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Religious Nation State: Bahtiar Effendy and Islamic Political Thought
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Konsep Tasawuf Said Nursi: Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Islam
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Pesantren Mlangi: Poros Spiritual Intelektual Islam
di Yogyakarta Abad XVIII-XIX M
Dzulkifli Hadi Imawan

An Analysis of The Divine Principles of
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An Analysis of The Divine Principles of K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie (1910-1985 M)

Muhammad Choirin

Faculty of Islamic Studies

Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta

Email: muhammad.choirin@umj.ac.id

Abstract

K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie is widely known as an Islamic scholar and preacher in the Indonesian Muslim community, particularly among Betawi natives. His significant contribution to spreading Islam, notably in education, is depicted through as-Syafi'iyah Islamic Education. Furthermore, his role in Islam in the Indonesian archipelago is evidenced by writing more than twenty-one titles of books in the field of Islamic faith and Usuluddin, which has been marking his name in the Islamic discourse. This paper aims at exploring the persona of K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie as a Muslim theologian, particularly in the issues related to the science of kalam. In doing so, this study employs historical approaches combined with interviews and observation. This study finds that the thought of divinity established within the literature written by KH Abdullah Syafi'ie supports the validity of ahli sunnah wal jama'ah Asy'ariyah belief which he had practiced.

Keywords: *Betawi Scholar Muslim, Abdulah Syafi'ie, Islamic Thought, and Islamic Scholar*

Analisis Pemikiran K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie (1910-1985 M) Tentang Prinsip Ilahiyat

Muhammad Choirin

FAI Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta

Abstrak

K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie dikenal luas sebagai seorang cendekiawan dan Ulama di kalangan masyarakat Muslim Indonesia, khususnya masyarakat Betawi. Kontribusinya dalam dunia dakwah Islam sangat signifikan, khususnya melalui lembaga pendidikan yang Pendidikan Islam as-Syafi'iyah. Kiprah dan perannya dalam pengembangan dakwah dibuktikan dengan menulis lebih dari dua puluh judul buku dalam berbagai disiplin ilmu, antara lain, pendidikan Islam, akidah dan Usuluddin. Makalah ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi kepribadian K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie sebagai seorang teolog Muslim, khususnya dalam masalah yang berkaitan dengan ilmu kalam. Dalam melakukan itu, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan historis yang dikombinasikan dengan wawancara dan observasi. Studi ini mendapati bahwa pemikiran ke-Tuhan-an K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie dibangun atas dan validitas teologi dan konsep akidah Ahli Sunnah wal Jama'ah Asy'ariyah yang ia yakini.

Kata Kunci: *Dakwah Ulama Betawi, Abdullah Syafi'ie, Ilmu Kalam, dan Pemikiran Islam*

INTRODUCTION

Jakarta was formerly known as a port city called Sunda Kelapa before the advent of Islam. At that period, the kingdom of Hindu Padjajaran had ruled the region.¹ The term Padjajaran itself refers to as Sundanese land where coconut tree has been the primary plant.² Similar to other regions across the Indonesian archipelago, Hinduism

¹ Ahmad Fadli, *Ulama Betawi*, Ahmad Fadli HS, *Ulama Betawi: Studi Tentang*, 37-40.

² Ade Sukirno, *Pangeran Djayakarta Perintis Jakarta Lewat Sunda Kelapa* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 1995), 15.

and Animism were the beliefs among Betawi residents. Islam began to penetrate the Nusantara from the seventh century and grew considerably after the thirteenth century. At the time, the Islamic preachers had massively transformed and merged the values of Islam into the local customs.³ Thereafter, their efforts had substantially marked the history of Islam in the Nusantara.

This study can be categorized as qualitative research. It utilizes library research as its method and historical approach. It focus on a Betawi-origin Muslim scholar, K.H. Abdullah Syaf'ie. Data for research were collected through primary and secondary sources, including interview with experts in relevant topics. Data were then analyzed to answer research question.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN BETAWI

History has identified that Islam began to enter Jakarta in the fifteenth century. This is evident by the existence of the Qurro' pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in the region of Karawang which was founded by a Cambodian scholar in 1418.⁴ This information is documented in the book titled *Caruban Nagari*, mentioning the founder of the pesantren who is Sheikh Hasanuddin, was the son of Sheikh Yusuf Siddiq who was a Muslim Cambodian. Further, some of the literature has explained that Islam entered Jakarta around 1526 following the victory of Fatahillah in absolving Sunda Kelapa from Dutch colonialism.⁵

The efforts of Muslims to spread Islam had first carried out through non-formal education conducted in mosques and madrasa.

³ Wan Abdullah Bin Hj. W. Mahmood, *Tamadun Islam dan Tamadun Alam Melayu Serta Sumbangannya Kepada Dunia*, Selangor: Percetakan Global Printers Sdn. Bhd, 1997),120.

⁴ Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, *Islam di Jakarta: Studi Sejarah Islam dan Budaya Betawi* (Jakarta: TP Press, 2002), 139.

⁵ Badri Yatim, *Peran Ulama Dalam Masyarakat Betawi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Festival Istiqlal, 1996), 133-4.

