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THE HISTORY OF ISLAM IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF ABDULLAH BIN NUH'S WORKS¹

Mohammad Noviani Ardi
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Abstract

*The topic on the coming of Islam to the Malay world has become an intellectual debate among scholars around the world for both Muslim and Western scholars. There are at least four elements of debate on these issues, in particular, on the originality of Islamic doctrines in the Malay world, the theory of the coming of Islam to the Malay world, the times of the coming of Islam as well as the spreading of Islam in the Nusantara. This research will be an attempt to explicate Abdullah bin Nuh's works particularly in his discourses of the coming of Islam to the Nusantara. It focuses on three works by Abdullah bin Nuh, entitled *Sejarah Islam di Jawa Barat hingga Zaman Keemasan Banten*, *Ringkasan Sejarah Wali Songo*, *al-Islām Fi Indūnīsīyyā*, and his articles delivered in the Seminar on The Advent of Islam in Indonesia held in Medan in 1963. The approach of this study is based on textual analysis, using descriptive, analytical methods from various works of the subject under study, comparison and contrast in order to get additional information from the other ulama' in the same era as Abdullah bin Nuh. This study concludes that Abdullah bin Nuh believes that Islam came to Nusantara in particular to Indonesia since 7th century CE even though there is a claim that says Islam came much earlier from the Arab Peninsula plus encounters the theory most of Western scholars who view that Islam came in 12th century CE.*

Keywords: Colonization, Civilization, Culture, and Nusantara

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Introduction

Islam is not just the name of a religion as the final revelation, but, it was also revealed to all human beings as the model of guidance for life including its doctrines, virtues, values, civilization and culture based on the Al-Qur'an and Hadith of His messenger. Seyyed Hossein Nasr in his book *Islam: Religion, History and Civilization*, stated that Islam is religion (*al-Dīn*) and civilization:

Islam is not only a religion; it is also the creator and living spirit of a major world civilization with a long history stretching over fourteen centuries.

Islam created a civilization that has covered the middle belt of the Old World for over a millennium (Nasr, 1996).

Islam has a great civilization and values with which it has been able to produce Muslim intellectuals with diverse proficiency in the field of knowledge of either sciences or Islamic thought based on the Al-Qur'an and Hadith in order to represent and interpret the verses or signs of Allah in His creation of the universe. In the early period, Islam became a great force with its civilization around the world and the consistency of the intellectual culture. Therefore, thousands of books were written by Muslim scholars who were experts in astronomy, geology, Sufism, arithmetic, medicine, marine, law, jurisprudence, language, philosophy, and other fields of knowledge.

Moreover, the advancement of Muslims had inspired non-Muslim, particularly Western scholars and inventors. They attempted to take credit for the advancements by the Muslim world and change it in favor of the Western civilization. Colonization and imperialism was applied by Western nations, particularly in the Muslim world in order to globalize their ideologies. Colonization and imperialism here does not mean only physical colonization, but also the colonizing of civilization, culture, ideology, and history. All these elements of colonization aim to weaken the Muslim world and get rid of its legacy. Finally, history has also been altered by them, particularly the history of the coming of Islam to the Nusantara archipelago by Dutch scholars.

This paper presents an attempt to rediscover the history of the coming of Islam to the Nusantara particularly Indonesia with reference to works by Abdullah bin Nuh² who is seen to have had major impact on Indonesian Muslim scholarship along with M. Hamka, Aboebakar Atjeh, and M. Rasidji. The special aspect of Abdullah bin Nuh's writing can be seen in his referring to the *turath* books (the previous *ulamas* works) and using semantic method in order to facilitate assimilation of Arabic language with Nusantara language at that period.

