

## Reformist Muslim Discourse in the Sundanese Commentary of the Qur'an: E. Abdurrahman's Commentary on QS. Al-Hujurat

*Wacana Muslim Reformis dalam Tafsir Sunda: Penafsiran E. Abdurrahman pada QS. Al-Hujurat*

Roni Nugraha \*<sup>(a)</sup>, Jajang A Rohmana<sup>(b)</sup> 

\*Corresponding Author, email, roninugraha@stai-persis-bandung.ac.id

<sup>(a)</sup> Department of Qur'anic Studies, STAI PERSIS Bandung, Ciganitri Street No.2, Bandung, 40287, Indonesia

<sup>(b)</sup> Department of Sociology, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, A.H. Nasution Street No.105, Bandung, Indonesia.

### Abstract

This article focuses on reformist Muslim discourse in the Sundanese commentary of the Qur'an or tafsir, entitled Sababaraha Naséhat Tina Qur'an Surat al-Hudjurot, some advice of sūrah Al-Hujurat (1971). The book was written by E. Abdurrahman (1912-1983), an activist of a reformist Islamic organization, Islamic Union (Persatuan Islam or Persis). He has been a chairman of Persis from 1962-1983. They have a slogan "back to the Qur'an and Hadith" as well as to oppose the taqlid and heresy. E. Abdurrahman explained Q. 49 or sūrah Al-Hujurat in the frame of his ideology as an activist of Persis. Following his commentary of Q. 49:1, the prohibition against practicing Islam before find dalil or textual instructions of the Qur'an and Hadith. He also interpreted Q. 49:6 on recheck the news as a form of prohibition taqlid. Meanwhile, Q. 49:9-10 was interpreted by him to emphasize the strengthening of reformist followers. Using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, this study confirms that E. Abdurrahman's commentary cannot be separated from his reformist ideology. He used Sundanese Quranic commentary to convey the reformist ideas against traditionalist Muslims in West Java.

**Keywords:** the Qur'an, qur'anic commentary, Sundanese, reformist

### Abstrak

Artikel ini memfokuskan pada penafsiran Al-Qur'an berbahasa Sunda yang dibingkai dengan kepentingan Islam reformis. Objek kajiannya adalah tafsir Sunda berjudul Sababaraha Naséhat Tina Qur'an Surat al-Hudjurot (1971), beberapa Naséhat dari Al-Qur'an surah al-Hujurat/49, karya K.H.E. Abdurrahman (1912-1983). Ia merupakan aktivis organisasi Islam reformis sekaligus Ketua Umum PP. Persatuan Islam (PERSIS) Periode 1962-1983. Sebuah organisasi Islam yang dikenal memiliki slogan kembali pada Al-Qur'an dan hadis serta anti taklid dan bidah. E. Abdurrahman menafsirkan surah Al-Hujurat dalam bingkai kepentingan Islam reformis yang dianutnya. Melalui pendekatan analisis wacana kritis Fairclough, kajian ini menegaskan bahwa penafsiran E. Abdurrahman tidak dapat dilepaskan dari wacana di luar teks terkait dengan kepentingan ideologi reformisnya yang berhadapan dengan kalangan Islam tradisional di Jawa Barat.

**Kata kunci:** Persatuan Islam; E. Abdurrahman; tafsir Al-Qur'an bahasa Sunda; Muslim reformis

### Introduction

This study focuses on the book of *Sabararaha Naséhat Tina Qur'an Surat al-Hudjurot* (some advices of sūrah al-Hujurat) (1971) which was written by



E. Abdurrahman (1912-1983).<sup>1</sup> This is a commentary of the Qur'ān or *tafsīr* in Sundanese that contains a discourse of reformist Muslim. E. Abdurrahman integrates the idea of religious purification into his Qur'anic commentary.<sup>2</sup> He is known as a scholar, teacher, lecturer, writer and reformist Muslim activist who has served as chairman of the Islamic Union (Persatuan Islam or Persis) in 1962-1983. Persis is known as one of the reformist Islamic organizations in Indonesia which was founded in 1923.<sup>3</sup>

The book *Sababaraha Naséhat* is one of E. Abdurrahman's works which was written in Sundanese. This is a work that has not been widely known by Muslim scholars in Indonesia. This work may be one and only E. Abdurrahman's book of Qur'anic interpretation. He was known as the second ideologist of Persis after A. Hassan (1887-1958), the main teacher of Persis and the author of *Tafsir Al-Furqan*. Many scholars who studied E. Abdurrahman's thoughts did not mention this book at all.<sup>4</sup> Whereas some of E. Abdurrahman's friends call him a great Islamic scholar (*'ulamā'*) in the field of ḥadīth and Qur'anic commentary.<sup>5</sup> This paper will discuss the reformist commentary of the Qur'ān in Indonesia, a short biography of E. Abdurrahman and the characteristics of his Sundanese commentary of the Qur'ān and the discourse of reformist Muslim ideology in E. Abdurrahman's commentary of Q. 49 which analyzed using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis.<sup>6</sup>

The main argument of this paper is that the development of the reformist Islamic movement in the modern Indonesia cannot be separated from the use of Qur'anic commentary as a mean of conveying the reformist Muslim ideology. The idea of Islamic renewal in the 1970s in Indonesia did not only use magazines and newspapers, but also Islamic books including Qur'anic commentaries.<sup>7</sup> E.

1 E. Abdurrahman, *Sababaraha Naséhat Tina Qur'an Surat Al-Hudjurot* (Bandung: Corps Muballigh Bandung, 1971).

2 Thoḥa Hamim, *Paham Keagamaan Kaum Reformis* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2000), ix.

3 Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (Persis) 1923 to 1957* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Dadan Wildan, *Sejarah Perjuangan Persis 1923-1983* (Bandung: Gema Syahida, 1995); Dadan Wildan, *Pasang Surut Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam Di Indonesia: Potret Perjalanan Sejarah Persatuan Islam* (Bandung: Persis Press, 2000).

4 Fauzi Nur Wahid, 'K.H.E. Abdurrahman; Peranannya Dalam Organisasi Persatuan Islam' (IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 1988); Dadan Wildan, *Yang Da'i Yang Politikus: Hayat Dan Perjuangan Lima Tokoh Persis* (Bandung: Rosda Karya, 1997); Nanang Sutisna, 'Persatuan Islam (PERSIS) Pada Masa K.H.E. Abdurrahman' (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2008); Tiar Anwar Bachtiar, 'Sikap Intelektual Persatuan Islam Terhadap Kebijakan Politik Orde Baru' (Pascasarjana Universitas Indonesia, 2008).

5 Badri Khaeruman, *Persatuan Islam: Sejarah Pembaruan Pemikiran "Kembali Kepada Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Sunnah"* (Bandung: FAPPI & IRIS Press, 2010), 72.

6 Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1995).

7 Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Moderen Islam Di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996), 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 103.

