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Traditionalism of Tolerance in Dayah System: A Reflective Note on the Biography of Abon Aziz Samalanga of Aceh

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Abstract

This article was aimed to analyze the values of tolerance and deradicalization in local wisdom through the biography and contribution of Abon Aziz Samalanga. Using biographical approach, the author discussed Abon Aziz's tolerance values through the traditional education method, political attitude and multicultural values he was committed to. The article found that the procedure and in-depth exploration of traditional education in dayah, day-to-day examples which were taught by involving students were tolerance and deradicalization materials very important to be learned again by students and society to prevent intolerance and radical actions. Understanding the life of Abon Aziz Samalanga, students and the society will not only potentially be tolerant people but also deradicalization agents. This study contributes to Islamic education and counter-radicalization research by demonstrating how traditional Islamic educational models can be effective mechanisms for promoting peace and countering extremist ideologies. Furthermore, it offers a framework for applying biographical analysis in educational and social studies, highlighting the importance of historical figures in shaping contemporary discourses on religious moderation.

Keywords: *Abon Aziz, Dayah, Deradicalization, Tolerance, Aceh.*

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INTRODUCTION

In the formation of intellectual space in Aceh throughout the 20th century, three intellectual variants have been formed, i.e. school, dayah, and madrasah. School was the representation of secular groups occupied by *uleebalang* (Acehnese nobilities) who didn't want to mix religious affairs and worldly affairs except after they were accused to be infidels for their closeness with the colonists, so they brought modern Islamic movements

from Java, such as Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam, to show that they weren't anti-religion (Kamila, 2017: 27).

Dayah was the only educational institution in Aceh before colonialism was allowed was allowed to be established by Dutch East Indies with licensing (Saifullah, 2016: 78). Many alumni of dayah in the beginning of Dutch East Indies era thought the traditional system of dayah wouldn't be able to compete with secular schools, so they established madrasah in hope of competing with the modernism adopted by secular groups (Sulaiman, 2000: 40–44).

Traditionalists which weren't affected by modernism of school and disapproved of madrasah, consistently maintained the systematic tradition of dayah learning: from patronage of *mu'tabar* ulemas who taught the books gradually to development of personality and talents of students for personal training and scientific dedication (Amiruddin, 2007: 58–59).

Traditionalists which weren't too occupied with the changing time could concentrate in education, so that they weren't as reactive as modern groups who wanted the state, secular sciences, etc. to be Islamic (Efendy, 1998: 28). The reactive attitude of modern groups led to various national issues, such as DI/TII rebellion to hoaxes among Islamic groups today (Munhanif, 2016).

Most modern groups were caught in radicalism because they made instantaneous educational system. Religious lessons are treated like theoretical sciences. Unlike dayah traditionalist, modern groups study religion broadly, without depth, without basing on religious books with systematic discussions, and not through the guidance of muktabar ulemas (Interview with Tgk. Yulis, 3 July 2019).

This system leads to incomprehensive, shallow, poorly analyzed and unguided religious understanding. Young modernists even learn on their own from popular books available instantly (Interview with Tgk. Muhammad Abdullah, 6 June 2019). Modernists translate complex books and they're consumed by youth with inadequate religious understanding. This leads to confusion, misunderstanding, and uncertainty which lead to radical thoughts which are manifested in intolerance and radicalism (Hwang, 2018; Ramakrishna, 2009: 16) .

Radical thoughts only emerge from shallow and incomplete religious understanding. Therefore, traditionalists are the hope for deradicalization. These are groups with in-depth religious understanding. The lessons keep them from being caught in radical beliefs. That's why in Java, the deradicalization agents are generally members of Nahdatul Ulama (NU) (Bruinessen, 2009: 68).

Through local wisdom, the traditionalism of Islamic education in *dayah* could be the spirit and inspiration of deradicalization. Diversity in *dayah* heavily depends on the patronage of the ulemas. Therefore, focusing on certain ulema is an effective method (Zulkhairi, 2017).

Abon Aziz was the student of the well-known ulema, Abuya Muhammad Muda Waly. Abon Aziz was the ulema who spread his belief in Aceh most broadly because his students were encouraged to open *dayah* in Aceh. Nearly everywhere in Aceh and some places outside of Aceh there are *dayah* which use the name Al-Aziziyah. It shows that these *dayah* are led by the students of Abon Aziz (Nasution, Miswari, & Sabaruddin, 2019: 211–232).

