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Islam in Politics and Dakwah: A Reflection from Bapak Mohammad Natsir (1908-1993)

Nadzrah Ahmad^{*}
Ahmad Nabil Amir^{}**

Abstract

This paper discusses the historical struggle of Bapak Mohammad Natsir (1908-1993) in the fields of politics and dakwah in Indonesia. It analyzes his contributions in raising the spectre of Islamic politics and dakwah driven by his significant struggle in *Masyumi* (Muslims Consultative Council of Indonesia), and *DDII* (Islamic Missionary Chamber of Indonesia), as well as from his substantive writings on the political ideal and aspiration of dakwah in Islam. The qualitative methodology is employed in this research in which materials that are related to the Mohammad Natsir are analyzed. Findings reveal that considerable contribution of Mohammad Natsir to the Muslims can be reckoned especially in the area of Islamic propagation and political organization of Indonesia.

Keyword: Mohammad Natsir, politic, propagation, Islam, Indonesia.

Introduction

Mohammad Natsir (1908-1993) was the leading figure of Masyumi who has contributed significantly in the political struggle and dakwah movement in Indonesia. He has contributed immensely in developing an inclusive conception of Islamic nationalism, which embraces the ideological principle of democracy and constituency as enshrined in the basic pillars of Pancasila, based on "the ideal and values of Divinity, humanity, unity, consensus, and social justice".¹

His struggle was essentially rooted in the conscious understanding of cultural and religious ideal that embraces diversity of thought, culture

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¹ Yusrizal, Dj. M.H. "Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara: Analisis Pemikiran Politik M. Natsir dan Hubungannya dengan Munculnya Ide Kembali Ke Piagam Jakarta." Unpublished Working Paper, 2010, 3.

and ideology. His political philosophy and ideal and da'wah aspiration was unmistakably represented in his fight and struggle for reconstruction and reform and in rallying Islamic ideals and its constructive paradigms.

This profound aspirations and ideals and dynamic vision and life's attitudes are clearly revealed from George McT's pronouncements, drawing the figures of Pak Natsir: "Last of the giants among Indonesia's nationalist and revolutionary political leaders, he [Mohammad Natsir] undoubtedly had more influence on the course of Islamic thought and politics in postwar Indonesia than any of his contemporaries. By nature extraordinarily modest and unpretentious, he had a well-deserved reputation for personal integrity and political probity. He always lived simply with respect to house and attire, even in 1950 as prime minister. (When I first met him in 1948 and he was the Republic's minister of information, I found a man in what was surely the most mended shirt of any official in Yogyakarta; it was his only shirt...)"¹

Methodology

This research was strategically designed to investigate Muhammad Natsir's main ideas and viewpoints of Islamic dakwah and politics. It was conducted based on qualitative research that qualitatively analysed Muhammad Natsir's key works relating to Islamic ethics, dakwah and politics such as *Capita Selecta*, *Fiqhud Da'wah*, *Qur'an en Evangelie*, *(Prophet) Mohammad als Profeet (saw)*, *Cultur Islam*, *Politik melalui Jalur Dakwah*, *Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia* (compiled by Endang Saifuddin Ansari), *Indonesia di Persimpangan Jalan* (1984), *Islam sebagai Dasar Negara, Dari Masa ke Masa*, *World of Islam Festival dalam Perspektif Sejarah* and etc. The research materials were gathered and the data was scientifically analysed using historical and comparative analysis in order to identify Natsir's characteristics approach and perspective to encounter the problems of dakwah and politics in contemporary Indonesia and Islamic world at large.

Findings: Preliminary

The finding shows that the significant legacy Muhammad Natsir and his important contributions lie in his articulate vision of political Islam that was inclusive and rational and the deeply effective and strategic method of dakwah he expounded. The historic and momentous contributions of

¹ George McT.Kahin. "In Memoriam: Mohammad Natsir (1907-1993)." *Indonesia*, 56 (Oct): 158-165, 1993.

Natsir and the progressive vision he projected had significant bearing in the development of unprecedented and profound religious thought in Indonesia. It represents the significant effort to reconstruct a modern and dynamic outlook of socio and cultural history of Indonesia by a leading and revolutionary political leader. His revolutionary ideas had brought forth the inclusive and dynamic future in the nation's history of Indonesia.

