



THE RELEVANCE OF AHMAD BAHAUDDIN NURSALIM'S THOUGHTS IN MODERNIZING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

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Abstract

Islamic education has an important role in forming individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also have good morals and a deep understanding of religion and apply it in their lives. There are several charismatic scholars who have recently gained popularity with their phenomenal thoughts on the concept of Islamic education, and one of them is Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim. This research aims to describe the concept of Islamic education from Bahauddin Nursalim's perspective and its relevance to modernization. The research method used is descriptive-qualitative, with a library research type. Data was obtained through documentary techniques through online searches and using content analysis and hermeneutics. Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim emphasized the concept of Islamic education, which is appropriate to the situation of this modern era, in several of his thoughts, which were grouped into three aspects of education, namely: aqidah, worship, and morals. According to him, the modernization of Islamic religious education must have the principle of integrating the treasures of classical knowledge with the development of modern technology, the center of which is love for Allah Swt.

Keywords: *thought, modernization, Islamic religious education*

Introduction

Modernization in history has greatly influenced various areas of life, from economic, social, cultural, and educational. This gives rise to various pros and cons, especially in the field of Islamic education. In other languages, following developments with the times to advance Islamic education means remaining in tradition without being influenced by modernization. This condition accompanies Muslims to give birth to dichotomy thinking in science, so that Islamic and non-Islamic scientific concepts are born. As a result, on the one hand, it will produce humans who have a very great sense of obedience, while on the other hand, it will

give birth to human figures who think that there is no limit or end to the possibilities within themselves or that they can shape their lives without divine guidance (Husain & Ashraf, 1979). This condition is clearly very dilemmatic, so whether we realize it or not, the actual task of Muslim thinkers is also directed at efforts to socialize the non-dichotomous concept of Islamic education.

Education is the process of changing a person's behavior and ethics towards a better life and direction (Rizal, 2016). The process of instilling moral values to protect oneself from the negative effects of globalization But what is most urgent is how the moral values that Islamic education has instilled are able to act as a liberating force from the crushing pressure of poverty, ignorance, and socio-cultural and economic backwardness. This shows that Islamic education has a very important role in the process of forming individuals who are not only intelligent but also have good personalities and have religious understanding that is not only understood but also applied in life (Azhari & Mustapa, 2021).

The academic moral degradation of the millennial generation is increasing in this digital era. This is caused by many factors, such as easier access to the internet, which displays negative things. Loyensya describes examples of shows that have eroded the morals of the millennial generation, such as soap operas with indecent scenes or romantic nuances. According to him, this broadcast changed the mindset of the millennial generation and created a bad stigma in society towards the world of education. Education is considered to have failed to educate and mold its students into noble people. In fact, the teaching staff has tried their best. However, unfortunately, students' morals have indeed been eroded and indoctrinated by various bad influences from outside (Loyensya, 2019).

A good and safe environment for the millennial generation must also be maintained. S. Tatang emphasized that there are three environmental factors that play a very important role in the formation of character or morals, namely the family environment, school or education, and society (Tatang, 2012). Intellectual and religious figures have also made various efforts to overcome or minimize this moral degradation. Khotimah in his research, explains the concept of humanist education from the perspective of Paulo Freire and Abdurrahman Mas'ud with a theocentric and anthropocentric approach for educators and their students (Khotimah, 2023).

Modernization in Islamic religious education is also an important effort for the millennial generation by changing traditional community education towards self-renewal to obtain the characteristics found in modern society (Maryati, 2007). In order to realize the modernization of Islamic education, Ichsan et al. (2020) declared that the first problem that must be removed is the dichotomy

in the world of education. This is a classic problem where there is a dichotomy in the dualism of knowledge, namely religious knowledge and general science, which is waiting to be resolved immediately, both at the philosophical-pragmatic level and even at the technical department level (Ichsan et al., 2020).

There are many studies that discuss the concept of Islamic education and its relevance to modernization in the last 5 years, one of which is "The Concept of Islamic Education from Al-Ghazali's Perspective" (Suban, 2020). Then the journal was entitled "The Concept of Islamic Education from the Perspective of KH. Ahmad Dahlan and its Relevance to the Global Era of Education in Indonesia" (Roybah & Munib, 2022). Next is a journal with the title "The Concept of Islamic Education from Ahmad Tafsir's Perspective" (Meinura, 2022).

