

TRANSFORMATION OF ASWAJA IDEOLOGY IN THE NAHDLATUL ULAMA PESANTREN (NU)

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Abstract : *This article describes the transformation of Aswaja's ideology through the pesantren. History that can not be avoided is teaching in pesantren which is closely related to the sustainability of Aswaja's understanding. But unfortunately the studies that have emerged have still not identified intellectual biography carefully the architects of the pesantren and have not explained the core of their teachings. Therefore, this study tries to open the curtain of knowledge about Aswaja doctrine in Islamic boarding schools. The results of this study indicate that the spread of Aswaja's ideology embraced in the NU boarding school is caused by solidarity that has deep roots and the integrity of its pesantren kiai. The ideological sources are the legacy of Wali Songo and also the works of the pesantren kiai affiliated with Aswaja's understanding. The paradigm used is that the understanding of the concept of Aswaja is flexible and moderate, awareness forms the organization, and the doctrine of Usul Fiqh is developed.*

Keywords: Pesantren, Aswaja, Nahdlatul Ulama.

Introduction

In its historical record, pesantren have been involved in the struggle against invaders by not using religious justification and symbolic terms, such as "holy war to drive out infidels" for example. This is unique because it is an implementation of local culture which has the substance of Islam as a religion and way of life. From this, it was understood that pesantren were more likely to show their characteristics as "Javanese Islam".

Regarding the occupation, the case of the supremacy of the fatwa launched by Hasyim Asy'ari who was considered the father of the santri in October 1945 could be said to be very rare. This fatwa is widely known as "jihad resolution" which has a major contribution to the religious thought of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) based on pesantren.¹ On the other hand the idea of "cultural preservation" KH. Hasyim also flourished among Islamic boarding schools. This idea is one of the privileges of pesantren culture and religion which is considered as an expression of "cultural Islam" where the ulama as agents of social change, widely understood have continued the tradition of walisongo to apply and pay more attention to the substance of Islamic teachings, which have been formulated and strengthened through their yellow book.² This model of Islamic teaching is usually referred to as Ahlu Sunnah wa al-Jamaah or Aswaja.

Abdurrahman Mas'ud emphasized ideological, socio-intellectual, and socio-historical as a trans-diskiplinary approach to portray a more just and balanced portrait of the pesantren community. Zamaksari Dhofier in his work entitled *Pesantren Traditions* explains about the cultures that occur in pesantren.³ Meanwhile, Martin Van Bruinessen explained in general about the traditions that exist in the pesantren and Islam in Indonesia.⁴ That is, the studies that have been mentioned still have not identified intellectual biography carefully the

¹ Said Aqil Siradj, "Model dan Tantangan Pesantren Masa Depan". Paper Presented in Pesantren Seminar, Malang, 6 Juni 2006.

² *Ibid.*

³ Abdurrahman Mas'ud, *Intelektual Pesantren Perhelatan Agama Dan Tradisi* (Yogyakarta:Lkis, 2002) hlm, 234-236.

⁴ Zamaksari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1882).

pesantren architects and have not explained the core of their teachings.⁵

An important thing related to teaching in pesantren is the preservation of Aswaja's understanding. So that Aswaja and Islamic boarding schools cannot be separated. Therefore, this study tries to open the curtain of knowledge about Aswaja doctrine in Islamic boarding schools.

Pesantren, NU, and Aswaja Ideology

Pesantren is a hostel where students (students) study the Koran. Arifin said as quoted by Ngatawi that Islamic boarding schools are Islamic education institutions that are grown and recognized by the surrounding community, with a dormitory system (complex) where students receive religious education through a study system or madrasa that is entirely under the sovereignty of the leadership of one or several kiai with charismatic and independent characteristics in all respects.⁶

There are two opinions about the origin of pesantren in Indonesia. First, that pesantren are rooted in the Islamic tradition itself, namely the tradition of the tarekat. He, has a close relationship with the typical place of education of the Sufis. This opinion is based on the fact that the spread of Islam in Indonesia was initially more widely known in the form of a tarekat which carried out certain practices led by a kiai. In his teaching, the cleric required his followers to carry out suluk for forty days by staying with fellow members of the tarekat in special rooms for lodging and cooking facilities located on either side of the mosque. besides teaching the practices of the tarekat, followers are also taught by various branches of Islamic religious knowledge. This place was later called pesantren.⁷

Secondly, the pesantren was originally a takeover of the pesantren system which was held by Indonesian Hindus. That was based on the fact that long before Islam came to Indonesia, the pesantren had already existed. Pesantren at that time was intended as

⁵ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat: Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Mizan, 1995)

⁶ Al zastrow Ngatawi. *Transformasi Dunia Pesantren*. @ 2003, PBNU. All rights reserved. Powered by transformatika.