Abdurrahman, who is known as a prolific writer of religious books in Sundanese published his *Sababaraha Naséhat* in 1971. He used the book as a mean of disseminating the ideas of reformist Islam in West Java. Therefore, as Abu Zaid said, it is difficult for an interpreter to break away from his ideology. The commentary of the Qur'ān will fall into ideologization (*talwīn*) and easily get caught up in subjective tendentious readings (*al-qirā'ah al-mughbridah*).<sup>8</sup>

There are many scholars who generally focus on E. Abdurrahman's political response to the Indonesian government during his leadership as chairman of Persis in 1962-1983. Wildan, for instance, highlights the role of E. Abdurrahman in strengthening the Persis vision (*kbittah*) as a defender of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth.<sup>9</sup> Likewise with Bachtiar who highlights E. Abdurrahman's response as the second ideologist of Persis towards the New Order policy. E. Abdurrahman as a chairman of Persis as well as the leader of Pesantren Persis Pajagalan Bandung then withdrew from the political activity. He chose to focus on the fields of *da'wa* and Islamic education.<sup>10</sup> Another scholar, Sutisna, stated that Persis under E. Abdurrahman's leadership was neutral in politics, making Persis an organization of cadre and focused on education and *da'wa*.<sup>11</sup> However, no one studied the position of E. Abdurrahman as a Sundanese commentator of the Qur'ān based on his work, *Sababaraha Naséhat*. Although there are another Qur'anic commentaries in Sundanese which propose an ideology of reformist Islam, such as the works of Romli and Hasim.<sup>12</sup>

### The Qur'ān and reformist commentary in West Java

The reformist Muslims have dominated study of the Qur'ān in West Java since the early twentieth century. This is related to their encouragements in opening the *ijtihad*, directly refer to the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, and compose their own Qur'anic commentaries.<sup>13</sup> This is different from the traditionalist Muslims who are deeply respect for the authority of *kiai*. They mostly refer to the Qur'anic commentary writings of '*ulamā'* although they also produced Qur'an commentaries. In a varying degree, although both traditionalist and reformist Muslims accept the use of medieval

8 Nasr Hamīd Abū Zaid, *Kritik Wacana Agama, Translation of Naqd Al-Khi āb Ad-Dīnī*, ed. by Khoiron Nahdliyyin (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2003), 155-62.

9 Dadan Wildan, *Yang Da'i Yang Politikus*, 138.

10 Tiar Anwar Bachtiar, '*Sikap Intelektual Persatuan Islam*,' 94-108.

11 Nanang Sutisna, '*Persatuan Islam (PERSIS)*,' 74-5.

12 Jajang A Rohmana, 'Ideologisasi Tafsir Lokal Berbahasa Sunda: Kepentingan Islam-Modernis Dalam Tafsir Nurul-Bajan Dan Ayat Suci Lenyepaneun', *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, 2.1 (2013), 125-54.

13 Jajang A Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Tatar Sunda* (Bandung: Mujahid Press-Diktis Kementerian Agama RI, 2014), 42.

and modern *tafsirs*, the traditionalist Muslims mostly use the Qur'anic commentary in stages, from the lower-level book of *tafsir* such as al-Jalālain, to the higher-level ones, such as *tafsir al-Munir*, *al-Baidāwī*, *al-Qurtūbī*, *al-Kashshāf*. and others.

Some scholars previously explained that reformist Muslims in Indonesia was initially influenced by 'reformism-modernism' in Egypt since early twentieth century. They promote a synthesis between the concept of 'Islamic reformism' through the purification of Islamic beliefs and practices as formulated by the previous Muslim scholars in the seventeenth century with the concept of 'Islamic modernism' as formulated by modern educated Muslim intellectuals.<sup>14</sup> The 'reformism-modernism' thoughts of Jamāluddīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Ridā' spreaded to Indonesian archipelago through *al-Manār* magazine.<sup>15</sup> Their thoughts on Islamic reformism-modernism contributed to the increase of Islamic publication in Indonesia until post-independence era in 1970s. Muhammadiyah and Persis are two Islamic organizations in Indonesia which spread the idea of modernist Islam. Their followers do not only spread the idea through the establishment of Islamic schools, sermons, debates and distributing pamphlets and magazines, but also publish Islamic books.<sup>16</sup> They use the national language of bahasa Indonesia as well as regional languages such as Javanese, Sundanese and others.<sup>17</sup>

Persis supporter do not only write Sundanese Islamic books in the field of *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence, but also Qur'anic commentary in Sundanese. There are three volumes of Sundanese translation of A. Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan* published in 1928-1929. This is a Sundanese translation of *Tafsir Al-Furqan* in Malay which was published earlier. The first volume (Q.S. 2: 1-55, November 1928) and the second volume (Q.S. 2: 56-97, January 1929) were translated by Djoeragan Mh. Anwar Sanuci and Mh. Djoenaedi. Anwar Sanuci is a religious teacher in Garut as well as a Persis supporter. Meanwhile, Djoenaedi is a school teacher in Tasikmalaya.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the third volume (Q.S. 2: 98-177, April 1929) was translated by Achmad

14 Yudi Latif, *Intelegensia Muslim Dan Kuasa: Genealogi Intelegensia Muslim Indonesia Abad Ke-20* (Jakarta: Democracy Project, 2012), 214.

15 Jajat Burhanudin, 'Aspiring for Islamic Reform: Southeast Asian Requests for Fatwas in Al-Manar', *Islamic Law and Society*, 12.1 (2005), 9–26.

16 Howard M. Federspiel, 'Modernist Islam in Southeast Asia: A New Examination', *The Muslim World*, 92 (2002), p. 381; Julian Millie, *Hearing Allah's Call: Preaching and Performance in Indonesian Islam* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017), 15.

17 Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam*, p. 103.

18 A. Hassan, *Al-Foerqan Tafsir Qoer'an Basa Soenda Bagian Ka Hidji*, ed. by Mh. Anwar Sanuci (Bandung: Persatoean Islam Bandoeng, 1928); A. Hassan, *Al-Foerqan Tafsir Qoer'an Basa Soenda Bagian Ka Doea*, ed. by Mh. Anwar Sanuci (Bandung: Persatoean Islam Bandoeng, 1929).

Bassach.<sup>19</sup> He is known as Yuhana (d. 1930), a Sundanese literary figure who was active in the *Sarekat Pekerja* (Workers' Association), one of the organs of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the translation of A. Hassan's *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, the period of 1930s was also marked by the publication of Mh. Anwar Sanuci's *Gajatoel-Bajan*, another reformist Sundanese commentary of the Qur'an. With above mentioned, Anwar Sanuci was a translator of A. Hassan's works into Sundanese. He then compiled his own Qur'anic commentary, *Gajatoel-Bajan*. This *tafsir* is written in five volumes published by Madjlis Ahli Soennah Garoet. The first and second volumes contain short commentaries of *surah al-Fatihah* and several *surahs* of Juz 'Ammah. The first volume consists of *surah al-Fatihah*, *al-Dhuba* to *al-Takathur*. While the second volume consists *surah al-'Ashr* to *al-Nas*. The third, fourth and fifth volumes consist the commentary of *surah al-Baqarah*: 1-180.<sup>21</sup>

Another reformist Muslim activist who published Qur'anic commentary work was Mhd. Romli. He is an activist of reformist Muslim group, Majlis Ahlus Sunnah Cilame (MASC) in Garut. Romli published *Tafsir Nurul-Bajan* in three volumes with H.N.S. Midjaja or known as Jaksa Neneng in 1960. This *tafsir* was published by the printing company "Perbu" (Perboe) or *Perusahaan Bumiputera* (Native Company).<sup>22</sup> Romli then also published short Sundanese Qur'anic commentary in 1974, *Al-Kitabul Mubin*. Romli's *Tafsir Nurul-Bajan* and *Al-Kitabul Mubin* are partly reproductions of *Qoeran Tardjamah Soenda* which was previously published in 1950s. The latter is Romli's first work on Qur'anic translation in Sundanese published by "Poestaka Islam" Bandoeng in three volumes which each volume contains 10 *juz*.<sup>23</sup>

In recent times, as previous Sundanese translation of A. Hassan's *Tafsir al-Furqan* in the 1930s, there is also Sundanese translation of H. Oemar Bakry's *Tafsir Rahmat* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1983) entitle *Tafsir Rahmat Basa Sunda* (1986, 2002).<sup>24</sup> H. Oemar Bakry (1916-1985) is an activist of Muhammadiyah and Masyumi who was born in West Sumatera.<sup>25</sup> The translation of Bakry's *Tafsir Rahmat* into Sundanese

19 A. Hassan, *Al-Foerqan Tafsir Qo'er'an Basa Soenda Bagian Ka Tiloe*, ed. by Achmad Bassach (Bandung: Persatoean Islam Bandoeng, 1929).