His Life

Natsir was born in Alahan Panjang, Lembah Gumanti, (about 30 miles south) of Solok, West Sumatra on July 17, 1908 and grew up in a family of Minangkabau origin. His father was recruited as a clerk in the civil office in Alahan Panjang. He was primarily educated in school of Indonesian vernacular, who has no background in Dutch (Netherlands) since the school HIS [Hollandsch-Inlandsche School] (primary school founded in the Dutch colonial era) has not yet been established in its area. His mother too can only read Indonesian.¹

Natsir was admitted into private schools in Padang in the following years. He then continued his studied at the Hollands-Inlandse school in Solok, which lasted for three years, and after finishing school he was enrolled in a religious madrasah run by the disciple of Haji Rasul (Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, a scholar who introduced Muhammadiyah in East Sumatra and founded modern school of Sumatra Thawalib in Padang Panjang). Natsir then earned a scholarship that enabled him to further his study to MULO (1923-27) and after that entered AMS (Algemene Middle School), a prestigious high school in Bandung, where he graduated in 1930.

According to Natsir, AMS is the only institution in Indonesia that offers a Western classical study, and this is appealing to him. Natsir studied Latin from Van Bassem, the school's rector, who was an expert on Greek's culture and Latin philosophy. He also studied English, Dutch, French, German, and Arabic. His schoolmates, including Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Mohamad Roem, Jusuf Wibisono and Sutan Sjahrir who soon became important figures. The influence played by Van Bassem, in shaping Natsir's political outlook, is clearly evident from his devotion to the political developments and progress in Indonesia and the spirit of freedom inculcated in his students, as revealed by Natsir: "he was unique, admired by his students and possessed great magnitude and impact on them ... we saw him as a mentor, because he was more than a teacher."

¹ Ibid.

Bassem also handed to them political books, where he often described and discussed it with us between classrooms and analyzed it in the context of independence "sometimes you have to be independent."¹

In Bandung, Natsir is a radical Islamic student and activist. He actively supported the reform movement carried out by the Persatuan Islam, an organization founded by Ahmad Hassan, the ideologue and pioneer of Kaum Muda movement in Bandung, who witnessed the active participation of Natsir, while still studying at AMS. History records that Natsir "really had an organizational relationship with the Persatuan Islam (Persis) in Bandung"² and he has contributed his writings in the journal *Pembela Islam* (Islamic Defenders), published in 1928 by the Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union) as its platform in the revolutionary movement and in rallying the ideas of reform.

Persatuan Islam aspired for modern idealism and the pursuit of genuine reforms that convinced Natsir of its crucial importance that worked to formulate "Islamic social and political systems" and "its influence was more rooted and developed in the villages."³

Natsir also joined the Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB-Young Muslim Union), a movement led by Hadji Agus Salim (1884-1954) and Mohammad Roem (1908-1983) of younger generation in 1925. Jong sought to advocate a strong national spirit, and promote the image of Islam as a religion and ideological movement. Natsir actively regulates programs for enlightenment and education for its members, proclaiming toleration among religious community and building a strong national and Islamic identity. Jong also produced the magazine *al-Nur* (in Dutch, *Het Licht*) as its official platform for voicing the demand for reform. Jong made contact with modernist movements and its leaders such as Muhammadiyah and Persis, mobilized by activists such as Kasman Singodimejo, Mohammad Roem, Syafruddin Prawira and Mohammad Natsir. Natsir then promoted as the leader and representative of its branch.⁴

His consciousness of struggles through educational efforts in spreading Islam led Natsir to decline scholarships to continue his study in law in Batavia (Jakarta) and Rotterdam School of Economics, selecting instead for

¹ Ibid.

² Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*. Sholihat, ed. Jakarta: Gema Insani 1999, p. 29.

³ George McT.Kahin. "In Memoriam: Mohammad Natsir (1907-1993)", 158.

⁴ Dardiri Husni, "Jong Islamieten Bond: A Study of a Muslim Youth Movement in Indonesia During the Dutch Colonial Era, 1924-1942." MA thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill University, Montreal 1998; Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, 28.

School of Educational Training for non-European trainers, and spent two years there In 1932. At the end of that year he founded Pendidikan Islam [Islamic Education] (*Pendis*), the organization he led from 1942, which mobilized changes and educational reforms. His momentous effort and direct involvement in the educational programs had raised its significance and strength in the curriculum standard. It charted the "liberal orientation in a new trend as it was being developed at that time in Germany by *Arbeid Schulen* - which emphasized practical education" and was introduced in schools where students were teach with agricultural skill.¹

His Works

"In that way, I have no doubt that in times Mr. M. Natsir or author A. Muchlis would rise forward to lead his nation"² (ZA Ahmad, preface to *Capita Selecta*).

