandangan mereka dengan perdebatan tentang kesatuan dalam literatur Islam. Untuk itu, artikel ini menjawab dua pertanyaan berikut: (1) bagaimana pandangan teologis mereka berkontribusi pada hasil interpretasi mereka? dan (2) seberapa kuat pemahaman mereka tentang wacana persatuan di Indonesia? Artikel ini menemukan argumen kunci yang digunakan Ahmad Hassan tentang kesatuan dalam Islam. Ia berpendapat bahwa Islam memiliki rasa persatuan yang kuat dan menuntut umat Islam untuk memperjuangkan persatuan dengan baik. Demikian pula Ahmad Sanusi percaya bahwa dengan semangat ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an tentang persatuan, umat Islam harus mampu membangun persatuan dalam Islam dan Ijtihadi.

Kata Kunci: Kesatuan, Ulama, Al-Qur'an

Abstract

This study discusses the interpretation of two ulama who contributed to the Indonesian national movement on unity by using the Quran verses on unities. Ahmad Sanusi and A. Hassan, have widely attracted the Sundanese people with their effective interpretation of the Quran that also respects local norms and values. Despite known to be a textualist, Ahmad Sanusi employed ijtihad (his own efforts) to interpret the Quran. Meanwhile, A. Hassan is a prolific scholar modern Islamic thinker in Indonesia. By comparing thought of these two scholars, the writer aims to discover deep connection between classical Islamic tradition and colonial modernity in Indonesian local contexts through analyzing their interpretation to verses on unities in the Quran. By using a descriptive-analytical method, this paper therefore explores differences and similarities of views raised by these two idealistic scholars and linking their views with the existing debates on the unities in the existing Islamic literatures. For this purpose, this paper compares the taught between these two scholars by answering these two questions: (1) how their theological views contributed to their interpretation results? and (2) how strong are their understanding on unities discourse in Indonesia? This paper found key arguments that Ahmad Hassan uses on the unities in Islam. He argued that Islam has strong sense of unity and demands muslim to fight for unity well. Similarly, Ahmad Sanusi believes that with spirit of Quranic verses on unities, muslim must be able to establish unities within Islam and Ijtihadi.

Keywords: Unities, Ulama, al-Quran

Introduction

The Sundanese region is well known for its high religiosity image with the presence of Islamic boarding schools that safeguard the values of Islamic law. The image can't be separated from the struggle of Sundanese top Ulamas in the past who were able to groom generations of santri (religious students) to become religious leaders who always keep the region in harmony between Islam and the native culture. Ahmad Sanusi and A. Hassan, two influential Ulama in the Sundanese region have succeeded in spreading Islamic da'wah in a friendly and polite manner. This is proven through their book on Tafsir (Interpretation) *Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Marifat al-Quran* and *al-Furqan* which serves as the guideline for Sundanese society at that time. Their persistence in spreading Islamic da'wah was colored by their different backgrounds.

Jajang Rohmana is one researcher who is specialized in the field of Sundanese tafsir discovers the integrity of this Sundanese tafsir conducted by Ahmad Sanusi who was actively putting his thoughts into various religious fields such as *Malja al-Thalibin*, *Tafsir Surat Yasin*, *Tamsyiyat al-Muslimin*, and etc. Interestingly, he was consistent with his Sufism study entitled *Siradj al-Adzkiya fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya* which became the primary reference book of the Cantayan santri in sukabumi, and the regular study of the Cantayan community today.

Meanwhile, A. Hassan is known as the most productive writers in the Persis organization. His works reflected the pragmatic forms of understanding and explanation of Islam.⁴ Hassan wrote 80 books, each was published with thousand copies and many of them were often reprinted many times. One of his masterpiece book is Tafsir al-Furqan (Interpretation of al Furqan). With Tafsir al-Furqān, Ahmad Hassan aims to provide an explanation and understanding to Muslims who do not understand Arabic and at the same time to provide guidance for Muslims to avoid taqlid and ignorance by prioritizing the Qur'an and Sunnah as sources of their religious references. Tafsir Al-Furqān received considerable enthusiasm among the Indonesian Muslim communities. it was proven in 1962 AD by the fact that the Tafsir has been reprinted/reproduced around 10 times. Furthermore, this Tafsir is not only read by Indonesian Muslims, but also by Muslims in Malaysia and Singapore among others.¹

