

**FROM RELIGIOUS MODERATION TO PROPORTIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM  
(ARABIC STYLISTICS IN *RISALAH AHLUSSUNNAH WAL JAMA'AH*  
BY HASYIM ASY'ARI)**

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**Abstract:** Freedom of religion is a fundamental principle in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. However, its interpretation is often confronted with tensions between religious conviction and respect for diversity. KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's ideas in Risalah Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah (RAJ) offer a model of religious moderation that is relevant to this context. This study aims to reveal the characteristics of Arabic stylistics used by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, in promoting religious moderation, also examines the characteristics of religious freedom that can be developed in Indonesia based on his concept of religious moderation. The method used is qualitative analysis based on text study with an Arabic stylistic approach. The primary source is the RAJ book, which is then analyzed using Arabic stylistics theory and reinforced with analysis from similar studies. The results show that KH. Hasyim harmoniously combines the styles of *taqrīr* (affirmation), *tahdhīr* (warning), and *du'a* (supplicatory). This combination produces a pattern of religious communication that is firm yet gentle. KH. Hasyim's thinking affirms the limits of faith and criticizes deviations from doctrine, yet closes with a prayer that the people be kept from error. This style reflects Islamic moderation in line with the principles of religious freedom, as outlined in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Religious freedom in the Indonesian context is not absolute. The exercise of religious freedom is grounded in moral responsibility and the preservation of social harmony. Thus, KH. Hasyim's language functions not only as a tool for preaching but also as a means of shaping civilized religious ethics.

**Keywords:** Hasyim Asy'ari, Arabic stylistics, Religious Moderation, Freedom of Religion.

**Abstrak**

Kebebasan beragama merupakan prinsip dasar dalam Pancasila dan UUD 1945. Namun, pemaknaannya sering dihadapkan pada ketegangan antara keteguhan iman dan penghormatan terhadap perbedaan. Pemikiran KH. Hasyim Asy'ari dalam Risalah Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah (RAJ) menawarkan model moderasi beragama yang relevan dengan konteks tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap karakteristik Arabic stylistics yang digunakan KH. Hasyim Asy'ari dalam menyampaikan moderasi beragama, serta menggali karakter kebebasan beragama yang dapat dikembangkan di Indonesia berdasarkan gagasan moderasi beragamanya. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis kualitatif berbasis kajian teks dengan pendekatan stilistika Arab. Sumber utama adalah buku RAJ, kemudian dianalisis dengan teori stilistika Arab dan diperkuat dengan analisis dari penelitian sejenis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa KH. Hasyim menggabungkan gaya *taqrīr* (penegasan), *tahdhīr* (peringatan), dan *du'a* (doa) secara harmonis. Perpaduan ini menghasilkan pola

komunikasi keagamaan yang tegas namun lembut. Pemikiran KH. Hasyim menegaskan batas iman dan mengkritik penyimpangan akidah, tetapi tetap menutupnya dengan doa agar umat dijauhkan dari kesalahan. Gaya ini mencerminkan moderasi Islam yang sejalan dengan kebebasan beragama menurut Pancasila dan UUD 1945. Kebebasan beragama dalam konteks Indonesia adalah kebebasan yang tidak mutlak. Pelaksanaan kebebasan beragama berpangkal pada tanggung jawab moral, dan untuk menjaga kerukunan sosial. Dengan demikian, bahasa KH. Hasyim berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai alat dakwah, tetapi juga sebagai sarana pembentukan etika beragama yang berkeadaban.

**Kata Kunci:** Hasyim Asy'ari, Arabic stylistics, Moderasi Beragama, Kebebasan Beragama.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means of communication, but also a medium for expressing thoughts and shaping discourse. Language is understood as a complex system for sharing information, expressing thoughts, and constructing professional and social discourse.<sup>1</sup> In Islamic tradition, Arabic texts, whether in the form of the Qur'an, hadith, or the works of scholars, have rhetorical power and linguistic beauty that influence the way people understand teachings. Rhetoric is not only an aesthetic art but also a means of preaching, affirming faith, and understanding religious texts.<sup>2</sup> The study of language style, also known as stylistics, is important because, through the analysis of diction, structure, and rhetoric, the ideological messages and values contained in a text can be revealed.<sup>3</sup>