Among the centers of Islamic education marked in the Nusantara history is the al-Ma'mur Mosque located in Tanah Abang. The mosque was established in 1620 by a Muslim Scholar from Mataram named Tumenggung. Further, in 1717, the al-Mansyur Mosque was built in Kampung Sawah. In addition, other mosques were established afterward. Those were Angke Mosque (1761), Tambora Jami' Mosque at Jembatan Lima (1762), and Istiqomah Mosque in Tegal Parang (1805 AD).⁶

In 1839, a wealthy merchant from Makassar named Haji Imam Muhammad built a mosque in Bidara Cina. The mosque was functioned for informal Islamic learning that mostly conducted after dawn prayers. From that activity, then in 1868, the mosque was further named as *Nurus Sobah*, meaning to shine in the morning.⁷ At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the number of Islamic scholars from Betawi was significant serving Islam in Jakarta.⁸ Those scholars including Guru Sufiyan in Pecenongan,⁹ Habib Usman bin Yahya,¹⁰ Sheikh Juneid al-Batawi,¹¹ K.H. Moh. Mansur in Kampung Sawah, K.H. Abdul Majid in Pekajon, K.H. Ahmad Khalid in Gondangdia, K.H. Mahmud Romli in Menteng, K.H. Abdul Mughni in Kuningan and many others.¹²

According to Abdul Aziz as quoted by Hasbi Indra, the *sanad* of the Betawi Islamic scholars was linked to the two great ulama *al-Haramayn* of the seventeenth century who were Aīmad al-Qushayshī

⁶ Badri Yatim, *Peranan Ulama*, 13.

⁷ Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, *Islam di Jakarta*, 165.

⁸ Betawi is a term for a native of Jakarta.

⁹ Ulama among Betawi community refers to as Tuan Guru, Tuan Sheikh, Ustadz dan Kyai.

¹⁰ Ulama with Arabian root is called Habib or Sayyid. Habib Usman comes from Pekojan region who wrote 47 Islamic books and was appointed as Betawi Mufti (Islamic Jurist).

¹¹ Sheikh Juneid is a Betawi stayed in Saudi Arabia and passed away there. He taught Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani and Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi.

¹² Networks and the roles of Betawi Ulama can further refer to Abdul Aziz, *Islam dan Masyarakat Betawi* (Jakarta: Logos, 2001), 49-60.

and 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Zamzamī. Further, those two scholars also connected to the three great scholars who were Mukhtār Atharid, 'Umar Bajunīd and 'Umar Sumbawa.¹³

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Islam in Jakarta began to dominate the religion believed among the local population. Several factors had contributed to accelerating the spread of Islam in the region. The regeneration by the former Betawi Scholars was the main factor to succeed in preparing the then local scholars, such as Sheikh Misri in Tanah Abang, K.H. M. Mansur and Tuan Guru Ahmad Marzuki in Cipinang.¹⁴ Further, the students of Tuan Guru Marzuki had become his successor in the twentieth century. The great names who are K.H. Nor Ali of Bekasi, K.H. Zayyadi, K.H. Syafi'ie Hadzami, and K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie, were the students of Tuan Guru Ahmad Marzuki. In remembrance of K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie, Achmad Mubarak said:¹⁵

“The late was a person planted the seeds in Betawi. Thanks to his diligence and sincerity. The seeds have been growing into fertile trees that benefit the lives of Betawi people. During his time, the Betawi and As-Shafi'iyah communities were one. The discussion of the Islamic community in Jakarta, our perspective, will be first linked to As-Shafi'iyah, that had led by K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie.”

Based on the above elaboration, the contribution of Abdullah Syafi'ie as a Betawi Islamic Scholar is evidenced in the spread of Islamic teaching in Jakarta. The contribution of Abdullah Syafi'ie to Islam had begun as he was 18 years old (1928). In that regard, he

¹³ Hasbi Indra, *Pesantren dan Transformasi*, 123.

¹⁴ Abdul Aziz, *Islam dan Masyarakat*, 56-8.

¹⁵ Achmad Mubarak, (professor at Islamic State University of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta), interviewed on December 2013.

invested his wealth as *waqf* in the form of establishing an Islamic school (madrassah *diniyyah*) in Balimatraman.¹⁶ The school was the place he contributed to teaching Islamic subjects, such as *tawhid* (Islamic monotheism), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *tasawwuf* (Sufism), and others.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF K.H. ABDULLAH SYAFI'IE

K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie (then referred to as Abdullah Syafi'ie), is one of the Betawi preachers who practiced Ahli Sunnah wal Jama'ah, from Ash'ariyah with syafi'iyah school. He was born in the Balimatraman village of South Jakarta, Indonesia, on Saturday 16 Sya'ban 1329 Hijri, or 10 August 1910.¹⁷ Abdullah Syafi'ie's parents are Hajj Syafi'ie bin Haji Sairan and Hajjah Rogayah binti KH Ahmad Mukhtar. He was the only son of the three siblings who are Siti Ruqayyah, Abdullah and Siti Aminah.

He grew up in a religious family where Islamic education was the primary reference practiced in his family. Although he was not from the family of the Islamic scholar, Abdullah Syafi'ie's father had prepared him to become the generation of an Islamic scholar. During his childhood, he went to perform the pilgrimage with his grandparents. That had caused him to discontinue his formal education upon his return from Holy Land.¹⁸ Even so, he did not stop to keep learning, notably the Islamic subjects.

In his society, he was a great figure who massively influenced his generation and the younger generation after him. Although he adapted traditional ideology, he built a strong relationship with modern figures, such as Mr. Natsir, Prof. Dr. Hamka, and others. At the same time, he was also familiar with his older figures, such as K.H.

