

# Grounding Aswaja: Efforts to Stem the Movement of Religious Radicalism in Nurul Islam Jember Boarding School

**Miftahus Sa'diyah**

State Islamic University kiai Haji Achmad Shiddiq Jember

 [miftah.sadiyah17@gmail.com](mailto:miftah.sadiyah17@gmail.com)

**Maslathif Dwi Purnomo**

Charles Sturt University Australia

 [mpurnomo@csu.edu.au](mailto:mpurnomo@csu.edu.au)

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## Abstract:

*Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* itself is a teaching that adheres to the five sources of law. The five sources of law are the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, *Fiqh*, *Ijma'*, and *Qiyas*. And Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, with the majority adhering to the teachings of *ahl Sunnah wal jama'ah* (*aswaja*). This article reviews the efforts made by Educational Institutions to ground Aswaja's identity. In particular, the Aswaja identity was cultivated to ward off the Transnational Islamic movement, which is currently rife among teenagers, especially in educational institutions. This article examines the implementation of Aswaja learning material at Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam. This implementation aims to strengthen the understanding of *Wasatiyah* Islam among students so that it takes work to get caught up in radical takfiri teachings. This study uses field research with qualitative methods. The approach used in this research is a descriptive research approach. The results study results showed that the implementation of the Aswaja material at Islamic Junior High School was carried out through three stages: planning, evaluation, and outreach to student guardians. In addition, the application of this Aswaja material contributes to increasing students' understanding of *Wasatiyah* Islam, including its history, religious beliefs adopted by its *amaliyah* teachings, as well as other agreements that conflict with Aswaja or *Wasatiyah* Islam.

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## Introduction

Radicalism has become an increasingly widespread phenomenon in Indonesia in recent years. This is marked – among other things – by the birth of religious organizations that often use violent means to carry out their missions. Radical Islamic organizations have various characteristics, variants, and orientations. However, there are similarities between radical Islamic organizations, namely the use of violence. The massive growth of the radical Islamic movement has received various responses from various parties. Some give positive responses by being supportive, some give reactive-emotional answers, some give creative responses, and some respond anarchically. So far, the response provided has not stopped – let alone stop – the radical Islamic movement's growth rate. There is a tendency to increase the number of members in various radical Islamic organizations.<sup>1</sup>

So far, radical Islamic groups are known to have no respect for and are very anti towards Indonesian Muslims' culture and traditional values.<sup>2</sup> There are many religious traditions carried out by the people of Indonesia -which according to them- are heretical acts because they never existed at the time of the Prophet and were never taught by the Prophet. Unsurprisingly, they are keen to attack religious traditions and rituals deeply rooted in most Indonesian Muslim societies. Their goal is to purify Islamic teachings as they did during the time of the Prophet, necessitating Muslims to use Islamic law in all matters. The Al-Qur'an and Sunnah as sources of Islamic education must be the basis for all aspects of the life of Muslims. However, it is deplorable that their methods are included in their preaching, which often corners other groups that do not agree with their group—even without hesitation labeling other groups as perpetrators of heresy, polytheists, superstitions, and the like.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, among their radical expressions, they carried out the destruction of tombs or religious or cultural sites, which they considered hotbeds of superstition. Historical places such as the tombs of companions, saints' graves, and other areas of pilgrimage that Muslims usually visit, even the Prophet's tomb, were not spared from the efforts of radical Islamic groups to destroy them.<sup>4</sup>

It is within this framework that *Nahdlatul Ulama* feels the need to provide an active-creative-constructive response so that radical Islamic organizations do not further establish their roots in influence. The infiltration of radical Islamic movements was carried out massively,