Muhammad Natsir had produced substantive works throughout his career that extensively addressed the broad issues of da'wah, politics, society and religion. His writings manifest well-articulated ideas and features profound Islamic ideals with convincing and persuasive arguments. In this case, Prof. Thohir Luth affirmed: "M. Natsir's scientific works covering wide ranging topics of social, political, economic, educational, da'wah and others. One sequel chain of priority in the works is of showing Islam as its main trend."³

Among his well-known and widely acclaimed works is *Capita Selecta* (compiled by DP Sati Alimin), *Fiqhud Da 'wah* (compiled by SU Bayasut), *Qur'an en Evangelie*, *Mohammad als Profeet (saw)*, *Cultur Islam*, *Politik melalui Jalur Dakwah*, *Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia* (compiled by Endang Saifuddin Ansari), *Indonesia di Persimpangan Jalan* (1984) [Indonesia at the Crossroads], *Islam sebagai Dasar Negara* [Islam as State Policy], *Dari Masa ke Masa*, *World of Islam Festival dalam Perspektif Sejarah* and etc. These prolific works in the themes of da'wah, aqidah, ethics, politics [*siasah*], hadith [tradition], tafsir [exegesis], *sirah*, biography, culture and Islamic arts are the greatest cultural treasures that he pass down to Muslims in Indonesia: "The articulative way of M. Natsir's poured down in various highly authoritative works, became a historical record for Islamic heritage in Indonesia."⁴

¹ George McT.Kahin. "In Memoriam: Mohammad Natsir (1907-1993)", 158.

² ZA Ahmad (preface). In M. Natsir, *Capita Selecta*. vol. 2, Jakarta: Pustaka Pendis, 1961, 5.

³ Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, 28.

⁴ Ibid, 27

Natsir writes and outlines ideological and political understanding at the right times, and its presence was a "continuing links and enduring sequel of unbroken trail in Islamic ideology."¹ His writings sparks a fire of struggle and new spirit and confidence with the sound of "trumpet calling for the holy *jihad*," "rhythmic and vibrant."

His writings published in journals and periodicals such as *Pembela Islam* [Islamic Defenders] (Bandung), *Suara Republik*, *Panji Islam* (Medan), *Hikmah*, *Abadi*, *Pedoman Masyarakat*, *al-Manar* and others, by the pen name of A Muchlis have raised Natsir as the gallant ideologist ... "that sounded the trumpets with drums of war" that are waged and "portrayed in an exceptional way", the pen's name of an author from generation lacking in ideology, which shows the great writer's aspirations, with massive polemics and spirited themes that "still hold spirited leadership of the present generation."²

The first work of Natsir *Cultur Islam* written with C.P. Wolf Kemal Schoemaker, was considered by Soekarno as "a very important writing for the intellectual circles of Indonesia who at that time were more appreciative of the writings in Dutch rather than in Indonesian."³

On *Fiqhud-Da'wah* and *Capita Selecta*

Fiqhud-Da'wah: Djedjak Risalah dan Dasar-Dasar Da'wah (Mohammad Natsir 2000) [*The law of da'wah: the footprints of the Messenger's (saw) mission and the foundations of da'wah*] is an important work that explores the significant principle and ideological bases and ideals of da'wah. He outlines the significant and inclusive *manhaj* that embrace the values of *maqasid* and moderate and justly balanced thought and standpoint. The aspiration of dakwah he articulated and expressed is a definite formulation of the finest ideals and thought of da'wah that Bapak Natsir gave.

This work contains the writing and substantive collection of *tausiyah* of Pak Natsir about the aspirations of *da'wah*. He outlines the clear foundation in missionary work with wide-ranging discussion of the idealism of movement and the principles of struggle, the ultimate objective of the law and the subject matter of *Shari'a*. According to Ahmad Azam Ab Rahman, in his article "Bapak Mohammad Natsir: Apresiasi Generasi Kedua Aktivis Islam Malaysia" [Bapak Mohammad Natsir: The Appreciation of the Second Generation of Malaysian

¹ ZA Ahmad, 5.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, 28-9.

Muslim Activists] the fundamental thought and ideology of dakwah brought forth in his writings was highly significant and phenomenal. This book has been raised as a compulsory text in *usrah*: "His book *Fiqhud Da'wah* always become a standard reference in *usrah*."¹

The discussion represents precise understanding of *da'wah* and Islamic sermon, including *da'wah bil hal*, and *da'wah bil lisan*. This is shown in the discussion of the fundamental themes of *da'wah*, which emphasizes the profound understanding of its idealism and *manhaj*. Saeful Rokhman in his analysis of this work affirms: "The book of *Fiqhud Da'wah* is the main reference of every discussion of *da'wah*."²

A Representative Work

Fiqhud Da'wah presents an ideal understanding of the basic theories and principles of *da'wah*. It gives a deep insight into the fiqh of Islamic preaching, its philosophy and arguments, which is reinforced by modern and classical ideas and traditions on the issues of *da'wah*. This paper also charted a substantive understanding of *sirah* and classical history and treatises, as confirmed by Saeful Rokhman: "The book of *Fiqhud Da'wah* by Natsir can be said to be representative enough to be a classical guide for *da'i*. The content is very representative in presenting *da'wah*'s basic principles and theories."³