¹⁶ Ahmad Fadli HS, *Ulama Betawi: Studi Tentang Ulama Betawi dan Kontribusinya* (Jakarta: Manhalun Nasyi-in Press, 2011), 138.

¹⁷ Ahmad Fadli HS, *Ulama Betawi*. 167.

¹⁸ Zuhair, *K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie: Produk Betawi Dengan Kiprah Nasional dan Internasional* (Jakarta: Adabia Press, 2012), 19.

Masykur, K.H. Idham Khalid and many others. During his lifetime, he was an energetic, innovative and productive preacher. His footprint in Islamic endeavor, particularly in Indonesia, was evident in his involvement as an advisor in the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI), which was then chaired by Prof. Dr. Hamka. In addition to preaching in Jakarta, he also traveled to other cities, such as Pekalongan in Central Java, and to other countries, such as Singapore, England, Malaysia, Pakistan, Germany, and many others.

As an innovative scholar, he pioneered a preaching agenda via electronic media by establishing the As-Syafi'iyah radio in 1967. In addition, he also published printed media and recording tapes of Islamic education. Meanwhile, in the field of writing, he wrote 23 scientific books in various disciplines, including faith, *fiqh*, and Arabic grammar. Considering such an immense role, he received a lot of epithets, such as the Betawi tiger, Haji Dullah, Kyai Haji Abdullah, Buya and Walid. Prof. Dr. Hamka even personally called him as Sheikh. Nonetheless, as a humble person, he had preferred to be called as *Khédim al-Ùalabah*, which means the mentor of the students.

BACKGROUND OF EDUCATION

As mentioned previously, in terms of formal education of elementary level, Abdullah Syafi'ie only earned the second grade in a Sekolah Rakyat initiated by Dutch colonialists in Laan Meni, Jatinegara, East Jakarta.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Abdullah Syafi'ie continued to study with a non-formal approach by visiting scholars and teachers in the Betawi region. At the age of seven, he learned to read the Qur'an to Dallari Djauhari bin Sulaiman in Tebet and to Musannif in Menteng Atas. In addition to studying the Qur'an, he learned Arabic grammar from Musannif. In studying those subjects, he read *Matn al-Jurumiyah*

¹⁹ Tutty Alawiyah, *K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie Tokoh Kharismatik 1910-1985* (Jakarta: UIA Press, 1999), 4.

and Mutammimah by Sheikh 'Abd Allāh bin Aḥmad al-Faqīh by way talaqi (learning in a small group).²⁰

At the age of sixteen years (1926), Abdullah Shafi'ie studied to Subki bin Idris and Tuan Guru Mahmud bin Ramli. From those two scholars, he studied the principles of faith and fiqh for as long two years. Entering the age of twenty (1930), he studied further Arabic grammar from K.H. Abdul Madjid bin Abdurrahman. From this Pejokan scholar, he read Matn Alfiyah Ibn Mālik and was able to complete in five years. In addition to such knowledge, he also studied various disciplines, including faith (Kifāyah al-'Awwām), Islamic jurisprudence, the science of interpretation (Tafsīr al-Jalālayn), and hadith (Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn).²¹

Furthermore, he learned Islamic faith to K.H. Ahmad Mukhtar in Lemah Abang with the main reference to the book Kifāyah al-'Awwām by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Bajuri and the book al-Nasaih al-Dniyah wa al-Wasaya al-Imaiyah by al-Habib bin 'Alawī al-Haddād. From K.H. Ahmad Mukhtar, he got a diploma to teach those two books. Then in 1940 (when he was 30 years), he extended his religious knowledge with Habib Alwi bin Tahir al-Haddad in Bogor for two years. From this scholar who was later appointed as the Mufti of Johor in Malaysia, he learned the *Usul fiqh* with the main reference to the book Jam'u al-Jamawī'.²²

The method of learning pursued by Abdullah Syafi'ie in Islamic history is known as the Rihlah method or also called the Mulazamah *al-Sheikh* method. To support Abdullah Syafi'ie's learning activities, his father bought him a Raleigh bicycle. During the time, the Raleigh brand was expensive and unaffordable among his friends. It was the bicycle that Abdullah Syafi'ie pedaled going to his teachers reaching

²⁰ Badaruzzaman Busyairi, *Catatan Riwayat Hidup K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie* (Jakarta: t.p., t.t.), 33.

²¹ Sofyan Hadi, *Kegiatan Dakwah K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie* (Jakarta: t.p., t.t.), 13.

²² Sofyan Hadi, *Kegiatan Dakwah*, 14.

tens of kilometers from his home in Balimatraman. Among those places were Tanah Abang Central Jakarta (13 km), Karawang and Bekasi (25 km), to Bogor West Java (35 km).²³

Furthermore, Abdullah Syafi'ie's father bought good and expensive clothes for him as a way to motivate and increase his enthusiasm to study. In addition, his father also paid the teachers five to ten times higher than that paid by other students' parents.²⁴ The effort was carried out as a hope for the blessing of knowledge, and also a part of his father's education. Consequently, that had led to Abdullah Syafi'ie's interest in science and scholars as he was young.