Another piece of research that has also explained the modernization of Islamic education by combining old and modern branches of knowledge is the work of M. Fazlurrahman with the title "Modernization of Islamic Education: Fazlur Rahman's Alternative Ideas" (Fazlurrahman, 2018). Munir also explained his research with the journal title "Modernization of Islamic Education from Nurcholish Madjid's Perspective". Furthermore, As'ad Syamsul Arifin's thoughts regarding the modernization of Islamic religious education were researched by Chanifudin and Luqman with the title "Modernization of Islamic Religious Education from the Perspective of As'ad Syamsul Arifin" (Chanifudin & Haji Abdullah, 2022).

These previous studies have not thoroughly explored the concept of Islamic education according to current millennial interpreters who do not have academic degrees, such as Ahmad Bahaiddin Nursalim, which needs to be implemented by educators to overcome moral degradation for the current millennial generation. Therefore, this article will examine the thoughts on Islamic religious education by one of the charismatic religious figures who is currently viral among the millennial community. Of the many intellectual figures in Islamic education, Ahmad Bahaiddin Nursalim is an interpretive expert who also dedicates his phenomenal thoughts regarding the modernization of Islamic religious education. Therefore, this research aims to explain these thoughts and their relevance to modernization with the title *The Relevance of Ahmad Bahaiddin Nursalim's Thoughts in the Modernization of Islamic Religious Education for the Millennial Generation*.

Methods

This research is descriptive qualitative research with the type of library research that was carried out by analyzing and describing data obtained from YouTube videos regarding the modernization of Islamic religious education from

Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim's perspective for the millennial generation. The data found will be analyzed using content analysis, namely scientific analysis of the content or data of a scientific paper. Then also use hermeneutic data analysis, which is directly related to interpretation. Through this analysis, the researcher regularly describes the concept of modernizing Islamic religious education from Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim's perspective so that it can be applied to the general learning process in this modern era.

Result and Discussion

1. Biography of Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim

KH. Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim, better known as Gus Baha', is a prominent scholar affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), hailing from Narukan, Kragan, Rembang, Central Java. Gus Baha' is renowned as an adept commentator on the Quran, possessing profound knowledge of the holy text. He stands as one of the disciples of the charismatic scholar, KH. Maemun Zubair of Rembang (Tim harakah ID, 2020).

Gus Baha' was born on March 15, 1977, in Sarang, Rembang, Jawa Tengah, Gus Baha' is the fourth-generation descendant of a line of scholars recognized for their expertise in the Quran. His father, KH. Nursalim, received direct education from KH. Arwani Amin Kudus and KH. Abdullah Salam Kajen. Through his maternal lineage, Gus Baha' is connected to the family tree of Mbah Sambu Lasem, tracing back to Kiai Asnawi Sepuh, Mbah Mutamakkin, Jaka Tingkir, and Brawijaya V. This lineage is further supported by the affirmation of KH. Said Aqil Siradj, confirming Gus Baha's royal descent from the Majapahit Kingdom (Tim harakah ID, 2020).

During his formative years, Gus Baha' underwent scholarly and Quranic memorization education under the guidance of his father. Throughout his educational journey, he exclusively studied at two pesantrens: LP3IA (Lembaga Pembinaan Pendidikan dan Pengembangan Ilmu Al-Qur'an) founded by his father in Narukan, Kragan, Rembang, and Al-Anwar Karangmangu in Sarang, Rembang, owned by KH. Maemun Zubair. Despite an opportunity to pursue education in Rushoifah or Yemen, Gus Baha' opted to dedicate himself to his mentor, KH. Maemun Zubair, in Sarang, Rembang, Jawa Tengah. At Al-Anwar, he distinguished himself in the understanding of Sharia sciences, such as Fiqh, Hadith, and Tafsir. He accomplished the memorization of Sahih Muslim, Fathul Mu'in, and various Arabic grammar books, including Imrithi and Alfiah Ibnu Malik, at Al-Anwar (Azmi, 2020).

After completing his religious education in Sarang, Gus Baha' got married and established himself in Yogyakarta in 2003. Since Gus Baha's move to Yogyakarta, numerous of his students felt the loss and eventually relocated to Yogya to reside near Gus Baha's residence, intending to continue their religious studies under his guidance. The group of students who followed him to Yogya consisted of approximately 5-7 individuals, notably Masrukhin and Musthofa, who gained recognition through Gus Baha's preaching sessions in Yogya, attracting more locals to join his Islamic teachings (Azmi, 2020).