This paper is prepared in response to the lack of literatures that analyze KH. Ahmad Sanusi and A. Hassan's thoughts expressed in their respective books on Tafsir. With their simple explanation, these two tafsirs can be the best references for Indonesian especially the Sundanese region people to find solution to the problems of Islam by discussing the verses of

¹ Djaja, Tamar, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan*, Jakarta: Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia.

the Quran using Sundanese. This paper focuses on three aspects. The first, discussion about the profile and educational background of Ahmad Sanusi and A. Hassan and their professional teachings in the Sunda region. The second, explanation on the condition and content of the book *Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Marifat al-Quran* and *al-Furqan*, and the methods were employed. The third, description of the perspective of Ahmad Sanusi and A. Hassan on al-Quran and Unities in the verse of Surat al-Imrān (3): 103 and Surat al-Mukminūn(23): 52. These three aspects will be the main topics discussed in this paper.

According to the Tafsir, two assumptions will be discussed in this paper. First, the history of *Tafsir Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Ma'rifat al-Quran* and *Tafsir al-Furqan*; how much the two books were influential among the Sundanese. Second, the understanding of al-Quran and unities on Ahmad Sanusi and A. Hassan perspective on verses Surat al-Imrān (3): 103 and Surat al-Mukminūn(23): 52.

There are two literatures that will be discussed here, the first one is that of about Ahmad Sanusi and Ahmad Hassan's political roles. The second one is their thoughts and works as proof of their legacies. These two become subject of many studies, along with literature reviews.

Firstly, the study of Ahmad Sanusi's memoirs and his roles at a national level in general covered his activities at the Sarekat Islam Parties and pesantren, his struggles in exile, his founding of al ittihadijatoel islamijjah, his situation as a city prisoner, his membership of BPUPKI in Japan's era and his roles in the struggle for independence². Then I specifically and deeply discussed his political roles from pesantren to parliament, his role as a leader of Al-Ittihadijatoel Islamijjah and his political role as a member of BPUPKI and his Political Thought about Islam and nation were particularly addressed from Islamic perspectives.³

Secondly, the thoughts and works of Ahmad Sanusi. Most studies turned out to discuss about the master interpreter, both *Malja al-Thalibin, Tamsiyyatul Muslimin Fi Tafsir Kalam Rabb al-Alamin* and *Raudhatul Irfan Fi Ma'rifat al-Quran* Then there is a study of the book al-adawiyah associated with the economic crisis of the world in 1929 and his work during economic crises. Studies about the Islamic laws issues KH. Ahmad Sanusi thought and struggle an national tensions (The only study on tasawwuf and focused on the book of *Siradj al-Adzkiya Fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya*, is written in the journal of al-Tullab. However, it is not detailed in the origin of the book *Siradj al-Adzkiya Fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya*, but only describing the contents of the book.

² Miftahul Falah, 2009, *Biografi Perjuangan KH. Ahmad Sanusi*. Sukabumi: Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia.

³ Muhammad Iskandar, 2001, *Para Pengemban Amanah, Pergulatan Kiai dan Ulama di Jawa Barat 1900-1950*, Yogyakarta: Mata Bangsa, 85-86.

Methods

As the method, I use library research. The object of study is the book of *Raudhat al-'Irfan Fi Ma'rifat al-Quran* by Ahmad Sanusi and *Tafsir al-Furqan* written by Ahmad Hassan. Based on the data, I found that these Tafsir have strong influence among Muslim societies in Sunda region. Furthermore, we found strong relevance in the teaching of the moderation by Ahmad Sanusi and the modernization by Ahmad Hassan through their works with the sunda communities. Then, this research processes consisted of exploring of data sources, data-collection and the analysis.

This study is qualitative research using the literature reviews as the main data source. Then the secondary sources was obtained from articles, research results, records and other documents related to the two Ulama; Ahmad Sanusi and Ahmad Hassan. Data collection used in this study is documentary study techniques, which is to snap documents to get information about Ahmad Sanusi and Ahmad Hassan's perspective on al-Quran and unity. The two commentators presented their best analysis on unity verses at their books. Taken together, this study focused on the descriptive analysis, covering two types of approaches, content analysis and sociological history. An analysis of the content focused on the meaning and content of the text of *Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Marifat al-Quran*, *Tafsir al-Furqan* that was intended to fully describe the object of research. Then sociological analysis is used to analyze the thought of Ahmad Sanusi and Ahmad Hassan with various social historical context surrounding their own book.