Abdullah bin Nuh: Biography, Works and Contribution to Indonesia

Abdullah bin Nuh was born on 3 *Jumādā al-Ūlā* 1324 H/30th June 1905, in the small town of Cianjur, surrounded by the highlands of West of Java.³ He grew up in the high religious milieu with his family and in an Islamic environment. His father was K.H. Raden Muhammad Nuh, one of the prominent *ulamas* in Cianjur. His father was also an adherent of the *Ṭarīqah al-Tijāniyyah* from Shaikh Ali Thoyib, and influenced him towards Sufism. Moreover, K.H. Raden Muhammad Nuh was famous for his knowledge of *Ihya Ulumuddin* (Ghazālī's great book), which was subsequently learned by Abdullah bin Nuh. Abdullah bin Nuh's mother was 'Aisyah, who was a daughter of Ahmad, who descended from a great saint, 'Abdul al-Muhyi (the great *ulama* of Pamijahan in the West Java). 'Abdul al-Muhyi's descendant was Syarif Hidayat, among the venerated *ulama* at that period.⁴

² Among his works are *Sejarah Islam di Jawa Barat hingga Zaman Keemasan Banten, Ringkasan Sejarah Wali Songo, al-Islām Fī Indūnīsiyyā*, and his work with A. Shahab in the Seminar of the History of the Coming of Islam to Indonesia held at Medan tahun 1963.

³ A.P.B., Panitia Sejarah, *Arabian Press Board: Sejarah dan Perjuangannya*. (Jakarta: Panitia Sejarah A.P.B., 1986); A. Z. Dahlan, *Al-Hijrah min Allah Ila Allah*. (Bogor, 1987).

⁴ N. H. Lubis, "Pustaka Unpad." Last modified November 30, 2015, <http://pustaka.unpad.ac.id>; M. Muhsin, "Penyebaran Islam di Jawa Barat." (paper presented at National Workshop Sejarah Perjuangan Syaikhuna Badruzzaman, 2010); S. Antonio, *Al-Ghazali dari Indonesia: KH. Abdullah bin Nuh*. (Jakarta: Tazkia Publishing, 2015).

In addition, beside his family, Abdullah bin Nuh's teachers also had a significant influence in shaping his personality in an academic manner. Sayyid Muhammad bin Hasyim bin Thohir al-Alawi al-Hadromi was Abdullah bin Nuh's teacher who strived and sacrificed to teach his students.⁵ He also taught Abdullah bin Nuh other skills in life, such as public speaking, *da'wah*, writing skill, and journalism. This skill was used fully by Abdullah bin Nuh in his *da'wah* work and academic writing.

The spirit of striving and sacrificing by his teacher affected him throughout his life. Beside Abdullah bin Nuh being active in *da'wah* and teaching, he was also socially active through participation in several social organizations such as Syarikat Islam and Masyumi. Abdullah bin Nuh also devoted his life through participation in the Indonesian military struggle against colonizers. He became the leader of Defenders of The Homeland (Pembela Tanah Air/PETA) or Daidanco in the region of Cianjur, Bogor, and Sukabumi during 1943-1945. Later, he also participated in People's Security Army (Tentara Keamanan Rakyat/TKR) during 1945-1946.⁶ However, in several Indonesian history books written by Western scholars, the role of *ulamas* and *kyai* in the Daidanco was not given due attention. Only a few *kyais* were mentioned by them in the history of Indonesia. It was probably one of their strategies in order to obscure the contribution of the *ulamas* during Indonesian struggle for independence.⁷ In fact, by the end of occupation, the Javanese had built 66 such battalions in Java and three in Bali.⁸

Being the leader of Daidanco did not decrease his passion in teaching about Islam to his students or during his escape from the Netherland Indies Civil Administration (NICA). Abdullah bin Nuh

⁵ A. I. Al-Kaf, *Kitabat Shaikh al-Shahabah al-Hadramiyyah al-Ustadz Muhammad ibn Hashim*. (Yaman: Markaz Ibad al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 2008).

⁶ Dahlan, *Al-Hijrah...*; A.P.B., *Araban Press Board...*

⁷ Sulasman, "Kyai Haji Sanusi: Berjuang dari Pesantren Hingga Parlemen", *Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah*, 2, 2008, 71; Sulasman, "Heroes From Pesantren: A Brief Biography of K.H. Ahmad Sanusi: A Patriot of Indonesian Independence". *Journal International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2014, 182.