20 Tini Kartini, *Yuhana Sastrawan Sunda* (Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Jakarta, 1979), 5.

21 Moehammad Anwar Sanuci, *Gajatoel-Bajan, Nerangkeun Harti, Maksoed Sareng Rasiab-Rasiab Qur'an Soetji, Bagian Ka Hidji* (Garut: "Madjlis Ahli Soennah" Garoet).

22 Mhd. Romli, *Tafsir Nurul-Bajan* (Bandung: N.V. Perboe, 1960).

23 Moh. Romli, *Qoeran Tardjamah Soenda Djoez 1-30* (Bandung: Poestaka Islam Bandoeng, Dirj. "KITA" Dk).

24 Oemar Bakry, *Tafsir Rahmat Basa Sunda* (Bandung: CV. Angkasa, 2002).

25 Muhammad Saifullah, 'Kritik Oemar Bakry Terhadap Terjemahan Puitis H.B. Jassin: Studi Atas Polemik Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia', *Subuf*, 12.2 (2019), 352.

was carried out by H.M. Soelaeman. It is a Sundanese translation which is a response to the Qur'anic users who need a simple explanation in the study of the Qur'an.<sup>26</sup>

However, there is Sundanese *tafsir* considered the most complete, Moh. E. Hasim's *Ayat Suci Lenyepaneun* (the holy verses to be contemplated). He is an activist of Muhammadiyah in Bandung. Hasim published his 30 volumes of Qur'anic commentary in 1984. He uses his Qur'anic commentary to criticize the social realities such as political policies of the New Order. It is a reflection of the commentator's dialectic with his socio-political background. It is an effort of Hasim to resist against the hegemony of New Order and its discourse of knowledge who were considered oppressive.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, Sundanese reformist commentary of the Qur'an is Uu Suhendar's *Tafsir Al-Razi Juz 'Amma jeung Al-Fatihah, Kasaluyuan Surat, Ayat jeung Mufrodad* (2010). Suhendar is known as a teacher of Pesantren Persis Tasikmalaya. He is an alumnus of Arabic Language Department, IAIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.<sup>28</sup> Suhendar's *Tafsir al-Razi* was originally published in *Bina Da'wah* magazine known as serial *Rohangan Tafsir*. This reformist Muslim magazine has been published since 1978 by Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) branch of West Java. DDII is a private Islamic organization founded by a Masyumi figure, M. Natsir. DDII of West Java was founded by M. Rusyad Nurdin (1918–2002), a patriotist '*ulamā*' and Masyumi politician who was born in West Sumatra. The scripturalism ideology of *Bina Da'wah* is same as *Media Da'wah* magazine which is published in bahasa Indonesia by main office of DDII in Jakarta.<sup>29</sup>

Above explanation is a highlight of the reformist Muslim commentaries of the Qur'an in West Java. E. Abdurrahman's *Sababaraha Nasébat* seems to be in the same line of interests as above reformist Muslim commentaries. As I will explain, the Qur'anic commentary cannot be separated from the ideology of Islamic reformism. It can be seen to E. Abdurrahman's *tafsir* in his commentary of *surah al-Hujurat/49*.

26 Howard M. Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Qur'an* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1994), 69.

27 Moh. E. Hasim, *Tafsir Ayat Suci Lenyepaneun* (Bandung: Pustaka, 1984); Ahmad Ali Nurdin and Jajang A Rohmana, 'Ayat Suci Lenyepaneun and Social Critiques: Moh. E. Hasim's Critiques of the Political Policy of the New Order', *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 13.1 (2019), 141–76; Jajang A Rohmana, 'Tafsir Al-Qur'an Dari Dan Untuk Orang Sunda: Ayat Suci Lenyepaneun Karya Moh. E. Hasim (1916–2009)', *Journal of Qur'an and adith Studies*, 9.1 (2020), 1–24.

28 Uu Suhendar, *Tafsir Al-Razi Juz 'Amma Jeung Al-Fatihah, Kasaluyuan Surat, Ayat Jeung Mufrodad* (Tasikmalaya: Pustaka Al-Razi, 2011).

29 R. William Liddle, 'Media Dakwah Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia', in *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, ed. by Mark R. Woodward (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1996), pp. 323–56; Burhanuddin Muhtadi, 'The Conspiracy of Jews: The Quest for Anti-Semitism in Media Dakwah', *Graduate Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, 5.2 (2007), 53–76.

### E. Abdurrahman and his works

E. Abdurrahman or Endang Abdurrahman was born in Pasarean Village, Bojong Herang, Cianjur on June 12, 1912, which corresponds to 26 *Jumadil Akhbir* 1330. He is the eldest son of 11 children. His father, Ghazali, is a tailor. His mother, Hafsah, is a batik craftsman.<sup>30</sup> At the age of 7-8 years, E. Abdurrahman has learned the Qur'ān. He then studied at Pesantren of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Al-I'ānah in Cianjur (1919-1926). This is a madrasa under the guidance of Muhammad Nuh bin Idris, the father of the famous Sundanese '*ulamā'*' and prolific author, Abdullah bin Nuh (1905-1987).<sup>31</sup> E. Abdurrahman studied Arabic and other traditional Islamic knowledge in the madrasa. He then went to Bandung at the request of Mr. Swarha or Hassan Wiratmana to teach at Madrasah Nahdlatul Ulama Al-I'ānah Bandung (1928-1930). Again at the request of Mr. Alkatiri, a man of wealth in Bandung, E. Abdurrahman then was asked to teach his children in 1930s. In addition, Mr. Alkatiri also founded the Islamic Elementary Education Council (*Majelis Pendidikan Diniyah Islam*, MPDI) in Kebonjati Bandung to educate Muslim children and their parents. E. Abdurrahman was given the task of managing MPDI institution with his friend, O. Qomaruddin Shaleh, an activist of reformist Muslim who also manages the Madrasa of Al-Hikmah in Rancabali Padalarang.

During his activity at MDPI with O. Qomaruddin Shaleh, E. Abdurrahman then interested in religious teaching of Persis which delivered by A. Hassan at Pangeran Sumedang Street in Bandung.<sup>32</sup> E. Abdurrahman as a traditionalist *santri* initially surprised and offended by A. Hassan's teachings. He then made an intensive dialogue and debate with A. Hassan. Finally, E. Abdurrahman changed his opinion on Islam and *fiqh*. He then became a student of A. Hassan, joined the Persis movement and became the second main teacher in Persis after A. Hassan. He was even became loyal friend of A. Hassan accompanying him during pilgrimage in Mecca.<sup>33</sup> Finally, after his changing opinion on Islam, E. Abdurrahman was then put out by Mr. Alkatiri from his house. He was dismissed from MPDI as well as the preacher in Pakauman Bandung.

E. Abdurrahman's experience shows how Persis and NU members maintained their daily contacts and relationships in the first period of their establishment. Many

30 Wildan, *Yang Da'i Yang Politikus*, p. 121-38; Ajip Rosidi, *Ensiklopedi Sunda, Alam, Budaya, Dan Manusia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 2000), 9.