One of the important religious texts in Indonesia is Risalah Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (RAJ) by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, founder of Nahdlatul Ulama. This treatise, written in Arabic, has become a reference for Nahdliyin citizens. In it, KH. Hasyim emphasizes the values of *tawassuth* (middle way), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice). From a stylistic perspective, the choice of Arabic diction is not merely a matter of legal and doctrinal terminology, but also a rhetorical device that builds a spirit of moderation.<sup>4</sup> Moderation also appears in the call to adhere to the Sunnah and Salafi school of thought while still considering the context of society (local culture and social situation), and not ignoring current knowledge or the reality of plurality.<sup>5</sup>

These values of moderation are very relevant in the context of religious freedom (RF) in Indonesia. As a pluralistic country with diverse religions and beliefs, Indonesia faces challenges in the form of

<sup>1</sup> I. Baibakova and O. Hasko, "LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION THEORY WITHIN PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE," *International Humanitarian University Herald. Philology* 1, no. 49 (2021): 4–7, <https://doi.org/10.32841/2409-1154.2021.49-1.1>.

<sup>2</sup> Umdatul Hasanah, "Rhetoric in Islamic Tradition: Paradigm and Its Development," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 15, no. 2 (2021): 241–52.

<sup>3</sup> Riyadh Khalil Ibrahim and Layth Abdul Kareem Hussein, "A Critical Stylistic Analysis of the Ideological Positioning in Some Selected Poems by John Donne," *Journal of the College of Languages (JCL)*, no. 37 SE-Department of English language (June 1, 2018): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.36586/>.

<sup>4</sup> Nurul Mubin, Fiki Abidatul Laili Kamilatussyarifah, and Erisa Nafidlatussifa, "KONSEPSI MODERASI BERAGAMA DALAM RISALAH AHLUSSUNNAH WAL JAMA'AH KARYA KH. HASYIM ASY'ARI: TELAAH KONTEKSTUAL TERHADAP TANTANGAN KEBERAGAMAN MASA KINI," *An Najah (Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Sosial Keagamaan)* 4, no. 4 (2025): 143–49.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad Dani Cahaya Mukti, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Moderat KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (Telaah Kitab Risalah Ahl As-Sunah Wal Jamaah)," *Ta'lîm* 7, no. 2 (2025).

intolerance, radicalism, and the politicization of religion. In this case, RAJ can be reinterpreted as a classic text that supports the Indonesian version of RF. Its existence is relevant to support the spirit of rejecting the excommunication of fellow Muslims while maintaining the spirit of Indonesian cultural characteristics. This moderation serves to acknowledge plurality and encourage *ukhuwah wathaniyah* (national brotherhood) and *basyariyah* (human brotherhood). One of the core developments in the study of KBB is based on the concept of religious moderation. Religious moderation plays a crucial role in promoting religious freedom, which is essential for protecting human dignity and fostering healthy dialogue in society.<sup>6</sup>

The stylistic study of this treatise is significant because it shows how KH. Hasyim Asy'ari used Arabic not only as a scientific medium, but also as a persuasive and aesthetic means of conveying messages of tolerance and nationalism. There are several compelling reasons why this book needs to be studied with a focus on religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) and proportional freedom of religion and belief. First, the Risalah contains principles of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*) both conceptually and linguistically. Through careful diction, balanced sentence structures, and measured rhetorical strategies, the book exemplifies a moderate approach in both thought and the presentation of religious teachings. An analysis of these stylistic aspects allows researchers to understand how classical texts convey values of moderation such as balance, tolerance, and justice. Wasathiyah advocates moderation, tolerance, justice, and balance, distinguishing itself from extremist and overly liberal interpretations of Islam.<sup>7</sup>

Another reason is that analyzing the Risalah also helps to understand how language functions as a medium of ethical and theological persuasion. By examining these linguistic mechanisms, practical models can be identified to promote moderation in religious education, preaching, and interfaith dialogue. This underscores that moderation is not merely an abstract principle, but a communicative practice with tangible impacts on society. A tested lesson learned is that the dissemination of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah teachings through the study of the Risalah has been effective in internalizing moderate values (such as balance and tolerance) among students and santri.<sup>8</sup> The final reason is that linking the Risalah with the concept of freedom of religion and belief provides a bridge between classical thought and modern human rights frameworks. Indonesia, as a pluralistic country, faces the challenge of balancing doctrinal

<sup>6</sup> Núria Reguart-Segarra and Victoria Camarero-Suárez, "Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion Under the European Convention on Human Rights: New Approaches," in *Protection and Promotion of Freedom of Religions and Beliefs in the European Context* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 21–52, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34503-6\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34503-6_2); Louay M. Safi, "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN ISLAM: REFLECTIONS ON DA'WAH AND QUR'ANIC ETHICS," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 9, no. 2 (June 2011): 11–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2011.571422>.