The Profile of KH. Ahmad Sanusi and Ahmad Hassan

KH. Ahmad Sanusi, a Sundanese Ulama was born in the village of Cantayan, Cikembar, Sukabumi City, West Java Province, on 3 Muharram 1306/18 September 1888. He was a Kyai, Ajengan, the thinker in Ahlussunah wa al-Jama'ah stream, a founder and leader of the Al-Ittihadoel Islamiyyah (AII) organization. He joined Islamic Community Unity (PUI) and contributed a lot in fighting for and campaigning for Indonesian independence by producing his hundreds of Sundanese-language religious books. Born from a religious family, he has strong family background of a pesantren owned by his father, H.Abdurrahim.⁴

Ahmad Sanusi studied as several Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren). In addition to study at his father's pesantren, he also learned from a number of Islamic boarding schools he had visited. As a santri (student) who likes to travel, he is well connected with various networks of Islamic boarding

⁴ Fadlil Munawwar Mansur, *Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Marifat al-Quran Karya Haji Ahmad Sanusi: Analisis Semiotik dan Resepsi*, Tesis, Yogyakarta:PPs UGM,1992, 102.

schools in Priangan. He studied at least at nine Islamic boarding schools in the Sukabumi, Cianjur, Garut, and Tasikmalaya areas⁵. Among these pesantren, there are the Islamic Boarding School Salajembe led by Ajengan Muhammad Anwar and Pesantren Sukamantri (Ajengan Muhammad Siddik); both are located in Sukabumi Regency. Then, he studied at the Behavioral Islamic Boarding School and the Ciajag Islamic Boarding School in Cianjur City. Shortly thereafter, he went on to study at the Gudang Tasikmalaya Islamic Boarding School which was then led by Ajengan Suja'i.

Based on interviews with one of the grandchildren of Kyai Ahmad Sanusi, one of the most memorable experiences of the community in his life was the Guntur Islamic Boarding School led by Ajengan Ahmad Syatibi. The pesantren is in the village of Jambudwipa, Warungkondang, Cianjur. The relationship between Kyai Sanusi and the Nusantara Ulama was strong, and inseparable from the teaching axis of Syaikh Khalil Bangkalan which is connected to Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani, one of the Jawi top Ulama. His connection with the Nusantara Ulama was mentioned by Johns in his book on Islam in the Malay World, An Explanatory Survey with Some Reference to Quranic Exegesis. All the Ajengan Priangan who were visited by Kyai Sanusi were once students of Shaykh Khalil al-Bangkalan. Therefore, the connection of Kyai Sanusi in the Network of Priangan Islamic Boarding Schools is inseparable from the Pesantren Network in Java and Madura.⁶

The thing to note is that the attachment of Kyai Sanusi to the network of the Sundanese Islamic Boarding School made him well connected with the Nusantara Islamic Intellectual networks. He continued this relationship until he went to Mecca for five years (1909-1914). There, he studied various Syafi'iyah Ulamas, such as Syaikh Muhammad Garut, Syaikh Mukhtar, Shaykh Shalih Bafadil, Syaikh Sa'id Jamani, and Syaikh Abdullah Zawawi. Syaikh Muhammad Garut is one of the representative scholars according to him in the field of the Qadariyyah stream of Naqsabandiyah in West Java where Syaikh Garut has a connection with Syaikh Khatib of Sambas. Whereas Syaikh Abdullah Zawawi was one of his teachers in the field of the Naqsabandiyah Qadariyyah stream when he was in Mecca.⁷

Syaikh Zawawi was a Shafi'iyah mufti who wrote the book of Bughyah al-Raghibin. And finally, Kyai Sanusi was once requested to learn from Shaykh Mahfud, a Nusantara Ulama who was quite intense in the community and recognized as having international reputation in the field of

⁵ Miftahul Falah, 2009, *Biografi Perjuangan KH. Ahmad Sanusi*. Sukabumi: Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia.

⁶ Fadlil Munawwar Mansur, *Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Marifat al-Quran Karya Haji Ahmad Sanusi: Analisis Semiotik dan Resepsi*, Tesis, 103.