<sup>1</sup> Ngainun Naim, 'SEBAGAI STRATEGI DERADIKALISASI Ngainun Naim', *Walisongo*, 23 (2015), 69–88. See also: Andi Trisnowali, Awaluddin, A. F., Dwiyan, F., Alfian, M. ., Ilham, I., & Dilham, D. (2022). Al-Islam Learning Development on Local Wisdom based: Efforts to Strengthen the Concept of Indonesian Students Religious Moderation. *International Journal of Asian Education*, 3(1), 79–86. <https://doi.org/10.46966/ijae.v3i1.281>; Benny Afwadzi, Miski Miski, RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATIONS: Literature Review, *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 23(2) (2022), 203-231, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v22i2.13446>;

<sup>2</sup> Erni Budiwanti, Religion, And Public Sphere: Revisiting Balinese Religious Tradition In The Island Of Thousand Mosques. *Religion, Culture, and State Journal*, 1(1), 1-21 (2021). Retrieved from <https://journal.unram.ac.id/index.php/racs/article/view/3>.

<sup>3</sup> Anwar Rifai, Sucihatiningsih Dian, and Moh Yasir Alimi, 'Rifai, Anwar Dian, Sucihatiningsih Alimi, Moh Yasir Pembentukan Karakter Nasionalisme Melalui Pembelajaran Pendidikan Aswaja Pada Siswa Madrasah Aliyah Al Asror Semarang', *JESS: Journal of Educational Social Studies*, 6.1 (2017), 7–19.

<sup>4</sup> One of the most radical groups known to carry out the destruction of religious sites is the Wahhabi group, especially in Saudi Arabia. The teachings of the Wahhabis are known to be very puritanical; they are known to be very hard in spreading their understanding to return to the teachings of Islam according to the Prophet's time. See also: Ahmad Shidqi, "Respon Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) terhadap wahabisme dan Implikasinya Terhadap Deradikalisasi Pendidikan Islam", dalam *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, Volume II, Nomor I, Juni 2013, 115

especially toward the younger generation. The younger generation's choice is quite strategic because the younger age generally lacks mature religious experience. They are easy to be indoctrinated with a particular ideology. The younger generation recruited into radical Islamic groups are usually very ideological and ready to fight for any compensation to carry out the vision and mission of their organization. The increasing number of young people joining radical Islamic organizations seems to have awakened many parties to strengthen their defenses immediately. If this is not anticipated, the seeds of radicalism will be sown and developed widely. The growing spread of radical Islam has implications for fewer opportunities to build social harmony in a multicultural Indonesian society. The path of violence and intolerance will expand, damaging the foundations of national nationalism.<sup>5</sup>

Education, as R.J. Menges, is the whole process of helping humans move on. In such a context, education occupies a very central and strategic position in building individual and social human life, which is expected to position humans in a pluralistic life. The central part and tough challenges are in line with the increasing complexity of the wheel of human life in facing the global era.

One of the critical efforts to prevent the development of radical Islam is through specific lessons. The lessons delivered are structured and systematic media that enable students to know and understand a problem better. Through a lesson, students can comprehensively understand radical Islam, its characteristics, dangers, and various aspects. One lesson that can prevent radicalization is the *Aswaja* lesson.

The research method used in this research is qualitative research with a participatory approach, namely placing women not as objects but as research subjects based on field research. Field research is conducted in a real-life scene. Data was collected through interviews and discussions.

### **Grounding Aswaja**

The term *Aswaja* is a postulate from the expression of Rasulullah SAW, "*Ma ana ,alaihi wa ashabi.*"<sup>6</sup> Meaning an *aswaja* group is a group that follows Islamic teachings as taught and practiced by the Prophet and his companions. *Aswaja* (Ahlussunah wa al-jama'ah) is one of the many streams and sects that have sprung up within Islam. Among all the sects, presumably, the *aswaja* has the most followers, even the most. So, it can be said that *Aswaja* plays a central role in developing Islamic thought.