<sup>7</sup> Khairan Muhammad Arif, "Konsep Moderasi Islam Dalam Pemikiran," *Millah* 19, no. 2 (February 14, 2020): 307–44, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol19.iss2.art6>; R Rusli and A Muchtar, "Islamic Moderation in Higher Education," *Opcion* 35, no. 89 (2019): 2899–2921, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85083801164&partnerID=40&md5=9a01e170ec08827a244484862bc888ad>.

<sup>8</sup> Moh Ilyas, "The Dissemination of Aswaja Teachings Through the Study of Risālah Ahlissunnah Waljama'ah Book," *Journal of Education and Religious Studies* 3, no. 02 SE-Articles (August 5, 2023): 47–52, <https://doi.org/10.57060/9v9fz372>.

commitments with constitutional protection of religious freedom. Hasyim Asy'ari conveyed his views on the status of certain deviant sects through his book, and the language he used to assess these groups was proportional.<sup>9</sup> By examining how KH Hasyim Asy'ari communicated theological principles while still respecting community harmony and ethical boundaries, researchers can assess the relevance of this classical text in contemporary discussions on religious freedom.

Thus, this study not only enriches the study of religious moderation but also contributes to the understanding of Arabic in relation to the relevance of classical texts to contemporary issues of religious freedom. This study has two research questions. First, what characteristics of Arabic stylistics does KH. Hasyim Asy'ari utilized in conveying the concept of religious moderation in RAJ? Second, what are the characteristics of religious freedom that can be developed in the Indonesian context as a lesson from religious moderation?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive method with an Arabic stylistics approach. The qualitative method was chosen because the research focuses on exploring meaning through text, rather than numbers or statistical data. Meanwhile, the stylistic approach was used to examine KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's style of language in RAJ, particularly how his choice of diction, sentence structure, and rhetorical devices functioned in conveying the values of moderation. With this approach, the text is not only read as a theological document but also as a linguistic and literary work that carries ideological significance. Arabic is not only a liturgical language but also a symbol of culture, power, and ideology, as reflected in Indonesian literature.<sup>10</sup>

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data is the text of *Risalah Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (RAJ) by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. Secondary data includes supporting literature, such as books, journal articles, and previous studies, that discuss the thoughts of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, Arabic stylistics theory, religious moderation, and issues of religious freedom. Data collection was conducted through a literature study, examining the text of the treatise directly to identify terms or sentences that represent the value of moderation, and collecting supporting literature to strengthen the interpretation.

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis within a stylistic framework. Content analysis is used to systematically, objectively, and replicably analyze the content of communication (text, images, symbols, media, discourse) to identify specific meanings, patterns, themes, or trends.<sup>11</sup> Content analysis

<sup>9</sup> Sukma Maulana. « Pemikiran Hadits KH Hasyim Asy'ari Terhadap Penyimpangan Akidah di Tanah Jawa (Tela'ah Atas Kitab Risa'lah Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah) », *Al-Dhikra* 5, no 2 (2023).

<sup>10</sup> Sari Rahmatunnur and Puja Rahmah, "Bahasa Arab Dalam Imajinasi Budaya: Kajian Persepsi Masyarakat Indonesia Terhadap Bahasa Arab Sebagai Bahasa Asing Melalui Representasi Sastra", *AL IMTIYAZ: Arabic Linguistics and International Methodology for the Tarbiyah of Arabic Journal* 2, no. 2 (2024): 61–67.

<sup>11</sup> Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Sage publications, 2018).

was carried out in several stages. The first stage is to identify stylistic elements in the text. The next stage is to classify the findings of the moderation values and then interpret the KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's style of language. Furthermore, the results of the analysis are contextualized in relation to the issue of religious freedom in Indonesia, allowing for the relevance of classical thinking to contemporary challenges to be seen.

