

ABDULLAH BIN NUH: HIS STRUGGLE ON *DA'WAH* THROUGH ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study provides Abdullah bin Nuh and his struggle on *Da'wah* to reveal his contribution in the *Da'wah* of Islam particularly in Islamic education. In methodology, this paper used in-depth literature review and an analysis to highlight his noble works in order to increase prestige of Islam in Indonesia through education field. This study finds that Abdullah bin Nuh has great contribution in Indonesia, he very concerned in education with continually Islamic teaching and discourses to his students. This concerning were evidenced with the founding of two Islamic centers in Bogor both al-Ghazaly and al-Ihya'a with Islamic programs and discourses for public society and students (*santri*) as well. Moreover, in the regard to make good intellectual foundation among students of university, he also held several special discourses about Islamic teaching frequently. Therefore, in order to support his *da'wah* on Islamic education his consistently translated several classical Arabic books particularly al-Ghazaly's works to Indonesia and Sundanese language to make easier his students understanding. Finally, this paper presents the aspect life of Abdullah bin Nuh which did not covered yet by Indonesian Muslim today and to promote his struggle and contribution in *da'wah* of Islam in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Abdullah bin Nuh, Struggle, Da'wah, Islamic Education*

A. Introduction

Abdullah bin Nuh was one of Indonesian Muslim scholars with multidisciplinary knowledge. His intellectual personality was actualized through his books published, writings on magazines, and his activity in several book's translation. However, he was not popular as Indonesian intellectuals even today among Indonesian inelegancies due to many his works are not republished. But, according to Middle East scholars, Abdullah bin Nuh was known as the Indonesian Arabic poet and was nominated to be non-active Arabic poet in Encyclopedia of Kuwait.

In *da'wah* of Islam, Abdullah bin Nuh was very struggle in regard to teach the *ummah* with good understanding of basic principle of Islam. His *da'wah* was very concerned about Islamic education, because according to him; dedication on teaching, reading, and writing is one of the ways of mode of life. Therefore, throughout of his life, Abdullah bin Nuh was never leaved the educational activities even though he was in the battle field against the imperialists and colonialists.

No more the article and papers on journal talking about Abdullah bin Nuh and many aspects of his life, except some thesis and essays only. Therefore, in regard to reveal the real contribution of Abdullah bin Nuh in raising of Islamic education system in Indonesia, the writer writes this paper in order to see the one of aspects of Abdullah bin Nuh throughout of his life.

B. Biography of Abdullah bin Nuh

Abdullah bin Nuh was born on 3 *Jumada al-Ula* 1324 H/30th June 1905, in the small town of Cianjur, surrounded by the highlands of West of Java.¹ The heartland of this town lies in the fertile interior highlands of West Java where Sudanese people traditionally lived in the most of the villages. Abdullah bin Nuh's father was K.H. Raden Muhammad Nuh and his mother was Nyi Raden Hajjah 'Aisyah. His father was a Sundanese scholar and a charismatic figure in Islamic education in Cianjur. K.H. Raden Muhammad Nuh was the founder of the Islamic boarding school I'anatu al-Thalibi al-Muslimin. K.H. Muhammad Nuh was born in 1879 and lived in Mecca for several years to study Islam under K.H.R. Mukhtar al-Athoridi, a great scholar in Mecca who was originally from Bogor. As a result, K.H. Muhammad Nuh mastered Al-Qur'an and Ihyaa Ulumuddin, Ghazali's great book. His intellectualism inspired his son, Abdullah bin Nuh, as Abdullah bin Nuh was also famously known as Al-Ghazali of Indonesia and majority of his works were based on Ghazali due to his inspired figure.²

Genealogically, Abdullah bin Nuh was a descendant of the Hindu Pajajaran Kingdom and Talaga Kingdom. In 1529, the Talaga kingdom was converted to Islam by Syarif Hidayat (Sunan Gunung Jati) when Rangga Mantri (Prabu Pucuk Umum) was the leader of Talaga because Islam was spread to the inlands of Sunda by Sunan Gunung Jati and his adherents. After Prabu Pucuk Umum died, the throne of Talaga was continued by his son, Sunan Wanaperih. Sunan Wanaperih received Islamic teachings from Sunan Gunung Jati and become great *ulama* at that time among his folk. He had a grandchild, Raden Aria Wiratanudatar, which later became the founder of Cianjur. Raden Aria Wiratanudatar was an ancestor of Abdullah bin Nuh.³

Furthermore, from his mother's genealogy, Abdullah bin Nuh was the son of 'Aisyah, who was a daughter of Ahmad, who descended from a great saint, 'Abdul al-Muhyi (the great *ulama* of Pamijahan in the West Java). 'Abdul al-Muhyi's descendant was Syarif Hidayat, venerated

1 Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, *Arabian Press Board: Sejarah dan Perjuangannya*, (Jakarta: Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, 1986), 85; See also Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, *al-Hijrah min Allah Ila Allah*, (Bogor: N. P., 1987), hlm. 2.