⁷ Mujamil Qomar, *Pesantren Dari Transformasi Metodologi Menuju Demokrasi Istitusi* (Surabaya: Erlangga, 1996), hlm. 7-8.

a place to teach Hindu teachings. Other facts show that pesantren are not rooted in Islamic traditions, pesantren institutions are not found in other Islamic countries, while institutions similar to pesantren are found in Hindu Buddhist Communities such as in India, Myanmar and Thailand.⁸

The main role of the pesantren which has been believed and recognized by the community is to realize a generation of Muslims who are knowledgeable, religious (Islamic) and virtuous. Besides that there is also an assumption that pesantren is seen as a competent institution producing ulemas who are close to the community and leading the community.

In the historical level, pesantren cannot be separated from NU organizations in maintaining the Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah Fajar. It thus makes the designation for both as Traditionalist Islam. Dhofier stated that the great success achieved by traditional Islam in consolidating its power in Java was not only due to the fact that the number of followers was greater than followers of modern Islam, but it was also caused by solidarity that had deep roots and the integrity of its members. Thus, the kiai represented by Hasyim Asy'ari along with their students found no difficulty in grounding the ideology of Ahlussunnah Wal pilgrims in the pesantren. This ideology was affirmed by M. Tholhah Hasan that pesantren only applies their studies to applied sciences such as fiqh, Sufism and tool science; especially nahwu Sharf.⁹ He did not teach a radical understanding of Islam but cultural Islam, this is what causes pesantren to be accepted by society because it is considered to be more tolerant and flexible, understanding people's feelings and souls.

The Roots of Ideology in Islamic Boarding Schools

There are several factors that have caused the spread of Aswaja's ideology in connection with Islamic boarding schools, including:

⁸ Yusro. *Perbedaan Antara Strategi Diskusi Terbimbing Dan Dan Kegiatan Pondok Pesantren Terhadap Keterampilan Berbicara Siswa Kelas III SLTP Negeri 1 Dan 2 Laren Lamongan Tahun Pelajaran 2001/2002*, Tesis Program Pasca Sarjana Universitas PGRI Surabaya, 2001. Hlm. 10-11.

⁹ Muhammad Tolcha Hasan, *Model Pengembangan Madrasah Dan Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Sumber Daya Manusia*. Makalah Disajikan Dalam Seminar Pesantren, Malang, 6 Juni 2006.

a. Guardian Songo

Walisongo is believed to be the propagator of Islam in Java in the XVI-XVI centuries who have succeeded in combining secular and spiritual aspects in introducing Islam to the people. They were respectively Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Sunan Ampel, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Drajat, Sunan Giri, Sunan Kudus, Sunan Muria, and Sunan Gunung Jati. The Javanese Santri held that Walisongo was a leader of the people who was very pious with religious spiritual enlightenment. Their position in socio-cultural and religious life in Java is so compelling that it can be said that Islam will never become the region of Java if the Sufism developed by Walisongo is not rooted in society.

The Islamic teachings introduced by Walisongo in Java came with peace, seeming slow but convincing. The facts show that by tolerating local traditions and modifying them into Islamic teachings and still leaning on Islamic principles, Islam is embraced by the nobles and the majority of Javanese people on the north coast.

Regarding the initial process of the establishment of Islamic boarding schools, Mas'ud¹⁰ explained that pesantren cannot be separated from the history of XV-XVI walisongo influence on Java. Maulana Malik Ibrahim (1419 H.) for example, Walisongo's spiritual father, in the Javanese pesantren community is usually viewed as a teacher teacher for the people in the pesantren. Moreover, even the growing oral history gives an indication that old huts outside of Java also gained inspiration from Walisongo's teachings. For example, the Nahdlatul Wathan pesantren, which was founded in 1934 in Pancor, East Lombok, NTB, was also inspired by the teachings of Islamiyah Maulana Malik Ibrahim.