To maintain data validity, this study employs source triangulation techniques, which involve comparing primary texts and confirming interpretations through secondary literature. The interpretation of the analysis results is also tested by referring to Arabic stylistic theory and indicators of religious moderation formulated by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. The steps of this research include determining the study's focus, collecting primary texts and supporting literature, conducting critical reading with a stylistic approach, identifying and classifying data, interpreting moderation values, and analyzing the relevance to freedom of religion and belief. With this process, it is hoped that the research will produce a comprehensive understanding of how KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's style of language contributes to the discourse of moderation and religious freedom in Indonesia.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### **The Urgency of Stylistic Study of RAJ in the Context of Religious Moderation and Freedom**

Scholars from theological, historical, and social perspectives have widely conducted studies on RAJ by KH Hasyim Asy'ari. Nurul Mubin (2025) highlights values of religious moderation, such as *wasathiyah* (moderation), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice), as well as their relevance to Indonesia's plural society. This research demonstrates RAJ's role in nurturing social harmony.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Achmad Zuhri Muhibbin (2010) examines RAJ as a response to the rise of puritanism and transnational ideologies, with a primary focus on its normative-theological aspects.<sup>13</sup>

Fuadi's research (2022) reveals that Nahdlatul Ulama's (NU) concept of religious moderation did not emerge suddenly but was rooted in the long dialectic between pesantren scholars and the classical Islamic tradition, intertwined with the socio-cultural context of the Indonesian archipelago. In this regard, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's RAJ serves as a vital reference affirming the principles of *tawasuth* (the middle path), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice). These principles are regarded as normative foundations guiding NU in facing Indonesia's plural society.<sup>14</sup>

The principles of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Aswaja), such as balance, tolerance, and rejection

<sup>12</sup> Mubin, Kamilatussyarifah, and Nafidlatussifa, "KONSEPSI MODERASI BERAGAMA DALAM RISALAH AHLUSSUNNAH WAL JAMA'AH KARYA KH. HASYIM ASY'ARI: TELAAH KONTEKSTUAL TERHADAP TANTANGAN KEBERAGAMAN MASA KINI."

<sup>13</sup> Achmad Zuhri Muhibbin, "Pemikiran KH Hasyim Asy'ari Tentang Ahlussunnah Wa Al-Jamaah," *Surabaya: Khalista Dan LTN PBNU*, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Moh Ashif Fuadi, "Tradisi Pemikiran Moderasi Beragama Nahdlatul Ulama," *Al-Fikra : Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 21, no. 1 (September 1, 2022): 12, <https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v21i1.16692>.

of extremism, can serve as guidelines for building harmony in a diverse society. Moderation is understood not merely as a compromise but as an active stance to avoid radicalism and intolerance while recognizing religious pluralism as a reality to be embraced. Thus, this article asserts that Aswaja's creed plays a crucial role in strengthening social harmony and ensuring peaceful religious life in Indonesia.<sup>15</sup>

*Risalah Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari is fundamentally a text that reaffirms the commitment of Ahlussunnah to the actual teachings of Islam while laying the foundation for the emergence of religious moderation traditions within Nahdlatul Ulama. Through ten sections discussing the concepts of *sunnah* and *bid'ah*, the obligation of *taqlid*, the dangers of deviation, and the importance of maintaining unity amid sectarian divides, Hasyim Asy'ari teaches the balance between preserving the purity of faith and accepting the diversity of religious practices.<sup>16</sup>

Ahmad Dani Cahaya Mukti and Imam Nur Aziz (2025) emphasize that Hasyim Asy'ari's concept of moderate Islamic education is based on a balance between religious and general knowledge, between spiritual and moral dimensions, and between adherence to tradition and openness to modern developments. Using a qualitative library research approach, they demonstrate that RAJ not only emphasizes the importance of *aqidah* (faith) and *ibadah* (worship), but also highlights the role of character formation through *akhlaq* (ethics), *adab* (manners), and the exemplary behavior of teachers. Values of tolerance, unity, and adaptability to social change and technological progress are considered the primary pillars of moderate Islamic education.<sup>17</sup>

Previous studies have indeed uncovered elements of religious moderation in KH Hasyim Asy'ari's RAJ, focusing on themes such as tolerance, unity, and moderate Islamic education contained within it. These studies generally emphasize the substantive aspects of the text, such as Aswaja's creed, the concept of *sunnah* and *bid'ah*, and their relevance for strengthening religious moderation and nationalism in Indonesia. However, most existing research remains at the normative-theological level and has not explored the linguistic or stylistic aspects of the Arabic text used by Hasyim Asy'ari.

In fact, the choice of diction, sentence structure, and rhetorical style in RAJ can reveal how the discourse of moderation is constructed and communicated in subtle ways. Furthermore, this linguistic approach is crucial for uncovering the relevance of RAJ to the development of religious freedom in contemporary Indonesia, a topic that remains largely underexplored. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze how KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's diction, rhetoric, and linguistic style shape the discourse of moderation and how these elements relate to contemporary issues of religious freedom.