This significant work, which also recollect Natsir's instrumental and invaluable experience in the *da'wah* struggle in Indonesia, has placed Natsir as the ideal *da'wah* figure of the 20th century, "the worthwhile preacher"⁴, who has outlined the essence of *da'wah*'s significance and idealism, as described by Dr. Thohir Luth on the central idea encompassed in his dakwah: "In the view of M. Natsir, Islamic propagation is an invitation that comprises *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*."⁵

Kayfiyat Da'wah

This work proposes substantive *da'wah* theory that refers directly to the strategic struggle and dakwah endured by the bearers of the *risalah*. The message of *da'wah* conveyed focused on three basic discussions: (1)

¹ Ahmad Azam Ab Rahman "Bapak Mohamad Natsir (1908-1993): Apresiasi Generasi Kedua Aktivis Islam Malaysia." In *Mohammad Natsir Berdakwah di Jalur Politik Berpolitik di Jalur Dakwah*. Bangi: KUIS & WADAH, 2009, 117.

² Saeful Rokhman "Analisa terhadap buku *Fiqhud Da'wah* karya M. Natsir." *Jurnal Dakwah*. Accessed July 11, 2012. www.jurnalstidnatsir.co.ccl/2009, 139.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ajib Rosidi, *M.Natsir: Sebuah Biografi*. Jakarta: Girimukti Pasaka, 1990, 76.

⁵ Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, 1999, 80.

Hablun min Allah, mu'amalah ma'a al-Khaliq [relation with God, interaction with the Creator] (2) *Hablun minan-nas, mu'amalah ma'a al-khalqi* [relation with people, interaction with the creation] (3) Establishing balance (*tawazun*) between the two and galvanize both in tandem.¹

His discussion of *kayfiyat da'wah* contained three important headings which comprises *kaifiyat* and *adab dakwah*, learned preparation (*tafaqquh fi al-din* [comprehension of religion], *tafaqquh fi al-nas* [comprehension of people]) and wisdom and *uswah hasanah* [good example]. It expressed *kaifiyat da'wah* of the Prophet (saw) as the exponent of Islamic *risalah* with various hostility and opposition, and explains the *khittah* and approach of *da'wah bi al-hikmah*, which is entirely derived from the sunnah of the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (rad). It also reflects imbedded idealism and character of Islamic *da'wah*, which was built upon the spirit [*ruhul*] of Islam and spirit [*ruhul*] of jihad (aqidah *La ilaha illa-llah*), as pronounced by Natsir: "The trace of the *risalah* is the mandate of da'wah that is bestowed on the best human of all times, Prophet Muhammad Rasulullah (saw), in order to giving life and realizing-perfecting human beings that really conscious and live."²

Da 'wah bi al-Hikmah

The main theme raised in *Fiqhud Da'wah* revolves around the significance of *Da'wah bi'l-Hikmah* [preaching with wisdom], which manifests moderate *uslub* (approaches) and shows an inclusive *da'wah's* view. It outlines the methods and frameworks of science of *da'wah* that illustrates the fundamentals of aqidah, ibadah and syariah and expresses the principle of moderation and strategic approach, as pointed out by Ds. Anwar in his article "*Natsir Politikus Intelektual*": I am so impressed by this book because of moderate outlook and wisdom in his method of *da'wah*.³

Natsir presents significant views of the unequivocal force of the *risalah* in nurturing personality and shaping the *ummah*. And its starting point is *tauhid* [monotheism] and *ibadah*, as the fortress of the *ummah* in the struggle assembled from the mosque as the institution of *risalah*, in the preparation of *jama'ah mu'minin* [community of believers] and preparatory ground for preachers.

¹ M. Natsir *Fiqhud Da'wah: Jejak Risalah dan Dasar-Dasar Da'wah* [The law of da'wah: the footprints of the Messenger's (saw) mission and the foundations of da'wah]. Jakarta: Media Da'wah, ed. 11, 2000, 36.

² Ibid, 66.

³ Anwar Ibrahim, "Natsir Politikus Intelektual." *Tempo*, 14-20 Julai, 2008, 98-99.

Ṭarīqah al-Qur'ān

The ideas revealed in his work was inspired by the *uslub* [approach] and *tariqah* [method] of the Qur'an, which safeguard the freedom of thought, freedom of faith (*i'tiqad*), and the moral integrity and wisdom in carrying out *da'wah* activity. According to Natsir: "the power of *da'i* rests solely on the strength of his *da'wah*"¹, which depends on the force of his argument, and his appeal and inspiring calling that can attract soul and taste (*mawaddah fi'l-qurba*) - that bridge and connect the feeling, which is reinforced with the forceful power of making-contact and finding the meeting ground, and the understanding of the formidable essence and the dynamics it encompasses.