The focus of the present article was education system, political relation and views of Abon Aziz Samalanga and relevance in conceptualizing the spirit of deradicalization. Today, the actions of *dayah* students lean to intolerance. If left alone, it could spread radical actions (Makin, 2016). This attitude emerges because the students no longer live by the lessons of tolerance which were given by Abon Aziz. Although today's students and society don't learn directly from Abon Aziz, they should learn and understand the values of tolerance which were practiced and taught by Abon Aziz in day-to-day life.

Despite Abon Aziz's massive influence in the traditional Islamic education in Aceh, few literatures discuss his thinking and contribution, let alone serious scientific study. Realizing this, the present study was aimed to fill the gap. This was to revive the spirit of education passed by Abon Aziz Samalanga to respond to today's social problems, particularly in terms of deradicalization.

Therefore, there should be an in-depth descriptive and analytical analysis on the life and history of Abon Aziz. For this reason, the approach of the present study was biographical narration in analyzing the thoughts, views and principles of Abon Aziz.

Literature study was used to collect data, but due to limited literature on the biographical narration of Abon Aziz Samalanga, the researcher wouldn't avoid data collection through interview with certain people and observation. To process it, the data was verified and analyzed to be in line with the focus of the discussion.

DISCUSSION

1. Biography of Abon Abdul Aziz Samalanga

Abon Aziz Samalanga was born in Samalanga, Bireuen, Aceh in 1930 and passed away in 1989. Despite being raised by a modern father, Abon Aziz remained faithful to traditional system and paradigm. An evidence of the difference between Abon Aziz and his father is in DI/TII rebellion in Aceh which was led by Daud Beureueh, Muhammad Saleh supported the movement, while Abon Aziz and other traditional ulemas such as Abu Hasan Krung Kalee and Abuya Muda Waly rejected it (Samalanga, 2019: 142). However, some modernists, such as Ali Hasjmy also rejected rebellion as a way to communicate aspiration (Wildan, 2011).

Abon Aziz had scientific authority after completing religious education under Abuya Syaikh Muhammad Muda Waly in South Aceh. Abon Aziz was one of the students who were claimed to have completed the highest education level in the school of Abuya Muda Waly, which was Marhalah Sadisah Tsanawiyah Bustanul Muhaqqiqin wal Madaqqiqin which was the highest (sixth) level of all lessons given by Abuya Muda Waly (Samalanga, 2019: 22).

Abuya Muda Waly was one of the biggest ulemas in Aceh in the twentieth century. He was taught by Syaikh Hasan Krueng Kale, who was the main opponent of the biggest modernist in Aceh, Daud Beureueh who led DI/TII rebellion. Abu Hasan called the movement *bughab* (treason) (Baiquni, n.d.).

Traditionalists strongly opposed rebellion against the legal government. According to them, aspiration should be communicated to the government in appropriate way, such as deliberation. If the government practiced tyranny, rebellion must still be opposed. There are many ways to correct tyrannical government, but not rebellion (Interview with Khairul Al-Miswar, 12 July 2019).

The *sanad* of Abon Aziz is through Syaikh Muda Maly who was taught by Syaikh Ahmad bin Abdul Latif Al-Khatib Al-Minangkabawi, who was taught by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, who was taught by Imam Syafi'i who was taught by Prophet Muhammad through Imam Abdullah bin Umar bin Khattab (Samalanga: 2019, 31–35).

Abuya Muda Waly taught many charismatic ulemas in Aceh who established influential dayah, e.g. Abu Abdullah Tanoh Mirah Matangglumpangdua, Abu Tu Muhammad Amin di Blang Blahdeh Bireuen, Abu Zakaria Labai Sati di Padang Panjang, Abu Daod Zamzami, Abon Aziz Samalanga, etc. (over fifty major ulemas were produced by Dayah Darussalam led by Abuya Muda Waly, see Musliadi, 2017: 54–56).

Among the students of Abuya Muda Waly, Abon Aziz produced the most ulemas. From dayah MUDI (Ma'had Ulumu Diniyah Islamiyah) MESRA (Mesjid Raya village) Samalanga, great ulemas were created and they built famous and influential dayah which produced many students, e.g. Abu Qasim TB in Dayah Darul Istiqamah Bireuen, Abu Usman in Dayah Kuta Krueng, Abu Ibrahim Bardan in Panton Labu of North Aceh, Syaikh Hasanoel Basri HG (Abu MUDI) who now led Dayah MUDI MESRA, Waled Nuruzzahri who established Ummul Ayman, Waled Marzuki who established Dayah MUDI Mekar in Bekasi, Tgk. Nasuddin Ahmad who established Dayah Entrepreneur in Bireuen, Tgk. Khalidin Yacob (former Chairman of PB PII) who established Ashabul Kahfi Islamic Centre in Sidney, etc. (Samalanga, 2019: 61–64). There are over 314 branches of dayah Al-Aziziyah across Aceh. Some other students of Abon Aziz became modern figures as lecturers and employees in the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Aceh.