2 Dahlan, 3; See also Syafi'I Antonio & Team, *al-Ghazali dari Indonesia: KH. Abdullah bin Nuh: Ulama Sederhana Kelas Dunia*, (Jakarta: Tazkia Publishing, 2015), hlm. 10.

3 Nina H. Lubis & et al, "Sejarah Perkembangan Islam di Jawa Barat", <http://pustaka.unpad.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SEJARAH-PERKEMBANGAN-ISLAM.pdf> (accessed 30 November, 2016), hlm. 25-28.

ulama at that period.⁴

Abdullah bin Nuh had a religious and educated family background as well as Islamic environment around him. It greatly influenced his intellectual and spiritual development progress. Cianjur is a city famous for its Muslim scholars (*ulama*) and national patriots. The *ulamas* struggled to spread their knowledge with sincerity, modesty, and simplicity. They taught their students without weary and salary but only to worship Allah. Furthermore, the national patriots struggled persistently and bravely, and without any expected profit for their struggles. All of their sacrifices were to reach the contentment of Allah.⁵

In 1912, in Cianjur, a famous Madrasah was built namely “al-I’anah”. Its founder was Raden H. Tolhah al-Kholidi. He was a rich man in his village and an owner of an enterprise. He was the one of the elders in Cianjur who was a grandfather of K.H. Raden Muhammad Nuh. Abdullah bin Nuh studied Islamic studies in this Madrasah. His intelligence, talent, and character were apparent when he studied in Madrasah al-I’anah. Since he was 8 years old, he mastered the Arabic language theoretically and practically. Moreover, he also studied continuously under his father, Raden Muhmmad Nuh.⁶ This educational environment shaped his academic mentality and became the foundation for his intellectual journey in the future.

Then, Abdullah bin Nuh was sent with his friends to Madrasah al-‘Arabiyyah, which was famous with Madrasah Syamailul Huda in Pekalongan. Basically, Madrasah Syamailul Huda was similar to al-I’anah based on the *pesantren*, but one of the educators was Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim bin Tohir al-Alawi al-Hadromi.⁷ He was a great scholastic and strived scholar from Yemen and had high aspirations for his students to succeed particularly in struggle to develop Islamic teaching in Indonesia. Therefore, in his *pesantren*, Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim taught his youth students all aspects of life, including good manners, behaviour, supreme mentality, exemplary character, and courage to enforce Islam wherever they live.⁸

In 1914, Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim moved to Surabaya from Pekalongan with some of his students, including Abdullah bin Nuh and he built the Hardramaut School there. In Hadramaut School, Abdullah bin Nuh encountered many new experiences and shared his knowledge which he gained from his teacher. He was trusted by Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim because he had more knowledge and talent than his peers. Abdullah bin Nuh spent his time in Surabaya to study Islam in depth, scientific knowledge, and several languages, including Dutch

4 Dhiya Shahab & Abdullah bin Nuh, *al-Imam al-Muhajir: Maa Labu Wa Linaslihi Wa Li al-A’immatibi Min Aslafibi Min al-Fadhail Wa al-Ma’thur*, (Beirut: Darul as-Shuruq, 1958), hlm. 88.

5 Dahlan, 3; See also Syafi’I Antonio & Team, *al-Ghazali dari Indonesia: KH. Abdullah bin Nuh: Ulama Sederhana Kelas Dunia*, (Jakarta: Tazkia Publishing, 2015), hlm. 3.

6 Dahlan, 3; See also Syafi’I Antonio & Team, *al-Ghazali dari Indonesia: KH. Abdullah bin Nuh: Ulama Sederhana Kelas Dunia*, (Jakarta: Tazkia Publishing, 2015), hlm. 4.

7 For further detail reading about Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim bin Tohir al-Alawi al-Hadromi, see, ‘Ali ibn Anis al-Kaf, Mukhtarat Min Kitabat Shaikh al-Shahabah al-Hadhramiyyah al-Ustadh Muhammad ibn Hashim, (Yemen: Markaz “ibadi li al-Dirasat Wa al-Nashr, 2008).

