Research article

Mahabah According to KH Hasyim Asy’ari and Its Actualization on Religious Tolerance

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Abstract

This study examines the concept of mahabah in the context of Indonesian cultural and religious diversity and its potential for promoting religious tolerance. The Indonesian nation is diverse, with multiple cultures and religions, which can be a great strength or source of conflict. The worst impact of conflicts between cultures and religions is the loss of tolerance between them. To promote interfaith tolerance in Indonesia, it is important to imply the concept of mahabah in socializing, which is interpreted as love/affection in every religion. Kiai Haji Hasyim Asy’ari is an Indonesian Muslim figure who has influenced the unity of the Indonesian nation, and this study explores his concept of mahabah and its actualization on religious tolerance. The library research method collects data by studying various literature, such as books, archives, and written works related to KH Hasyim Asy’ari. According to KH Hasyim Asy’ari, mahabah, in the context of Sufism, is the faith of a servant in his god by following the Quran and Sunnah. In the social context, the servant of God will give rise to tolerance, even between religious people. By exploring the concept of mahabah in the context of Indonesian cultural and religious diversity, this study seeks to promote religious tolerance and social harmony in Indonesia.

Keywords

KH Hasyim Asy’ari; mahabah; religious tolerance; social harmony; sufism.

Article history

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a diverse country with many cultural and religious traditions. Existing diversity, however, has the potential to lead to conflict. Religion, intergroup relations, and ethnicity are still very sensitive topics that can cause conflict. There are numerous riots worldwide, many motivated by religion (BBC News Indonesia, 2020)
and culture (Riadi, 2022). Conflict is typically sparked by the prevalence of stereotypes pitting one group of people against another from different cultures and religions. The worst effect of these disputes is the lack of tolerance between cultures and religions. According to Hasyim Muzadi, there are at least three reasons why there is a conflict between religious groups in Indonesia, a multicultural country: a partial comprehension of religion, political and economic causes, and depictions of non-religious issues (Muzadi, 2010)

The perspective of religion by placing religion as a source of conflict has led to various attempts at reinterpretation and then finding common ground at a certain level to reduce conflict between religious communities if there is mutual tolerance (Yunus, 2014). Disparities in religious beliefs frequently cause conflicts. This is because there are incorrect viewpoints and people or groups with a limited understanding of religion. Beginning with an excessive sense of zeal eliminates the likelihood of truth. It moves on to asserting his truest faith, denying, stuttering, and encouraging radical acts against other religions. The foundation of religious life is the teaching and inviting in of goodness taught in every religion, followed by mutual regard, respect, and tolerance in a religion that must be upheld to uphold human values.

An interesting fact is that one of the forms of approach to the essence of every religion is love. The fundamental reason all religions teach love can be known as follows: Christianity is very attached to love, Buddhism is famous for mâitre, Khonghucu teachings are interpreted with jinn (love), Hinduism calls it Tat Twam Asi, and in Islam, it is interpreted as mahabah. Each Religion has its concept of love, and from that love, each religion is taught to do good to each other. In Islam, mahabah is the concept of Sufism, which is the actualization of love for Allah toward his being.

As Muslims, Indonesian Muslims must incorporate the idea of mahabah into social interactions to eradicate division and intolerance in the country’s wide cultural and religious variety. The author makes an effort to examine the idea of the Mahabah according to Kyai Haji Hasyim Asy’ari, because he is a prominent Indonesian Muslim who has influenced the country’s unity. He is associated with the realization of

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1. Thus remain these three things, namely faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these three is love (Korintus 13:13)
2. The word “mâître” has its roots in the word partner which means friend in Buddhism, the main meaning of love is friendship or friendship (Admin, n.d.)
3. The underlying thing of love is the teaching that states that I am you, the meaning is developed again: you are him, he is them and so on. This is what is often called “Tat Twam Asi” as stated in Chandogya Upanisad VI. 14. 1
interreligious tolerance. It seems that the feature that sets this particular study apart from others is its focus on the implementation of mahabah’s sufistic feature in the practice of unity in diversity, specifically in the context of addressing religious diversity in Indonesia. This novel approach builds upon previous research, such as Abdul Hakam’s study of KH Hasyim Asyari’s teachings on Sufism (Hakam, 2014). By applying the concept of mahabah to contemporary issues, this study offers unique insights into how Sufi practices can promote unity and understanding in diverse communities.