The success of the students of Abon Aziz shows that traditional society is more able to understand knowledge than modern society. At least in terms of religious affairs, traditional society has very strict criteria to determine who could be an ulema. To be an ulema, one must study and receive diploma from an authoritative ulema before him. He must learn from a previous ulema who has systematic sanad to Prophet Muhammad (Hamidy, 1982).

The contestation of intellectual variants in Aceh (between traditionalists, modernists, and secularists) has started to emerge and grow today. However, new social group in Aceh started to form when Aceh was declared to lose against the colonial army. Aceh became a part of the Dutch East Indies. The Military Governor of Dutch East Indies became the highest ruler in Aceh to replace sultan. While creating the new social group,

Dutch East Indies started to focus on continuing education for bumiputera in Aceh (Saifullah, 2016: 79–80).

Dayah traditionalists were allowed to be established under the supervision of Dutch East Indies government after some schools were built. Some dayah alumni modernized Islamic education by establishing madrasah. They did it because they were worried the traditional society would be removed in public discourse (Sulaiman, 2000: 40).

Despite claiming to be a part of traditional dayah community, modernists became completely different from traditionalists. Modernists groups left unique essential traditions, including learning books systematically and being loyal to ulema who have clear sanad of knowledge (Abbas, 2010: 72). Modern groups prioritize involvement in modern discourses and slowly leave scientific tradition based on turas with books recommended and directly taught by ulemas (Prihantoro, 2019).

Moreover, traditional system prioritizes practicing and comprehending books. Unlike modern groups which make technical mastery as the indicator of scientific mastery of a book, traditionalists have stricter rules. Traditionalists have to understand the soul of a book, practice the content in whole, and be recognized by the society for their knowledge (Heryati & Rusdiana, 2018).

Tuanku Raja Keumala, Muhammad Daud Beureueh, Aburrahman Meunasah Meucap, and Sayid Husin Syahab might come from dayah, but by establishing madrasah, they produced a new group unlike the scientific tradition of dayah (Iqbal & Rizal, 2012). Modern groups prioritize conceptual mastery and comprehension and practice of books. Recently, madrasah even only prioritize shallow unsystematic readings which aren't taught by *mu'tabar* ulema (Interview with Al Kahfi, 16 July 2019).

Abon Abdul Aziz Samalanga's father, Muhammad Saleh, was a modernist because he was the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Jeunib (Bireuen, formerly North Aceh). Abon Aziz even studied in Sekolah Rakyat (SR) which was a secular educational institution. But, Abon Aziz was loyal to traditional education. He studied by rihlah in dayah in North Aceh, Bireuen and South Aceh (Musliadi, 2017: 54).

1. Education System of Dayah

Abon Aziz applied *ta'rif* system, which is emotional approach to students. After the students are emotionally close, they are given *ta'rif*, which are advices on manners. Then, he applied *taklif*, which are rules to obey. The system is effective in religious education

compared with the modern system which is only concerned with students obeying applicable rules without any emotional relation. In the modern system, rules are only obeyed in the form of hegemony.

In education, the principle that is maintained is human as the target of education must be handled in a specific way (Al-Attas, 1979: 3–4). Human as continuously developing form with unlimited potentials can't only be viewed physically. An important focus in education is emotional aspect. This aspect determines the success of education. Education is human transcendence. Human isn't only to be equipped with technical skills, but also honed soul (I. F. A. Nasution, 2017). Emotional closeness is an important fact in education people. Therefore, wise teachers will prioritize emotional approach through *ta'lif* in educating their students.

The systems of *ta'lif*, *ta'rif* and *taklif* formed among the students prepare them for social relations in the society. The systems are proven to develop authority and people's loyalty, so that Abon Aziz's students could become charismatic ulemas and the dayah they established became favorite learning places and are supported by the society (Hasjmy, 1981: 76).