⁷ Muhammad Iskandar, *Para Pengemban Amanah, Pergulatan Kiai dan Ulama di Jawa Barat 1900-1950*, Yogyakarta: Mata Bangsa 2001, 85-86.

hadith. It was also said that he was an architect of a pesantren which produced many scholars in Indonesia.

During his stay in Mecca, Kyai Sanusi had a lot of interactions with the scholars from different nations. He was very aware of the importance of the role and presence of the Nusantara Ulama by aiming to unite the people. While in Mecca, Kyai Sanusi closely monitored social-religious developments, one of which was that in the archipelago. There he met KH Abdul Halim (1887-1962), one of the influential Kyai in the PUI organization, and other Ulama who contributed to the national movements. His interaction with the two led Kyai Sanusi to know more closely with the SI organization.⁸ SI is the first national organization in the field of political economy that triumphed in the 20th century. Its activity in SI made him a person who was very critical to the national upheaval movements. His critical attitude was shown when SI was accused of being an organization that did not defend Islam. As a form of his defense, he wrote a book entitled *Nahrat al-Dhurgam*. In this book he identified and debunk all information that were used to attack against SI.

In addition to his activity in the organization, he also spent much time to write books. Some of his books have been widely circulated throughout the archipelago, especially the Sunda region. He is also known as a productive book author. All of his works have been put forward by Gunseikanbu in his book Appendix to the Most Popular Indonesian Registration in Java. Gunseikanbu found about 125 written works of Kyai Sanusi: 101 were written in Sundanese and 24 were titled in Indonesian. Meanwhile, according to S.Wanta, Kyai Sanusi has produced 450 titles of books. The works he wrote cover various fields of religious disciplines such as Tafsir, Hadith, Aqidah / Tauhid, Fiqh, Literature, and Sufism. All those were written in different languages, including Sundanese, Indonesian, and Malay. But at majority of his works, he wrote more in Sundanese. This is because Sundanese language was more widely used as language of communication among cantayan villagers, so make it easier for them to study the books⁹.

Among his works in the field of Tafsir are *Malja al-Thalibin fi Tafsir Kalam Rabb al-'Alamin*, *Kashf al-Auham wa al-Zunun fi Bayan Qaulih Ta'ala laa yamassuh illa al-Mutahharun*, *Raudatul Irfan fi Ma'rifat al -Quran and others*. In the field of hadith, there are *Tafsier Boechoerie and al-Hidajah (Explaining the Hadith of Kitab Sapinah) using Malay language*. In the Science of Fiqh, there are *al-Djauharat al-Mardiyah (Imam Shafi'i Fiqh)*,

⁸ Jajang Rohmana, 2014, *Sejarah Tafsir al-Quran di Tatar Sunda*, Bandung: Mujahid Press.

⁹ Jajang Rohmana, 2014, *Sejarah Tafsir al-Quran di Tatar Sunda*. Bandung: Mujahid Press, 148.

Tarjamah Fiqh Akbar li al-Imam Hanafi, Hilyat al-Gulam, and others. Then in the famous Sufism field, there are *Tarjamatu Kitab al-Hikam and Siradj al-Adzkiya fi Tarjamah al-Azkiya* that are still widely used among the people and santri.¹⁰

Having reviewed some of his works, I found that Kyai Sanusi's works were inseparable from the struggle he devoted to his pesantren namely the Syamsyul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Cantayan, Sukabumi City. In 1915, after completing his education in Mecca, he returned to his hometown to help his father teach at the Cantayan boarding school. The boarding school was founded on April 15, 1933. His teaching style was different from those of other clerics, including his parents. He taught in simple language and applied the halaqah method. It turned out that his teaching method had a positive impact because the subject he presented was relatively easier to accept by the santri and his congregations. Therefore, in a relatively short period of time, KH Ahmad Sanusi had received the title from the community by calling the Ajengan Cantayan or in colonial sources called Kyai Cantayan (Verbaal Hadji Ahmad Sanoesi Process dated October 7, 1919 in Kern RA Collection No. 278. KITLV ; Sipahoetar 1946: 72).

Having reviewed data on his works in the community, I found that Sanusi's spirit did not limit in continuing his father's works at the Syamsyul Ulum boarding school, but also in 1921, he founded a boarding school in Genteng village, Babakansirna, Cibadak District, Afdeeling Sukabumi. The pesantren was founded on the advice of his father who at that time saw crowd of people coming from various regions took part in the religious sermons. This can be seen from his teaching method and the content of the materials that he conveyed. He used simple language and applied the halaqah system. Sanusi's influence in the communities is very strong. He led to free the people from the prisons of ignorance, poverty and colonialism. (Shaykh Munandi, KH. Ahmad Sanusi. His thoughts and struggles in the National Upheaval.)