From the information gained, Abdullah Syafi'ie was recorded to visit the holy city of Mecca eight times, both to perform the pilgrimage or *umrah*. In the midst of the pilgrimage, he made use of it to study to the Muslim Scholars in *haram*. Among the scholars who became his teachers was Sheikh Yasin bin Isa al-Fadani. From this hadith scholar, Abdullah Syafi'ie earned a sanad in the field of narration of the hadith (*al-'Ajalah fi al-Ahâdith al-Mursalâh* dan kitab *al-Muqta'af min Ithâf al-Akâbir*). Further, he also learned from Sayyid 'AlawÊ bin 'Abbâs al-MâlikÊ (*Fath al-Qarîb 'alÉ Tahdhîb al-Targhîb wa al-Tarhîb*) and many more, such as Sheikh Dr. Muhammad bin 'Abbâs al-Mâlikî, Sheikh Amîn Qutbî, Sheikh Amîn al-Sinqîfî.

From the scholars and teachers of Abdullah Syafi'ie as elaborated above, it can be concluded that his scholarship was very substantial. In addition, his work and contribution to the field of scientific writing may further evidence his contribution to Islam. The authors also found that in many of his works, he emphasized the aspects of fostering the Islamic faith and fortifying generations from the threat of heresy and harmful digressions.

²³ Abudin Nata, *Tokoh-Tokoh Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2005.161-2.

²⁴ Interview with Haji Zainal Abidin on 17 April 2013.

SCHOLARLY WORKS CONTRIBUTION

Abdullah Syafi'ie was not only good at lecturing and giving speeches, but also, he was a productive scholar diligently writing academic works. Writing so is a tradition that has been evidenced as the knowledge superiority of an Islamic scholar. That is, the writing was a fundamental activity of Abdullah Syafi'ie in addition to reading and teaching. He rewrote what he heard from his teachers or new things that he gained while reading the book.

He was of the view that writing is a medium to preach and spread Islam. The purpose of doing so is to ease Muslims, especially for students to understand the teachings of Islam. As the authors found, Abdullah Syafi'ie mentioned in his book entitled; *Risâlah Hidâyah al-'Awwâm fi 'Ilm al-Kalâm*, that the book was written and addressed to the students studying theology. On this basis, the book was constructed its readability style and was presented a question-answer session. As mentioned in the introduction of the book:²⁵

...فهذه رسالة (هداية العوام في علم الكلام) على طريق السؤال والجواب، جعلتها في مستوى مدارك الطلابية ليسهل عليهم حفظها وفهمها، وعلى المعلم تعبيرها وتعليمها. ولقد جربنا في إلقائها بمدربتنا ولم يمض مدة وجيزة إلا وظهرت لنا علامتنا تبشرنا بالنجاح وبلوغ المقصد، فبرزت بعون الله وافية بالمراد، جامعة لما لا بد للبنات والأولاد، من معرفة العقائد الدينية... وما دفعنا إلى ترتيبها وحشنا على إبراز إلا كثير من الأساتذة المدرسية ودعاة الملة المحمدية، وأتمتها العاملين في إعلاء شأنها وإدناء قطوفها.

The treatise of Risâlah Hidâyah al-'Awwâm fi 'Ilm al-Kalâm was written with a question-answer part. I made it according to the level of students' knowledge so they could memorize and understand it easily. This method can also make it easier for teachers to share and teach it. We have actually tested this book in our school. Although it was done in a short time, it received

²⁵ Abdullah Syafi'ie, *Risalah Hidayah al-Awwam* (Jakarta: Matba'ah al-Shafi'iyah, t.t.), 2.

a big reception and became proof of the message and achievement of the author's intent. Thus, with the help of Allah SWT, I hasten to solve it so that students can understand the Islamic faith well ... The background of the preparation of this book is to help teachers who teach in Islamic schools, preachers and imams in elevating the religion of Allah SWT.

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that Abdullah Syafi'ie is an extraordinary figure, a unique scholar and a brilliant writer. On many occasions, he succeeded in becoming a scholar who transcended his era. His expertise in writing can be seen from his expertise in compiling books for students according to their ability levels and arranging an appropriate curriculum. In fact, as elaborated previously, he had tested his books first to his student before the book was printed for official publications in his school.

Upon his books, the authors have analyzed and found that all the works of Abdullah Syafi'ie were highlighted the problems originating from the Qur'an, al-hadith and the views of the former scholars as well as his personal views on the issues raised. The authors also found that his published books reached twenty-three books. The books are as follows:

1. The Arabic Book

- a. *Kitab Ta'lim al-Dîn.*
- b. *Kitab al-Mu'âdathah.*
- c. *Kitab Madârij al-Fiqh.*
- d. *Kitab Bir al-Wilidayn.*
- e. *Kitab Al-Dîn wa al-Masjid.*
- f. *Kitab I'râb Matn al-Ajrumiyyah.*
- g. *Kitab Hidâyah al-Awwâm fâ 'Ilm al-Kalâm.*
- h. *Kitab Mu'kjizât Sayyidinâ Muhammad SAW.*
- i. *Kitab al-Mu'assasah al-Shâfi'iyyah al-Ta'lîmiyah.*
- j. *Kitab Man Huwa Sayyidunâ Muhammad SAW.*

- k. *Kitab Risâlah Ahl al-Sunnah fi Kalimatay al-ShahÉdah.*
- l. *Kitab Al-Fawâ'id al-Jaliyah fi Ôdhâh al-Qâwa'id al-Nahwiyah.*
- m. *Kitab Al-Risâlah al-Jâmi'ah Bayna UÏËl al-Dîn wa al-Fiqh wa al-Ta'lawwuf.*

From the list of Abdullah Syafi'ie's books above, it can be understood that he contributed to a lot of focus on the aspects of fostering Islamic faith and divinity. Nevertheless, other disciplines such as jurisprudence and morals were also included. The thought of *ahli sunnah wal jama'ah asy'ariyah* was significant to influence his work. Meanwhile, in the field of jurisprudence, he followed the thought of the Imam Shafi'i.