⁸ B. R. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance 1944-1946*. (London: Cornel University Press, 1972).

was captured and became the fugitive of NICA because he was active in the Indonesian military and also was a journalist in Asian Press Board (APB)⁹ and spread the information about Dutch colonizers with anti-colonialized.¹⁰ He announced the Indonesian independence to the whole world through broadcasting and writing news in APB particularly to the colonized Muslim countries using Arabic language. However, in several references, as evidence of his passion in education, Abdullah bin Nuh was listed in the names of the initiators of Indonesia Islamic University (UII) Jogjakarta after being moved from Jakarta because of military aggression II by Dutch and their allies.¹¹

Abdullah bin Nuh was a master in interdisciplinary knowledge in both Islamic and science. Therefore, during his participation in Indonesian struggling for independence, he also continued his contributions in thought to Muslims around the world through his writing in magazines, book, and discourses. His concern for the right to information was evident when he and his friends A. Shahab founded the Islamic Research Institute (IRI) at Jakarta in 1962. Using its library, Abdullah bin Nuh wrote many articles and published in *Pembina* magazine periodically, particularly on modern ideologies, such as Marxism, Materialism, and Communism in order to save Indonesians from the globalization of modern ideologies post-independence through international communist networks.

⁹ Arabian Press Board (APB) was the first Indonesia mass media that connected Indonesia with countries around the Asian and Africa regions for the exchange of news and in order to get support for the independence of Indonesia, and to influence Asian and Africa countries against colonization. On 2th September 1945, APB held and contacted with young Indonesians in Hejaz, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Suriname. In addition, APB also had connection with the daily news time in Egypt, Lebanon and Aden since before the independence of Indonesia. APB had an important role in Indonesia's struggle. After Indonesia's independence, APB changed to Asian Press Board which frequently informed the Indonesian people and government on the risk of Indonesian communism. As a result, in the guided democracy period under Sukarno and in the coalition with Indonesian communism party, APB was officially dissolved by Sukarno on 13th December 1962.

¹⁰ A. B. Nuh, *Kantor Berita Nasional* (A.P.B., 1968).

¹¹ Dahlan, *Al-Hijrah...*; A.P.B., *Araban Press Board...*

Among his works were *Anā Muslimūn Sunniyyūn Shāfi'īyyūn*, *Zakat dan Dunia Modern*, *Islam, Communism, dan Kapitalisme: Soal Kerdja dan Buruh*, *Islam Dizaman Modern*, *Agama Dalam Pembahasan (Wanita)*, *Ringkasan Sejarah Wali Songo* and other works and articles have been published in *Pembina* and *Mimbar Agama* magazines.

The History of the Coming of Islam to Indonesia

The Theories on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia

There are many theories in determining the coming of Islam to Indonesia which are famous among intellectuals, both Muslim and Western, including theory of Gujarat, Persia, and Arab or Mecca. In addition, the difference also appears in the determining of the age of the coming of Islam to Indonesia. Perhaps, these differences are because Islam came to Indonesia in the different places and did not come in one time, but in different periods. The difference political circumstance of every place also contributed to the spreading of Islam in Indonesia because there were Hindu-Buddha empires in the ancient Nusantara and Hinduism and Buddhism were the ancient religions of Nusantara's forefathers. Therefore, the debates in order to determine the history of the coming of Islam to Indonesia are sometimes based on the political interest.

The Gujerat Theory explains that Islam came and spread to Nusantara, particularly the Indonesia archipelago from Muslim Gujarat in the 13th Century. According to this theory, Muslim traders from Gujarat had an important role in spreading Islam to Indonesia because besides coming for trading, they also brought missions to introduce and teach about Islam to local residents particularly in the coast of Indonesia.¹² This theory was by C. Snouch Hurgronje, the

¹² U. Tjandrasasmita, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia III*. (Jakarta: PN. Balai Pustaka, 1984); B. Yatim, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam: Dirasah Islamiyah II*. (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2005). If this theory is investigated more, the district or region which was meant by Indonesian coast and there was a Muslim population here was in the Coast of Aceh in 13rd Century. This fact can be resulted that these were the first communication or contact between local residents of Aceh with Muslim traders from Arab, Persia, and India as well. Therefore, it could be understood that the first

famous of Dutch orientalist, who gave much recommendations to Dutch government related to discriminative policies during colonization of the Indonesian Muslim. This theory had significant influence on the West historians after him who quoted him in their works, such as Stutterheim (*De Islam en Zijn Komst in De Archple*), Bernard H.N. Vlekke (*Nusantara A History of Indonesia*), Clifford Geertz (*The Religion of Java*), Harry J. Benda (*A History of Modern South East Asia*), Van Leur (*Indnoesian Trade and Society*), T.W. Arnold (*The Preaching of Islam*) (Negara, 2002) as well as Dr. Gonda, Van Ronkel, Marrison, R.A. Kern, dan C.A.O. Van Nieuwinhuize.¹³