This pesantren is known for its traditional salafiyah yellow book learning system. All santri are obliged to memorize what they have learnt, and obliged them to demonstrate his memorization results to the ajengan in their respective fields. One of the most popular characteristics in this boarding is the reading of wirid (dzikir) prior to every learning activities. Before starting learning with ajengan, the santri could not start their learning without conducting wiridan or dzikir together. The purpose is to gain knowledge and blessing at the same time. Dzikir is a riyadlah al-nafs (self-exercise) to draw one closer to the Divine. (Interview with Endang Fitriana, one of the Syamsyul ulum students who was still active in teaching

¹⁰ Jajang Rohmana, 2014, *Sejarah Tafsir al-Quran di Tatar Sunda*. Bandung: Mujahid Press, 149.

and learning at Cantayan Islamic Boarding School to date). He was also active in marketing the works of Kyai Ahmad Sanusi.

Kyai Sanusi's works and enthusiasm in his struggle make him known as an inspirational person to date. As a religious leader that was mandated to uphold Islamic law, he never run away from their mandate and works in preaching Islamic laws among the public and students. This showed that Sanusi was able to foster unity by bring closer and building harmonious relationship between religion and state.¹¹

Ahmad Hassan, more popularly known as A. Hassan or Hassan of Bandung was born in 1887 in the Tamil area of Singapore. He is a child of a mixed couple of Indonesian and Indian. His father, Ahmad Sinna Vappu Maricar was from India. Ahmad had ever worked as editor of "Nurul Islam" Magazine. He wrote several books in Tamil language, and translated several books which were written in Arabic. His mother Muznah, who came from Palekat Madras was born in Surabaya. When Ahmad Sinna was trading in Surabaya, he met with Muznah, and married her there. The couple then moved to Singapore, and settled in there until both of them died.

Since childhood, the young Hassan has been trained very hard by his father to master Islamic studies. He began his education at the age of 7 in Kampung Kapur. At that age, he began to study the Qur'an and Islamic teachings. Hassan received religious education directly from his father, then he continued to study at a Malay school. At the same age, he also attended the Victoria Bridge English School in Geylang. He also studied Arabic, Malay and Tamil. Formally, he never completed his elementary school education because at the age of 12, he had worked in a shop owned by Sulaiman's brother-in-law. Like what children at his age normally did at Haji Ahmad in Bukittinggi, at the same time he also learnt about how to conduct prayer, ablution, fasting and others. He also studied Nahwu Shorof to Muhammad Thaib and also studied Arabic for three years to Said Abdullah al-Musawi. He also studied with Abdul Latif, a scholar in Malacca and Singapore, and Sheikh Hasan, an scholar from India. He studied Islam from many teachers, including Ahmad on Bukit Tiung, Muhammad Thaib on Minto Road, Said Abdullah alMusawi, Abdul Latif, and Sheikh Hassan, a teacher of Indian descent. He learned these lessons until he was 23 years old.¹² Thus, even though he never completed his formal education, the capacity and quality of his knowledge in the field of Islamic studies has been recognized by the religious circles serving the area.

¹¹Personal Interview with Endang Rahmana, one of students Syamsyul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Juni 2019, Sukabumi Cantayan.

¹²Dadan Wildan Anas, Badri Khaeruddin, *Analisis Gerakan Dakwah Persatuan Islam*, Amanah Publishing, 35.

In 1911, at about 24 years old, A. Hassan married Maryam, a Malay Tamil's descent. From this marriage, he has seven children namely, Abdul Qodir; Jamilah; Abdul Hakim; Zulaikha; Ahmad; Muhammad Sa'id; and Mansyur. When in March 1936, Persis established a new academic institution called "pesantren", A. Hassan became the director and head of the new pesantren. However, in 1940, he decided to move his pesantren to Bangil, East Java by inviting 25 students from Bandung to join him. This move was apparently driven by family considerations in which many of his relatives lived in Surabaya area.¹³ He dedicated his life for religious teaching and dakwah. The way he conducted dakwah Islamiyyah was done not only by preaching, but also by writing. He is a prolific author who wrote a lot of articles for magazines, books, and materials for debates. In 1956, he made the pilgrimage (two years before he died) together with his students and close friends of his fellow Persis members. In the middle of the pilgrimage, A. Hassan got pain, so he was unable to do jumrah aqabah. Upon arrival from Hajj, he was still sick. Even one of his legs had an infection that had to be amputated. A. Hassan died on Sunday, November 10, 1958 at the age of 71 years. His body was buried in Bangil.¹⁴