31 Gausulfardi Hakim, 'K.H.R. Abdullah Bin Nuh Dan Karya-Karyanya' (Universitas Indonesia, 2009); Dadan Wildan et al, *Anatomi Gerakan Dakwah Persatuan Islam* (Ciputat: Amana, 2015), 239.

32 Akh. Minhaji, *Abmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia (1887-1958)* (Canada: Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University, 1997).

33 Badri Khaeruman, *Persatuan Islam*, 73.

Persis members come from NU background such as E. Abdurrahman, and that this is also case nowadays. E. Abdurrahman's student and the current Chairman of Persis, Ust Aceng Zakaria, who has a strong NU background.<sup>34</sup> E. Abdurrahman is regarded as greatly contributing to the institutionalism of Islamic education in the Persatuan Islam milieu.<sup>35</sup> He did not use the *Jalalayn* in his *tafsir* classes. Instead, he taught the *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. There was an interesting development after E. Abdurrahman, the *Jalalayn* officially appeared as a prescribed textbook in the curriculum of Pesantren Persis in 2005.<sup>36</sup> This reception of the *Jalalayn* in the Pesantren Persis milieu indicated the value of plurality among Persis members, revealing the co-existence of various approaches to Islamic scholarship.<sup>37</sup>

E. Abdurrahman then became a teacher at the institution of Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Islam, Pendis*) in Persis organization under the chairman of M. Natsir in 1934. He also taught at HIS, MULO and Kweekschool. He then taught and developed Pesantren Kecil, especially after A. Hassan moved to Bangil, East Java in 1940. During the period of revolution (1945-1949), Pesantren Persis under the leadership of E. Abdurrahman was evacuated to Gunung Cupu, Ciamis. Pesantren Persis was finally moved to Bandung after the period of Indonesia revolution and developed to the level of high school (*Mu'allimin*).

Since 1934, E. Abdurrahman was known as an active and loyal '*ulamā*' in Persis organization. His first position was chair of the Tabligh and Education Division (1952), General Secretary of Persis (1953) accompanied Isa Anshary as chairman of Persis. E. Abdurrahman was then elected as chairman of Persis after the Congress of Persis VII in 1962.

In 1957, E. Abdurrahman was elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia from the Masyumi Party. He is a member number 246. Finally, the Constituent Assembly was dissolved by Sukarno and he then resigned from politics.<sup>38</sup> E. Abdurrahman as an '*ulamā*' performed the pilgrimage to Mecca twice. Firstly, he accompanied A. Hassan, Isa Anshary, Tamar Jaya and a group of Muslims 40 people in 1956. Secondly, E. Abdurrahman guided the Persis

34 Pepen Irpan Fauzan, *KH. Aceng Zakaria, Ulama Persatuan Islam* (Garut: LPPM STAI PERSIS, 2021), . 218-22.

35 Tiar Anwar Bachtiar, *Sejarah Pesantren PERSIS 1936-1983* (Jakarta: Pembela Islam Media, 2012).

36 Dedeng Rosyidin, *Konsep Pendidikan Formal Dalam Islam* (Bandung: Pustaka Nadwah, 2009).

37 Ervan Nurtawab, *Jalalayn Pedagogical Practice: Style of Qur'an and Tafsir Learning in Contemporary Indonesia* (Ph.D. Thesis: Monash University, 2018), p. 39-40; Ervan Nurtawab, 'The Decline of Traditional Learning Methods in Changing Indonesia: Trends of Bandongan-Kitāb Readings in Pesantrens', *Studia Islamika*, 26.2 (2019), 526.

38 Tiar Anwar Bachtiar and Pepen Irpan Fauzan, *Sejarah Pemikiran Dan Gerakan Politik Persis* (Bandung: Persis Pers, 2019), 114.



members 89 people in 1981.

The Persis organization faced difficulties during the leadership of E. Abdurrahman in the midst of political situation. The organization which supported by Masyumi members under the threat of dissolution after the dissolution of Masyumi by Sukarno. Persis members worried about that, because Persis did not integrate the ideology of Nasakom in the statutes of its organization. E. Abdurrahman's leadership in leading Persis is very strict in supervision. He prioritizes the quality of members over the quantity. There is a anxious that large numbers of the Persis members only add to the burden of the organization. This was also motivated by bad intention among some members of Persis who falsified their member identities after the case of communist uprising (G30S/PKI) in 1965. There was a decrease of number of Persis members during E. Abdurrahman's period. There is also disconnection between the center office of Persis in Bandung with its branches in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. It can be seen that there were 63 branches with a total membership of 7,173 in 1964. It then decreased to 56 branches with a total of 4,455 members in 1967 and it decreased again to 3,717 members in 1980.

E. Abdurrahman is known as a modest Islamic jurist. He does not want to be praised although widely known in outside Persis organization. He spent his time to read books, taught at *pesantren* and mosques, wrote books and articles in magazines. His education in madrasa did not prevent him to access broad insight. In addition to mastering Arabic, Sundanese and Malay, E. Abdurrahman then learned English and Dutch. It was encouraged by his closeness with A. Hassan. He also subscribed many newspapers in Malay and Sundanese such as *Sipatahoenan*, *Kompas*, and *Pikiran Rakyat*, as well as English newspaper, *The Indonesia Observer*. In addition, he always received Arabic magazines from Saudi Arabia and Egypt. He also has large book collections. His expertise as an '*ulamā*' covers many fields of Islamic knowledge such as *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *kalām*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, astronomy, and others. One of his characteristics as a teacher at Pesantren Persis Pajagalan is wearing trousers, coat and tie. E. Abdurrahman was also become a lecturer at Bandung Islamic University (Unisba) in 1959 and IKIP Bandung in 1967.

E. Abdurrahman is also known as a prolific writer. His writings in Malay and Sundanese are widely published in magazines. He pioneered and managed some Persis magazines such as *At-Taqwaa* (with O. Qomaruddin Saleh) until 1941. He also wrote many Islamic books such as *Sababaraha Nasébat Tina Qur'an Surat al-Hudjurot* (Corps Muballigh Bandung, 1971); *Jihad dan Qital*; *Darul Islam*; *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah*; *Dirasah Ilmu Hadits*; *Perbandingan Madzhab* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1986); *Risalah Wanita* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1987); *Abkamusy Syar'i*; *Risalah*

*Jum'at; Istifta: Tanya Jawab Masalah Agama* (Bandung, TB. Al-Huda, 1991); *Recik-recik Dakwah* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1993); *Renungan Tarikh* (Bandung: Sinar Baru, 1993); *Sekitar Masalah Tarawih; Takbir dan Shalat 'Ied Dilengkapi Khutbah Iedul Fitri; Hukum Qurban; Aqiqah dan Sembelihan; Petunjuk Praktis Ibadah Haji; Mernakheun Hukum dina Agama; Syiatu 'Ali;* and others.

He died on Thursday, April 21, 1983 at Hasan Sadikin Hospital due to asthma. E. Abdurrahman was buried in the cemetery of Karang Anyar, Bandung. One of his youngest sons, Deddy Rahman (d. 2018), is known as a popular *'ulamā'* in Bandung.

### **On Book Sababaraha Naséhat Tina Qur'an Surat Al-Hudjurot**

In this section, I discuss about the authorship and methodology of Qur'anic commentary in E. Abdurrahman's book *Sababaraha Naséhat*. It is important to clarify behind the discourse practice of E. Abdurrahman in producing the Qur'anic commentary text. I argue that the reformist Islam discourse in his book of Qur'anic commentary cannot be separated from the ideology of reformist Islam that disseminated by him as a chairman of Persis in Bandung.