*Aswaja* did not emerge from a vacuum. Many things influence the birth process from the womb of history. Among those that are quite popular is the high temperature of the political constellation that occurred in the period after the death of the Prophet. The end of Uthman bin Affan, the 3rd caliph, sparked various reactions. Primarily because he was killed, not in battle, this sparked the enthusiasm of many people to demand that Imam Ali, Uthman's successor, take responsibility. What's more, the killer, apparently still related to Ali, did not immediately receive the punishment he deserved.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Didin Wahyudin, 'PENDIDIKAN ASWAJA SEBAGAI UPAYA MENANGKAL RADIKALISME', *Dinamika Penelitian: Media Komunikasi Sosial Keagamaan A.*, 17.2 (2019), 291–314. See also: M. Adnan, and A. Amaliyah, "Radicalism VS Extremism: The Dilemma of Islam And Politics In Indonesia," *JURNAL ILMU SOSIAL*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 24-48, Apr. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jis.1.1.2021.24-48>

<sup>6</sup> Said Aqil Siradj, "Kontroversi Aswaja: Aula Perdebatan dan Reinterpretasi" (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2004)182.

<sup>7</sup> Zainil Ghulam. Ideologisasi Identitas Aswaja An-Nahdliyah Di Lp. Ma'arif Nu Lumajang Dalam Menangkal Gerakan Islam Transnasional Zainil. Tarbiyatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam; 2019, 12, 2. 5-10

The *pesantren* culture is an invisible force that can move people in the *pesantren* to carry out work activities. A strong *pesantren* culture and organizational culture can generally support achieving *pesantren* goals, whereas a weak culture can hinder accomplishing *pesantren* goals. *Pesantren* culture can make people easily understand work procedures and relationships that are clearly defined.<sup>8</sup>

The cultural transformation of the *pesantren* needs to be well planned because the *pesantren* is the second educational institution after the family, which is very strategic in forming a culture that supports and familiarizes specific positive values so that students can develop naturally by internalizing these positive values.<sup>9</sup>

Among these positive values is the *Aswaja* value. *Aswaja's* cultural transformation is very appropriate to be carried out in Islamic boarding schools because *pesantren* are the only educational institutions and Islamic da'wah that are strategic for studying Islam in a directed manner. Learning in Islamic boarding schools from the book of the Salaf is a process of preserving and practicing Islamic teachings based on *Aswaja* values.<sup>10</sup> *Aswaja* is not only an ideology that becomes the orientation and spirit of the development of Islamic boarding schools, but it is also the basis for the thinking of the personnel within it and the identity of the Islamic boarding school that can differentiate it from other Islamic boarding schools.<sup>11</sup>

### Efforts To Stop the Movement of Religious Radicalism in Nurul Islam Jember Islamic Boarding School

#### 1. Strategic Planning for the Development of *Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* Values in Religious Planting in students of Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam,

Planning is a projection of what must be carried out to achieve the goals and objectives that have been set—in this case, planning a strategy for developing the values of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* in religious inculcation in Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam students is carried out based on the principles of *usul fiqh Al Muhafadhatu 'Ala Qodimisholih Wal Akhdzu Bil Jadidil Ashlah*. Namely by continuing something good old and looking for something new that is better. As well as maintaining traditions that have developed in society such as *tahlilan*, *yasinan*, grave pilgrimage, prayer, and others. Then in planning to establish the values of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* in religious planting in Islamic Junior High Schools, Nurul Islam students also through formal and non-formal education. As well as through the IPNU-IPPNU internal organization. This becomes a planning strategy for developing the values of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah*, carried out by Islamic Junior High School students and theoretically has significance in building the character of teenagers. Habituation of religious activities is a relatively effective way of instilling values and morality into the souls of adolescents. The values embedded in him will manifest in his life. The habit of regular worship is a vital strategy to continue to develop. Teenagers will have good worship habits; their vigor will be by the norms and moral values taught by religion. They have a corridor of

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<sup>8</sup> Gary Yukl, *Kepemimpinan dalam Organisasi* (ed. 5), terj Budi Supriyanto (New Jersey: Prentice –Hall Inc, 2005), 417.