2. *The Book in Bahasa*

- a. *Isra dan Mi'raj.*
- b. *Empat Puluh Hadith*
- c. *The translation of al-Ajrummyah.*
- d. *Berkenanalan dengan Perguruan al-Syafi'iyah.*
- e. *Penduduk Dunia Hanya Ada Tiga Golongan.*
- f. *Kaifiyyah Solat Tarawih dan Witr Serta Do'anya.*
- g. *The translation of 'Aqidah li al-'Ôrif bi Allah Abu Bakar Sakran.*
- h. *The translation of al-Jawâhir al-Kalâmiyah fi ÔÏËh al-'Aqîdah al-Islîmiyah.*
- i. *The translation of Fath al-Qarîb al-Mujîb 'alÉ TahÐîb al-Targhîb wa al-Tarhîb.*
- j. *The translation of Risâlah fi Kalimatay al-Shahâdah.*

Based on the analysis, the authors need to mention that the above works were the result of excerpts and citations from other books, the translation and some of them are his substantial works. The main purpose of writing the above books is to ease the students in

particular, and Muslims in general, in understanding the religious problems. In addition, all the books and works of Abdullah Syafi'ie can be categorized into two parts which are books written as a school curriculum and books written for the public.

THE DIVINE THOUGHT OF ABDULLAH SYAFI'IE

In the beginning of Islam marked its footprint in the Indonesian archipelago, the ideology of *ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* was coined by Imam Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 324 H / 936 AD) and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 305 H / 917), to which has become the mainstream of thought in understanding Islamic faith. Among the earliest books which substantively discussed the faith is the translation of the book *al-AqÊdah al-NasafÊ* by 'Umar Najm al-DÊn al-NasafÊ.²⁶ There are many factors that make the topic of faith in the realm of the Indonesian archipelago increasing. That including the contribution of the scholars to scientific work in various fields. Even so, the initiator is yet to be known. However, there were certain challenges from the local government at that time, such as from the governments of Aceh, Pasai, Perlak, Riau, Melaka, and others.²⁷ Among the scholars who concerned about this field of study is Abdullah Syafi'ie who had lived in the early twentieth century. The following are some of the matters related to the Divine concept explained by Abdullah Syafi'ie:

1. The Existence of God

Among the matters that are often debated by scholars is the existence of God. A servant's belief in the existence and oneness of God is fundamental in the Islamic faith. This belief is then pledged in

²⁶ Syafie Abu Bakar, *Persuratan Melayu: Pengucapan tamadun Islam,*" in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2000), 410.

²⁷ Wan Mohd Saghir Abdullah, *Manuskrip Islam Dunia Melayu Ditinjau dari Pelbagai Peringkat* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fataniyah, 1996), 1.

two sentences of the shahada. To prove this, scholars take different approaches. Some of them prefer the use of the *naql* argument and so it is reinforced by the argument '*aql*. And some others prefer the argument '*aql* and so on strengthened by the *naql* viewpoint.

Therefore, the Muslim Scholars' discussion on this matter is not about the existence or non-existence of Allah, but about how humans come to the knowledge and beliefs about the existence and Oneness of Allah SWT. In short, what is the focus of the scholars' debate is about the way of evidence and the convincing process of God's appearance. The *muktazilah* represents a group that prefers the use of the *aql* argument and even tends to raise philosophical issues. The '*ash'ariyah* and *maturidiyah* groups are those who use the *naql* argument as the main guide in resolving this issue. The use of the argument '*aql* and logic for this last group is needed to strengthen an understanding of the topic and support the *naql* argument.

As a scholar, K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie followed a similar approach as the Ashairah scholars. In the book entitled *Hidayah al-Awwam fi Ilm al-Kalam*, he mentioned that the first rank for a servant is to confess in the heart and recite verbally that there is no God but Allah and, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah SWT.²⁸ This confession must be believed in the heart, and that is an affirmation that Allah SWT exists. This belief carries the intention that Allah is a *qidam* which has no beginning (*Wujuduhu laysa lahu awwal*). If Allah SWT is included in the category of new things, then Allah SWT needs to be the creator and such a case is impossible.²⁹

As for the Oneness of Allah SWT, he stated that Allah SWT is One, there is no ally for him, there are no parables and imagery that equals Him.³⁰ This belief in the Oneness of Allah is the foundation that

²⁸ Abdullah, Syafi'ie, *Hidayah al-'Awwam fi 'Ilm al-Kalam* (Jakarta: al-Matba'ah al-Syafi'iyah, t.t.), 3.

²⁹ Abdullah, Syafi'ie, *Hidayah al-Awwam*, 8.