Ta'lif system to develop intimate relation between teacher and student is a tradition in traditional education. The system was applied by the teacher of Abon Aziz, Syaikh Muda Waly in Dayah Darussalam of South Aceh where Abon Aziz received his diploma. In Dayah Darussalam, the relationship between teacher and student must be very intense like father and son (Musliadi, 2017: 80).

Example is an important part of forming emotional relationship in education. Teacher teaching through example is a very effective system in developing student's personality. Action speaks louder than words. Setting example is an effective way to develop relationship and make education effective (DePorter, Reardon, & Singer-Nourie, 2003: 39).

The closeness between teacher and student also makes the student voluntarily follow the teacher's teachings. The teacher's orders become honor for the student. This is described in *Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim* which quotes Sayyidina Ali who states that to him, students are servants of their teachers (Az-Zarnuji, n.d.: 37–38).

A student must obey his teacher. Teachers' orders must be upheld by the student. The success of education is very reliant on reverence to the teacher. Every direction given

by teacher must be followed because teacher knows well the level of education, potentials and correct ways to education his students (Al-Khalidy, 2013: 335).

The system isn't understood well by modern preachers. They're narcissistic, spread foreign ideas in the society and attack the society's mistakes directly (A. Nasution, 2019). This makes people resistant and preaching fail (Interview with Tgk. Muhammad Abdullah, 6 July 2019).

That's why many preachers cause hate from other groups. They attack others' religions, schools of faith and beliefs aggressively. They're far from the rules which should be applied in dawah. Actually, opposing social rule or system directly is strongly forbidden by traditional ulemas, especially Abon Aziz (Samalanga, 2019: 193).

Abon Aziz's consistency in learning was proven as he had studied in faraway places for a long time. The learning experience of Abon Aziz was one of the requirements to get beneficial knowledge. To gain knowledge, one must work hard, sacrifice many things and be consistent because knowledge sticks through the experiences. Journey in knowledge is similar to spiritual journey: the process is more important than the outcome (Nata, 2016: 126).

In teaching, he was also very consistent. He made Dayah MUDI Mesra Samalanga left by Abu Hanafiah the biggest dayah in Aceh even today. The dayah even has an Islamic university, IAI Al-Aziziyah, whose new building was rebuilt grandly (Hasyim, 2018) after being destroyed by earthquake in 2016 (Yulinnas, 2016).

Abon Aziz was very serious and consistent in teaching. He abandoned other businesses if he hadn't finished teaching. Unlike modernists who are busy with rank, collecting credit, teaching for salary and certification, Abon Aziz Samalanga didn't recognize any of them. He kept teaching. The result wasn't rank or position, but ulemas who are now charismatic ulemas in Aceh (Interview with Tgk. Muhammad Abdullah, 6 July 2019).

"If you're handling an affair, focus entirely on the affair. Disrepute and harm are had by those who turn away from the sciences of Allah. Ask for the protection of Allah at night and day" (Az-Zarnuji: n.d., 38–39). Sayyidina Ali's quote was the principle of Abon Aziz. Consistency was very important to him. He understood that, as quoted by Imam Al-Ghazali from ulama's advices, "Knowledge won't give any part of it to you until you give all of you to it" (Al-Ghazali: n.d., 50).

In traditional education system, although not very essential, memorizing is unavoidable. In this case, Abon Aziz applied nazam system. Nazam form is easy to memorize because it's lyrical, so it can be sung. In dayah or traditional schools, some of the famous nazam are *naẓam jauharah al-tauhid* in tauhid, *naẓam sulam munauraq* in mantiq and *naẓam jauhar maknun* in nahwu and balaghah (Samalanga, 2019: 84).

The uniqueness of traditional education rarely found in modern Islamic education system is reverence to ulema or teacher. Traditional community believe that without reverence to teacher, knowledge won't be beneficial. In education, the most important factor is the teacher. In the traditional system, the charisma or ulema and teacher is essential. In dayah, the charisma of ulema is the main determinant of the success of education (Saby, 2001).

This is different from secular and modern education systems. In those systems, teachers are only a part of the learning process. In the modern formal system, the relation between teacher and student is transactional. Student pays to be taught, teacher receives teaching fee. Recently, many modernists even study informally through non-intensive meetings (*halaqah*) led by teachers who self-taught themselves using textbooks. These meetings are meeting between those who don't know and those who don't understand. From these groups, radical and intolerant views emerge (Hwang, 2010).

In traditional education system, the most essential thing is reverence to teacher, followed by teaching method, then lastly teaching material. This is in line with the modern system which makes material essential matter in teaching. Then, method is considered and reverence to teacher isn't important (Interview with Khairul Al-Miswar, 12 July 2019).