<sup>9</sup> Fidelis E. Waruwn, *Membangun Budaya Berbasis Nilai*(Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2010), 55

<sup>10</sup> Asep Syaifuddin Halim, *Membumikan Aswaja Pegangan Para Guru NU* (Surabaya: Khalista, 2015), 1-2

<sup>11</sup> Departemen Republik Indonesia Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, *Direktorat Pendidikan Islam, Post-Tradisionalisme Islam*(Jakarta: DEPAK, 2007), 46

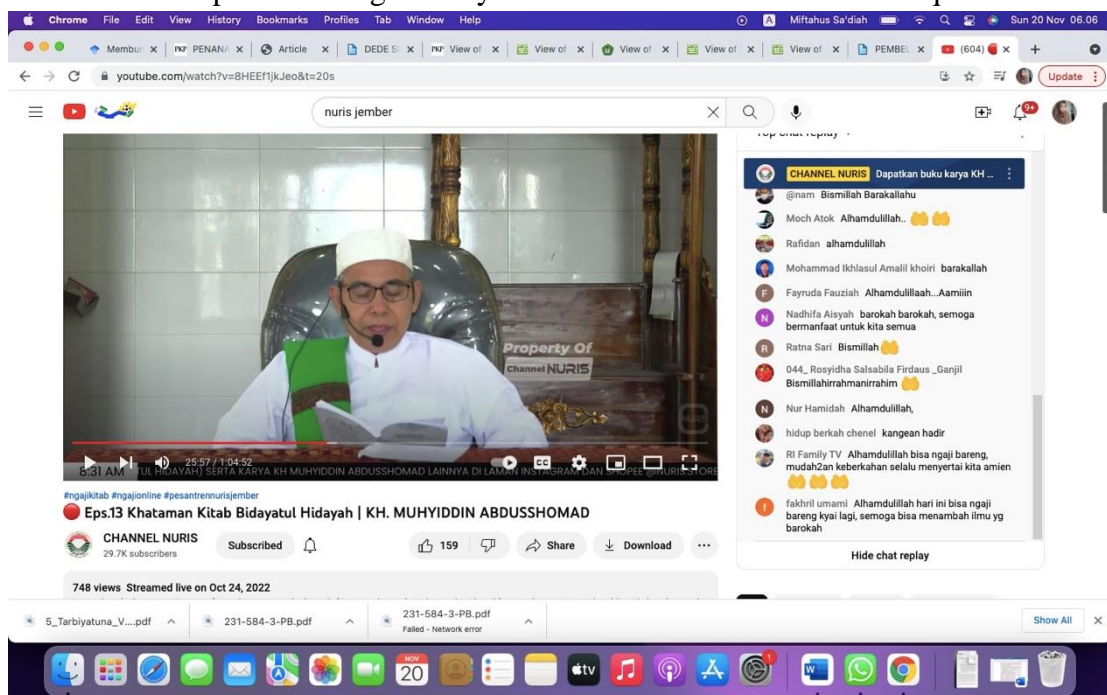


good behavior. The practices that have been awakened have merged and become an inseparable part of everyday life.

This becomes a planning strategy for developing *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* values, which IPNU-IPPNU pursues theoretically and has significance in building the character of youth. Habituation of religious activities is a relatively effective way of instilling values and morality into the souls of adolescents. The values embedded in him will manifest in his life. The habit of regular worship is a vital strategy to continue to develop. Teenagers will have good worship habits; their vigor will be by the norms and moral values taught by religion. They have a corridor of good behavior. The practices that have been awakened have merged and become an inseparable part of everyday life.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Implementation of the development of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* values in religious planting in Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam students

- a. Implementation is a process of practical, systematic action to have a good influence or impact on one's knowledge, changes, values, or attitudes. The implementation of developing the values of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* in religious planting in students of Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam is as follows:
- b. Conducting self-reliance studies globally and participating in all educational institutions, both Islamic Junior High Schools, Middle Schools, MA, High Schools, and Vocational Schools every Monday from 08.00-09.00, which KH Muhyiddin Abdus Somad directly fills in.
- c. The study of the strengthening of *Aswaja* is carried out according to the schedule of each Educational Institution and is filled in by the *Aswaja* teacher.
- d. Dissemination of *aswaja* material to guardians of students through the YouTube Channel and provide giveaways for viewers and quiz takers.