8 For further detail reading about Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim bin Tohir al-Alawi al-Hadromi, see, ‘Ali ibn Anis al-Kaf, Mukhtarat Min Kitabat Shaikh al-Shahabah al-Hadhramiyyah al-Ustadh Muhammad ibn Hashim, (Yemen: Markaz “ibadi li al-Dirasat Wa al-Nashr, 2008), hlm. 5.

and English. He also tried to advance his talent continuously, particularly in Arabic poetry, discussion, public speaking and leadership.⁹

The high praises given to Abdullah bin Nuh by Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim to become the head of redaction and editor of the Hadramaut weekly magazine from 1922 to 1926. The Hadramaut magazine was published to anticipate and encounter the political wars of the Dutch in Indonesia. Therefore, it aimed to enlighten and understand regional political, social, cultural, and religious issues. Finally, in Surabaya, in a way, Abdullah bin Nuh had many progressive developments in his intellectual with more experiences.¹⁰

Abdullah bin Nuh received further intellectual experiences when he was a student at Al-Azhar University. With the guidance of Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim, he and his friends went to Egypt to study in Al-Azhar University. He had mastered the Arabic language perfectly, and thus, he spent more time reading and learning about Islamic Jurisprudence (*al-Fiqh*) specifically. He also actively became involved in several informal classes held by several lecturers in Al-Azhar. His study and time in Al-Azhar, was significant as it his views on al-Fiqh. His great book on *Ana Muslimun Sunniyyun Shafi'iyyun* consists of more than 30 volumes discussing Islamic Jurisprudence, particularly *as-Shafi'i*, because Abdullah bin Nuh focused his study on the *as-Shafi'i* sect. He also published many articles in Pembina magazine on issues of *al-Fiqh*.¹¹

When Abdullah bin Nuh was intelligence mature enough, he also contributed in several social movements defended Indonesia against colonialist. He became involved with Syarikat Islam (SI). SI was founded in 1911 to protect Muslim traders against the Chinese and Dutch traders. In 1919, SI developed into a social progressive movement, transforming to an Islamic political organization in the struggle for Indonesia's independence. In 1913, a local SI division was founded in Cianjur. In 1916, SI membership within Cianjur reached 8,000, with the largest membership in the region of Sunda at that time.¹²

His involvement in SI, in a way, evoked his spirit to stive for Indonesia's independence. He decided to be a volunteer for the Army of Defenders of The Homeland (*Pembela Tanah Air/ PETA*). During the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, the Japanese directly contributed to several developments, especially in Java and to lesser extent in Sumatra. They indoctrinated, trained and armed many of the younger generation and gave older leaders the opportunity to forge links with the masses. As a result, in October 1943, the Japanese began their youth organization, PETA. This was an Indonesian volunteer army which by the end of the war had 37,000 men in Java, 1,600 in Bali and about 20,000 in Sumatra. PETA was not formally a part of the Japanese military but was intended to be an auxiliary guerrilla force to resist an allied invasion. Its officer corps included officials, teachers, *kyais*, and Indonesian soldiers of the former Dutch colonial

9 For further detail reading about Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim bin Tohir al-Alawi al-Hadromi, see, 'Ali ibn Anis al-Kaf, Mukhtarat Min Kitabat Shaikh al-Shahabah al-Hadhramiyyah al-Ustadh Muhammad ibn Hashim, (Yemen: Markaz "ibadi li al-Dirasat Wa al-Nashr, 2008), hlm. 6.

10 Alwi Shahab, *Maria Van Engels, Menantu Habib Kwitang*, (Jakarta: Republika, 2006), hlm. 197.

11 Alwi Shahab, *Maria Van Engels, Menantu Habib Kwitang*, (Jakarta: Republika, 2006), hlm. 8-9.

12 Huis Stjin Cornelis Van, *Islamic Courts and Women's Right in Indonesia: The Case of Cianjur and Bulakamba*, (Leiden: Leiden University, 2015), hlm. 126.

army. Among them was an Islamic school teacher named Soedirman and Abdullah bin Nuh. In February 1945, they formed *Barisan Hizbullah* (Forces of God) as a military wing of the Masyumi Party which was dominated by its leader and Muhamadiyah members.¹³

Basically, the rationale for Japanese recruiting the members from indigenous Muslim communities for their army was because Muslims in general, particularly Indonesians, had been defenders of their homeland, in the name of holy war (*jihad fi sabili Allah*) with the mission to live peacefully precious or die as a martyr. Therefore, the Japanese accommodated *kyais*, *ulamas*, *santri*, and Muslim teachers in order to assist their occupation in Indonesia. Abdullah bin Nuh got the honor to become a leader of PETA or battalion commanders called “Daidancho” in West Jampang in the regions of Cianjur, Bogor, and Sukabumi from 1943 to 1945.¹⁴

His involvement in several Indonesian fight against colonist, Abdullah bin Nuh was wanted by Netherland Indies Civil Administration (NICA) when they forced Jakarta and in a number of other key centers in Indonesia in September 1945. The British landed in the harbors of Jakarta, Semarang, and Surabaya. Then, the British assisted the Dutch to land their own Netherland Indies Civil Administration (NICA) forces in Jakarta and in a number of other key centers. As a consequence of this situation, a battle ensued between the British and NICA of the Indonesian army. The Dutch were able to capture only major cities in Java and Sumatra. On the critical situation in Jakarta, according to the Sultan Hamengkubowono IX, the Indonesian government center moved to the royal Javanese capital of Yogyakarta involved Abdullah bin Nuh.¹⁵ He that time was a BKR, journalist, and writer in Arabian Press Board (APB) in Jakarta.¹⁶