In 2005, Gus Baha's father returned to Rembang due to illness and passed away. Consequently, Gus Baha couldn't continue his preaching in Yogyakarta as he was entrusted by his father to oversee the LP3IA Narukan Islamic boarding school. After returning to his hometown, the students of Gus Baha' in Yogyakarta felt his absence and requested his return. Gus Baha' agreed to their request but committed to visiting Yogyakarta for Quranic teachings once a month.

In addition to his active teaching role, Gus Baha' also participated in the Quranic Interpretation Institute at the Islamic University of Indonesia (UII) in Yogyakarta, serving as the Head of the UII Mushaf Committee. This team consisted of professors, doctors, and Quranic experts from across Indonesia, including figures like Prof. Dr. Quraishy Shihab, Prof. Zaini Dahlan, Prof. Shohib, and other members of the National Quranic Interpretation Council. Despite being a newcomer in the field of Quranic interpretation in Indonesia and the only one in the National Council without formal degrees, Gus Baha's level of piety and scholarly mastery is widely acknowledged by experts in Quranic interpretation. One of the scholars recognizing Gus Baha's scholarly expertise is Prof. Dr. Quraish Shihab. Apart from being a Mufassir (Quranic interpreter), Gus Baha' holds the position of a Mufassir Fakih due to his understanding of the legal verses within the Quran, as highlighted by Prof. Dr. Quraish Shihab on a particular occasion (Kurniasari, 2021).

2. The Concept of Islamic Education of Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim

According to Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim, the concept of Islamic education involves efforts to nurture students to understand the teachings of Islam comprehensively, internalize its goals, and ultimately practice Islam as a way of life (Majid & Andayani, 2006). Islamic education, in his view, entails conscious and devout efforts by adult Muslims to guide and facilitate the growth and development of students' innate abilities through Islamic teachings toward their maximum potential (Arifin, 2008).

In the book "Minhâj al-Thifli al-Muslim" (Musthafa, 2010), Sheikh Fuhaim Musthafa outlines several goals of education in Islam, including:

- a. Acknowledging the concept of monotheistic belief (tauhid) as the highest concept for humans to recognize Allah, His attributes, and names. Tauhid is also considered a regulator of the lives of Muslims and society.
- b. Giving full attention to Islamic values, shaping noble behavior and morals in children through an understanding of the pillars of faith and Islam, and studying the Quran and Hadith.
- c. Creating a balance between worldly and hereafter life.
- d. Educating Muslim individuals to possess trustworthiness and responsibility in every action and word.
- e. Discovering the civilizational aspect of Islam as the source of law at all times and places.
- f. Forming Muslim individuals who respect every honorable profession in various fields and explaining its relationship to family and society.
- g. Avoiding thoughts that deviate from and contradict Islamic values derived from the teachings of the Quran and Hadith.
- h. Developing rational and scientific thinking skills related to all of God's creations.
- i. Preparing righteous Muslim individuals (Kurniasari, 2021).

As a renowned religious figure known for his blend of traditional and modern Islamic intellect, KH. Ahmad Bahaiddin Nursalim, or Gus Baha', emphasizes the concept of Islamic education suitable for the contemporary era in several of his thoughts. His ideas can be categorized into three aspects of education: faith (aqidah), worship (ibadah), and morality (akhlaq).

a. Aqidah (Faith) Education

Aqidah education guides students to understand Allah SWT and His oneness. Susiba emphasizes the obligation for every individual to believe in Allah SWT and not associate any partners with Him, as elucidated in Surah Luqman verse 13:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ۚ يَبْنِي لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, 'O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice".

It is essential for an educator to instill love for Allah SWT and sincerity in the hearts of students in their pursuit of knowledge and other acts of worship. Gus Baha' underscores the significance of this, stating, "If everyone

were imprisoned by their love for Allah, there would be no concern about where they live because they would undoubtedly uphold the religion of Allah SWT." This educational value is reinforced by stories of certain students Gus Baha' knew who, despite being perceived as less intelligent and underachieving during their education, prioritized prayers, established prayer spaces, and formed prayer communities. This commitment was driven solely by their love for Allah SWT, even when facing challenging circumstances, such as living in poverty and being on the run from the police due to illegal logging allegations.