Ignoring reverence as a priority of modern education makes students in the system claim to understand learning materials better than those who study in the traditional system. However, those from modern system usually don't study systematically. They also aren't taught intensely and in organized manner muktabar ulema, and aren't grounded on reverence to their teacher (Interview with Tgk. Muhammad Abdullah, 6 July 2019).

“Modernist may claim to understand the content of a book, able to memorize it and even remember the pages. However, actually more importantly is whether the book is learnt systematically. Some books should be studied before starting to study a book. Equally important is who teaches the book. Who does the syarah. If one doesn't follow the rules, non-Muslim orientalisks may understand

better than the modernists.” (Interview with Tgk. Muhammad Abdullah, 6 Juli 2019)

For example, a modern student may easily read *Mahalli*. But for students of dayah and traditional schools, it’s only learnt after seven years in dayah or school, after studying some books which are systematically necessary under the guidance of *mu’tabar* ulema so that they can learn *Mahalli* well (Second in the classes and levels of books in dayah, see, Tgk Zarkasy, 2006: 229). Without the system, good understanding on a book is deemed impossible to meet (Musliadi, 2017: 83).

Without reverence to teacher, knowledge isn’t obtained despite memorizing entire books. The most important thing is knowledge, which is unity of subject who knows and the knowledge, so the knowledge is said to be a blessing (Miswari, 2018b: 50–51).

Moreover, reverence to teacher or ulema is a more important lesson than any learning material. A charismatic ulema will teach his students in accordance with the students’ potentials. Teaching is also given in accordance with the students’ capability. The approach is also adjusted with students’ interests and talents. Understanding the students’ limits is the main requirement of the successful teaching process (Al-Khalidy, 2013: 335).

The charisma of ulema isn’t a degree granted to them. Charisma is something formed by an ulema’s journey in life (Nirzalin, 2011). Abon Aziz was very respectful to his teacher, so he was deeply honored by his students. He liked building friendship and helping others, was discipline, maintained his identity, learn from his mistakes, and had modest appearance.

Modesty is a requirement for charisma. Prophet Muhammad was a well-respected man, however he had very modest appearance. His clothes weren’t luxurious. He behaved politely. Despite coming from a respectable family, Prophet Muhammad was very close to all circles in the society, including slaves (Al-Ghazali, n.d: 390–391). This attitude is an example for ulemas.

Abuya Muda Waly was charismatic and the most popular among ulemas in Aceh throughout the twentieth century. However, no one could compete with Abon Aziz in consistency in education. Abon Aziz emphasized consistency to teach to his students. That was why, nearly all students of Abon Aziz who received diplomas from him opened dayah in their residential areas. Therefore, it’s not surprising that there are over 214 branch dayah of Al-Aziziyah in Aceh and outside of Aceh (Samalanga, 2019: 182–183).

Actually, dayah and traditional schools teach character development more. In dayah, not only knowledge is given, but also other skills. When the students return to the society, they'll have skills to survive. The students aren't allowed to find a living through Quran recitals. Recitals are means of devotion, not a means to earn livelihood (Samalanga, 2019: 191–192).

Abon Aziz's message was consistent with KH Maimun Zubair's message that despite being a teacher, one must have work, so that they don't expect the gift of others. The result of the business is more of a blessing (Muazaroh & Subaidi, 2019).

2. Political Relation and Value of Tolerance

Since they emerged in Aceh, modernists have competed for the positions of *uleebalang* (Stange & Missbach, 2011). They wanted to replace *uleebalang* in the society. To this end, some of them formed *Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh* (Aceh Ulema Association or PUSA). They wanted a new system to help them obtain their goal. Therefore, Japanese occupation was welcomed in hope of getting them strategic position. Meanwhile, traditional ulemas resisted Japanese occupation and fought Dai Nippon in some major battles (Kamila, 2017; Said, n.d.: 16).

However, Japanese occupation didn't prioritize PUSA members. PUSA wanted another new system to strengthen their political influence. Indonesia's proclamation of independence was proudly celebrated (Sjamsuddin, 1999: 98). This momentum was used to destroy *uleebalang* and take over their wealth.

Indonesian government gave PUSA members strategic roles, but they weren't satisfied. PUSA modernists wanted formalization of Islamic sharia. To fight for this aspiration, PUSA conducted armed protest against Jakarta (the central government) using DI/TII. After reaching peace in 1959 through the Pledge of Lamteh, some PUSA members attempted another coup (Stange & Missbach, 2011). This time they wanted to separate Aceh from Indonesia (Sulaiman, 2000: 12–13).