As already explained, there are no many scholars who studied E. Abdurrahman's book *Sababaraha Naséhat*. It is not only relate to limited information about that book, but also not easy to access this Sundanese *tafsir* book. E. Abdurrahman's book of the Qur'anic commentary is not listed in library catalog such as UB Leiden. It is also not listed in the online public access catalog (*opac*) of the Jakarta National Library (Perpusnas). Many scholars who previously studied on E. Abdurrahman also do not list the book. There are almost no members of Persis who know about the book when I asked them. I got a copy of the book from my close friend, Aldy Istanzia Wiguna, one of Persis youth activists. He got the book from a bookseller in Bandung.

It maybe another reason why the book *Sababaraha Naséhat* cannot be accessed easily. The book is published by a privat printing company "Corps Muballigh Bandung" in 1971. The Indonesian publishers and organizations mostly no to pay attention to the documentation as well as the distribution and quality of their book products.

In addition, many Qur'anic researchers in Indonesia believe that Qur'anic commentaries in regional language are generally less popular than the Malay-Indonesian commentaries. This view point related to the decline in number of native speakers of regional languages in Indonesia. The citizen of Indonesia mostly use their national language especially after Sumpah Pemuda (the Youth Pledge) in 1928. Federspiel, for instance, states that there are no many Qur'anic commentaries publications in regional language with not more than 5-10 books in each regional language. The format of commentary is also same as the Indonesian language

commentaries.<sup>39</sup> It is an assumption that is not entirely correct if we see that there are so many Qur'anic commentaries with various formats and peculiarities in regional languages including Sundanese.<sup>40</sup>

There is not much information about why E. Abdurrahman wrote his book *Sababaraha Naséhat*. He did not explain it. We can see the title, author, publisher (Corps Muballigh Bandung) and year of publishing (1971) on the front cover. The book also mentions Farida Bandung as the stencil printing company on the back cover. This book consists of 41 pages. There are two references that mentioned by E. Abdurrahman on the last page, namely *Tafsir Al-Marāghī* and *Tafsir Aḥmad Muḥbir A'zhamah* (sic!) or 'Uzhamah.

*Tafsir Al-Marāghī* or *Tafsir Al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* is written by Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī (1883-1952). He is an 'ulamā' of Egypt and a lecturer at Al-Azhar University and Darul 'Ulum University. Al-Marāghī was a student of Muḥammad 'Abduh. His older brother, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, was a rector of Al-Azhar University in the period 1928-1930 and 1935-1945.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Aḥmad Muḥbir 'Uḥmah (1909-1982) was a writer, poet and politician from Damascus who had sat in a representative assembly and has become a minister. One of his books on Qur'anic commentary is *Tafsir Ajzā' min al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.

The influence of *Tafsir Al-Marāghī* on E. Abdurrahman's *Sababaraha Naséhat* is very clear. He cites al-Marāghī's Qur'anic commentary in several places of his book. Following commentary is an example of E. Abdurrahman's citation of *Tafsir Al-Marāghī* on Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49: 2. He borrows word-by-word commentary of *Tafsir Al-Marāghī*.

39 Howard M. Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian Literature*, p. 137.

40 Jajang A Rohmana, *Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, p. 7-8.

41 Lukmanul Hakim, 'Analisis Tentang Aspek Munasabah Dalam Kitab Tafsir Al-Maraghi' (Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2006), p. 178-82; 'Adil Nuwaihīd, *Mu'jam Al-Mufasssirin Min Sadr Al-Islam Hatta Al-'asr Al-Hadir Vol. 1* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Nuwaihīd al-Saqafiyah, 1988), p. 80.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ (الحجرات: ٢)

وما نزلت هذه الآية تخلف ثابت بن قيس عن مجلس رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فدعاه اليه صلى الله عليه وسلم, فقال يا رسول الله: لقد أنزلت هذه الآية واني رجل جهير الصوت, فأخاف أن يكون عملي قد حبط, فقال عليه الصلاة والسلام: لست هناك, انك تعيش بخير وتموت بخير, وانك في أهل الجنة, فقال: رضيت ببشري رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم, لا أرفع صوتي على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أبد.<sup>1</sup>

Tafsir Al-Maraghi

Tsabit bin Qais, hidji djalmi nu teu tiasa njarios kendor. Mungkin bakatna atawa kitu biasana. Nalika nguping turun ayat nu ieu, andjeunna nangis teras-terasan. Sarta andjeunna nerangkeun ka Adi bin 'Adjlan, jen pangna tjeurik bae teh, njaeta rempan ayat ieu keunana ka dirina pribadi, sabab rumasa teu biasa sarta teu bisa ngomong kendor. Ku 'Ashim diwartoskeun ka Rasulullah. Saladjengna Rasulullah ngabeberah, saurna: "Naha andjeun teu sugema hirup terpudji, maot sjahid sarta abus ka surga?. Tsabit ngawaler: "Abdi ridlo, sarta moal deui narikkeun sora ngaluhuran soanten Nabi".<sup>2</sup>

E. Abdurrahman's Sababaraha Naséhat

Thabit bin Qais cannot speak softly. It maybe his innate or habit. When he heard this Qur'anic verse (Q.49:2) come down, he kept crying. He explained to Adi bin 'Ajlan that he was crying. He was afraid this Qur'anic verse was related to him, because he felt unusual and could not speak softly. 'Asim then told the Messenger of Allah (Rasulullah). He (Rasulullah) comforted him by saying: "Are you not happy to live laudably, then die as a martyr and go to heaven?" Tsabit replied: "I am happy and will no longer speak in a load voice above the voice of the Prophet."

Translation

Therefore, the table shows that Qur'anic commentary of *Sababaraha Naséhat* follows *Tafsir al-Marāghī* in the commentary of Qur'anic verses by giving the commentary of each one or two verses. E. Abdurrahman divides the interpretation

of *sūrah Al-Hujurat/49* into seven sub-headings of the discussion, almost all sub-headings contain prohibition sentences: 1) *ulah kokolot begog* (don't feel like a wiseacre as well as an old man); 2) *ulah songong belengong* (don't be often speak without manners); 3) *gara-wak-goro-wok* (don't scream); 4) *ulah taklid tapi kudu taliti* (don't be *taqlid* but must be careful); 5) *ulah babantu burung sosoroh gelo* (don't help "crazy people" and ask him for work); 6) *panjakit nu marwa berewit* (the illness brings misery); 7) *iman kudu djeung prakna* (faith must be accompanied by deeds).<sup>42</sup>

E. Abdurrahman's commentary method is a *tahlili* or analytical interpretation. It is the explanation of the verses sequentially in broad discussion.<sup>43</sup> There is the subtitles first, then displayed the Arabic Qur'anic script, translated into Sundanese and finally interpreted by him. However, E. Abdurrahman also emphasizes the unity of *surah Al-Hujurat* which is integrated into the general theme of Islamic social ethics. He calls it *surah al-muaddibah* or education verses which contains education, teaching, advice and reminders. He states in the introduction:

*Ku para shahabat, surat Al-Hudjurot sok disebut atanapi dilandi surat "Al-Muaddibah", hartosna "Pendidikan"; tegesna nu ngadidik, nu pinuh ku piwuruk, piwedjang, pepeling sareng poko papakem agama. Ku margi eta, katjida lajakna djadi babatsan sareng bahan utama para Muballigh sareng Muballighat.*<sup>44</sup>

Translation: *Surah al-Hujurat* was called or given a nickname *surah al-mu'addibah* by the companions. Its meaning is education, learning; admonition, advice, reminders and principles of religious rules. Therefore, it is very worthy of being the main studies and source material of preacher (*muballigh* and *muballighat*).