The movement carried out by the Wali Songo was the initial foundation of the spread of the Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah Islamic teachings. Their shrewdness in culturing Hindu-Buddhist culture with Islam to become a culture that does not violate the shari'ah can be easily accepted by almost all elements of society. Therefore, the next generation to date has made the Wali Songo as a funding father for the existence of Islamic teachings of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah in Indonesia.

¹⁰ Mas'ud, *Intelektual Pesantren.*, hlm, 49-53.

By the sixteenth century Muslim merchants had made rapid progress in their business ventures and preaching to have networks in business cities along the northern coast of Central Java and East Java. In these cities the Muslim community was originally formed. This community was spearheaded by Walisongo by establishing the first mosque in the land of Java, the Demak mosque. The mosque, which was founded in 1428, is the most important religious center in Java and plays a large role in the effort to complete Islamization throughout Java, including inland areas. For the Muslim community, the Demak mosque is not only a center of worship, but also as an educational venue, considering the pesantren educational institutions in the early days have not found its final form. But from this mosque Rahim pesantren education stands as has been explained.

b. Ulema and His Works

When viewed from the historical side of the establishment of pesantren, it can be seen that the kiai has a very significant role. They are very decisive about the steps that must be used in educating their students. One of their efforts is to compose a book that contains essential teachings. One of the kiai who became the main pioneer of the series of causes of the establishment of the Islamic Boarding School which used Aswaja as a teaching or school and was able to work was Sheikh Nawawi Al-Bantani (1813-1897). He has a great influence in ideology on his students. For example kiai Hasyim Asy'ari, Tebu Ireng, Jombang, (founder of Nahdhatul Ulama'), and kiai Khalil Bangkalan, Madura, who followed him in Nawawi's understanding of Aswaja. His famous work is al-Munir's interpretation which is widely studied in NU pesantren.¹¹

Spread of the Aswaja Ideology in Islamic Boarding Schools.

Before going any further, it is better to recognize the figure of tradition and religious thought of the pesantren which the author calls "Traditional Islam". In recognizing the tradition and religious thought of pesantren, it cannot be separated from the religious understanding of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah. Of course this is the Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah version of the pesantren. This understanding can be known from several things that are unique and different from other Islamic circles. For example, in the aspect of worship, usually pesantren people

¹¹ Muhsin Jamil, *Pesantren NU Dan Tarekat Dan Politik*. Majalah Pesantren edisi 1, 2002, hlm, 50-54.

use ushalli in prayer, tarawih 20 rak'ahs, pray qunut in the midday prayer, twice the call to prayer in Friday worship. In the aspect of religious ceremonies they used to read sholawatan in the books of Dliba ', al-Barzanji, and Burdah, they like to perform tales when death, likes to do Khaul, often make pilgrimages to the saints' graves, like Manakiban to honor Shaykh Abdul Qodir Jailani and so on.

Whereas in the aspect of religious thought the style of the pesantren-style Sunni relies on three aspects; Aqidah, Fiqh and Sufism. In the aspect of Aqeedah, they adhere to one of the two moderate Imams, Imam Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari and Abu Mansyuir Maturidi. Whereas in the aspect of Fiqh, they adhere to one of the four Imams of School (Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali). Although in general, those who are embraced among them are Shafi'i Imams. In the case of Sufism, they follow Imam Junaid Al-Baghdadi` or Imam Al-Ghazali. In another source it is mentioned that Imam Abi Al-Sazily is also the Imam of Sufism which is used as a reference in Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah.

In the actual pesantren, there is no standard and comprehensive explanation regarding the Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah other than the above definition. Such understanding of Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah has been used in Islamic boarding schools and even Islamic boarding schools, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). In fact, this understanding among ordinary pesantren communities is often narrowed by assuming that Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah is a teaching that contains observations of the traditions of qunut, tahlil, dliba ', salvation, khaul, talqin adzan once in Friday prayers and so on. Therefore, even though there are Islamic groups that practice religion with the school of imams above, but do not follow these traditions are considered not Ahlussunnah. So sometimes they accuse Muhammadiyah supporters, exactly, and so on as not Ahlussunnah.

The Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah version of the pesantren is built, developed and preserved by books taught in the modern world which are commonly referred to as the yellow book (Al-Pole Al-Mu'tabarah). Then zamakhsaryi dhofier explains that what is meant by traditional thought are Islamic thoughts that are still strongly bound by the thoughts of fiqh experts, hadith, Sufism, interpretation and monotheism, which lived between the seventh century to the thirteenth century.