## Arabic Stylistics of Religious Moderation in RAJ

<sup>15</sup> Sori Monang, Bambang Saputra, and Abdurrohim Harahap, "Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia: Analisis Terhadap Akidah Ahlu Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaâ€™ Ah," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 01 (2022).

<sup>16</sup> Taufiq Zaenal Mustofa and Akhmad Rifai, "Membangun Peradaban Moderasi Melalui Kitab Risalah Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah Karya KH. Hasyim Asy'ari," *Sinai: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Humaniora* 9, no. 1 (2023): 25–49.

<sup>17</sup> Mukti, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Moderat KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (Telaah Kitab Risalah Ahl As-Sunah Wal Jamaah)."

Arabic stylistics (*al-uslubiyyah*) is a branch of linguistics that focuses on analyzing the style of language within a text, whether literary or non-literary. Arabic stylistics is a distinct academic discipline derived from the science of *balāghah* (eloquence) and plays a vital role in Arabic linguistics.<sup>18</sup> In the Arabic scholarly tradition, stylistics is closely related to *balāghah*, which encompasses *ma’ānī* (semantics and structure), *bayān* (clarity and imagery), and *badī’* (rhetorical embellishment). It is dimensions that embody beauty, precision, and rhetorical strength in language.<sup>19</sup> Stylistic studies do not merely examine the formal structure of language but also explore how diction, sentence composition, and rhetorical devices are used to construct specific meanings. In the context of this research, the stylistic approach is employed to examine how KH. Hasyim Asy’ari in RAJ uses Arabic as a rhetorical instrument. His choice of words goes beyond religious terminology, serving also as a linguistic device imbued with ideological intent and values of moderation.

Furthermore, the concept of religious moderation (*al-wasathiyyah*) provides the substantive framework for understanding the content of RAJ. Religious moderation is understood as a balanced stance that avoids two extreme poles: *ghuluw* (excessiveness) and *tafrīt* (negligence). *Wasathiyyah* is a fundamental Islamic principle emphasizing balance, tolerance, and the avoidance of extremism. This concept is deeply rooted in the Qur'an, which describes Muslims as "ummatan wasatan" or a just and moderate community.<sup>20</sup> Its theological foundation can be traced to the Qur'an, particularly Al-Baqarah [2]:143 on *ummatan wasatan* (the middle community), as well as various hadiths emphasizing the importance of balance. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019) formulated four indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and acceptance of local traditions.<sup>21</sup> These four indicators align closely with the principles offered by KH. Hasyim Asy’ari in his RAJ. He paid close attention to the problem of fanaticism among Muslims due to sectarian differences, emphasizing unity through *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), *ukhuwah wathaniyah* (national brotherhood), and *ukhuwah basyariyah* (human brotherhood), and encouraged the acceptance of local traditions as long as they did not contradict Islamic principles.

KH. Hasyim Asy’ari was a prominent Indonesian scholar who excelled not only in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *tasawwuf* (Sufism), but also in the eloquent use of classical Arabic as a medium for expressing his religious thought. In RAJ, he employs Arabic in a manner that is not merely communicative but also rhetorical and ideological, through distinctive diction, sentence structure, and patterns of

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<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Sapi, "Stistik Dan Al-Qur'an: Fenomena Budaya Uslubiyyah Bangsa Arab," *Ulumul Qur'an: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (September 30, 2022): 188–208, <https://doi.org/10.58404/uq.v2i2.109>.

<sup>19</sup> Habibullah Ali Ibrahim Ali, "DIRASAHL-USLUB WA AL-USLUBIYAH FI NAQD AL-ARABY," *LiNGUA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa Dan Sastra* 10, no. 1 (August 13, 2015): 45, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ling.v10i1.3033>.

<sup>20</sup> Shumsudin Y., Norhasnira I., and A.Irwan Santeri D. K., "The Concept of Moderation Among Islamic Pious Predecessors," *Global Journal Al Thaqafah* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2014): 133–39, <https://doi.org/10.7187/GJAT732014.04.02>.

<sup>21</sup> Edi Junaedi, "INILAH MODERASI BERAGAMA PERSPEKTIF KEMENAG," *Harmoni* 18, no. 2 (December 31, 2019): 182–86, <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i2.414>.

argumentation, KH. Hasyim effectively articulates the concept of religious moderation.