The author notes that this research is unique because it connects the idea of mahabah with Sufism, a mystical tradition within Islam that emphasizes spiritual purification and enlightenment. By doing so, the author aims to show how the practice of mahabah can be grounded in a spiritual tradition and can help address contemporary issues such as religious divisions in Indonesia. Overall, the author is interested in exploring how Islamic concepts and practices can promote social harmony and tolerance in Indonesia and how traditional Islamic scholarship can inform contemporary discussions on these issues.

2. METHODS

It is not easy to determine the research method used without additional context about the research. However, if the data collected does not involve direct interaction with human participants, it can be classified as a non-interactive research method. Non-interactive research methods usually involve gathering data from sources such as surveys, observations, or existing datasets, without directly involving human subjects. Examples of non-interactive research methods include content analysis, archival research, and secondary data analysis (Gunawan, 2013, p. 142).

Based on the information provided, the research method used in this study is document analysis. Document analysis involves collecting and analyzing data from various written sources, such as books, archives, and written works, instead of collecting data through direct interaction with human subjects. In this case, the researchers collect data by studying and analyzing literature related to KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s concept of mahabah and its actualization of interfaith tolerance. This research method can provide valuable insights into a particular phenomenon or topic’s historical, cultural, and social context. However, it is important to carefully evaluate the quality and reliability of the sources used in the document analysis to ensure the validity of the findings.
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Sufistic Life of KH Hasyim Asy’ari

KH Hasyim Asy’ari was a prominent figure in Indonesian history, known for his contributions to the state as a great ‘ulama and statesman (Yuniari, 2021, p. 13). KH Hasyim Asy’ari is the founder and supreme leader of a Muslims organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which still exists and has many followers (Nizar, 2017). He was a great scholar from Pesantren Tebuireng (Islamic Boarding School) in Jombang and a national hero (Kartika, 2022). KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s contributions to Indonesian Muslims’ progress include his academic work, his struggle and educating the people, and his thoughts on education (Yuniari, 2021, p. 56). His thinking was balanced between the inner and outer dimensions, between traditionality and modernity (Septialana & Hermawan, 2020). KH Hasyim Asy’ari utilized anthropocentric theology to raise Muslims’ awareness to fight the practices of colonialism and break free from its shackles while also fighting the ignorance of Aqidah (Kartika, 2022). In his book al-Muqaddimah al-Qānūn al-Asāsī Li Jam’iyyah Nahdlatul ‘Ulama, KH Hasyim Asyari emphasized the idea of unity, which included national unity and religious unity (Nizar, 2017) He believed that the condition of the Indonesian nation being colonized by the Dutch was the most dominant social condition, and his thought in this book was motivated by the social conditions that occurred at that time. KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s thoughts in the field of education included the significance of education, the purpose of education, the character of the teacher, the duties and responsibilities of the student, the education system, the curriculum, and the method (Rosyid, 2014). He believed that education should instill nationalism and patriotism, which evoke the courage to make sacrifices of soul, body, and property. In conclusion, KH Hasyim Asy’ari was a significant figure in Indonesian history, known for his contributions to the state, his thoughts on education, and his fight against colonialism.

KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s thinking in Sufism follows the orthodox Sufism formulated by Imam Junaidi Al-Baghdadi and Imam Al-Ghazali. The concept of Sufi teachings written by KH Hasyim Asy’ari has taught that in Sufi teachings, one should not exaggerate anything, but he advocates being mediocre. The goal is that Sufism in Islam is not considered radical (Zutas, 2017). This type of Sufi emphasizes increasing moral values and piety by carrying out the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad saw. (Haidar, 1998, p. 74). The notion of mahabah in sufism is the tendency of the heart to love God. Or obedience to God’s commands, staying away
from His prohibitions, and obeying all its provisions (Al-Kalabazi, 1993). Based on Imam al-Ghazali’s book, Ihya’ Ulumiddin, mahabbah Allah and His Messenger (Rasul) are an obligation (al-Ghazali, 1998, p. 360) knowing the nature of love, it must be preceded by ma’rifah (recognition) and idrak (known) because man loves nothing but what he recognizes (al-Ghazali, 1998, p. 418). So it can be understood that the terminology of Islamic mysticism (Sufism) is the tendency of a person’s heart (Sûfi) to only love Allah, empty the chambers of his heart from other than Allah, accompanied by obedience to carry out His commandments and stay away from His prohibitions.