The teachings originating from the book written by the first century ulama which developed into a style of religious thought

among boarding schools. This type of Islamic style has been passed down from generation to generation and has been preserved from generation to generation.¹² The role of Islamic scholars' pesantren in maintaining the Aswaja Ideology by preserving it for generations. To preserve this, the paradigm used is as follows:

- a. Understanding of the Aswaja Concept which is Flexible and Moderate.

In the pesantren community, sunism or Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaa'ah is more popular with the name Aswaja. This concept of Aswaja can be seen in the first articles of association of NU and regulations drawn up in the 1930s. Hasyim's role in making those decisions cannot be doubted, because he was the first person in this organization.

Whereas in the aspect of religious thought the style of the pesantren-style Sunni relies on three aspects; aqidah, fiqh and tasawwuf. They adhere to one of the two moderate imams, Imam Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari and Abu Mansyur Al-Maturidi. While on the aspect of fiqh, they adhered to one of the four madzhab priests (Shafi'i Hanafi, Maliki and Hambali). Although generally held among them is the Shafi'i Imam. When it comes to tasawwuf, they charge Imam Junaid Al-Baghdadi or Imam Ghozali. In another source it is stated that Imam Abu Al-Hasan Al-Sazili is also Imam Tasawwuf who is used as a reference in Ahlussunnah Wal-Jamaa'ah.

This type of Aswaja is understood by NU by emphasizing the importance of tasamuh (tolerance). Other principles of Aswaja are Tawassuth or 'adl (standing in the middle and avoiding extremism), Tawazzun (balancing the concepts of hbl minan-nas and min Allah), and amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar. As understood, this teaching is also easily tracked since the Walisongo period. Once again, walisongo remains an ideal model for this community.¹³

- b. Awareness forms an organization.

The problems faced by the ulama 'to maintain the ideology of Aswaja are very complex. Mutual support is carried out by various parties who feel unequal or indeed are not immediately happy about the development of the Aswaja ideology. That is because the doctrine of Aswaja's understanding which rests on the law of the realization of

¹² Rahmad Imdadun, *Pesantren NU Dan Tarekat Dan Politik*. Majalah Pesantren edisi 1, 2002, hlm. 6-8.

¹³ Mas'ud, *Intelektual Pesantren.*, hlm, 221.

the Qur'an and the Hadith is very strong and jeopardizes their political position.

Among those who are keen to scorch Aswaja's ideology were the Dutch when they colonized Indonesia. Because in addition to intending to colonize they also have a mission to spread Christianity in the midst of society. Therefore the kiai in the pesantren firmly spread the Aswaja ideology. They even agreed to make the pesantren a center for maintaining the spirit and purity of the Aswaja Ideology. In their thinking, the spirit and purity of the Aswaja Ideology must be revived and preserved along with the maturity of knowledge. So pesantren must appear as a center for the fostering of Islamic society.

Nevertheless, the success of the business has not been maximized. Because the struggle system built by the kiai is still in the form of "micro" in the local sense. But in the end they realized that there was actually the potential to build greater strength for the survival of the Aswaja Ideology. The potential was finally utilized by KH. Hasyim 'Ash'ari and KH. Wahab Hasbullah by inviting pesantren scholars to sit together and deliberate to face a situation that is increasingly endangering the sustainability of the Aswaja Ideology. The incident occurred on Sunday Pon, 16 Rojab 1344 Hijriyyah. It coincides with January 31, 1926 in Surabaya. The meeting finally succeeded in taking a consensus that in order to preserve the teachings of Aswaja it is necessary to build strength in the form of organization. Then the organization can be realized with the name "Nahdlotul Ulama" commanded by KH. Hasyim Ash'ari.

c. Developed Fiqh Proposed Doctrine.

The thinking paradigm of Aswaja's understanding as contained in NU's conceptual themes (Maudhu'iyah) is the development of the traditional Islamic methodology of fiqh. This paradigm tries to develop the science of ushul fiqh by referring to the opinions of classical ushul scholars who are considered to be closer to the realization of sharia objectives. Therefore, from this thought, the aim is for Islamic law to become a non-partisan public law as the realization of the Islamic mission which respects all human beings and for the sake of universal justice, they formulate improvements to the rules of Usul fiqh as follows:¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibrahim al-Shayrazi, *al-Luma' fī Ushūl al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 2003), hlm. 44. And Abdullah Ibn Yusuf Ibn 'Isa, *Taysir 'Ilm Ushul al-Fiqh* (Lebanon: Muassasat al-Rayyan, 1997), hlm 276.