It is important to note that the purpose of E. Abdurrahman's commentary of *surah al-hujurat* to educate, learn and advice, as well as the main source for the preachers or religious speakers. Therefore, the discussion of Qur'anic commentary of the *surah* is divided by E. Abdurrahman into seven sub-headings as already mentioned. It is making easier for the preachers to explain one by one the verses that will be delivered when they delivered religious speech. This is understandable, because E. Abdurrahman was aware of the needs of the preachers in the Persis organization. They needed many source materials of speech to spread the teachings of reformist Islam which at that time was more dominated by religious speeches and sermons.

Meanwhile, the methodology of Qur'anic commentary in the book *Sababaraha Nasehat* is dominated by citation of *hadith*, the opinion of companions, *tabi'in* and

42 E. Abdurrahman, *Sababaraha Nasehat*, 2.

43 'Abd al- ayy Al-Farmāwī, *Al-Bidayah Fi Al-Tafsir Al-Maudu'i* (Mesir: Matba'ah al-Hadarah al-'Arabiyah, 1977), 24.

44 E. Abdurrahman, *Sababaraha Nasehat*, 3.

'*ulamā*' of the Qur'ān and *tafsīr*. One of preeminents of this *tafsīr* is the use of the *asbāb al-nuzūl*. E. Abdurrahman always begins his commentary with *asbāb al-nuzūl* entitle "*kadjadian anu patali djeung turunna ieu ajat*" (events related to the descent of this verse). He, for instance, explains *asbāb al-nuzūl* of Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49: 1 before his commentary which is given the subtitle *ulah kokolot begog* (do not be a wiseacre like an old man).

*Abdu 'llah bin azZubair njaurkeun kieu: "Parantos dongkap ka Rasulullah hidji rombongan ti Bani Tamim, saladjengna Abu Bakar njaurkeun: "Alqa'qa bin Mabad angkat djadi pamingpin (Amir)!". Ladjeng Umar njaurkeun: "Al Agra' bin Habis angkat djadi pamingpin!". Abu Bakar ngawaler: "Andjeun mah teu mikarep anging sangkan teu saluju!" Saur Umar: "Teu pisan-pisan!" saladjengna djadi adu renjom, sarta sorana patarik-tarik".<sup>45</sup>*

Translation: 'Abdullah bin az-Zubair says this: "there is a group of Bani Tamim who come to Rasulallah. Abu Bakr then said: "Al-Qa'qa bin Mabad who will go to be a leader (amir)!." Umar then said: "Al-Agra' bin Habis who went to be a leader!." Abu Bakr then replied: "You don't really want it, other than to disagree (on my opinion)!" Umar said: "Not at all!." They then become arguing with each other with loud voices each other."

Above explanation shows that E. Abdurrahman started in his Qur'anic commentary with *asbāb al-nuzūl* and then sometimes used opinions of companions and '*ulamā*' of the Qur'ān and *tafsīr*, and the commentary of E. Abdurrahman himself. Therefore, E. Abdurrahman at the end of his commentary explain the Qur'anic verse based on his reason or *tafsīr bi al-ra'y*. His Sundanese tends to be rhythmic (*murwakanti*) in some places of his *tafsīr* and also uses Sundanese proverbs. In addition, his commentaries, as will be explained, also influenced by social and religious issues (*al-ijtimā'i*). He responses some issues based on his ideology as a reformist Islamic activist with remains focuse to commentary the verse.

## Reformist Islam Commentary of QS. Al-Hujurāt

This section will explain the message of reformist Islamic ideology in Qur'anic commentary of E. Abdurrahman's *Sababaraha Nasebat*. This is important to clarify the context of socio-cultural practice that is outside the text. According to Fairclough, text discourse analysis is not only related to linguistic aspects, but also discourse practice in the production and consumption of texts as well as sociocultural practices that are

<sup>45</sup> E. Abdurrahman, *Sababaraha Nasebat*, 5.

outside the text.<sup>46</sup> The socio-cultural practices of E. Abdurrahman as the Chairman of Persis, his activities as preacher, and teacher of pesantren then influenced him in producing discourses of reformist Islamic ideology in his *tafsir*.

In other words, E. Abdurrahman's position as Persis activist makes his commentary of the Qur'an was influenced by ideology reformist Islam, even though the verses related to social ethical issues in *sūrah Al-Hujurat*. It can be seen to the issues in his Qur'anic commentary such as opposing *taqlid* and heresy. Following explanation shows some examples of Qur'anic reformist commentary of E. Abdurrahman in his book *Sababaraha Naséhat*.

### ***Practicing Islam based on the textual instructions***

E. Abdurrahman, for instance, explains that Muslims must perform the religious practice of Islam based on proposition derived from of the Qur'an and ḥadīth. It can be seen to his commentary when explain Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49: 1. He interprets it as a prohibition on practicing Islam if there are no *dalil* or textual instructions of the Qur'an and ḥadīth.

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ  
(الحجرات: ١)

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“La tuqaddimu baina jadaji ‘ILahi waRasulihī”, maksud-na ulah njajahoanan, padahal lain wewenang maneh, lain tugas maneh... Dina sjarah AzZamachsjarī (T.538) : “la ta'malu ‘amalan duna an tatabajjanu hukma'ILahi wa Rasulihī”. Poma maneh rek migawe hidji ‘amal tanpa nalungtik neangan dalil djeung katerangan hukum Allah djeung RasulNa”. Saur Ibnu ‘Abbas: “La taqulu chilafa ‘lKitabi wa’ sSunnati”. “Poma maneh rek njaritakeun anu teu mokprok djeung Qur’an sarta Sunnah Nabi”.... Tjindekna deui, teu tjukup ku ngaku iman, tapi kudu djeung bukti tha’at, hartina nurut parentah, sarta naon hartina tha’at lamun migawe bari parentahna teu aja. Anu kitu dina urusan ‘ibadah mah lain tha’at, tapi bid’ah, njajahoanan, majunanan, migawe perkara luar wewenang.<sup>3</sup>

E. Abdurrahman's  
Sababaraha  
Naséhat

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46 Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 87.

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<Lā tuqaddimū bain yadaillāh wa rasūlih> “put not yourselves forward before Allah and His messenger” means that do not be wiseacre if it is not your authority, not your duty ... Az-Zamakhsyari (T.538) said in his shara: Do not do a deed without find textual instructions and evidence of the law of Allah and His Messenger.” Ibn ‘Abbas said: “Lā taqūlū khilāf al-kitāb wa al-sunnah. Do not tell what is not in accordance (in line) with the Qur’ān and the Sunna.” Therefore, it is not enough claim to be a believer, but you must give evidence with obedient. It means that you are obeying orders. What it means to obey if you do good deeds but there is no orders? That is not obedience of worship, but heresy, wiseacre, getting ahead, doing things outside the authority.

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Translation

Above explanation of E. Abdurrahman shows that Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49: 1 which forbids “to put not yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger” was driven by him into the idea of reformist Islam on prohibition against practicing Islam if there are no *dalil* or the textual instructions of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. He emphasized that it is supposed to practice Islam in accordance with the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. Therefore, practicing Islam means having to wait for orders, because it is not being obedient to do good deed without any orders. E. Abdurrahman called it a heresy, wiseacre, going ahead and doing good deed outside of the authority. E. Abdurrahman said *ulah kokolot begog* (don’t be wiseacre like an old man).

According to reformist Muslims, Allah and the Prophet Muhammad have sent down completely rules through the textual instructions of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. Therefore, all Islamic practices should not deviate from the textual instructions. If you make a new instructions of worship outside of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth, you were regarded deviate and wrong.<sup>47</sup> Reformist Muslims believe that the Qur’ān and Sunna are absolutes, and contain within themselves the answers for the challenges of modernity. The answers can be identified literally. Literalism is linguistic and historical and directly defines law, ethics and political philosophy for all eras of Islam, including one’s own. All Muslims, in particular the ‘*ulama*’, have a duty to show a will to action in identifying answers<sup>48</sup>.