³⁰ Abdullah Syafi'ie, *al-Risalah al-Jami'ah bayna Usul al-Din wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tasawwuf* (Jakarta: al-Matba'ah al-Syafi'iyah, 1974), 3.

unites faith, Islam, and *ihsan* in human beings. These three pillars then make a robust building under the auspices of Islamic law. To prove this, Abdullah Shafi'ie used the proposition of common sense and logic. In his view, if Allah SWT has a number, then, of course, there will be no creatures on the face of the earth. If God is numbered, it is certainly difficult to determine who created the creatures on this earth.³¹ According to him, the existence of the universe with all its contents and the galactic system is unmatched proof of the existence and Oneness of Allah SWT.

In one of the lectures, he revealed: "If I only found a creature in the form of a reptile in this world, then that would be enough for me to know the existence of God."³² That was how Abdullah Syafi'ie explained the concept of monotheism which he believed. The concept of belief is built on the guidance of the *naql* and reinforced by the arguments of logic (*al-aql*). To confirm this belief to the worshipers and students, he often recited the *Mujmalah Aqidah* before starting the lecture.

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that Abdullah Syafi'ie's thoughts on the issue of faith are not different from the views of his predecessors from the *Asha'irah* and *Maturidiyah* scholars. In that regard, critical reasoning is used to support the arguments of *naql*.

2. The Attribute of Gods

It is known that the Islamic teaching on faith is based on the concept of genuine monotheism. The discussion is often referred to as *wahdaniyat* in kalam science. All scholars from various schools and groups always try to confirm this concept of monotheism. Although there exist other issues, the discourse among Islamic scholars is about the nature of God. History records a sharp dispute that occurred

³¹ Abdullah, Syafi'ie, *Hidayah al-Awwam...*, 11.

³² The speech of K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie with the title 'Alam Raya' (universe).

among the scholars of the past regarding the attributes of Allah SWT. The debate that flows upon one issue that does God have nature or not? If God has nature, is there a difference between the nature and the substance of God? There are several approaches to these inquiries as elaborated in the following.

First, those who deny the nature of God (*Nafy al-Sifat*). The concept of denying God was introduced by the *Muktazilah*. According to them, Allah has no nature. This is because if Allah has nature, it means that nature is united in the substance of God. And if this applies, it means that nature is included in the matters of *Qadim* such as the substance of Allah SWT. Obviously, the *Muktazilah* understands the nature of God as a matter that is outside of God's substance. Because, if the nature is united in the substance of God, then there will be various forms of *qadim* (*Ta'addud al-Qudama'*) which are contrary to the concept of monotheism. Moreover, in the science of kalam, it is stated that there is only one *qadim*, namely Allah SWT. For this reason, the *Muktazilah* understands that some terms in the Qur'an such as Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Listening and others are understood by knowing, having power and hearing to the substance of Allah, not by His nature.³³

Second, the group that established the nature of God (*Istbat al-Sifat*). This concept was popularized by Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari. This concept states that Allah has many attributes as mentioned in the Qur'an, such as seeing, hearing, having power and so on. According to al-Ash'ari, because God is *Qadim*, hence, nature is the same.³⁴ A further explanation of this concept, Ahmad bin Hanbal opposed the views of the *Muktazilah* upon the denial of the nature of Allah SWT. According to him, Allah SWT is *qadim*, both in terms of His nature and substance. He continued, the trait was a creation of Allah SWT, when

³³ 'Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.t.), 44.

³⁴ Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari, *al-Luma' fi al-Rad ala al-Zaigh*, (Cairo: Sharikah al-Misriyah, 1955), 34.

and in what way Allah SWT created, those traits are a case that cannot be reached and explored by reason. The concept of *takwil* in Ahmad bin Hanbal's view cannot be used in this case.³⁵ That is certainly not a problem, the inability of reason to understand the problem of God's nature is an ordinary matter, because humans are often unable to understand the other creations of Allah SWT. Ibn Taymiyah was in agreement with the group of Asha'irah who attributed the nature of God, not a matter that was outside of His substance.³⁶

In this context, Abdullah Syafi'ie understands that although Allah SWT has nature, it is not human. The inequality of the nature of Allah SWT with the nature of these creatures is like the difference in the substance of Allah SWT with the substance of beings.³⁷ It is clear that Allah SWT speaks with words (*Mutakallim bi al-Kalam*), knows with knowledge (*'alim bi' ilm*) and has power with power (*qadir bi qudrah*) and others. Furthermore, Abdullah Syafi'ie states that these qualities must be believed by every Muslim as he is mentioned and interpreted as desired without changing, adjusting, likening and destroying that may lead to *kufr*.³⁸

3. God's Power

The scholars, in general, agree that Allah SWT is the Almighty One. Their difference in understanding God's power revolves around the issues related to the will of Allah SWT. The Asha'irah group believes that Allah has absolute will and power. Allah SWT has absolute freedom to do whatever He wants, both accompanied by certain causes and goals or without certain causes or goals. Simply

³⁵ Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam Aliran-Aliran Sejarah Analisa Perbandingan* (Jakarta: UI Press, 2002), 136.

³⁶ Ibnu Taimiyah, *al-'Aqidah al-Wasatiyah* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Muhammadiyah, 1951), 8.

³⁷ Abdullah Syafi'ie, *Akidah-Akidah yang Berhaluan Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* (Jakarta: Penerbit As-Syafi'iyah, t.t.), 6.