حَمْلُ الْمُطْلَقِ عَلَى الْمُقَيَّدِ

That is; *bring the absolute to the bound.*

Becomes :

حَمْلُ الْمُقَيَّدِ عَلَى الْمُطْلَقِ

Meaning: *Bringing that is bound to the absolute*

الْعِبْرَةُ بِعُمُومِ اللَّفْظِ لَا بِخُصُوصِ السَّبَبِ

Meaning: *An expression in the Koran in the hadith that must be considered is editorial generality (text) not a specific reason.*

Becomes :

الْعِبْرَةُ بِعُمُومِ الْمَقَاصِدِ لَا بِخُصُوصِ النَّصِّ

Meaning: *An expression in the verses of al-Qur'an and hadith that must be considered is the generality of sharia objectives not depending on specific texts or texts.*

To reinforce the above ideas Aswaja's understanding was very impressed and fully supported the ideas of the classical Usul Fiqh scholars in Qowaid al-Fiqhiyah as follows:¹⁵

أَلْ مَصْلَحَةُ دَلِيلٍ شَرْعِيٍّ مُسْتَقِلٌّ عَنِ النَّصُوصِ

Meaning: *The interest of the ummah is the shari'a proposition 'which is independent of rain does not depend on the confirmation of the text or text.*

إِسْتِقْلَالُ الْعُقُولِ بِإِدْرَاكِ الْمَصَالِحِ وَالْمَقَاصِدِ دُونَ التَّعَلُّقِ بِالنُّصُوصِ

¹⁵ Ahmad Ibn Mahmud al-Shinqithi, *al-Washfu al-Munasib li Shar'I al-Hikam* (Madinah: ;Imadah al-Bahts, 1415H), hlm. 349.

Meaning: Intellect has the authority to determine good and bad (masahalih-Mafasi), without depending on the text.

المصلحة أقوى دليل الشرعي

Meaning: The public interest is the strongest hujjah syara '.

مجال العمل بالمصلحة هو المعاملة والعادة دون العبادات

Meaning: The field of enactment of "public interest" is the field of relations between people and traditions, not in the area of Mahdhah worship.

الثابت بالعرف كالثابت بالنص

Meaning: The law that is determined by tradition until it is strong with the law that is determined based on the text.

تصرف الإمام منوط بالمصلحة

Meaning: Leader's policies or actions must be related to the public interest.

حكم الو سائل بمقاصدها

Meaning: The legal instrument or means depends and must be adjusted according to the law to be the goal.

The grip on qawaid ushul and fiqhiyah above becomes the basis for responding to any social, political, cultural, and other changes according to the life motto of the very popular Nahdliyin residents:

المحافظة على القديم الصالح والخذ بالجد يد الأصلح

Meaning: Maintaining old traditions that are still relevant, and responsive to new ideas that are better and more relevant.

القول بترجيح النقل على العقل محال

Meaning: *Opinion which states that the proof of naql (al-Qur'an and hadith) is more superior than understanding based on reason, it is impossible.*