3.2. Mahabah According to KH Hasyim Asy’ari

The word mahabah derives from the word ahabba yuhibbu mahabbatan, which literally means to love deeply (Yunus, 1990, p. 36). It can also mean al-Wadud, which mean an ultimate love (Shaliba, 1978, p. 346). Mahabah can also means a true love that leads to the owner of the majesty, namely Allah Swt. Love for anything will be fake if not framed by love for Him (Mustafa, 2020). Sufism in Islam has many figures with various concepts. Among them is the concept of love coined by Rabi’atul Adawiyah. Mahabah is a concept in which a servant no longer loves fellow creatures but is solely given to the creator, namely Allah Swt. (Mustamin, 2020). According to KH Hasyim Asy’ari, mahabah is not just a feeling or emotion but an active embodiment of one’s devotion and commitment towards God and His messengers. In Sufi terms, mahabah can be seen as a form of spiritual love leading to greater obedience and submission to God (Asy’ari, 1346H). There are also those who argue that mahabah comes from the word hubb, which means four logs used to support a vessel like a lover who is willing to bear the burden he loves. It is then etymologically understandable that he is omnipotent can be interpreted as the love of something very deep, his heart is overwhelmed with his love, and there is nothing to fill his heart except love.

Mahabah is a concept in Islamic thought that refers to the highest level of love and affection towards God and His creation. From the perspective of KH Hasyim Asy’ari, mahabah is an essential aspect of Islamic education and character building (Wibowo, 2018, p. 106). His educational thought emphasizes the ethical aspects of learning and puts tasawuf as the foundation of education in shaping the character of learners. Mahabah is also relevant in forming a sakinah household, which is peaceful, harmonious, and full of love (Rosyidin, 2022, p. 1). Contemporary Sufism focuses on the concept of Muhammadan love as the essence of the mahabah (Fikra, 2021, p. 356).
KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s educational thought is based on the ethics of teaching and learning, emphasizing character-building’s importance in education. In his book, *Adab al-‘Âlim wa al-Muta’allim*, KH Hasyim Asy’ari explains the duties and responsibilities of students in the teaching and learning process, including their relationship with their teachers and fellow students (Bagaskara, 2019).

That concept is also relevant in the context of nationalism. He believed that Islam and nationality are inseparable and that Muslims should be loyal to their country and work towards its progress (Fadli, 2020). In conclusion, mahabah is an essential concept in Islamic thought, particularly from the perspective of KH Hasyim Asy’ari. It is relevant in Islamic education, character building, forming a *sakinah* household, and nationalism. His ideas on the relationship between Islam and nationality are also significant in contemporary Indonesia. The founder of NU also has a big enough thought and role in various ways, including in Islam and nationality. In pertaining to the Islamic thought, KH Hasyim Asy’ari has formulated Islamic thoughts patterned in traditional Islam among the Islamic thoughts, namely in the field of *tasawuf* (sufism), the field of *kalam* (theology), and the field of *fiqh* (law) (Nizar, 2017).

"As is understood, men must surely be social, mixed with others; for no one can be alone to meet all the needs. He is inevitably forced into society, gathering that brings goodness to his people and rejects the needs and threats of danger from him. Therefore, unity, the inner bond with one another, helping each other to deal with one thing at the same age, is the most important cause of happiness and the most powerful factor for creating brotherhood and affection. How many countries became prosperous, and servants became powerful leaders? Development was evenly distributed. Countries became developed, governments were established, and roads became smooth. Transportation became crowded, and there were many other benefits of unity: the greatest virtue and the most powerful causes and means.” (Asy’ari, 1971, p. 5).
By those narratives, KH Hasyim Asy’ari explained that unity in society could create brotherhood and affection (mahabah), and this is the basis for the moral and national thinking of him (Fadli, 2020). His thoughts on unity are also corroborated by his description, which explains the dangers of breaking brotherhood and division. It can be seen in his book *at-Tibyan fi Nahyi an Muqath’a’ti al-Arham wa-l-Aqrabin* (Asy’ari, 1360) where he quotes many verses from the Qur’an and the Hadith about brotherhood and the danger of division. Through the NU organization, KH Hasyim Asy’ari demonstrated the nature of moderation while laying the groundwork for the moderate movement, which unites the concepts of country and community. Additionally, NU has been at the forefront of defending Pancasila and the Republic of Indonesia’s 1945 Constitution until now. In the meantime, *tasamuh*-reflecting behaviors of him have been captured in photographs by M. Sanusi (Sanusi, 2013). KH Hasyim Asy’ari and NU’s efforts to promote moderation, unity, and defend democratic values are admirable and serve as an example for others.