The concept of religious moderation in KH. Hasyim's RAJ is reflected not only in the substance of his teachings but also in the manner of his expression through a balanced, wise, and characteristically classical Arabic style. One example is his critique of the *Rāfiḍah* group, which can be found on pages 42–45 of his RAJ.<sup>22</sup>

وَمِنْهُمْ رَافِضِيُونَ يَسْبُونَ سَيِّدَنَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا وَيَكْرَهُونَ الصَّحَابَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَيُبَالِغُونَ هَوَى سَيِّدِنَا عَلِيٍّ وَأَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ. قَالَ السَّيِّدُ مُحَمَّدٌ فِي شَرِحِ الْقَامُوسِ: وَبَعْضُهُمْ يَرْتَقِي إِلَى الْكُفْرِ وَالرَّنْدَقَةِ أَعَادَنَا اللَّهُ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْهَا .

Lexically, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari demonstrates a deliberate choice of diction infused with theological and moral values. He sequentially employs the verbs *yasubbūna* (to revile), *yakrahūna* (to hate), and *yubāghidūna* (to be hostile) in a rhythmic and structured pattern. The progression of these three verbs signifies an ascending gradation of meaning from verbal action to a deeper internal disposition. This enumerative style creates a strong rhetorical effect, implying that the group's deviation lies not only in outward actions but also in the depths of inner conviction.

Furthermore, the use of the phrase *al-kufr wa al-zandaqah* (disbelief and heresy) as the culmination of theological consequence shows that KH. Hasyim employs evaluative language. These words are not neutral. They carry a firm moral judgment. Meanwhile, the closing phrase *a'ādzanā Allāh wa al-muslimīn minhā* (May Allah protect us and all Muslims from it) demonstrates emotional balance. After a stern judgment comes a moral tenderness expressed through prayer. Stylistically, Hasyim's diction reveals a synthesis between theological firmness and the gentle ethics of *da'wah* (propagation).

Syntactically, the text displays both parallel and hierarchical sentence structures. The successive use of three verbs, each preceded by the conjunction *wa* (and), creates an accumulative effect and emphasizes the causal progression from one act to the next. KH. Hasyim utilizes this syntactic structure to demonstrate that the theological errors of the *Rāfiḍah* group are interconnected and evolve into a more profound form of rejection of the truth of faith. The sentence *wa ba'ðuhum yartaqī ilā al-kufr wa al-zandaqah* (and some of them ascend to disbelief and heresy) is declarative and final. There is no form of mitigation or hypothetical expression (such as *rubba* or *qad*). He uses a definitive statement that reflects

<sup>22</sup> K H Hasyim Asyari, *Risalah Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah*, ed. Arman Paramansyah, Terjemahan (Bekasi: Pustaka Al-Muqith, 2021).

theological certainty without compromise. Thus, the syntactic aspect reinforces the author's position as a religious authority speaking with juridical confidence.

Rhetorically, KH. Hasyim's style integrates three principal modes: *uslūb taqrīrī* (assertive exposition), *uslūb taḥdhīrī* (warning), and *uslūb du‘ā’ī* (supplicatory). The opening section is *taqrīrī* as it states doctrinal facts about the criticized group without exaggeration. The middle section is *taḥdhīrī*, emphasizing the theological threat posed by disbelief to some members of the group. The final section is *du‘ā’ī*, closing with a prayer of protection that conveys moral empathy and compassion. Stylistically, this triadic composition creates a controlled emotional rhythm: description, condemnation, and prayer. This pattern maintains equilibrium between scholarly authority and clerical ethics. KH. Hasyim admonishes with evidence, not anger; he warns through prayer, not through curses. This demonstrates rhetorical maturity from a scholar who understands the moral power of language as an educational instrument.

Phonologically, the repetition of *yasubbūna*, *yakrahūna*, and *yubāghidūna* produces a firm and resonant sound effect, mirroring the tone of rebuke. Conversely, the repetition of *raḍiya Allāhu ‘anhum* and *raḍwān Allāhi ‘alayhim* introduces a softer sonic contrast, reflecting the moral difference between the honored companions and the group that reviles them. This sound contrast not only enhances the text's beauty but also serves as a moral symbol. KH. Hasyim teaches firmness toward falsehood yet gentleness toward truth. Pragmatically, the text serves a strong didactic function. Though it does not use explicit imperatives, readers are implicitly guided to reject *Rāfiḍahah*'s behavior and emulate reverence for the Prophet's companions. Thus, the style operates as an effective pedagogical instrument for cultivating faith.