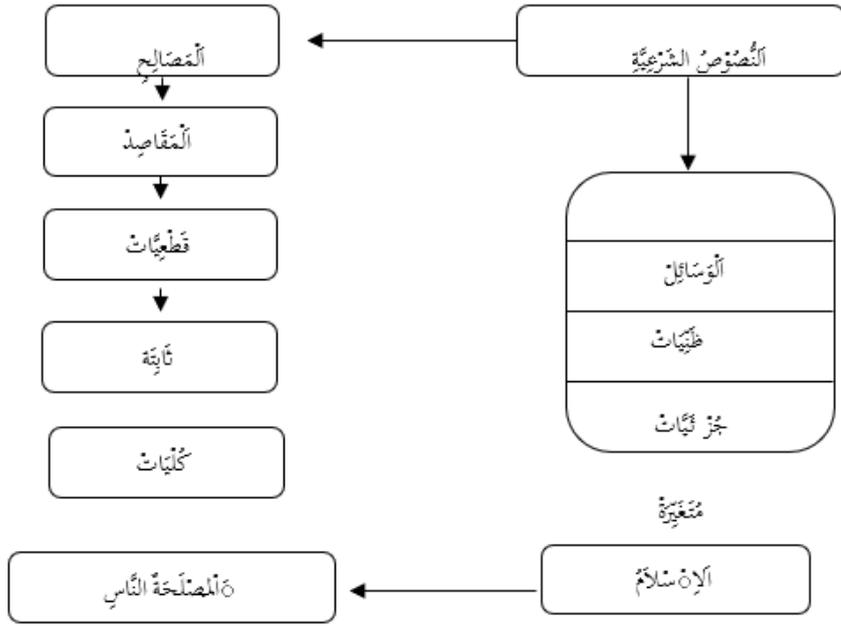
From what has been explained, it can be concluded that the Aswaja understanding doctrine spread at NU pesantren in Indonesia is an agreement of the kiai to respond to the challenges of the times. If deeply understood the doctrine is not rigid, it is proven that there is an adjustment of the old teaching principles to the existing conditions, so that the pronunciations of the principles are different but in substance remain the same. In essence, everything boils down to the formulation of the existing objectives of the Shari'a.

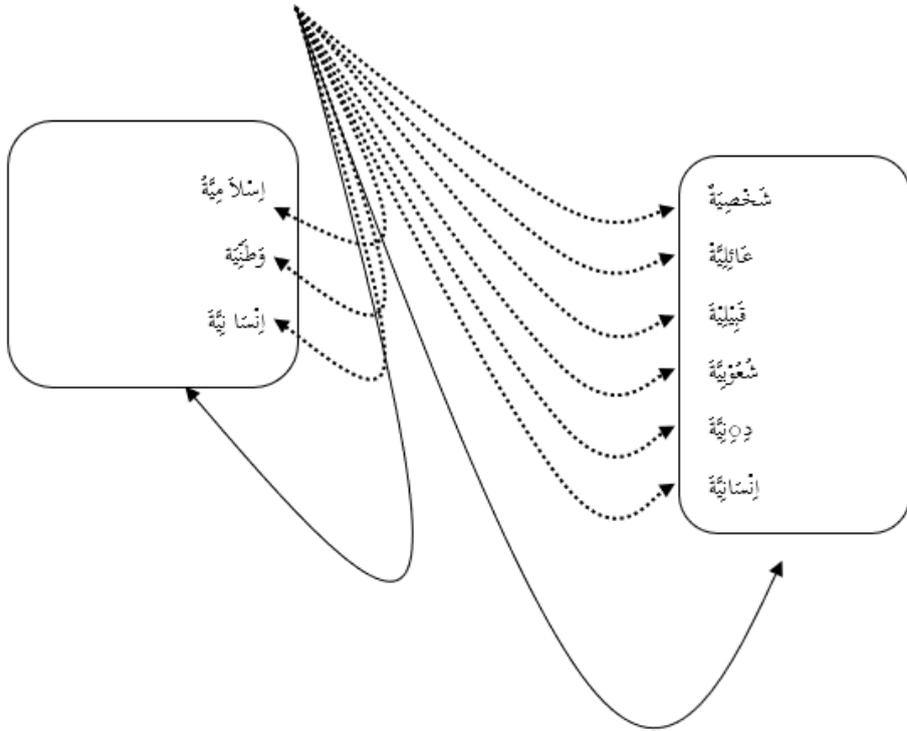
If examined carefully, all of the above doctrines as practiced by Jamaluddin Miri¹⁶ can be seen in the following scheme:

¹⁶ Jamaluddin Miri, *Ahkamul Fuqaha Solusi Problematika Aktual Hukum Islam, Keputusan Muktamar, Munas Dan Kombes Nahdlatul Ulama* (Surabaya: Diatama Surabaya, 2004), hlm 16.