Ahmad Hassan was known as the most productive writer in the Persis organization. The writings he produced reflected the pragmatic and the achievement of conclusions related to religion.¹⁵ His entire articles were published for the first time in the late 1930s or the first two years of the 1940s. His articles were structured by key purposes, among others; as an effort to increase knowledge of lay Muslims and encourage them to conduct right behavior, teach children the standard Islamic lessons, give religious decisions to those who seek advice on daily problems they faced, to answer or debate an opponent in a certain debate in an article or magazine. There were total of 80 articles that Ahmad Hassan has written. Some of his books were published thousands of copies and often reprinted many times.

The Urgency of Unities in The Quran

Explaining the unities, Ahmad Sanusi has contributed greatly to advancement of an organization he founded in Sukabumi, namely Al-Ittihadiyah Islamiyah (AII). Through AII, Sanusi brought in cheap goods from Japan to fill the cooperatives managed by AII. The organization enabled creation of a bond between the Sukabumi people and the Japanese.

¹³ Howard M Pedersfiel, 1966, *The Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union)*, Diss, Montreal: Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University, 52.

¹⁴ Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan*, Jakarta: Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia, 22.

In 1943, AII name was changed into Persatuan Ummat Islam Indonesia (PUII), upon which Sanusi was elected as a member of the Preparatory Body for Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI). His involvement at BPUPKI was a realization of Sanusi's faith in the Indonesian state, and thus contributed to the national unity.

Ahmad Sanusi gave the following meaning of unity at the chapter Ali 'Imran (2): 103:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

“Nerangkeun asas kadua tina pergaulan hirup Islam nyaeta kudu aya hiji golongan anu nganyahokeun kana sakabeh perkara hade jeung goring, buat di dunia jeung di akhirat serta nyebarkeun eta perkara ka sakabeh umat Islam ka karabat Islam menang bagja di dunia jeung di akhirat”.

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ

“ieu agama Islam ngan hiji-hijina agama anu ditarima ku Allah Ta’ala sarta jadi agamana kabeh nabi ti nabi Adam nepi ka panutup kanjeng Nabi Muhammad Shallallahu Alaihi Wasallam”¹⁶.

Every individual staying at this territory will have a feeling of loyalty to his nation-state. This sense of loyalty takes many forms. Some of the characters were expressed through actions, others through speeches and writing. And there were even those expressing it through criticism. Ahmad Hassan was among those expressed the unity through his writings and actions. He was a scholar and politician who lived during the national movement era. He was working hard to maintain the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation.

In this verse Ahmad Hassan gave the following meaning to the chapter Ali 'Imran (2): 103 and Chapter al-Mukminūn(23): 52:

“Berpeganglah kalian pada tali Allah dan janganlah kalian bercerai-berai. Ingatlah nikmat Allah kepada kalian ketika kalian bermusuhan, lalu Dia mempersatukan hati kalian, dan dengan nikmat Allah itu kalian menjadi bersaudara, padahal dahulu kalian nyaris berada di tepi jurang neraka, tetapi Dia menyelamatkan kalian darinya. Demikianlah Allah menerangkan tanda-tanda-Nya kepada kalian agar kalian mendapat petunjuk.”¹⁷ (And hold firmly

¹⁶ Ahmad Sanusi, *Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Ma'rifat al-Quran*, Sukabumi: Cantayan Press, 100.

¹⁷Hassan Ahmad, *Al-Furqān Tafsir Qur'an*, Jakarta: Universitas Al-Azhar Indonesia, 2010.

to the rope of Allah¹ and do not be divided. Remember Allah's favour upon you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so you—by His grace—became brothers. And you were at the brink of a fiery pit and He saved you from it. This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so that you may be 'rightly' guided.)