Gus Baha' strongly advises educators, whether in a family or school setting, against doctrinating the purpose of acquiring knowledge with misguided or worldly intentions, especially in the field of religious knowledge. He illustrates the problem with statements like, "Study at IAIN so you can study at Aliyah, then you can go to Al-Azhar or Ummul Qura, get an Lc degree, enter a department, lead the country, and earn a salary, with the justification: 'Good in this world and good in the hereafter.'" Such doctrination is not endorsed by Gus Baha' because it can lead to despair if the individual is not utilized by the state or a major institution. Moreover, if faith and love for Allah are not deeply rooted, they might turn to unqualified sources when faced with challenges.

Gus Baha' emphasizes that educators must have broad knowledge and engage in scholarly pursuits that responsibly address substantive societal issues. For instance, he discusses the concept of "Absolutism of Truth in Tauhid," highlighting that the sacredness of faith is not disturbed by the actions of its adherents. Regardless of their deeds, if someone utters the declaration of faith, their faith remains intact, as the absolute truth in the oneness of Allah cannot be affected by anything, not even one's social status.

Regarding the opinion of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, we can refer to the statement of al-Qadhi 'Iyadh in *Ikmal al-Mu'allim bi Fawaid Shahih Muslim* ('Iyadh, 1998):

فَنَقَرُّ أَوَّلًا أَنَّ مَذْهَبَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ بِأَجْمَعِهِمْ مِنَ السَّلَفِ الصَّالِحِ وَأَهْلِ الْحَدِيثِ وَالْفُقَهَاءِ وَالْمُتَكَلِّمِينَ عَلَى مَذْهَبِهِمْ مِنَ الْأَشْعَرِيِّينَ: أَنَّ أَهْلَ الذُّنُوبِ فِي مَشِيئَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَأَنَّ كُلَّ مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَشَهِدَ مُخْلِصًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ بِالشَّهَادَتَيْنِ فَإِنَّهُ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ، فَإِنْ كَانَ تَائِبًا أَوْ سَلِيمًا مِنَ الْمَعَاصِي وَالتَّبَعَاتِ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ بِرَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ، وَحُرِّمَ عَلَى النَّارِ بِالْجُمْلَةِ

“We affirm that the Ahlusunnah school from the righteous predecessors, experts in hadith, fiqh, and kalam, particularly the Ash'ari group, believes: 'Verily, the fate of a sinner depends on the will of Allah ta'ala. Anyone who dies in faith and sincerely testifies to Allah and His Messenger from the heart will enter paradise. If they repent or are freed from sins and their consequences, they will enter paradise and be forbidden from hell due to the mercy of Allah”.

Gus Baha' teaches the importance of being parents who do not restrict their children and strive to be their idols. This approach is employed to safeguard Tawhid, or their religious education. He illustrates various examples that can be emulated in educating children or students. He views parents who take their children to the mall or to enjoy good food as a form of jihad and intention, especially when they have instilled the declaration of Tawhid as something special.

He also explains in the literary results that there is a friend of Allah who will continue to be a friend until death, namely the one who is lenient with his family. A concrete example from Gus Baha' himself is when he trained his son to pray by starting with the phrase Allahu Akbar, then being able to prostrate and recite tasbih. For him, all of these are special, and something special must be preserved. How do I do it? The minimum is for a child not to be disappointed with his father. He gives an example: if a child likes to buy snacks, give him snacks; if a child likes to eat good food, give him good food. However, all of this is done to safeguard the declaration of Tawhid and the truths of Islam that parents instill.

In his lectures, Gus Baha' prohibits restricting children from doing something they enjoy. For example, if a child wants to learn to ride a motorcycle and learns from a friend who does not pray or initially plays music borrowed from a neighbor who does not pray, the child idolizes those who do not pray because they provide healthier facilities. When grown up, the child becomes disobedient because, from a young age, they did not idolize their parents. This is the secret behind why the prophets always allowed flexibility for their children. For instance, Prophet Muhammad SAW, during prayer, once allowed his grandsons Hasan and Husain to climb on him, and he remained silent while praying, showing them how to pray (Santri Gayeng, 2022). Furthermore, in the Quran, Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 28, Allah says:

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“And [Abraham] made it [i.e., the declaration of Tawhid] an enduring word among his descendants, that they might return to it” (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2015).