The Persian Theory was initiated by Hossein Djajadiningrat. He was famously known as the Father of History and expert on research method in Indonesia and had good emotional relation with Snouch Hurgronje during the colonization era. In fact, this theory is in line with theory of Gujarat. However, Hossein observed more similarity of the Muslim culture between in Indonesia with the Muslims in Persia. For instance, those similarities are associated with the tradition and culture in celebrating 10th Muharam in Indonesia with most adherent of Shi'is at Persia as the commemoration of Karbala tragedy, *Tasawwuf* teaching in Nusantara archipelago was similar to teaching with the of Sunni adherents at Iran.

The Theory of Mecca is a theory in which it is believed that the spreading of Islam to Nusantara was directly from Arabia or Mecca. Therefore, the proponents of this theory have been rejecting the theories of Gujarat and Persia. This theory has been used by several Indonesian scholars such as M. Hamka in his speech in Dies

Islamic empire in Nusantara archipelago was Samudera Pasai at Aceh at 13rd Century. After Samudera Pasai became stable, Muslim empire at Malaka founded at 15th Century. However, earlier than it, in the Javanese coast Islamization movement had begun at 11st Century, it can be proved from a grave of Fatimah binti Maimun at Leran Gresik with lettered 475 AH/1082 AD. Most of historians particularly Western observed that the shape of tombstone of Fatimah binti Maimun and the first Sultan of Samudera Pasai empire were same with Hinduism design of tombstone at India. Therefore, this evidence underlie their theory that the original Islam in Indonesia were coming from Gujarat India.

¹³ D. Supriyadi, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*. (Bandung: Depag, 1998).

Natalis PTAIN 8th at Jogjakarta. Hamka also presented this theory in his article seminar in the seminar of the coming of Islam to Indonesia held at Medan in 1963. Abdullah bin Nuh also delivered his article in this seminar with the same theme with Hamka that Islam came to Nusantara in 7th Century and directly from Mecca. Afterwards, Abdullah bin Nuh explored this theory more in his academic works, particularly in his book *Sejarah Wali Songo*, *Sejarah Islam di Jawa Barat* and *al-Islām Fī Indūnīsiyyā*. This theory also supported by contemporary Muslim scholars, such as Syed Naquib Al-Alatas in his book *Preliminary Statement on A General Theory of The Islamization process of The Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*.

The History of the Coming of Islam to Indonesia According to Abdullah bin Nuh

The study about the coming of Islam to Indonesia is not a new; there are many studies available. But this study is very important particularly in order to gain additional knowledge on this issue from the other aspects. Indonesian scholars also have been discussing about this issue since the middle of 20th Century. Among them were Hamka, Abdullah bin Nuh, and Aboebakar Atjeh. The Indonesia Ministry of Religion Affairs also held a seminar about this issue at Medan in 1963 which have recommendations regarding the history of Islam in Indonesia.¹⁴

In several discussions about the history of the coming of Islam to Indonesia by both the Indonesian Muslim and Western scholars, the focus has been in three major issues. Among them are the time of the coming of Islam to the Indonesian archipelago; the originality of Islamic teaching in the earlier Indonesia, and how Islam spread in Indonesia. Abdullah bin Nuh also focused on those three important issues in his study.

The Origin of Islam in Indonesia

¹⁴ This seminar held at Medan (North Sumatera) in 17th – 20th March 1963 which was discussing on the method of the coming of Islam to Indonesia, the originality of Islam in Indonesia, the bearer of Islam to Indonesia, the first region Islamized in Indonesia.