The passage addressing the *Rāfiḍahah* group clearly illustrates how KH. Hasyim Asy‘ari constructs the discourse of religious moderation through a distinct and balanced Arabic style. Theologically, he remains firm that there is no tolerance for insults against the Prophet's companions, which he considers tantamount to harming the Prophet himself. However, he does not close the door to dialogue nor deliver emotional personal condemnations. He adopts a scholarly approach by citing credible authorities, such as al-Sayyid Muhammad from Sharḥ al-Qāmūs. He concludes that some members of the group have reached the level of disbelief (*kafir*). This reflects an argumentative style grounded in authoritative sources (*uslūb istidlālī*). It demonstrates that Hasyim's theological judgment is based on scholarly reasoning and a chain of transmission (*sanad*), rather than emotion. KH. Hasyim's prayer (*a‘ādzanā Allāhu wa al-muslimīn minhā*) reflects an instance of *uslūb du‘ā’ī*. It is a stylistic form expressing gentleness and empathy. He ends not with condemnation but with spiritual direction, seeking divine protection rather than inciting hatred. Here lies the essence of *wasatiyyah* (religious moderation) in his rhetoric: firm in doctrine, compassionate toward people.

KH. Hasyim Asy‘ari's Arabic style embodies a unique model of theological moderation framed within classical stylistics. His sentences are concise, hierarchical, and multilayered: descriptive at the

beginning, normative in the middle, and spiritual at the end. This reflects the true character of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* as understood by him. His character is neither extreme nor permissive. When he warns against certain deviations, he does so not merely to reject but to educate. He instills reflection, not fear; he calls for critical thought and prayer, not hostility.

### From Religious Moderation to Indonesian-Style Religious Freedom

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's thoughts on religious moderation, as reflected in RAJ, bear profound relevance to the concept of religious freedom as mandated by the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila. However, conceived in the early 20th century, before Indonesia's statehood discourse formally took shape, KH. Hasyim's ideas already emphasized the principle of balance in religious life. He taught the importance of maintaining the purity of faith while remaining tolerant toward *furu'iyyah* differences. This principle aligns with Indonesia's constitutional view, which guarantees freedom of religion within the framework of belief in the Almighty God and moral responsibility toward fellow citizens. In other words, KH. Hasyim advocated a form of civilized religious freedom, not value-free liberty. Indonesian religious freedom, thus, is established upon social considerations.<sup>23</sup>

In RAJ, KH. Hasyim employs a distinctive Arabic rhetorical style known as *uslūb al-wasaṭiyah*. It is a moderate tone that blends theological firmness with spiritual gentleness. For example, when he criticized the *Rāfiḍah* (extreme Shia) group for reviling the Prophet's companions, he asserted that such an act could lead to disbelief because it harms the Prophet. However, he did not conclude his statement with condemnation, but with a prayer: *a'ādzanā Allāhu wa al-muslimīn minhā* (May Allah protect us and the Muslims from it). Here lies the balance between *al-ḥaqq* (theological truth) and *al-raḥmah* (human compassion). This attitude reflects the spirit of Pancasila, which places "Belief in the Almighty God" as the foundation of religious freedom. Faith must be safeguarded, but its expression should be accompanied by courtesy and respect toward others.<sup>24</sup>

From an Arabic stylistic perspective, KH. Hasyim's rhetoric displays three layers of expression: *uslūb taqrīrī* (affirmation of religious facts), *uslūb taḥdhīrī* (moral warning), and *uslūb du'ā'ī* (reflective supplication). Together, these create an educative narrative pattern: first explaining, then warning, and finally soothing. This pattern resonates strongly with Indonesia's constitutional spirit, which views religious freedom not merely as a right but also as a social responsibility. Article 29(2) of the 1945 Constitution guarantees every citizen the freedom to profess, practice, and worship their religion according to their beliefs. However, this guarantee does not imply absolute freedom. Such freedom must operate within

<sup>23</sup> B S Maula, "Religious Freedom in Indonesia: Between Upholding Constitutional Provisions and Complying with Social Considerations," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, no. 2 (2013): 383–403, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.2.383-403>.

<sup>24</sup> A Lathifah et al., "The Construction of Religious Freedom in Indonesian Legislation: A Perspective of Maqāsid Hifz Al-Dīn," *Samarah* 6, no. 1 (2022): 369–90, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i1.10957>.

moral boundaries and public order, as emphasized in Article 28J of the Constitution.<sup>25</sup> It is often referred to as the limitation of human rights.<sup>26</sup> Through his balanced rhetorical style, KH. Hasyim exemplifies how the principle of religious freedom can be upheld without descending into theological anarchy.