This work represents a phenomenal contribution of Natsir in defining the style and method of effective *da'wah*: "From the writings of M. Natsir, it turns out that the substance of *dakwah* he proposed involves almost all aspects of human life. In this case it includes aspects of human relations with God, as well as human relationships with each other."² It has express the influence and widespread impression to the generation of Islam in recent centuries with the formidable argument and intense idealism it projected, as revealed by Prof. Dr. Thohir Luth: "Therefore by knowing this ideas (*fiqhud da'wah*), it is expected that Islamic preaching will run more systematic and consistently and can motivate the next generation to take more instructive and diligence effort in Islamic *da'wah* in various fields of life."³

His instrumental thought and struggle in mobilizing *da'wah* effort had gives clear foundation for its undertaking to flourish. It gave birth to a realistic and holistic view of the historical efforts in the development of Islamic *da'wah*, based on *kalimatin sawa'* (common ground), as a universal understanding inherent in the struggle, as stated by Dr. Muhammad Nur Manuty in his paper "Bapak Mohammad Natsir: Sosok Peribadi Da'i Teladan [Bapak Mohammad Natsir: The exemplar figure of ideal Da'i: "Pak Natsir decides that Islamic *da'wah* is the best alternative in his lifetime struggle."⁴

Capita Selecta

Capita Selecta, a work that contains Natsir's important articles and writings on issues concerning politics, history, faith, theology (*kalam*),

¹ M. Natsir, *Fiqhud Da'wah: Jejak Risalah dan Dasar-Dasar Da'wah*, 22.

² Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, 1999, 83.

³ Ibid, 12.

⁴ Muhammad Nur Manuty "Bapak Mohammad Natsir: Sosok Peribadi Da'i Teladan." In *Seminar Serantau Memperingati 100 Tahun Pahlawan Nasional Bapak Mohammad Natsir*, KUIS, WADAH, 2009, 3.

tasawwuf, philosophy, shari‘a, comparative religion, and literature. It exhibits his widespread readings and unprecedented mastery of western and European literature, as his excerpts from the work of the Middle Ages scholar, Prof. Henri Pirenne, who presented "an honest and courageous investigation" of the influence of Islam in the West in his major writings such as *History of Europe*.

The work that contains "a collection of thoughts of Bapak M. Natsir " was compiled by D.P. Sati Alimin, and produced in two volumes, volume I compiled his writings between 1936-1941, and volume II contained "a collection of writings, speeches and press-interview between 1950-1955" which are considered "part of documentation of the development of the country in 5 years since the formation of Negara Kesatuan until the formation of Burhanuddin Harahap's cabinet."

Natsir cites and discusses important works and philosophies of major Muslim thinkers such as Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Miskawayh, Hay ibn Yaqzan and Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ghazali. He analyzed the philosophical thought expounded and the contradictions and conflicts of ideas in the history and tradition of medieval thought. A profound analysis of al-Farabi's thought is definitely and thoroughly expressed: "In the afternoon he rolls up his sleeves as a gardener, in the night he holds the pen [*kalam*], turns his brain as a philosopher, illuminated by a small, shimmering lamp. He gave a commentary and elucidation on the philosophy of Aristotle and

Plato, and compared the two philosophers with Islamic belief."¹ Hamka, in his foreword to *Capita Selecta*, describes the collection of M. Natsir's writings as "important and useful for our youths of new generation, even more for new generation of Muslim Youth."² It reflected decisive aspiration for improvement and restoration of the spirit of struggle and scholarship as initiated and invigorated by Natsir. *Capita Selecta* drew the figure of intellectual thinker and scholar: "through *Capita Selecta* I see the intellectual figure of Mohammad Natsir."³

D.P. Sati Alimin, concluded the forceful ideas illustrated in this book that idealize the ideals of struggle and essential ideology of Islam: "The fundamental and the spirit are only one, *i.e.*, by means of a distinctly, explicit

¹ M. Natsir. *Capita Selecta*. vol.2, Jakarta: Pustaka Pendis 1954, 16.

² Hadji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (foreword). In *Capita Selecta*. 2 vol. Jakarta: Pustaka Pendis, 1954, 7.