The group's views were opposed by traditional ulemas such as Abu Hasan Krueng Kale, Abuya Muda Waly and Abon Aziz. They believed that the modernists' actions were *bughab* forbidden in Islam (Samalanga, 2019: 142).

Dayah is a gentle (flexible) system in political affairs (Ilyas, 2019: 31). Traditional ulemas, especially Abon Aziz, were actually disinterested in politics. However, if necessary,

it should be performed for education. For Abon Aziz, politics is a means, not the end. There was no loyalty for any particular party or group.

This attitude was different from today's new modernists who often communicate their political aspirations in the street. These groups claim to fight for Islam, but they were actually used by certain political groups. The street modernists' attitude is the opposite of traditionalist principles that politics is a tool and that uses it as a vehicle. Meanwhile, street modernists were the vehicle.

The views of traditionalists very rarely oppose government policies. Beside opposing DI/TII, Abon Aziz also opposed *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (Free Aceh Movement or GAM) who wanted to leave the Republic of Indonesia. However, the opposition wasn't direct. Abon Aziz's policies, especially in politics, were very flexible. Abon Aziz understood that politics is the means, not end. Although he hated GAM, Abon Aziz didn't directly claim that they were wrong. Instead, Abon Aziz advised his students to not get involved in the rebellion (Interview with Khairul Al-Miswar, 12 July 2019).

Tolerance is an important part of traditional ulemas' attitudes. Abon Aziz who had mantik background, had solid arguments in his views. However, if anyone disagreed with his views, Abon Aziz wouldn't pressure them. He really respected others' opinions (Samalanga, 2019, p. 138).

Tolerance was also practiced day-to-day life, even very technical issues. Abon Aziz didn't smoke in front of ulemas who forbade smoking. This was similar with Imam Syafi'i who didn't read qunut when leading prayer with followers of the school of Hanafi (Maafi, 2018: 43).

In developing the characters of students in their day-to-day lives in dayah, the students' views and attitudes are left to actualize naturally. In dayah, each student is unique and it trains them to be tolerant.

The students are taught to respect differences. For example, some students like wearing sarong, while others not. These opinions are respected. However, if an ulema visited the dayah of Abon Aziz and the ulema didn't like seeing the students not wearing sarong, Abon Aziz asked the students to wear sarong (Samalanga, 2019: 137).

Tolerance means understanding differences (Miswari, 2018a). Ideal tolerance doesn't only allow difference but also recognize that in every difference, there is goodness.

Tolerance is a requirement for democracy. Without tolerance, it's impossible to live in a diverse country (Yewangoe, 2011).

In practicing tolerance through examples in dayah, there are some layers. First, the students are taught to respect the differences between them. Then, they are also taught to respect differences with the views of other ulemas. In this case, it's clear that the students learn to tolerance flexibly as exemplified by Abon Aziz (Samalanga, 2019: 138).

Tolerance is the basic principle of traditional students. Beside practicing in day-to-day life, in learning books, they're used to understanding how differences are resolved by ulemas in the books. The students learn to have healthy discourse found in the study of the books.

This is different from modernists who have an ambition that not only are their views accepted by others, but they should also be the state system forced onto citizens. Tjokromaminoto wanted to defeat Chinese economy, Masyumi wanted to make Indonesia entirely and PUSA formalized Islamic sharia in Aceh. These are modernist ambitions that force their ideas and put aside tolerance (Latif, 2013: 116).

Modernists don't have any tradition which teaches them to be tolerant people. They have difficulty accepting the views of other groups. It's different from traditionalists who are taught and trained to respect others' opinions so that they can adapt with others' principles (Ilyas, Zainuddin, Sibuea, & Zahrila, 2019).

Abon Aziz once visited an ulema who hated student who didn't wear sarong while most students who came with Abon Aziz didn't wear sarong. Near their destination, they stopped to wear sarongs (Samalanga, 2019: 138). From experiences like this, traditional students learn to respect others' opinions. They learn to be tolerant (Interview with Tgk. Yulis, 3 July 2019).

However, discourse which allows them to be tolerant in broader aspect isn't present in their lives. For example, they're not familiar with religious tolerance because most Acehnese are Muslims. In the dayah of Abon Aziz, people came from various areas. Some people didn't get along with others.