The intellectual rigor in KH. Hasyim's concept of moderation is also evident in his method of assessing groups that deviate from Islamic orthodoxy. In every assessment, he employs scholarly reasoning by citing earlier scholars as authoritative sources and concluding with a prayer. Here we see the essence of epistemological moderation. He neither judges without knowledge nor declares others heretical without evidence, and never condemns without compassion. This approach mirrors the spirit of religious freedom in Pancasila, which requires that every belief be practiced through sound reason and social responsibility.<sup>27</sup> Pancasila rejects two extremes: secularism that negates religion, and fanaticism that denies reason and tolerance. KH. Hasyim charts the middle path between the two.

KH. Hasyim's stance in RAJ demonstrates that religious freedom must be accompanied by moral self-restraint and theological awareness. He emphasizes that freedom does not mean allowing every belief without boundaries, but grounding faith as the moral foundation of communal life. This aligns with the nature of religious freedom in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila, which emphasizes theistic and responsible freedom. Religious liberty is rooted in the acknowledgment of God and bounded by social responsibility. For KH. Hasyim, freedom without faith leads to spiritual confusion, while faith without tolerance breeds violence. Thus, the balance between the two constitutes the essence of Islamic teaching and the principle of a theistic nation.

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's notion of religious moderation is substantively compatible with the concept of religious freedom enshrined in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila. Both reject extremism, whether in the form of coercive belief or the denial of divine values. For KH. Hasyim, moderation is not a compromise of truth but a balance among faith, reason, and compassion. In the national context, Pancasila likewise rejects secularism that marginalizes religion, aspiring instead for a peaceful and responsible religious life. Therefore, KH. Hasyim's *uslūb* can be regarded as a cultural manifestation of the ideal form of religious freedom envisioned by Indonesia's Constitution. His rhetorical style harmoniously integrates rational argumentation, moral admonition, and spiritual tenderness. It is offering a profound lesson in civilized, religious, and just freedom of belief.

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<sup>25</sup> Zainal Abidin Bagir et al., "Limitations to Freedom of Religion or Belief in Indonesia: Norms and Practices," *Religion & Human Rights* 15, no. 1–2 (April 23, 2020): 39–56, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18710328-BJA10003>.

<sup>26</sup> Jayadi Jayadi and Asep Supena, "Implementasi Pendidikan Inklusi Di SDN K1 Kabupaten Karawang," *Aksara: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Nonformal* 9, no. 1 (2023): 725–36, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.37905/aksara.9.1.725-736.2023>; M M F Akbar, "Legal Protection for Tolerance and Freedom among Religious People in Indonesia," *Contemporary Issues on Interfaith Law and Society* 1, no. 1 (2022): 39–58, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ciils.v1i1.56712>.

<sup>27</sup> B F Intan, "Religious Pluralism, Public Religion, and Principled Pluralism in Indonesia," *Transformation* 40, no. 4 (2023): 334–49, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02653788231206020>.

## CONCLUSION

The characteristics of Arabic stylistics employed by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, in conveying the concept of religious moderation, is marked by a balance between theological firmness and moral gentleness. He combines the *taqrīrī* style (assertive teaching), *taḥdhīrī* style (warning), and *du'ā'ī* style (reflective supplication) within a coherent rhetorical structure. It is making his religious message rational, authoritative, yet courteous. His diction is evaluative. It rejects deviations in creed, yet maintains scholarly ethics and spiritual compassion. Through this linguistic style, KH. Hasyim presents a moderate portrait of Islam. It is strict toward fundamental errors but gentle toward people. The purity of monotheism (*tawḥīd*) is upheld without losing the spirit of brotherhood. Thus, KH. Hasyim's Arabic stylistics serve not only as a medium of scholarly communication but also as a means of teaching the concept of religious moderation in the spirit of Indonesian Islamic tradition.

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's notion of religious moderation offers a moral lesson on the character of religious freedom that can be developed within the Indonesian context. Ideal religious freedom is grounded in steadfast faith, respect, and compassion. In RAJ, KH. Hasyim demonstrates that safeguarding the truth of creed does not require the loss of gentleness. Even when addressing groups he considered deviating, he concludes with prayers, asking that Muslims be protected from misguidance. This attitude suggests that ideal religious freedom is not merely a value-free freedom, but one that is framed by spiritual ethics. Freedom embodies the strength to believe in and uphold the truth while simultaneously praying for the well-being of others. Within the framework of the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila, this character reflects a civilized form of religious freedom. It is faith without hatred, conviction without hostility, and respect for diversity inspired by prayer and moral responsibility as citizens of the nation.

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