³ Anwar Ibrahim, "Natsir Politikus Intelektual, 98-99.

or implicit, arguments of the superior and foundational teachings of Islam, and that Islam is a way of life for all human-lovers, and lovers of God.¹

Laudable Acclaim for Natsir

"How difficult to understand the history of the struggle of the Indonesian nation without knowing Natsir" ²

Natsir's simple and outstanding personality, and the resilience character and the national aspirations he advocated, had elevated him as a superior maestro, a pious and respected *mujahid*, a democratic stalwart and nationalist who proclaims the nation's ideals rallied in his struggle, which reaffirm his illustrious position as a great thinker and savior of the nation, as noted by Bapak Syuhada Bahri, Chairman, Dewan Da'wah Islamiyyah Indonesia (DDII), "if we read the life journey of Pak Natsir, we will find how strong the impression of religious values in his life. Since the age of 8, he already slept in surau to acquire religious education. Even his courage to choose religious study after graduating from AMS is an option that describes Pak Natsir's commitment to religion."³

Mohammad Roem (1908-1983), a loyal companion, called him "the conscience of the people" while Deliar Noer hailed him as "theologian intellectual or intellectual theologian" capable of producing great works, concerning various issues and "presenting Islam as its main trend." Natsir clamored the idea of renewal and fought as a *mujahid* who was "serious in defending Islam from those who would undermine Islam."⁴

His fighting spirit, fortitude, and firm conviction are portrayed most interestingly by Lukman Hakiem in his foreword to the book *100 Tahun Mohammad Natsir: Berdamai Dengan Sejarah* (100 year Mohammad Natsir: Peace with History): "There are many things that can be learned from Pak Natsir. His piercing thoughts and beyond time, his steadfastness (*istiqamah*) in struggle, his modest lifestyle, his polite ways of politics, and many things that becoming increasingly scarce. Amid the reinforcing current of political pragmatism, the exemplary legacy is essential to be actualized."⁵ Against this great figure Imam

¹ M. Natsir *Capita Selecta*, 1954, vi.

² Mardias Gufron. "Studi Terhadap Pemikiran Politik Mohammad Natsir [Study of Political Thought Mohammad Natsir]." Tesis Pascasarjana-UI, Kajian Timur Tengah dan Islam, 2005, xvi.

³ Syuhada Bahri, "Pak Natsir: Pendidikan dan Pembinaan Kader." In *Seminar Serantau 100 tahun Bapak Mohammad Natsir*, KUIS, WADAH, 2009.

⁴ Syuhada Bahri, 2009, xvii.

⁵ Lukman Hakiem ed. *100 Tahun Mohammad Natsir: Berdamai dengan Sejarah*. Jakarta: Penerbit Republika. 2008, x.

Taufik al-Khotob wrote: "M. Natsir is a person who live to revive Islam. His life is really at stake to defend and safeguard the survival of Islam."¹

Political Ideal

"So the mind of M. Natsir can be interpreted as the mind of Muslims in Indonesia and it is aptly in place that we put it forward."²

Pak Natsir's political views forthcoming from an inclusive understanding of Islamic political philosophy leads to a genuine democratic struggle demanding freedom, justice, the principle of consultation (*shūrā*), the struggle to uphold the dignity of nation and respect of religion and to demand a fair representative system that comprises the power of democracy and pancasila. Natsir struggled to mobilize an inclusive political understanding, and developed the ideological basis and aspirations of an open and democratic state, as he stated: "we cannot argue the difference between 'western democracy and eastern democracy' it's only between democracy and non-democracy."³ The democracy he championed defends the rule of law and constitutional principles.

In his book *Agama dan Negara, Falsafah Perundangan Islam* (Medan 1951), [*Religion and State, Philosophy of Islamic Law*], Natsir discussed the relationship between religion and state and "the efforts of Muslims to fight for Islamic values in the life of the country."⁴ Natsir formulates profound view of political policy that preserves the principle of freedom and democracy, in which "the question of statehood is essentially a part of and governed by Islam."⁵

This philosophy was articulated in "Masyumi, a party almost identical to himself," (*Natsir Politik Santun di antara Dua Rezim, Seri Buku Tempo: Tokoh Islam di Awal Kemerdekaan*) [*Natsir The Polite ways of Politics between the Two Regimes, Tempo Book Series: Islamic*

¹ Imam Taufik al-Khotob "Mohammad Natsir dalam Tataran al-Sunnah." Accessed Feb 1, 2013. <http://crescentinstitute.blogspot.com/2010/05/pemahaman-m-natsir-terhadap-dakwah.html>. 2010.

² Hamka (foreword). In *Capita Selecta*, op.cit., .x.

³ Laode M. Kamaluddin "Peranan M. Natsir dalam Membangun Demokrasi Pasca Kemerdekaan Indonesia." *Seminar Serantau Memperingati 100 Tahun Pahlawan Nasional Bapak Mohammad Natsir*, anjuran Kolej Universiti Islam Selangor (KUIS) dan Wadah Pencerdasan Umat (WADAH), 2009.