Furthermore, in Yogyakarta, Abdullah bin Nuh took the lead in Arabic broadcasting at Radio Republic of Indonesia (RRI) Yogyakarta in order to broadcast the latest news about Indonesia with the cooperation of APB. As a result, Indonesia got the support of countries, particularly the Middle East. They recognized Indonesia’s independence and endorsed to the United Nations to grant Indonesia a membership. This connection and relationship continued at the Asia Africa Conference among the development countries, also known as the Bandung Conference from 18th-24th April 1955 in Bandung, West Java. There were 29th countries participated at the Bandung Conference, was portrayed as a large-scale conference in the early post-independent Indonesia in order to reduce global political tension and secure conditions

13 M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), hlm. 242-244; See also Steven Drakeley, *The History of Indonesia*, (London: Greenwood Press, 2005), hlm. 70.

14 Dahlan, 11. See, Panitia Penerbit A.P.B., hlm. 85.

15 Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), hlm. 99.

16 Arabian Press Board (APB) was the first Indonesia mass media that connected Indonesia with countries around the Asian and Africa regions for the exchange of news and in order to get support for the independence of Indonesia, and to influence Asian and Africa countries against colonization. On 2th September 1945, APB held and contacted with young Indonesians in Hejaz, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Suriname. In addition, APB also had connection with the daily news time in Egypt, Lebanon and Aden since before the independence of Indonesia. APB had an important role in Indonesia’s struggle. After Indonesia’s independence, APB changed to Asian Press Board which frequently informed the Indonesian people and government on the risk of Indonesian communism. As a result, in the guided democracy period under Sukarno and in the coalition with Indonesian communism party, APB was officially dissolved by Sukarno on 13th December 1962. See Abdullah bin Nuh, “Kantor Berita Nasional A.P.B”, *Pembina*, 6 September 1968.

after the Cold War. The Indonesian government decided to take action as a pioneer of world peace with this conference.¹⁷

Then, after the Dutch and British were conquered by the Indonesian military army and their condition was secure, the Indonesian government moved back to Jakarta at the end of 1949. Abdullah bin Nuh also returned to Jakarta and began his common activities in da'wa.¹⁸ He dedicated his life to Islam and his state through da'wa through education particularly teaching, Islamic discourses, writings, and books translation.

C. Abdullah bin Nuh's Struggle on Da'wah

1. Through Islamic Education and Islamic Discourses

The Indonesian struggle against colonialist of Netherland was very hard even Indonesia had proclaimed the independence. Although, Abdullah bin Nuh involved in battle field encountered Indonesia, he also continuously cared for the education. Abdullah bin Nuh, with K.H. Abdul Kahar Muzakir and others, founded the Islamic High School (*Sekolah Tinggi Islam* or STI) which is later known as Indonesia Islamic University (UII) in Yogyakarta. He was an assistance of professor in STI Yogyakarta from 1945 to 1950. Then, after the Dutch and British were conquered by the Indonesian military army and their condition was secure, the Indonesian government moved back to Jakarta at the end of 1949.¹⁹

In Jakarta, Abdullah bin Nuh still officiated as the leader of the Arabic broadcasting in RRI Jakarta from 1950 to 1964 and was active in the Arabian Press Board office. Besides being active in the media office, he also dedicated himself as an Assistant Professor in University of Indonesia (UI) in the Faculty of Arabic literature. After independence, the Indonesian government still sought the formulation of the state, therefore, there were political conflict based on interest among the Islamic party, socialist party, secular party, and communist party. In the peak of this conflict was the Indonesian communist revolt. As his contribution, Abdullah bin Nuh also founded Pembina weekly magazine and Islamic Research Institute (IRI) with his close friends, Muhammad Asad Shahab and Dhiya Shahab, in Jakarta from 1962 to 1972.²⁰

The Pembina was a weekly magazine which provided regular commentary on religion, discussing aspects of Islamic teaching such as Islamic Jurisprudence, theology, and Sufism in order to develop spirituality sense in co-existence with scientific knowledge. Moreover, this magazine came in order to answer the problems existed at that time such as materialism, Marxism, capitalism, communism, and others from the Islamic perspective. The positive

17 National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, *Guide Asian-Asia Conference Archives*, (Jakarta: No Publisher, 2014), hlm. 2.

18 Dahlan, 13; Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, *Arabian Press Board: Sejarah dan Perjuangannya*, (Jakarta: Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, 1986), 85; See also Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, *al-Hijrah min Allah Ila Allah*, (Bogor: N. P., 1987), hlm. 85.

19 Dahlan, 13; Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, *Arabian Press Board: Sejarah dan Perjuangannya*, (Jakarta: Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, 1986), 85; See also Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, *al-Hijrah min Allah Ila Allah*, (Bogor: N. P., 1987), hlm. 85.