In simpler terms, if you are truly a prophet or scholar, the declaration of Tawhid must be made eternal among your descendants. This is what Prophet Ibrahim did for his sons, Prophet Isma'il and Prophet Ishaq. Therefore, he is referred to as the Father of Tawhid because his sole obsession was to ensure that the declaration of Tawhid became eternal for all his descendants.

b. Ibadah (Worship) Education

Shiddieqy explains that worship education is an effort to instill worship awareness in humans so that they understand their existence as servants of Allah with the utmost submission (Shiddieqy, 2010). Zulkifli agrees, stating that worship education aims to control human morality through its teachings. Religion instructs humans to always be conscious and self-disciplined, so that all attitudes, words, and actions remain under divine control (Zulkifli, 2017). Worship is classified into two types: mahdlah worship, which is specific worship with everything determined by Allah in terms of degree, procedures, and details; and ghairu mahdlah, known as general worship, covering all actions permitted by Allah. The difference between the two is that mahdlah worship must be continuously performed even if its time has passed, whereas ghairu mahdlah, if its time has passed, is no longer obligatory (Shiddieqy, 2010).

Regarding the distinction between mahdlah and ghairu mahdlah worship, Gus Baha' explains that mahdlah worship is pure worship directly related to Allah SWT, such as prayer, dhikr, fasting, pilgrimage, and others (Santri Bejo, n.d.). Ghairu mahdlah worship involves activities that involve others in their worship, such as business transactions, charity, removing hazards or impurities from the road, and all other acts of goodness (Berandangaji5054, n.d.).

Worship education must be taught to students by competent and knowledgeable educators. Gus Baha' emphasizes this, warning students not to rely solely on the internet and books in seeking knowledge. There's a saying: "Whoever learns without a teacher, his teacher is Satan." This happens because, outside of the knowledge or laws applied by Prophet Muhammad, there are circumstances, behaviors, characters, or characteristics. For example, since ancient times, all prophets and scholars

have said that forbidding evil is obligatory, but they didn't have the tradition of being extremists. Hence, the importance of a teacher is to understand true knowledge and not blindly adopt incorrect beliefs that lead to extremist movements, declaring others unbelievers or worthy of death. All of this is called takalluf (imposing). Additionally, learning knowledge is also necessary to maintain a valid chain of knowledge up to Prophet Muhammad (NU Online, 2020).

The process of transferring knowledge in worship education to students also requires various effective methods. A method frequently used by Gus Baha' is providing analogies or concrete examples of materials that are often considered difficult. He simplifies his explanations in a language easily understood, making weighty knowledge easily accessible to diverse audiences or communities from various backgrounds.

Gus Baha' also cautions against eliminating the "sorogan" method of learning. He expresses deep regret for educational institutions that no longer implement the "sorogan" method in their teaching. According to him, the importance of "sorogan" includes preventing misreading or misunderstanding of the literacies used as sources, especially when it comes to the Arabic language, primarily the holy book, the Quran. It should be read correctly by students in front of the teacher using the "sorogan" method. He emphasizes this due to several incidents among students who misunderstand reading texts, such as reading *إِبْنُ أَبِي* as *إِبْنُ أَبِي*, and so on. Strangely enough, the "sorogan" method is even adopted in learning English to ensure the correct pronunciation. Therefore, he advises not to discard the tradition of the "sorogan" method in Islamic education (Santri Gayeng, 2022).

c. Akhlaq (Morality) Education

Fundamentally, in addition to faith and worship education, character education is equally crucial for individuals, especially for the millennial generation. Moral or character education should be instilled in them by the family environment, primarily by a mother. The significance of a righteous and chaste "mother" as the primary educational environment for children is emphasized by Gus Baha. He describes women as extraordinary figures in the process of educating the community, asserting that there would be no knowledgeable, intelligent, or successful person without a great woman behind them (EduPlus Parenting, 2022).

Character education has become a current trend as modernization has led many students into laziness. It becomes the duty of an educator to

consistently instill values of motivation and hard work and discourage laziness (NU Online, n.d.). Gus Baha also demonstrates that character education will strongly take root in a child if the food given to them is halal. He even educates families to respect community-provided meals or blessings as a way to instill good character and humility in children (NU Online, n.d.).