⁴ Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, 29.

⁵ Ar-Rahhal Abdul Ghany b. Muhammad, Suhardi Kathur. *Fenomena Demokrasi: Studi Analisis Perpolitikan Dunia Islam*. Jakarta, n.p., 2000, 4.

Figures in Early Independence], that regarded political affairs as an integral part of Islam, "integreerend deel "(affairs of state is a part of Islam itself), as described by Munawir Syadzali (1993) of Natsir's political ideology: "According to M. Natsir, Islam - different from other religions - contains rules or state's regulation, including civil and criminal law. In order to carry out these laws it is necessary that an institution with its power can undertake the enforcement of those laws. Therefore, the existence of a ruler or government is an imperative. "¹

Natsir prefers an inclusive and democratic political ideology, and supported constitutionalism and basic constitution, which defended the idea of freedom and democracy, as he asserted: "For me Islamic values are inspirational. I will strive for those values in democratic way. "²

He strives for universal human values, and called for an ideological base that could accommodate the voice of the people, in the public realm and the larger part of the nation's life. Natsir supports democracy as a 'middle way' which becomes the forum of his struggle and was instrumental in defending the socio-political interest in the clash of secular-Islamic ideology, and, "his activity in Petition 50 shows his stance as genuine democrat"³

The implication of his struggle for democratic ideal is illustrated by Hidayatul Muslimah "Muhammad Natsir's never-ending political idea is about democracy"⁴. In the *Tempo Book Series* it is stated: "In his time, he became the leading champion of democracy and respect for human rights. When Javanese nationalists, whether incorporated in large or small parties, wanted indirect elections, Natsir fighting for the opposite. Likewise, when human rights became the scourge of some members of the Constituent Assembly, Natsir nevertheless fighting for its inclusion as important articles in the Constitution."⁵

According to Chris Siner and A.M. Fatwa, Natsir is deeply a democrat to the bone. Natsir views democracy as "a cultural legacy whose inheritance is irreplaceable". In his reaction to Sjafroeddin Prawiranegara, who proposed

¹ Yusrizal, Dj. M.H. "Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara: Analisis Pemikiran Politik M. Natsir", 1.

² Tempo, "Natsir Politik Santun di antara Dua Rezim" in *Seri Buku Tempo: Tokoh Islam di Awal Kemerdekaan*), Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2011, 152.

³ Tempo. "Natsir: Berpetisi tanpa Caci Maki." *Tempo*, edisi 21, July, 2008, 109.

⁴ Hidayatul Muslimah, "Muhammad Natsir dan Pemikirannya Tentang Demokrasi." Skripsi Gelar Sarjana Strata Satu dalam Ilmu Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam, Fakultas Adab, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga. 2008.

⁵ Tempo, "Natsir Politik Santun di antara Dua Rezim" 152.

that in a democracy, even communist ideology cannot be forbidden, Natsir replied: "If communism is not good, we fight it through elections"¹

Natsir's political struggle had brought significant reform, and was instrumental in formulating Islamic political ideals, ideas and theories, as expressed by Bruce Lawrence, of Natsir as "the most prominent politician favoring Islamic reform."²

Natsir thoroughly advocate Masyumi political ideals to making Islam the underlying foundation of the country. In pursuit of the Islamic ideals, Natsir expresses his commitment to maintain democratic aspirations, the formation of a civil state, the spirit of nationality and the principle of law and outlines an important decision of the relationship between religion and state, which stipulates that "religion is inseparable from the affairs of state."³

This spectacular openness illustrate the strong idealism and political philosophy he advocated that based on concrete ideal and foundation which holds that society and state should be governed by religion⁴ and reflects "the high ideals embodied in the person of M. Natsir."⁵

His Struggle in Masyumi and DDII

Masyumi (*Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia - Muslims Consultative Council of Indonesia*) was disbanded by Soekarno in 1960, and "with the dissolution of Masyumi in the political stage in Indonesia, the political powers of da'wah were exhausted dramatically, except for *NU*, *PSII*, *Perti pasca-Masyumi*."⁶

This dissolution gives crucial impact to the movement, to seek a new strength to defend the Islamic idealism and rallying the cadre and moving the political momentum in the struggle, and Natsir directly launched the undertaking through DDII (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*), or *Islamic Missionary Chamber of Indonesia* which was formed on 27 February 1967 as "the institution propagating Islamic

¹ Ibid.

² Ma'mur, Ilzamudin, "Abul A'la Mawdudi and Mohammad Natsir's Views on Statehood: A Comparative Study," MA thesis, McGill University, Montreal. 1995, 65.

³ Samin. "Polemik Agama dan Negara (Studi Komparatif Soekarno Versus M. Natsir Tentang Ideologi Negara)." Skripsi Gelar Sarjana Strata Satu Agama (S. Hum), Fakultas Adab, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga. 2008, i.