Picture 1 online study through the Youtube channel

<sup>12</sup> Ngainun Naim, Pengembangan Pendidikan Aswaja Sebagai Strategi Radikalisasi, Tulungagung :Walisono Volume 23 Nomor 1, 2015, 83

Delivery of *aswaja* material and socialization is a strategy that is quite effective in developing *aswaja* values in religious inculcation in adolescents. According to researchers, it is not only through socialization and material delivery; it can add *ubudiyah* practices taught by *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah*.

### 1. Religious routine habituation activities.

Habits carried out by Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam students are routine activities such as prayer, vows, *tahlil*, *yasinan*, and others. This becomes part of developing *aswaja* values in religious cultivation in Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam students. Religious routine habituation activities provide experience for their lives, both *hablum minan nas* and *hablum minallah*, as a means of getting closer to the Almighty.

### 2. Study Aswaja

The recitation of *aswaja* here is the process of *tholabul ilmi* or the understanding of *aswaja* and *aswaja* values through the delivery of NU *kiyai*. This activity is intended to understand what *aswaja* is and to believe in, practice, and develop *aswaja* values. The researchers' findings related to reciting discussions are pretty effective as a strategy for developing *aswaja* values in religious inculcation in Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam students. This is by studying chapter theory which teaches teenagers that every action is always based on a sincere heart to achieve Allah's pleasure.

### 3. Evaluation of the strategy for developing the values of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* in religious planting in Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam students

In developing *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* values in spiritual cultivation, of course, there are problems or problems, so there is a need for evaluation. So, the researchers found an assessment in the development of *aswaja* values, including:

1. Outreach to the community, especially parents, encouraging their children to attend school in Nurul Islam and carry out religious activities. Socialization here is essential for the community, especially parents, to encourage their children to attend school and participate in religious activities. Because teenagers feel independent, they want to solve their problems and not want to be controlled. In fear, they fall into negative things. So, it needs encouragement and attention from parents
2. Maximizing the member recruitment process at IPNU-IPPNU Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam This cadre is intended to make Islamic Junior High School students Nurul Islam active in IPNU-IPPNU so that the process of understanding and developing *aswaja* values in adolescents easier. Because through a good social environment, the social development of adolescents can be carried out properly so that adolescents will not experience difficulties in their social life and will bring happiness and success.
3. Utilizing the potential of IPNU-IPPNU cadres in the da'wah process. As educated cadres, IPNU-IPPNU must understand and invite other youth to participate in religious activities. Thus, Nurul Islam youth has a role in society.

## Conclusion

The spread of the radical Islamic movement has become a distinct threat to the integrity and unity of the Indonesian nation. Because of this, strategic efforts are needed to prevent radicalism, one of which is through learning. Learning is a medium-range development medium

in preparing the next generations based on *Ahus sunnah wal Jamaah*. The *Aswaja* lessons applied at Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam are strategic in carrying out the role of deradicalization. *Aswaja* is significant to be reconstructed and socialized to students as a capital for guiding daily religious life. These guidelines will be functional-applicable and provide an active-creative response in dealing with the increasingly complex reality of spiritual and social life. The *Aswaja* learning strategy at Islamic Junior High School Nurul Islam is designed to provide students with understanding. Apart from classically delivering material, various activities were also carried out at the school to strengthen *Aswaja's* internalization, such as daily worship by *Aswaja's* teachings.

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