Gus Baha also warns educators to practice what they preach, serving as an example for students. He emphasizes that a knowledgeable and practicing person will live comfortably and be respected wherever they are (Pengajian Gus Baha, 2023). Imam Al-Ghazali advises consistently applying knowledge in his book "Ayyuhal Walad":

أَيُّهَا الْوَلَدُ، يَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَوْلُكَ وَفِعْلُكَ مُوَافِقًا لِلشَّرْعِ، إِذِ الْعِلْمُ وَالْعَمَلُ بِإِلَافَتِدَاءٍ لِلشَّرْعِ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَيَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَلَّا تَعْتَرَّ بِالشَّطْحِ وَطَامَاتِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ، لِأَنَّ سُلُوكَ هَذَا الطَّرِيقِ يَكُونُ بِالْمُجَاهَدَةِ وَقَطْعِ شَهْوَةِ النَّفْسِ وَقَتْلِ هَوَاهَا بِسَيْفِ الرِّيَاضَةِ، لَا بِالطَّمَامَاتِ وَالتَّرَهَاتِ

"O my son, it is advisable that your words and actions are in harmony with the religious teachings, for knowledge and deeds without adhering to religious principles are misguided. You should not be deceived by the appearances and calamities of the mystics, as the journey on this path requires struggle, the suppression of personal desires, and the defeat of carnal passions with the sword of discipline, not through a wretched path and meaningless chatter" (Al-Ghazali, 2008).

3. Implementation of Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim's Islamic Education in Facing Modernization for the Millennial Generation

The idea of modernization in Islamic thought originates from the desire to "modernize" Islamic thinking and institutions as a whole. Thus, the "modernization" occurring in Islamic education is inseparable from the resurgence of ideas for the modernization program of Islam, serving as the basic framework behind the "modernization" of Islamic thinking and institutions, which is a prerequisite for the resurgence of the Muslim community in the modern era. Therefore, Islamic education must undergo modernization, or, simply put, be renewed according to "modernity." While retaining traditional Islamic institutional thinking will prolong the helplessness of Muslims in facing progress in the modern world (No Surya & Kholik, 2020).

The New Modernist circle, to understand the fundamental teachings and values in the Qur'an and Sunnah, must strive to integrate and consider the classical intellectual heritage of Muslims. It should also contemplate the difficulties and conveniences offered by the modern technological world. So, this

model always considers the Qur'an and Sunnah, the heritage of classical Islamic thought, and the scholarly approaches that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries. This thinking is often echoed as "*al-Muhafadzah 'ala al-Qadim al-Shalih wa al-Akhdzu bi al-Jadid al-Ashlah*" meaning preserving the good things that already exist while developing new values that are better.

The term *al-Muhafazah 'ala al-Qadim al-Salih* represents perennialism and essentialism, i.e., a regressive and conservative attitude toward divine and human values that have been built and developed by society. Meanwhile, the term *al-Akhdzu bi al-Jadid al-Ashlah* means seeking alternative, better options in the context of contemporary Muslim society's education and indicates a dynamic, progressive, and reconstructive stance, albeit not radical. Hence, this typology is also referred to as the contextual-falsificative perennial-essentialist typology (Muhaimin, 2012).

This typology is more critical because there is an effort to place information in context and refute theories with facts. It is more comprehensive and integrated into building the philosophical framework of Islamic education. Studies on the main points of Islamic education and all its issues are built from the texts of the Qur'an and Hadiths through thematic interpretations while still considering relevant values from the classical intellectual heritage and even paying attention to the Islamic education system that needs to be developed (Musyaffa' Dkk, 2020).

Gus Baha' explains that, essentially, all types of knowledge come from Islam. General knowledge, such as astronomy, biology, geography, and others, derives from Islam itself. As in the Qur'an, there are many explanations about this knowledge, including in Surah Yunus verse 5 and Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 4:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۚ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

"It is He who made the sun a shining light and the moon a derived light and determined its phases, so that you may know the number of years and account of time. Allah has not created this except in truth. He details the signs for people who know." (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2015).

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُتَتَّجِرُونَ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزُرُوعٌ وَخَيْلٌ صِنَوَانٌ وَعَيْرٌ صِنَوَانٌ يُسْقَىٰ بِمَاءٍ وَجِدٍ وَنُقْضِلُ بَعْضُهَا عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكُلِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

"And on the earth are tracts of land close to one another and vineyards, crops, and date palms, both with and without branches, all watered with

the same water. And we make some of them excel at others in fruit. Surely, these are signs for people who understand.” (Al-Qur'an, 2015).