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47 Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology*, 129.

48 M.B. Hooker, *Indonesian Islam: Social Change through Contemporary Fatawa* (Honolulu: University of Hawa’i Press, 2003), 29.



Therefore, it can be understandable if E. Abdurrahman also proposed this matter, even though his commentary on *asbāb al-nuzūl* was not directly related to the issue of obedience to the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. The verse of Q. 49:1 was related to the argument between Abu Bakr and Umar in the matter of who deserves to be the leader of the Banu Tamim clan.

### ***Do not Taqlid***

In addition to the prohibition of wiseacre in practicing Islam before find the textual instructions, E. Abdurrahman also interpreted Q. 49:6 that giving order to clarify and recheck a piece of news. He draws his commentary into the prohibition of *taqlid*. It is a term used in Muslim jurisprudence for uncritically accepting legal and theological fatwa of an ulama. E. Abdurrahman's Qur'anic commentary was influenced by his reformist Islamic ideology as a Persis activist. He emphasizes to clarify the textual instructions directly into the Qur'ān and ḥadīth before accepting and practicing Islamic jurisprudence. It is not just following *fatwa* of religious teachers or '*ulamā*.'

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ

مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ (الحجرات: ٦)

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Pikeun nu boga iman, wadajib taliti ulah gantjang pertjaja, saperti ulah gantjang ngabohongkeun, tapi pariksa heula mun agama tanjakeun Qur'anna djeung Haditsna, mun kabar biasa, talungtik sarta udji bebeneranana. Ulah mangtaun-taun mibentji djelema, sihareng eta teh pembela utama. Rasulu'llah parantos pupus, tapi urang teu kaleungiteun adjaranana. Tetep urang katablegan ku Rasulu'llah. Andjeunna parantos ngawaritskeun Qur'an djeung Hadits Shahih, anu djadi djaminan moal sasar, dina sagala lapangan, boh dina agama, ibadah, dagang, tani, kuli, rumah tangga atawa sosobatan. Mun kaputusan agama teu sarua djeung kahajang nafsu, maka kudu jakin lain kahajang anu kudu ngelehkeun agama tapi karep kahajang anu kudu disalaraskeun djeung agama. Sabab, teu aja hukum agama anu bangga, mun kaidahna, ngarobah kahajang sina sapagodos djeung adjakan agama, -

E. Abdurrahman's  
Sababaraha  
Naséhat

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sarta sakabeh masalah agama, djadi sulit djadi rumit rumpil, mun mikir-mikir kumaha ngusad-ngised hukum sangkan ngadeukeutan kana kahajang nafsu.<sup>4</sup>

E. Abdurrahman's Sababaraha Naséhat

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For those who have faith, you must be careful, don't be quick to believe (news), like don't be quick to assume (it) a lie, but check it first. If it is religious (doctrine), ask (teachers) on the Qur'an and Hadith (instructions) first. If it is regular or not religious news, you must doing the research and test the truth (of news). Do not hating someone years, he turns out to be the main defender (of Islam). Rasulullah has died, but we have not lost his teachings. He preached us. He has inherited the Qur'an and authentic Hadiths which guarantee that we will not go astray, in all fields (of life), whether religion, worship, trade, farming, labor, household or friendship. If religion instructions are not appropriate with our lust, we believe that it is not our lust must defeat the religion but our lust must be harmonized with the religion. There is no difficult in religious law, because its rule can change our lust to conform the religious demands. Religious matters will be difficult and complicated, if you think about how to shift the religious law drew near our lust.

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Translation

E. Abdurrahman's explanation shows that he draws a common thread between the Qur'anic verses on filtering the news and the prohibition of *taqlid*. According to him, the believers must be careful, do not easily believe, check first. If it is a matter of religion, ask the textual instructions of the Qur'an and hadith. This is an opinion which confirms the importance of *ittiba'* or opposite *taqlid*. It is a term used in Muslim jurisprudence for critically accepting legal and theological decisions of a teacher with directly confirm to the Qur'an and hadith. E. Abdurrahman says that Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49: 6 is important to be connected with the reformist Islamic ideas on prohibition of *taqlid* and encourage to looking for textual instructions of the Qur'an and hadith. This is different from the traditionalist Muslims who allow laities or non expert Muslims to follow the opinion of their religious teachers, rather than studying textual instructions of the Qur'an and hadith that are impossible for everyone to do.

***Helping those who are following textual instructions of the Qur'an and ḥadīth***

The last thing of the reformist Islam ideology in E. Abdurrahman's Qur'anic commentary is his prohibition to help Muslims who do not follow "the path of truth" (*ulah babantu burung sosoroh gelo* in the sub-title), on the contrary helping anyone who is on "the path of truth." According to E. Abdurrahman, Muslims who follow "the path of truth" are those who exclusively follow the Qur'an and ḥadīth. It means that Muslims are the adherents of reformist Islamic ideology only. It is not traditionalist Muslims who uncritically follow their teacher learnings or *taqlid*. We believe that E. Abdurrahman's commentary in his *Sababaraha Nasehat* published privately inside of Persis members. It is difficult to look for clarification why E. Abdurrahman is very unfriendly to people whose ideologies are not the same as his. E. Abdurrahman, for instance, emphasized his argument when interprets Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49: 9-10 on the order to uphold peace and believers brotherhood.

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وَأَنْ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَعَثَ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْآخَرَىٰ  
فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (٩) إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخْوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تُرحَمُونَ (١٠) (الحجرات: ٩-١٠)

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Ulah Babantu Burung Sosoroh Gelo

Ieu ajat marentahkeun sangkan salilana djadi pembantu pikeun anu bener, anu memang kabeneranana geus diudji. Tegesna lain dasarna dedengean, sabab hese beresna lamun geus aja tjampur tangan fihak luar, anu bertindak djadi DORNA... Ari pangna bisa dibereskeun, sabab mu'min mah dulur, puguh indung bapana. Sarta dulur dina Islam puguh Qur'an-Haditsna, anu tangtu kadinja pitundukeun turutna ("Muntasikun ila ashlin wahidin")... Teu aja djalma-djalma anu beriman, anging pasti dulur. Tjindekna kaduluran anu hakiki mah ngan duduluran anu beriman djeung anu beriman deui, anu sa Qur'an sarta sa Hadits... Djalma anu beriman dina enggoning hirupna, kudu berdasarkan Qur'an djeung Hadits. Poma rek njanjahanan. Supaja adjaran Rasul katarima sarta njerep, maka kudu aja rasa hormat ka anu ngadjar, kudu aja kasopanan, diatur ti mimiti lentong basana,

E. Abdurrahman's  
Sababaraha  
Naséhat

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nepi kana rengkuhna. Sarta supaja ulah kapalsu, dina agama sing taliti. Poma ulah nurutan anu teu ngarti kana harga pangadjen Rasul, harga pangadjen agama. Djadikeun agama alat pangrapih. Tinangtu gampang beresna lamun rasa djadi dulur anu katalian iman di palihara.<sup>5</sup>

E. Abdurrahman's  
Sababaraha  
Naséhat

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Do not help Muslims who do not follow the path of truth.