³⁸ Abdullah Syafi'ie, *Risalah Ahl al-Sunnah fi Kalimatay al-Shahadah* (Jakarta: Percetakan As-Syafi'iyah, t.t.), 7.

put, the Asha'irah view that the will of Allah SWT encompasses everything that happens, and His power encompasses everything that He has determined, whether good or bad.³⁹ Among the verses which form the basis of this understanding are surah al-Insan (76): 30, sura al-Kahfi (18): 23-24 and surah Hud (11): 107, which clearly state that everything happens on the face the earth is with the permission and will of Allah SWT.

According to Muhammad Abduh, as quoted by Harun Nasution, such an understanding is closer to the Jabariah understanding (Fatalism) which causes the Islamic world to retreat. According to him, this understanding needs to be changed towards greater opportunities for the human to have freedom, will and more independent actions.⁴⁰ The *Muktazilah* holds that Allah has absolute power and will, but the substance of Allah SWT himself creates levels and limits for himself. For this group, Allah SWT is considered to have limited His will and power with God's law which is His own creation which is permanent and unchanged.

Allah SWT has obliged Himself to do justice easily, keep promises and provide fortune to humans.⁴¹ This means that the power of God Almighty is completely limited by the nature of justice. Allah SWT has been bound by justice, which, if violated, will make Allah SWT unjust, even wrongdoers.

From the elaboration above, Abdullah Shafi'ie was more inclined to the view of Asha'irah. According to him, Allah is Almighty and Willing over everything. Not a single issue applies to the face of the earth but by His permission and will. Anything that Allah Almighty wants will surely happen and what is not desired will not happen. There is not one step or a second passage of the heart except

³⁹ Muhammad Yusuf Musa, *al-Qur'an wa al-Falsafah* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif: t.t.), iii.

⁴⁰ Harun Nasution, *Pembaharuan dalam Islam; Sejarah Pemikiran dan Gerakan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1973), 66.

⁴¹ Harun Nasution, *Falsafah Agama* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang: 1973), 138.

by His will. Allah SWT is also free to will and do according to His will. No one can refuse his will or replace his decision. A servant cannot avoid evil but because of his *taufiq* and help. If all jinns and people are in association to move or move seeds, nothing will happen but with His permission and will.⁴²

He stated that the power and will (*al-Qudrah wa al-Iradah*) are the natures be always inherent in His substance and will be valid. If Allah SWT wants something, He will create something at any time without any preparation and compromise. Everything happens according to his will.⁴³ Although Abdullah Syafi'ie believes that Allah SWT has absolute will and power, but Allah SWT provides opportunities for humans to determine their own attitudes and actions. This can be understood from the following excerpt of his lecture:

“... someone who is limping in a state of depression when being chased by a dog, he is trying to run to save himself. Someone who is lost in the middle of the ocean in a state of surrender will try to seek help by giving a sign of help.”

From the above statement, it can be concluded that human has a role in their actions being carried out, although small. Nevertheless, as a servant of Allah SWT, the human must surrender and resign to Him, whether in a state of happiness or in a difficult time. This is because all events in this life and the journey depend on the power and destiny of Allah SWT. Thus, it is apparent that Abdullah Shafi'ie understands *Asha'irah* comprehensively.

4. Seeing Allah (Ru'yah Allah)

Among the discourse which has been debated among scholars, was the extent of seeing Allah SWT. The discussion on this issue has been ongoing for generations, especially between the *Muktazilah* and

⁴² Abdullah Syafi'ie, *Kumpulan Khutbah*, 9.

⁴³ Abdullah Syafi'ie, *Akidah-Akidah*, 4.

Ash'ariyah groups. Both groups agree that it is impossible for humans to see the form of Allah in this world, but they disagree about the possibility of seeing the form of Allah in the hereafter.

The *Muktazilah* argued that in the hereafter Allah could not be seen by eyes. In the context of maintaining the concept of *tanzih*, Allah SWT will only be seen through the eyes of the heart. According to them, the term seeing (*Ru'yah Allah*), means *al-ilm* or knowledge.⁴⁴ This group reasoned that everything can be seen with the senses must be in one particular place. Yet according to them, because Allah SWT is not material and has no physical form, then Allah has no place.⁴⁵ To strengthen this view, the *muktazilah* uses the words of Allah SWT as justification. The verse states:

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٠٣﴾

Surah Al-An'am (6): 103.

Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives (all) vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted.

The above verse explains that Allah cannot be seen by the senses of the human eye. As for the *Asha'irah*, the view is that humans can see Allah SWT in the hereafter. For them, the greatest pleasure is when a servant sees the face of Allah SWT. They establish such an argument with the verses of the Koran which explains a related case, including:

قَالَ لَنْ تَرِنِي وَلَكِنِ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرِنِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

Al-A'raf 7: 143

⁴⁴ 'Abd al-Jabbar, *Sharh Usul al-Khamsah* (Cairo: al-Istiqbal al-Kubra, t.t.), 262.

⁴⁵ 'Abd al-Jabbar, *Sharh Usul*, 249.

“You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.” But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, “Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.”

Furthermore, Allah SWT said:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاطِرَةٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

Al-Qiyamah 75: 22-23

[Some] faces, that Day, will be radiant, Looking at their Lord.