After religious knowledge became synonymous with the rituals of prayer, the procedures of Hajj, the procedures of Zakat, and so on, and then general knowledge delved into the natural world, a dichotomy emerged. According to Gus Baha', the reason religious leaders did not revolt against the dichotomy of knowledge is because general knowledge underwent development. If religion and its theories were revised, then what would be blamed by laypeople is the religion itself. Hence, whatever is true in Islam, it was humanity from the time of the Prophet who brought it to the Ummah. Ultimately, scholars say, 'Never justify or criticize a theory in the name of Islam, lest it be the fault of humans, but they attribute it to Islam' (Ngaji Gus Baha, 2022).

In the modernization of Islamic education, Gus Baha' emphasizes that all Muslims, especially the millennial generation, should always bring Allah into their hearts. According to him, something missing from this modern civilization is the emptiness of hearts when remembering Allah. He then explains the story of a cleric who was called by a young man or bullied to come to his house and then was expelled without reason; this happened repeatedly three times. Later, the young man wondered why the cleric was not angry and even remained calm with a smile. The cleric answered, "O young man, I am delighted to obey the command of Allah. I am commanded to respect my neighbors, so when you call, I come; when you tell me to leave, I leave. And that is the command of Allah; it has nothing to do with you." The young man finally cried and apologized for his actions. The Kiyai firmly adhered to the hadith of the Prophet, which says:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ.

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak well or remain silent. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his neighbor. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor his guest.(HR. Bukhari Muslim).” (Syaiikh, n.d.).

Gus Baha' continues by stating that in the modern era, there are many intelligent people, including lecturers, clerics, and professors, who are still often dictated by ignorant people. When ignorant people annoy or make them angry, they also get provoked into anger and annoyance. Gus Baha's illustration conveys the meaning that "if we are truly intelligent, then we should only be

dictated by Allah. According to him, the problem of the millennial generation today is that both intelligent and ignorant people are equally dictated by the social norms around them." (Pengajian Gus Baha, 2023). In a sound and good hadith narrated by Imam Tirmidhi, there is a statement from the Prophet Muhammad:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو هِشَامٍ الرَّفَاعِيُّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَزِيدَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ فُضَيْلٍ عَنْ الْوَلِيدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ جُمَيْعٍ عَنْ أَبِي الطُّفَيْلِ عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا تَكُونُوا إِمْعَةً تَقُولُونَ إِنْ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسُ أَحْسَنًا وَإِنْ ظَلَمُوا ظَلَمْنَا وَلَكِنْ وَطِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنْ أَحْسَنَ النَّاسُ أَنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَإِنْ أَسَاءُوا فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ لَا نَعْرِفُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ

"Do not be someone who blindly follows others. If people are good, then we will also be good. And if they do wrong, then we will also do wrong. However, strengthen your hearts. If people do good, you also do good, but if they behave badly, do not do wrong."

This explanation reflects Gus Baha's thoughts as a reference for educators to strengthen the souls of the current millennial generation. Educators, whether parents or school teachers, must guide students to consistently practice sincerity in doing good for the sake of Allah. In this modern era, education in Aqidah (faith), Ibadah (worship), and Akhlak (morality) should be balanced in its implementation for students. As explained above, according to Gus Baha', the modernization of Islamic religious education should integrate classical knowledge and the advancements of modern technology, with its core being the love for Allah.

Conclusion

As one of the intellectual figures, Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim, better known as Gus Baha', is one of the scholars of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), originating from Narukan, Kragan, Rembang, Central Java. Gus Baha is renowned as a knowledgeable Quranic scholar with a profound understanding of the Qur'an. He is a disciple of the charismatic scholar, KH. Maemun Zubair, Rembang.

Gus Baha emphasizes the concept of Islamic education that is relevant to the modern era in several of his thoughts. His ideas can be categorized into three aspects of education: faith (aqidah), worship (ibadah), and morality (akhlak). According to Gus Baha, the modernization of Islamic education should be based on integrating classical scholarly knowledge and the advancements of modern technology, centered around love for Allah SWT. Understanding the fundamental

teachings and values in the Qur'an and Sunnah is necessary by incorporating and considering the classical intellectual heritage of Muslims while also taking into account the challenges and conveniences offered by the modern technological world. This thought is often articulated as "*al-Muhafadzah 'ala al-Qadim al-Shalih wa al-Akhdzu bi al-Jadid al-Ashlah*," meaning preserving the good things that exist while developing new values that are better.

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