“Sesungguhnya (agama) ini adalah agama kalian, agama yang tunggal, dan Aku ini adalah Tuhan kalian, maka berbaktilah kepadaKu.” (Surely this religion of yours is 'only' one, and I am your Lord, so fear Me 'alone'.)

In understanding the verses pertaining to "unity". Hassan preferred to interpret "unity" as maintaining the harmony of Muslims in religion, as prioritizing brotherhood in terms of faith and the importance of unity among Muslims. The presence of this unity in religion will also lead to the national unity. The unity among the Muslims included a very broad meaning. With the brotherhood spirit, there will also be national unity and brotherhood. Since Muslims in Indonesian context are the most important elements, it is obligatory to guarantee the rights of muslims in implementing Islamic Sharia law in the context of the state.

In the book entitled "*Islam dan Kebangsaan*", Hassan expressed the word "united" not only to worship but includes a broader meaning, namely freedom to carrying out the obligations of a believer in his own country and even throughout the world. The disputes and debates within the Muslim group for him will not be able to eliminate the sense of unity, because the purpose of these disputes is to demand the right of the Muslims to enjoy their freedom to implement Islamic law that is based on the Qur'an and Hadith. Hassan also argued that the verses was intended for a person who claims to be Muslim and supports a national movement that aimed to get the independence of Indonesia. For him, this is a warning for them to rethink about their status as Muslims so that they did not turn into what the Prophet said in the hadith of Abu Dawud, "*Cintamu akan sesuatu itu, membutakan (mu) dan membisukan (mu) - your love on that thing makes you blind or mute*".¹⁸

Hassan expressed his disappointment on the attitude of the nationalists who emphasized a "neutral attitude", by taking national law as a guide in the life of the nation and state and put aside Islamic law, for the sake of unity. They even accused religions as "dividers" to those demanding to uphold the banner of Islam. Hassan was concerned on the attitudes of Muslims that abandoned their rights as majority. As the majority of the people in Indonesia, Muslims should have the greater rights, so that Islamic law could be applied in the context of Indonesia.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ahmad Hassan, *Islam dan Kebangsaan*, Bandung: Segarsy 2017, 47-48.

¹⁹ Ahmad Hassan, *Islam dan Kebangsaan*, Bandung: Segarsy 2017, 49.

For Hassan, to make "one Islam" is impossible, because every Islamic organization has its own different youth, which were competing with each other to achieve victory. And the victory itself becomes God's secret that humans cannot predict. The human obligation is only to do what God commands him to do.²⁰ In line with the name used by the organization, 'Persatuan Islam' (Islamic Unity) came up with direction that on the spirit of *ijtihad* and *jihad*, the organization aimed to achieve the organizational visions, namely; Unity in Islamic thoughts, unity in Islamic feelings, unity in Islamic businesses, and unity in Islamic voices. Based on these visionn, this organization was called "Persatuan Islam" (Unity of Islam, PERSIS). In addition, this unity name was also inspired by QS. Ali 'Imrān [3]: 103 and the hadith of the prophet that was narrated by Tirmidhi said; "*Kekuatan Allah itu bersama jama'ah*" (Allah's power is with the congregation). These arguments were used as the motto of Persis and inscribed in the emblem of the organization which is located within the circle of a twelve-pointed star.²¹

Conclusion

Many people still think that Ahmad Sanusi's thoughts were influenced by the culture of the pesantren. In fact, Sanusi's thought on the unity of religion and state is in line with the prescription mentioned in the Tafsir of Raudhat al-Irfan Fi Ma'rifat al-Quran. His interpretation on unity was based on a traditional understanding of religion as well as his vision on the unity between religion and nation. Sanusi has incorporated these two principles in his Tafsir.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Hassan's interpretation of the verses on unity represented a dimension of Muslim fundamentalist thought. In general, his thought is similar to the reformists who used the Islamic perspective as a measure for understanding external concepts such as the term "unity". In this case, Ahmad Hassan gave more attention to the application of the faith concept of unity and the importance of the implementation of Islamic laws in the context of Indonesia. To support his opinion, he argues that Indonesian Muslims are the majority who have greater rights and obligations as Indonesian citizens.

²⁰ Ahmad Hassan, *Membudakkan Pengertian Islam*, Majalah Al-Lisan, 88-89

²¹ Dadan Wildan Anas dan Badri Khaeruddin, *Analisis Gerakan Dakwah Persatuan Islam*, 35.

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