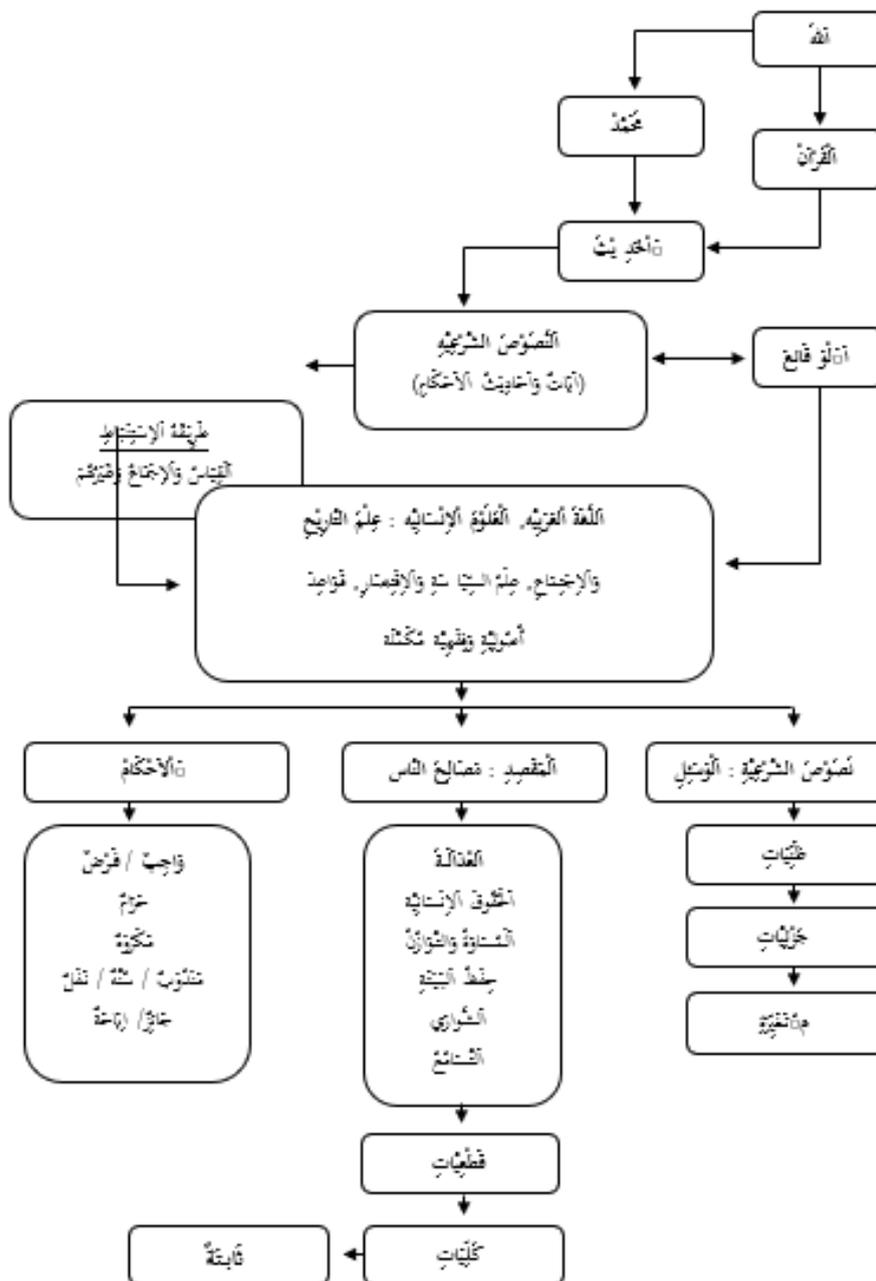
اُولُيَاتِ الْمَصَالِحِ

فِي الشَّرِيعَةِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ





تَقْرِيرُ الْأَحْكَامِ الشَّرْعِيَّةِ
بِالطَّرِيقَةِ الْإِسْتِدْلَالِيَّةِ (جَدِيدَةً)



From the scheme above it is clear, that this group places legal texts (*al-Nushus al-Shari'ah*) in line with the purpose of law (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*), namely for the benefit of humans, even in certain

circumstances, Maslahah can be placed in the position above the legal texts (*al-Nushus al-Shari'ah*).

Conclusion

Aswaja's ideology developed in Indonesia through long processes. This ideology can develop and become a concept that is followed by the majority of Muslims in the NU circles, inseparable from the existence and role of Islamic boarding schools established by the kiai. The Aswaja understanding doctrine spread at NU pesantren in Indonesia is an agreement of the kiai to respond to the challenges of the times. If deeply understood the doctrine is not rigid, it is evident that there are adjustments to the old teaching principles with the existing conditions, so that the pronunciation is different but in substance the same.

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