According to Asha'irah, the above verses that tell about the prophet Moses does not explain the substance of Allah SWT, that cannot be seen with eyes as claimed by the *Muktazilah*. The refusal of Allah SWT by not granting the request of the prophet Moses is due to the motives of animosity and opposition to the prophet Moses.⁴⁶ Even as a prophet, Moses could not possibly ask Allah SWT about something that must be for Allah SWT. Therefore, the request of the prophet Moses to see Allah SWT is a possible case.⁴⁷

Abu al-Hasan al-Asha'ri states the term al-Nazr in Arabic has many meanings, including *Nazr al-Intizar*, *al-Fikr wa al-I'tibar* and *Idrak bi al-Absar* to confirm the above logic. However, the word *al-Nazr* if attributed or united to the word *al-Wajh*, the intention is to see with the eyes (*al-Ru'yah bi al-Ayn*).⁴⁸ In addition to using the *naql*, the Ash'ari group also uses the logic to strengthen their views. According to them, everything that exists can be seen. In this regard, because

⁴⁶ Abu Bakar al-Baqilani, *Kitab Tamhid al-Awa'il wa Takhlis al-Dala'il* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Kutub al-Saqifah, 1987), 310.

⁴⁷ Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari, *al-Ibanah 'an Usul al-Diyannah* (Cairo: Idarah al-Tiba'ah al-Muniriyah, t.t.), 13-14.

⁴⁸ Abu Hasan al-'Ash'ari, *al-Ibanah*, 11.

Allah SWT has such a nature, then Allah will withdraw Himself to humans in the hereafter. If Allah can see himself, then surely Allah can appoint himself to the people in heaven on the Day of Judgment.⁴⁹

Ibn Hazm sees the same as Asha'irah, but according to Ibn Hazm, the ability of the human to see God Almighty does not pass through the senses of the eye that are necessary to the power of light and color as prevailing in the world. However, Allah SWT will give other strengths to His desired servants such as the hearing power that was once given to the prophet Moses to hear Allah SWT directly.⁵⁰

As a scholar, it is inevitable that Abdullah Syafi'ie had also involved in the dialectics of this discourse. The results of the authors' observation, it was found that the discussion of Abdullah Syafi'ie in this issue emphasizes more on the pleasure that can be felt by a believer when meeting with Allah SWT. In his view, the pleasure of seeing Allah is the most beautiful gift that cannot be described in words. Precisely, Abdullah Syafi'ie argued that seeing Allah SWT is a very likely case at the time of the meeting.

For the case, Abdullah Syafi'ie established an argument from al-Qur'an Surah al-Mutaffifin 83: 13 which states that the disbelievers in the hereafter will be among those who are denied from seeing God. Therefore, the group of people of faith is those who can see Allah SWT. On this point, it is clear that Abdullah Shafi'ie assumed the believers will see Allah SWT without the barrier.⁵¹ According to him, seeing Allah SWT for the believers is considered as a gift of goodness they performed in the world, at the same time it is a punishment for the unbelievers so that they cannot see Allah SWT. He also interpreted the

⁴⁹ Abu Hasan al-'Ash'ari, *al-Ibanah*, 16.

⁵⁰ Abu Muhammad 'Ali bin Hazm, *Fisal fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.t.), 2.

⁵¹ Speech material of K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie.

meaning of al-Nazar in surah al-Qiyamah 75: 22-23 as to see with the eyes.⁵²

Shortly, in the context of seeing Allah SWT, Abdullah Shafi'ie has the same view as the group of Asha'irah. This is proof that he is an Islamic scholar who holds the view of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah who understands Ash'ariyah. Abdullah Syafi'ie's understanding is in line with the views of the scholars of *tasawwuf*, which states that seeing Allah SWT on the Day of Judgment is the culmination of every worship performed in the world. For them, performing worship only to get Allah's paradise is a low stage of worship. In fact, a Sufi performs all his practices to get the gift of seeing the substance of Allah SWT directly on the Day of Judgment. Even so, Abdullah Shafi'ie was not known as a knowledgeable Sufism.

CONCLUSION

From the elucidation above, it can now be concluded that K.H. Abdullah Syafi'ie is among the Islamic scholars in the Indonesian archipelago who had largely contributed to the propagation of spreading the religion of Islam. His role is not only in the context of preaching to spread Islam in society, but also, his contribution to scientific works in various fields including the field of Islamic faith subject is significant. Further, in the context of *Ghaibiyat* and *Sam'iyat*, Abdullah Syafi'ie emphasizes the use of the *naql* proposition versus the proposition of *aql*. This, as he believed, human reason is an imperfect state. Therefore, in order to construct a way of thinking, a reason must follow the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah as sources of Islamic law.

As an Islamic scholar who has a breadth of knowledge, he demonstrated his expertise in elaborating and discussing the divine issues as evidence of his enormous and respected figure and

⁵² Abdullah Syafi'ie, *Risalah Hidayah al-Awwam* (Jakarta: Matba'ah al-Shafi'iyah, t.t.), 19.

scholarship. In fact, he clearly asserted as an *Ahli Sunnah wal jamaah* with Ash'ari's view on believing the Islamic faith and Shafi'ie school in practicing the Islamic jurisprudence. Nevertheless, this study encountered several different conditions and ways to confirm the rules and formulations agreed upon in the Ash'ariyah perspectives.

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Interviews

Achmad Mubarok, (Professor from UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta dan Universitas Islam As-Syafi'iyah Jatiwaringin), the interview was conducted on 14 December 2018.

Zainal Abidin, (a son of the leader Pesantren Yatim As-Syafi'iyah), the interview was conducted on 17 April 2019.