20 Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, *Arabian Press Board: Sejarah dan Perjuangannya*, (Jakarta: Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, 1986), 85; See also Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, *al-Hijrah min Allah Ila Allah*, (Bogor: N. P., 1987), hlm. 85

responses, praises, support, and expectation were given to Pembina in its contribution to the pioneering of educational and religious magazine in Indonesia.²¹

Furthermore, the Islamic Research Institute (IRI) was established to make scientific investigation in search of truth, in order to find the real meaning of Islam and convey the results of scientific investigations to the public. Furthermore, to gain comprehensive data, IRI exchanged scientific materials with other institutes or bodies in the country and abroad, collecting and studying books and articles of well-known Muslim scholars and intellectuals, and then publishing and spreading the results of such investigations in books, newspapers, and magazines with the principle of the freedom of thinking mental and spiritual development. IRI always forward its slogan in their work, which is devoted to Islamic solidarity and *al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah*, truth, country, and is based on *Pancasila*.²²

In his old age, Abdullah bin Nuh moved with his family to Bogor on 20th May 1970. He devoted his life to the Islamic Center al-Ghazali, which was established on 23rd January 1971 in Paris City, Bogor West Java. Its establishment was in order to continue his mission on *da'wah* around Bogor. In the Islamic Center al-Ghazali, he taught and nurtured his students. He also held several informal programs for the public society around Bogor where most of them were *kyai*, *ulamas*, and universities students around Jakarta and Bogor. According to Ikhwan Hakim and Muhammad Irfan, Abdullah bin Nuh frequently held public lecturer in Islamic Center of al-Ghazali and talked mostly on scientific discourse with connection of religion.²³

The Islamic Center al-Ghazali participated in government programs on the development of youth character building and Indonesian Muslim education which is mission of *al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah* based on al-Qur'an and Hadith.²⁴ Therefore, regarding its aims, Islamic Center al-Ghazali held programs such as Islamic Education, especially on *da'wah*, Arabic language teaching, al-Madrasah al-Diniyyah, weekly special talks for the elders, orphan charity house, economic development programs, etc.²⁵ Beside the Islamic Center al-Ghazali, Abdullah bin Nuh also founded some Islamic centers and *pesantren* around Bogor and delivered general lecturer which are managed by his students. These are *Al-Ihya Batutapak*, *Al-Husna* Layungsari and *Nahjus Salam* Sukaraja.²⁶

21 See Colonel M.Ng. Soenarjo, "Sambutan Kepala Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Darat dalam Madjalah Pembina"; K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri, "Pembina Mendukung Tugas Nasional dan Agama"; Dr. Soemarno, "Sambutan Gubernur Kepala Daerah Khusus Ibukota Djakarta Raya"; Colonel M. Rowi, "Sambutan Terhadap Penerbitan Madjallah Pembina"; Wampa Mulyadi Djojomartono, "Sambutan Wakil Menteri Pertama Koordinator Kesedjahteraan Rakjat", *Pembina*, (1), 23 November 1963.

22 Abdullah bin Nuh, "Yayasan Lembaga Penyelidikan Islam (Islamic Research Insititute)" *Pembina*, (1), October 1965, 2-3; See also Abdullah bin Nuh, "Lembaga Penyelidikan Islam", *Pembina*, (1), 23 November 1963, hlm. 17.

23 Syafi'I Antonio & Team, *al-Ghazali dari Indonesia: KH. Abdullah bin Nuh: Ulama Sederhana Kelas Dunia*, (Jakarta: Tazkia Publishing, 2015), hlm. 186.

24 Yayasan Islamic Center "Al-Ghazaly", (Bogor: N.P, N.D.), hlm. 3.

25 Yayasan Islamic Center "Al-Ghazaly", (Bogor: N.P, N.D.). hlm. 4-9.

26 Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, *Arabian Press Board: Sejarah dan Perjuangannya*, (Jakarta: Panitia Sejarah A.P.B, 1986), 85; See also Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, *al-Hijrah min Allah Ila Allah*, (Bogor: N. P., 1987), hlm. 86.

Abdullah bin Nuh spent his old age in Bogor and focused on Islamic education and *da'wah* to people until he passed away on 26th October 1987 in Bogor. He was an exemplary teacher, a prominent Indonesian scholar with comprehensive knowledge, a pioneer of *al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah*, a real Indonesian battler, and a great Arabic poet. According to Abdullah Alawi, he was nominated to be non-native Arabic poet and was recognized in the Encyclopedia of Kuwait. Moreover, the Prince of Jordan sent a delegation to meet with Abdullah bin Nuh in Indonesia.²⁷

Despite, the high appreciation he had, the comprehensive knowledge he reached, and the great contribution to his country, he was a humble *ulama* and never asked for honour from others, even his country. He had an unpretentious and modest character. Ahmad Zaini Dahlan said, in his writing, that when he met one of Abdullah bin Nuh's friend, Said bin Bahuwaritis, he was impressed with the personal behavior of Abdullah bin Nuh and that he was *al-Ustadh, al-'Alim, al-Adib, az-Zahid, al-Mutawadhi', and al-Halim*.²⁸ Ahmad Zaini Dahlan added that he was *al-Mujahid fi Sabilillah*.