In Banda Aceh where students and people from various regions meet, people are usually only close to those from their own regions. Gayo people have difficulty interacting with Pasai people. Pasai people from the east coast have difficulty interacting with people

from the west coast. There is primordial *ashabiyah* (chauvinism) between Pidie with Big Aceh who are considered to have difficulty getting along.

These groups won't be found in the dayah of Abon Aziz and other dayah in general. Every background merges in dayah. There is no group in dayah. Multiculturalism is cultivated in them. They don't care about background. Their focus is developing personality, developing soul with action and knowledge (Tgk Zarkasy, 2006: 339).

The multiculturalism of traditional communities in remote areas is different from modern groups in major cities. Only because of different political views, modern Muslim groups find excuses to accuse and create arguments that other Muslim groups are infidels (I. F. A. Nasution, 2018).

The emotional attitude of most modernists in religion, thinking that they're the only ones who are right and considering any different person to be infidel, is formed by instantaneous religious lessons. These groups generally just start learning religion in college through brief weekly meetings. Religious lessons are taught quickly. There, they debated themes they don't understand (Hayadin, 2016).

Their supervisor usually learns religion on their own through unreliable books. They've never studied religion in depth from authoritative sources and are never taught by ulema with accountable sanad. Most of them even only learn about religion through internet. These models only practice religion symbolically, shallowly, without knowing rigid, systematic and hierarchical religious education (Interview with Khairul Al-Miswar, 12 Juli 2019).

Meanwhile, traditionalists learn religion through authoritative books given syarah by muktabar ulemas whose knowledge is recognized by the society, not only those recognized by Sinta and Scopus. Moreover, more importantly, traditional students can learn in day-to-day life, so that life experiences become knowledge which merges with soul because they experience them themselves. Experience is the main key to the success of education (Dewey, 1986).

Regarding tolerance, the attitude is absorbed by the students through life experiences and advices from Abon Aziz. The biggest influence in forming the students' tolerance was their experience with Abon Aziz. When visiting the dayah of an ulema friend of Abon Aziz with his students, he only talked politely with the friend. At home, Abon Aziz said that he disagreed with some of the friend's views. The students wondered why

Abon Aziz didn't argue with the friend. However, the experience taught them to have tolerant mind and practice it in day-to-day life (Samalanga, 2019: 138).

Tolerant mind is an expected attitude in a multicultural country such as Indonesia (Al-Munawar, 2003: 210). Most Indonesians can live in harmony, but the attitude occurs because they don't have the power to discriminate other groups. For example, they don't bother minorities because they're scared of law enforcers (Burhanudin & Jabali, 2007).

Tolerance must start from the mind. The attitude should occur in one's mind. That way, tolerant actions can be actualized naturally without any motive except to be happy by being tolerant (Saputra, 2018).

Abon Aziz also advised not to be occupied with things one didn't master. On the surface, it means one should focus on one's mastery and avoid things one doesn't master. However, the in-depth meaning is to not join things which have drawn many.

Hoaxes which lend themselves to slander and defamation for political contestation are common in Indonesia. Students and the society shouldn't get involved in them because once they're caught in slander, it's difficult to get away (Samalanga, 2019: 147).

Slanders through hoaxes affect students in Aceh. They believe in the hoaxes so they hate other Muslims and are trapped by intolerant and radical Muslim groups. This is due to the wave of hoaxes which are hard to verify. Therefore, Abon Aziz advised the students not to be too serious unless about recitals (Interview with Tgk. Yulis, 3 July 2019).

Many news are considered absolute truth. However, lies are slowly uncovered after being investigated. So, Abon Aziz always said that students shouldn't easily be taqlid about an issue "Abon didn't want his students to join someone else's unclear missions" (Samalanga, 2019: 200)

Some time ago, major ulemas in Aceh were claimed to support certain presidential candidate. The claim was made because the students generally support the candidate. The ulemas were connected with the candidate several times, but eventually the ulemas requested not to be associated with the candidate. It showed how reckless students disturbed the authority of ulemas (Interview with Tgk. Yulis, 3 July 2019).

3. Deradicalization Values through Dayah System

Commitment, hard work, perseverance and focus on knowledge made Abon Aziz a prominent ulema with deep knowledge. As a result, Abon Aziz became a tolerant, anti-subversive and politically smart ulema (Samalanga, 2019: 147). These principles should be

followed by the students and society so that they're not easily influenced by hoaxes which made Muslims intolerant, hateful to different groups and potentially became extremists (I. F. A. Nasution & Miswari, 2017).