Human beings must realize that they need each other to fulfill their needs. Islam teaches humanity to be united and not divided (Nizar, 2017). And that is one of the proofs that Islam is in harmony with human nature. Allah commands Muslims to unite with the foundation of the mahabah. Actualization of God as *hablun min Allah* means guarding a relationship with God, always carrying out all His commands, and leaving all His prohibitions (Sahidun et al., 2018). As interpreted by the rope of Allah, namely the religion of Allah, namely Islam, which produces *ma’rifatullah* (knowing Allah), then mahabah, which is actualized to Human (*hablun min an-nas*) which are interpreted by the ropes of fellow human beings, namely socializing to society in the form of tolerance to non-Muslims and *ukhuwah Islamiyah* to fellow Muslims. The author describes this as stated on the following Figure 1:
The growth of awareness builds harmony through everyday attitudes, as mentioned above, driven by several factors, such as theological factors (Ajahari, 2018). The actualization of mahabah in Islam is included in the realm of *Sufism akhlâqi*. Sufism akhlâqi is a Sufism that concentrates on improving moralities and attitudes. With certain methods formulated, sufism concentrates on avoiding the despicable manners (*akhlaq sayyi’ah*) while realizing the praiseworthy ones (*akhlaq hasanah*) in daily lives (Taftazani, 1985, p. 187).

### 3.3. The Urgency of Mahabah in Building a Tolerant Society in Indonesia

Mahabah in KH Hasyim Asy’ari thought refers to love and affection towards fellow human beings, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds. This concept is closely related to interfaith tolerance, which emphasizes respecting and accepting differences among people of different faiths. According to Zuhri, KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s religious thinking was based on Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ’ah discourse, which emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation among Muslims (Zuhri, 2014). Nizar explains that KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s thought about unity is reflected in the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama, an Islamic organization that promotes the values of tolerance, inclusivity, and social justice (Nizar, 2017, p. 65). Bagaskara adds that KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s ethics in the teaching and learning process...
also emphasizes the importance of respect, empathy, and compassion towards students and fellow teachers. Finally, his concept of mahabah has significant implications for creating interfaith tolerance (Bagaskara, 2019, p. 156).

According to Rosyidin, KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s thought about the sakinah household, which emphasizes the importance of love, respect, and harmony in family relationships, can be extended to the broader society (Rosyidin, 2022, p. 2). This idea aligns with the government’s program specializing in character education to promote interfaith tolerance (Dwilaksono, 2020). Furthermore, the concept of hubb al-wathan min al-iman, which emphasizes the love for the homeland, can also promote national unity and social cohesion (Rofiq, 2018, p. 45). In conclusion, KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s concept of mahabah emphasizes the importance of love, respect, and compassion towards fellow human beings, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds. This concept has significant implications for creating interfaith tolerance and promoting social cohesion. The prominent thoughts about unity, ethics in the teaching and learning process, and the sakinah household can be used to promote interfaith tolerance and character education in Indonesia.

From the perspective of the founder of NU, Islam and nationalism are inseparable, and Muslims should be loyal to their country and work towards its progress. Indonesia is based on the principle of unity in diversity, which emphasizes respecting and appreciating the diversity of Indonesia’s cultures and religions. He believed nationalism should be based on justice, equality, and human rights. In the context of interfaith tolerance, KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s ideas on the relationship between Islam and nationalism are significant. His emphasis on unity in diversity and respect for other religions can be seen as a manifestation of the mahabah towards God’s creation.

Furthermore, KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s educational thought emphasizes the ethical aspects of learning and character building and can also contribute to developing interfaith tolerance. By instilling the values of mahabah in learners, they can learn to appreciate and respect the diversity of religions and cultures and work towards a more harmonious and peaceful society. In conclusion, mahabah is an essential concept in Islamic thought, particularly from this perspective. Mahabah can be actualized in interfaith tolerance by fostering religious tolerance and promoting unity in diversity. KH Hasyim Asy’ari’s ideas on the relationship between Islam and nationalism, which emphasize the importance of justice, equality, and human rights, can also contribute to the development of interfaith tolerance. By instilling the values of mahabah in learners, they can learn to appreciate and respect the diversity of
religions and cultures and work towards a more harmonious and peaceful society.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the actualization of Mahabah in Islam can give rise to interfaith tolerance. Mahabah according to KH Hasyim As’ari, in the context of Sufism is a servant's faith in his god by working out his commands and knowing his prohibitions with the guidelines of the Quran and Hadith. As for the social context, namely, the servant to God (hablum min Allah) that will give rise to ma’rifatullah servants of god and man with his fellowmen who will give rise to tolerance even among religious people. Finally, the foundation of mahabah as the actualization of religious tolerance in Islam is still in the realm of tasawuf akhlaqi, while the realm of aqidah and sharia has its limitation.

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