2. Abdullah bin Nuh's Works

As an *ulama* and Muslim scientist, Abdullah bin Nuh shared his knowledge through teaching in several formal educational institutions such as *pesantren* and Madrasah. He also wrote many works during his life. As long as his live, he was a productive scholar with a numbers of books and articles in Arabic, Indonesian and Sundanese languages, some of which are unpublished. He has also translated selected works by the great philosopher and Sufi, al-Ghazali (1058-1111), specifically on the Sufism and Morals. Among his works are:

a. Ana Muslimun Sunniyyun Shafi'iyyun

This book consists approximately of 28 volumes or 470 pages which are unpublished and still in manuscript form. Abdullah bin Nuh describes in this work that he was a Sunni Muslim and *madhhab* of as-Shafi'i. He defines in detail the reason why his religion was Islam, why he adhered to Sunni Islam, and why he was as-Shafi'i. He argues using both *naqli* (textual) and *'aqli* (reason) in his explanations when describing his stance. In his explanations and reasons about Sunni, he was a Sunni theologian. His explanation about Sunni Islam is spread into chapters and volumes, particularly in volumes I, X, XI, XII, XVI and XX. Moreover, in this book also Abdullah bin Nuh defines about concept of *Tasawwuf* and several ways of worship to Allah.

b. Laa Thaifiyyah fi al-Islam

In this book, Abdullah defines that the individual interpretation (*ijtihad*) in Islam is the cause of *madhhab* emergence. In fact, *madhhab* occurred during Prophet Muhammad's period and his companions based on the Hadith of Mu'az bin Jabal. According to him, *mahdhab* is important to Muslims, but should not be an issue between Muslims groups and

²⁷ Abdullah Alawi, "Membajak Jembatan Kebudayaan: Kisah Penerjemah Bahasa Arab", *Medan Sastra Indonesia (SURAH) Magazine*, vol. 6, (November-December 2014), hlm. 28.

²⁸ Dahlan, hlm. 6.

sects. All Muslims must strive for unity, even though there are many differences of thought. In this book, Abdullah bin Nuh also emphasised the obligation of all Muslims to avoid the judgement of infidels of other Muslims because of differences of *madhhab*.

c. Fi Zilal al-Ka'bah al-Bait al-Haram

In this book, Abdullah bin Nuh states that the Ka'bah was the first house which was built as a shelter and unifier of the Muslim world under the one roof of Tauhid. Even though, Islam has differences of *madhhab*, the main mission is Islamic brotherhood without any sectarianism and fanaticism. Muslims have care for one another because they from one forefather. Therefore, sectarian should not cause any disunity among Muslims. Abdullah bin Nuh referred more to al-Ghazali's works, *Faishali at-Tafriqah*, particularly on issues of judgment of unbelievers who still admit to Allah, His Messenger, and Judgment day.

d. Zakat dan Dunia Modern

In this book, Abdullah explains the function and main purpose of Zakat. Zakat, according to him is a medium for social building in Indonesia which did not run since the Dutch colonial era. Moreover, this book also contains with the implementation method of Zakat in the modern period and the variant of Zakat such as Zakat of property and Zakat of profession. In general, his book describes the Islamic economic system in the modern era particularly, zakat.

e. Diwan Ibn Nuh

This book is the compilation of Arabic poems written by Abdullah bin Nuh. This work consists of more than 2000 verses of poems in several chapters. There are various themes of the poems, such as praises, lamentations, struggles, wisdoms, advice, and others.

f. Al-Lu'lu' al-Manthur

g. Al-'Alam al-Islami

In this book, Abdullah bin Nuh clearly describes the Islamic world condition in the first half of 20th century, its strengths as well as its weaknesses.

h. Minhaj al-'Abidin

Minhaj al-'Abidin was written by al-Ghazali and was translated by Abdullah bin Nuh to Sundanese and Indonesia languages with further elucidation. Here, Abdullah bin Nuh emphasizes how the human is the servant of Allah, and how worship is a means to increase their spiritual level and gain the true way to Allah.

i. Al-Munqidh Min al-Dhalal

j. Cinta dan Bahagia

Abdullah bin Nuh translated this book from with the original book, *al-Mahabbah*, in Minhaj al-'Abidin.

k. Renungan

Renungan or *al-Tafakkur* derives from one of the chapters in the al-Ghazali's work, *Ihya Ulumiddin*.