Systematic and in-depth should be the foundation for students to analyze a news and information just like the learning tradition in *dayah* (Kurdi, 2015). A book studied in *dayah* must be systematic, in-depth, and through the guidance of ulema with clear sanad. Therefore, it's very difficult for *dayah* students to misunderstand the principles in religion (Musliadi, 2017: 80).

Radical and intolerant groups are generally those who study religion cursorily, are self-taught or learn from self-taught ustadz. This makes them misunderstand principles, meaning and intentions of a proposition. As a result, intolerant groups make people reactionary and radical in religious practices (Kersten, 2015: 26).

Radicalism also emerges due to lack of understanding on political situation and news source. News which are difficult to prove are consumed by youth who study religion in unaccountable places. They're very easy to provoke by news that America is a monster, the government is evil, etc. Subversion is cultivated in instantaneous recitals (Darmawan, 2017).

Negative view on the government is typical of radical groups. Ideologically, they're indoctrinated to believe that Indonesian government is thought because it doesn't use Islam as the legal basis. Some of them believe that Pancasila should be the national principle. It's because Pancasila isn't Islamic (Sulaiman, 2000: 100).

Due to obedience to teacher and ulemas, every action of a student is under the guidance and direction of the teacher. In fact, in traditional system, doing certain things related to religion at their own initiative is forbidden and one must get permission to teach from the teacher. Despite having diploma, students don't immediately get teaching permit. Teaching permit doesn't come with diploma. Diploma is only recognition for knowledge, not permit to teach. Teaching permit is entirely different (Interview with Tgk. Yulis, 3 July 2019).

If teaching religion requires a teacher's permit, other actions related with religion shouldn't be performed without the teacher's permit, either. So there's only a small chance for *dayah* alumni to be extremists because the ulemas who teach them are tolerance, pacifist people who hate actions which oppose the state (Samalanga, 2019: 141–142).

Today's cases of intolerance which involve students shouldn't happen again. Students should remember the words of their genealogical teacher, Abon Aziz Samalanga, who was very tolerant and anti-intolerance. Abon Aziz greatly respected others' views and should be an example to follow.

Intolerant and radical traditions didn't belong with traditionalists. This group should be a deradicalization agent, instead of a part of intolerant and radical group. Systematic, in-depth and analytical culture in religious learning in *dayah* should be maintained in responding to news and information, so that students are free from intolerance starting from their minds (Burhanudin & Jabali, 2007; Saputra, 2018).

Students shouldn't be caught in the political interests of certain groups. They have to be independent. That independence is very necessary for students to maintain the authority of the wisdom of *dayah* traditional education. By maintaining the authority, people who need them will respect them.

CONCLUSION

The formation of intellectual space in Aceh after the implementation of Ethical Politics by the Dutch East Indies government led to the emergence of three intellectual variants: secular intellectuals (dominant among *uleebalang*), traditional intellectuals (represented by *dayah*), and modernist intellectuals (represented by modern Islamic organizations). Despite being born into a modernist family, Abon Aziz Samalanga grew as a traditional ulama, firmly adhering to traditional educational principles shaped by his experience with *dayah* under the guidance of Abuya Syaikh Muda Waly in South Aceh.

Abon Aziz prioritized education over politics, engaging in political relations only to safeguard the traditional education system of *dayah*. His educational philosophy concentrated on the *ta'lif*, *ta'rif*, and *taklif* systems, emphasizing teacher-student closeness, reverence for teachers, and learning through exemplary behavior rather than coercion. Tolerance was a core value in his teachings, conveyed not only through lectures and advice but, more importantly, through his lived experiences and actions. As a result, many of Abon Aziz's students have become public figures known for their tolerance and moderation.

This study contributes to the field of Islamic education and intellectual history by demonstrating the persistence of traditional Islamic education in the modern era and its role

in fostering tolerance. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of biographical analysis in understanding the influence of Islamic scholars. However, this study has several limitations, including its focus on a single figure without comparison to other traditional scholars, and the lack of empirical data on the long-term impact of his teachings on society.

Future research should conduct comparative studies between the educational approaches of Abon Aziz and other traditional scholars in Aceh or beyond. Additionally, empirical research is needed to assess the effectiveness of his educational model in shaping tolerant individuals in contemporary society. Further exploration into the intersection between traditional and modern Islamic education in Aceh could also provide valuable insights into the evolution of religious scholarship in Indonesia.

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