Translation

This verse commands to be a helper for the truth forever. The truth has been verified. It is not basically just listening in truth, because it is difficult to finished if there is an intervention from outsiders people who act as Dorna (a figure known as a instigator) ... It must be finished, because the believers are a brother who clear their mothers and fathers. The believers are brothers and sisters in Islam who clearly make reference to the Qur'ān and Hadith. They bent in submission and follow (hold on to one principle) ... There are no believers, but surely brothers. The real brotherhood is only the brotherhood of the believers who have common references of the Qur'ān and Hadith ... The believers must be based on the Qur'ān and Hadith in their lifes. So do not "wiseacre." You must be respect for those who teach in order the teaching of the Messenger to be accepted and permeated by you. There is must be courtesy and it must be arranged from the way of speak to the manners. This is important in order not to be deceived by the false. You must be careful in practicing the religion. Do not follow people who do not understand the value of appreciating the Messenger and appreciating the religion. Make the religion as a tool for your improvement. It is so easy to finished if the sense of brotherhood in faith is preserved.

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Above explanation shows that E. Abdurrahman emphasized to help those who follow the truth. They are believers who clearly make references to the Qur'ān and ḥadīth or who have common references of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. He argues that the truth belongs only to those who are clearly make references to the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. This argument aims at the reformist Muslims where E. Abdurrahman belong to Persis organization. The reformist Muslims are known to be the most active in

promoting the slogan “back to the Qur’ān and ḥadīth.” E. Abdurrahman then advised in order not to be deceived by the false and must be careful in practicing the religion. He said that do not follow people who do not understand the value of appreciating the Messenger and appreciating the religion. His view point clearly narrows the Qur’anic commentary on the brotherhood among believers into the reformist Muslim community who have common references of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. This is interesting that there is an ideologization of Qur’anic meaning on brotherhood which was originally a brotherhood of all believers has become a brotherhood of the reformist Muslim. He has limited the meaning of brotherhood into the reformist Muslims as the owner of the truth according to himself. They were regarded as the owner of the truth, because their references to the textual instructions of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth.

This is different from the view point of traditionalist Muslims who do not directly make references to the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. They encourage the importance of respecting the *‘ulamā’* and the Islamic traditions as the first step to practising Islam before they refer to the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. According to traditionalist Muslims, both the Qur’ān and ḥadīth are considered the primary sources. However, referring directly to both the Qur’ān and ḥadīth without going through the *‘ulamā’* and Islamic traditions is too reckless. The *‘ulamās* as the inheritors of the Prophets are believed to be the most authoritative in exploring the teachings of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. Therefore, it is important for the believers to respect them and maintain their traditions. This is one thing that distinguishes the ideology of traditionalists Muslims from reformist Muslims.

Therefore, E. Abdurrahman’s *Sababaraha Nasébat* shows the thought of reformist Muslim activist on *sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt*. This *surah* contains etiquette and norms to be observed in the Muslim community, including the proper conduct towards the Islamic prophet, an injunction against acting on news without verification, a call for peace and reconciliation, as well injunctions against defamation, suspicion, and backbiting. However, according to the reformist Muslim commentator, the meaning of the *surah* was drawn into the important of textual instructions of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth in practising Islam, the prohibition of *taqlīd*, and strengthening of reformist Muslims who making references to the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. This is what Fairclough calls a discourse in a text that cannot be separated from discourse practice in producing the text, the consumption of text, and sociocultural practice that is outside the text.<sup>49</sup> The discourse in the text of *Sababaraha Nasébat* is determined by E. Abdurrahman’s position as a reformist Muslim activist as well as a chairman of

49 Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 87.

Persis. He very interested in strengthening and disseminating the idea of reformist Islam that is not only for Persis followers, who are mostly Sundanese, but also other Sundanese people especially traditionalist Muslim in West Java.

E. Abdurrahman realized that the idea of Persis on Islamic purification conflict with the culture of traditionalist Muslim of NU. He believes that Qur'anic commentary works can be one of channels in disseminating the reformist Islam idea. E. Abdurrahman who has been studied at Madrasah Al-T'annah Cianjur which affiliated with NU, he mastered various knowledge of traditionalist Muslim such as Qur'anic commentary, ḥadīth, *fiqh*, Islamic theology and others. According to Yunus, the curricula of Indonesian Islamic school inserted Qur'an teaching in the early education of Indonesian Muslims.<sup>50</sup> It can be understood that E. Abdurrahman's skills in Qur'anic interpretation comes from his early educational background in Cianjur.

He realized that Qur'anic commentary became one of the fields which can be used to disseminate the idea of reformist Islam. Meanwhile, the use of Sundanese language relates to his awareness as a Muslim of Priangan. He know that Sundanese Muslims who lived in Priangan villages were mostly still use Sundanese language. Therefore, the use of Sundanese is an effective channel in distributing the ideas of reformist Islam of Persis. Therefore, E. Abdurrahman hoped that his work is not only can be read by Persis followers who are generally Sundanese, but also Sundanese readers of traditional Islam followers.

## Conclusion

This article argues that the Qur'anic commentary in Indonesia cannot be separated from its socio-religious context. E. Abdurrahman's *Sababaraha Nasébat* was used as a means of conveying the reformist ideas against traditionalist Muslims in West Java. E. Abdurrahman as the second ideologist of Persis after A. Hassan has an interest in order to encourage the formation of a reformist Muslims discourse in his religious publications. E. Abdurrahman was a chairman of Persis in the period 1962-1983. He is regarded as greatly contributing to the institutionalism of Islamic education in the Persatuan Islam milieu. He did not use the *Jalalayn* in his *tafsir* classes. Instead, he taught the *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. He was known as one of the main activist of Persis who supported mission to purifies Islam back to the Qur'an and ḥadīth and prohibition *taqlid* and heresy although he accepted classical *tafsir*. E. Abdurrahman then integrates the ideological messages of reformist Muslims into his Qur'anic commentary of *sūrah Al-Hujurāt*. This can be seen in the interpretation of Q.S. 49: 1

50 Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Hidakarya Agung, 1984), 24.

which is understood as a prohibition against practicing Islam if there are no textual instructions or *dalil* of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. He also interpreted the Q.S. 49: 6 on recheck the news which was understood as a form of prohibition against *taqlid*. Finally, he interprets Q.S. 49: 9-10 which emphasizes the strengthening of followers of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. Using Faiclough's critical discourse analysis, this study shows that the text discourse is a product of discourse practices, discourse consumption and socio-cultural practices outside the text. So that it can be understandable if the ideological discourse of the reformist Muslims permeates into E. Abdurrahman's *Sababaraha Nasehat*. We believe that E. Abdurrahman's commentary in his *Sababaraha Nasehat* published privately inside of Persis members. It is difficult to look for clarification why E. Abdurrahman is very unfriendly to people whose ideologies are not the same as his. His exclusive commentary to the Muslim traditionalist is different with Persis organization that considered progressive. There is always a possibility that a Chairman of an organisation wrote something, but it never be used by his followers for certain reasons. The ideologization of Qur'anic commentary generally emerged in the commentary works of theology, mysticism, philosophy, and sciences in the Middle East. However, the ideologization of Qur'anic commentary in Indonesia emerge from the competition between two ideologies, reformist and traditionalist Islam. The works of E. Abdurrahman represent how a reformist Muslim integrates his reformist ideology into his commentary.

### **Supplementary Materials**

The data presented in this study are available in [insert article or supplementary material here] (Usually the datasets were analyzed from library research can be found in the whole data references ).

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### **Authors' contributions**

All listed authors contribute to this article. R.N. wrote the original draft, reviewed and edited it, conceptualised the study and managed the project administration, responsible for the methodology and validation. J.A.R. wrote the formal analysis and compiled the resources, wrote the visualisation and supervised the project.

### **Data availability statement**

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

### Conflict of interests

None of the authors of this study has a financial or personal relationship with other people that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the study.

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