l. Islam, Communism, dan Kapitalisme: Soal Kerdja dan Buruh

The author of this book is El Bahy El Khouly. Abdullah bin Nuh translated this book because its content is related to the social conditions in Indonesia during the influence of the communism and capitalism through the Indonesian communism movement. The Indonesian youths were taken by his offering on justice, equality, honour, and freedom. The importance of this book is the explanation of the Islamic position among communism and capitalism, and also the real meaning of the Islam as *Rahmatan li al-'Alamin*. El Bahy El Khouly was Egypt scholar who was concerned his writing to protect Egyptian from communism movement in Egypt.

m. Agama dalam Pembahasan

This book was published in 1961 by Pusaka Press. Abdullah bin Nuh wrote this book as a response and refutation for the Moskow Radio Broadcasting which was spreading racial issues on the religion as the consequences of their belief of atheism and materialism. Such as, refutation of existence of God as the Necessary being; Islam contradicts with this Science due to its belief in metaphysics; Islam degrades the women because of the polygamy issues; Islam is cruel to the other belief due to its spread by war; Islam helps the feudalist in order to oppress the society, etc.

n. Islam Dizaman Modern

Abdullah bin Nuh wrote this book when he was the head of Islamic Research Institute in Jakarta was published in 1964 by the Arabian Press Board Press. This book consists of a compilation of his articles which were published in several Indonesian and Arabic magazines and was broadcasted through the Asian Press Board, particularly on issues of Islamic theology, monotheism, and specifications of religion which is needed by people (Abdullah bin Nuh pointed out 52 specifications on these issues), and issues on Islamic brotherhood and *madhhab*.

o. Agama Dalam Pembahasan (Wanita)

This book was published by Lembaga Penyelidikan Islam (Islamic Research Institute) Jakarta in 1961. Abdullah bin Nuh clarifies issues on Islamic teaching inequality of gender, as well as polygamy issues. He points out the polygamy culture in Christianity and other religions historically and its differences with Islam. He also highlights that Islam place a high honour on the *Muslimah*, contrasting with the phenomenon during the period before Islam. Abdullah bin Nuh referees to many Western books in order to criticize polygamy views from Western perspective.

p. Ahlan Biramadhan: Tahqiqat 'Ilmiyyah Shar'iyah Li al-Aimmah al-'Alam Fi Thubuti Shahr Ramadhan Wa Shawwal

This book is unpublished and specifically talks about how Muslims determined the beginning of the month, particularly for *Ramadhan*, because there were arguments between several Islamic social organizations in Indonesia. He clarifies among the four *madhhab* in determining the beginning of month through *Ru'yatu al-Hilal* (the sighting of the moon) or

it should complete the 30 days of *Sya'ban* as well as natural constraints in its sighting. He also points out about arguments with references to all *madhhab*.

q. Mu'allim al-'Arabiyyah

This book clearly defines the Arabic teaching methods, specifically on how to teach the Arabic language to non-native speakers.

r. Kamus Indonesia-Arab-Inggris dan Arab-Inggris-Indonesia

s. Sejarah Islam di Jawa Barat

In this book defines historically about the chronology of the spread of Islami and how the *ulamas* in past years spread Islam in Nusantara, specifically from the early to the golden age of the Banten Sultanate period.

t. Mencintai Keluarga Nabi: Bekal Menuju Surga

This book is a compilation of 10 Muharram book and Keutamaan Keluarga Rasulullah S.A.W, both books were written by Abdullah bin Nuh. He emphasizes the obligation of all Muslims to love Prophet Muhammad's family and his offspring as a reflection of the love for Muhammad (S.A.W). In this book, He describes the Hadiths of the privileges of Muhammad (S.A.W) and his family, particularly Ali R.A, Fatimah Zahra, Hasan, and Husein.

u. Nathru al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah (in the form of a prose)

This prose talks about Islamic brotherhood and Abdullah bin Nuh's restlessness on the dissention of the Muslim world due to differences in *madhhab*, how Muslims one another on who are the true ones and who are false. This is an impact of bigotry or fanaticism of *madhhab*. As a result, there are many cases of conflicts and controversy among Muslims. Therefore, Abdullah bin Nuh writes dream for Islamic unity in the future among the Muslim world.

v. Ketuhanan: Dasar Hidup Perseorangan dan Masjarakat Manusia

This book Published by N.V. Al-Ma'arif Press, talks about *Ushuluddin* and the basis of religion. This book talks also about the existence of God with logical scientific evidences. The science and belief of God have a basic relationship each other. Sciences, civilization, culture, and tradition of true religion are actually meant to improve human life.

w. Al-Barahain: Tuayyidu Ahla al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, Atb'a al-Madhhab al-Arba'ah 'Am-mah wa al-Shafi'iyyah Khashah.