⁴ Endang Saefuddin Anshary, *Piagam Jakarta 22 Juni 1945 dan Sejarah Konsensus Nasional Antara Nasionalis Islam dan Nasionalis Sekuler*, Bandung: Pustaka Salman, 1981, 23.

⁵ ZA Ahmad (preface). In M. Natsir, *Capita Selecta*, 5.

⁶ Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, 9.

beliefs and values"¹ and has brought "a fresh breeze to the da'wah of Islam in Indonesia".²

His struggle in *DDII* has injected new strength and idealism in initiating and advocating the ideals of Islam and *DDII*'s agenda, as pointed out by Abdur Razzaq: "Mohammad Natsir through the political party of *Masyumi* and *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (*DDII*), has broke the ground in the development of Islam in Indonesia. "³

In discussing this intense political struggle, Thohir Luth writes: "As a result of the dissolution of the Islamic party, its leaders scattered in search of positions on Islamic mass organizations. Some joined *Muhammadiyah* like Mr. Moh. Kasman Singodimedjo and others joined *Nahdhatul Ulama* as K.H. Idham Khalid and K.H. Masykur. They then became the top leaders of *Muhammadiyah-Nahdhatul Ulama* for the next period. Different case with M. Natsir, he did not choose *Nahdhatul Ulama*, *Muhammadiyah*, or *Persis* as a platform for his devotion. He instead established da'wah organization now known as the *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (*DDII*)."⁴

While serving as Prime Minister of Indonesia (1950-1951), Natsir's cabinet was widely reputed with strategic political arrangement, and Natsir discussed the motions of Mosi in the Masyumi Party Leadership Council (*Dewan Pimpinan Partai Masyumi*), which envisioned the great ideals of combining political forces and alliances and, this Mosi's agenda "its value is generally recognized as highly strategic". "It is this motion which leads each state to reunite within the Negara Kesatuan of the Republic of Indonesia" and "as an Islamic political leader, M. Natsir has given his maximal energy and thought to the interests of Muslims in Indonesia and its all-inclusive nation."⁵

Conclusion

The historic struggle of Pak Natsir in *Partai Masyumi* and *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (*DDII*) has forged an important milestone in Indonesian political history. Natsir was an influential and revolutionary political leader and activist who had played instrumental role in the historical struggle of his

¹ Tempo. *Natsir Politik Santun di antara Dua Rezim* (Seri Buku Tempo: Tokoh Islam di Awal Kemerdekaan). Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2011, 115.

² Ibid., 10.

³ Abdur Razzaq "Pengaruh Pemikiran Hasan al-Banna dan Mohammad Natsir terhadap Politik Islam di Indonesia: Kajian Perbandingan." PhD diss., Universiti Malaya. 2009, vi.

⁴ Thohir Luth, *M. Natsir Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, 9-10.

⁵ Ibid. 42.

nation for independence. His important contribution in upholding the fundamental ideals of democratic principles and charting its inclusive understanding has brought forth significant cultural foundation for his nation.

His attempts to break down the obsolete bastion of *taklid*, restore the understanding of Islam and *tauhid*, reconstructs the principles of *da'wah* and ideal of *maqasid*, and expands the intellectual and scientific tradition has carved his name in the nation's political history and contemporary fiqh. His willingness to accept the nationalist Islam (Islam Kebangsaan) is the starting point towards an inclusive Islam with diverse cultural currents that embraces all forces.

With his inclusive ideas, Natsir has assumed a strategic position as political player, in rallying the dynamic social outlook, and bringing the monumental ideals of *da'wah*, and projecting an influential and inclusive culture, as eloquently revealed by Taufiq Ismail, "for history, he is teacher of the nation, statesman, warrior, thinker, writer, intellectual, humanist, politician, educator of the ummah, *mujahid da'wah*, and illustrious and respected international figure."¹

With the intensely impeccable philosophy, the *taushiyah diniyah* and the radical and heroic struggle, and political resolve and firmness, Natsir has left an unparalleled legacy, and tremendous thought worth of reflection, which awaits the appreciation of "Muslim youths who have great aspiration and high *himmah*"² as revealed by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the momentous event of the *Refleksi Seabad M. Natsir*, that "Mohammad Natsir's deserves the respect of Indonesia for his years of service and struggle".

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¹ Taufiq Ismail "Mohammad Natsir, 100 Tahun Dalam Kenangan." In *100 Tahun Mohammad Natsir: Berdamai dengan Sejarah*, edited by Lukman Hakiem. Jakarta: Penerbit Republika. 2008, xi.

² M. Natsir, 1954, 15.

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