This book provides proof or substantiations on the principle of Islamic rules derived from al-Quran and Hadith. According to this book, Islamic rule actually consists of two major principle, both necessary (*al-hukmu al-Dharuri*) and theoretical rule (*al-hukmu al-Nadzari*). The necessary rule does not need to be constructed because it is recognized whereas the theoretical needs construction and is the root of the emergence of *madhhab*. This book also explains the teachings of Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, specifically on theology, such as teaching about intercessory (as-Shafa'ah), the certainty of law for those who pray and idolatry the law of *al-Tawassul* in Islam, etc.

x. Ringkasan Sejarah Wali Songo

This book clarifies to Western historians on the claim that Islam came to Indonesia in the 13th century. Here, Abdullah bin Nuh asserts that Islam has been in Indonesia since in early Hijra years. It can be tracked from the relationship between Arab traders and local people of during that century. Referring to the book *Nukhbat ad-Dahr* by Shaikh Syamsuddin Abu Ubaidillah Muhammad bin Tolib ad-Dimsahqi, Abdllah bin Nuh confirms that the third of Caliphate Uthman bin 'Affan sent his delegation to Nusantara archipelagos besides China. Moreover, this book explains the history of the spread of Islam in Nusantara by the *Wali Songo* with their sultanate.

y. Other works and articles have published in *Pembina* and *Mimbar Agama* magazines.

From Abdullah bin Nuh's works, it is apparent that he was more influenced by al-Ghazali's works. First, he translated selections of al-Ghazali's works into Indonesian and Sundanese languages for having Shufi values. These works are not easy for people without any basic knowledge in Sufism. Abdulah bin Nuh might have also been influenced by his father who was also an Shufi and famous for teaching and understanding al-Ghazali as well as being an expert on Ihya Ulumuddin.

Like his father, during his life, Abdullah bin Nuh was also a famous Shufi, and according to his friends and students, he was a great Shufi scholar.²⁹ Second, on issues on conflicts of *madhhab*, he referred to al-Ghazali's works such as *Faisal al-Tafriqah*. Moreover, he was very strict in terms of accusation of non-believers (*al-takfiri*) between the adherents of *madhhab* because it carried fatal risk and consequence.³⁰ Third, also the names of his institutions, both Islamic Centre al-Ghazali and al-Ihya, are clear proof that he was an al-Ghazali's proponent.

Furthermore, Abdullah bin Nuh was a great scholar who had high dreams of Islamic brotherhood among Muslims in this world without any conflict due to *madhhab*. His dream was drawn in his prose, *al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah*. He stated that all Muslims as are brothers long as they believe in Allah, His messenger Muhammad, and Judgment day, regardless of race. He was very disappointed in the conflicts among Muslims caused by differences of *madhhab*, which is simply the result of personal interpretation and is not in the basic principles of Islam. So, differences of *madhhab* are natural, according to Abdullah bin Nuh, even during Prophet Muhammad's and his companion's lifetime.³¹

D. Conclusion

This study presents Abdullah bin Nuh's struggle on da'wa through Islamic education particularly on his contribution on the development of Islamic education in Indonesia and his works throughout his life either his frequently academic writing nor books translation.

Abdullah bin Nuh was a great scholar with interdisciplinary knowledge both Islamic and

29 See the acknowledgment that Abdullah bin Nuh was an Shufi by his students Ahmad Zaini Dahlan and his friend Said in *al-Hijrah min al-Millah Ila Allah*, hlm. 6.

30 See Abdullah bin Nuh, *Fi Dzilal al-Ka'bah and Faishal al-Tafriqah*.

31 See Abdullah bin Nuh, *Nathru al-Ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah*, (Bogor: Markaz al-Ghazali al-Islami, 1925).

science. He was a Muslim polymath with significant contributions in intellectual heritage, social development, and struggle against imperialism. He is a role model to current Muslim scholars today, because despite having profound knowledge, he was not imperious and lived with modestly and humbly throughout his life. He also always attempted to avoid controversy, particularly among Muslims in term of Islamic teachings (*madhhab*) and political views.

Throughout his life, Abdullah bin Nuh was very concern on da'wa al-Islamiyyah particularly through education, Islamic discourses, academic writing on magazines, books translation, etc. In the educational field, Abdullah bin Nuh found several Islamic institutions and *pesantren* in order to create good milieu in the Islamic teachings such as, Islamic center "al-Ghazali" and "al-Ihyaa", *Al-Ihya* Batutapak, *Al-Husna* Layungsari and *Nahjus Salam* Sukaraja around Bogor.

Moreover, in the intellectual activities, he had a crucial role in the Indonesian development era after independence which was found an Indonesia Research Institute in order to strengthen Islamic principle against modern ideologies at that time. To sum up, Abdullah bin Nuh, has a crucial contribution to Indonesia in particular in the educational field, Islamic intellectual activities, da'wa al-Islamiyyah, and in the battle field as well against colonialists. Therefore, high appreciation and honor given to him.

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