Abdullah bin Nuh rejected those who argued that Islam came from Gujarat (India) and Persia. According to him, Islam in Indonesia came directly from the Arabs through the Arabian *ulamas* and Arabian Muslim traders in the earlier years of Hijra. His argument was that because the Arab peninsula was surrounded by three seas; Red sea, Arab sea, and Persian sea, and hence, the development of maritime activities at those regions might have occurred particularly in the Arab archipelago. The south region of Arab peninsula (Yaman) is the most fertile. Therefore, they then had communication and contact with the ancient civilization at Egypt and India through Iran (Persia) and then reached to Nusantara archipelago.¹⁵

Furthermore, in the glorious period of Islam, the Muslims voyaged in the Indian sea from the Malacca to Nikobar, Andaman, Maldives, etc, and the others changed their voyage to Madagaskar and Nusantara. This can be proven by the similarity of the goods and commodity among them such as *wangi-wangian* (perfume), *mustaki*, *kayu manis* (cinnamon), and *rempah-rempah* (spices).¹⁶ After Muslim traders had a contact trading with locals in the Nusantara, the *ulamas* from Arabia who were experts in *tasawwuf* and Alawi also travelled to the East and brought their mission for *da'wah* (spread the Islam). Kambai dan Gujarat at that period was the centre of the assembly of Arabian traders from Iran, Hadramaut, and Persian Gulf.¹⁷ Therefore, it can be concluded that Islam originally did not come from Gujarat and Persia, but it came to Nusantara archipelago brought by *ulamas* from Arab peninsula who were just passing through Persia and Gujarat.

The Period of Coming of Islam to Indonesia

Some other writers or historians believed that Islam came to Nusantara since the 13th century CE.¹⁸ Their assumption was based

¹⁵ A. B. Nuh, *Sejarah Islam di Jawa Barat Hingga Zaman Keemasan Banten*. (Bogor: Majlis Ta'lim al-Ihya, 1978).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ For instance: H.J. de Graaf and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud in his book *Kerajaan-Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa*, translated from Dutch by Pustaka Utama Grafiti and KITLV, Lukman Thaib, in his book, *Acheh Sumatera dalam Dimensi Sejarah*, stated that the

on the document of Marco Polo after voyaging and reaching Indonesia. He wrote that in North Sumatera an Islamic empire was founded at the time and famously known as Peruerulla (Perlak).¹⁹ However, Abdullah bin Nuh had a different view. According to him, Islam came to Indonesia since 7th Century early on in the Hijra calendar.²⁰

Abdullah bin Nuh rejected Marco Polo's statement. He even supported the restudy of history of the first king of Samudera Pase, Malikus Saleh. According to him, Malikus Saleh died in 635 AH/1297 CE approximately, based on his tombstone. Abdullah bin Nuh stated that based on this determination, it was illogical that the grave of Malikus Saleh existed only five years after the arrival of Islam to Indonesia because according to Marco Polo, who arrived at Sumadera Pase in 1292 CE, Islam just arrived at that place. In addition, Abdullah bin Nuh said that it was possible that Malikus Saleh might be only an immigrant who had power in a place named Sila.²¹

In line with Abdullah bin Nuh's statement above, Sutjipto Wiriosuparto in his book *Sejarah Dunia (The History of World)* mentioned that in Sumatera, before the arrival of Marco Polo, immigrant Arabs were already there. Moreover, a book entitled *Gatokatjaraya* written by Mpu Panjulu also had contained Arabic words. This book was written in the earlier part of the 12th century. Therefore, this view strengthen the theory that Arab immigrants and Islam had arrived to Indonesia before that period.²²

Acheh Sultanate was the first Islamic empire in the South East Asia which most of the Arab traders visited to Acheh and spread Islam there since 11st till the end of 12nd CE.

¹⁹ T. M. Jamil, *Tawarikh Raja-Raja Kerajaan Aceh*. (Banda Aceh, n.d). Peureulak Empire was situated in the east of Acheh. Its King was ancestry of the King of Siam which famous with Syahir Nuwi.

²⁰ Nuh, *Sejarah Islam...*; A. B. Nuh, *Ringkasan Sejarah Wali Sanga*. (Surabaya: Teladan, n.d); A. B Nuh, & D. Shahab, *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia. Risalah Seminar Sejarah Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia*, (Medan: Panitia Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia, 1963), 145-150; A. B. Nuh & M. D. Shihab, *Al-Islam fi Indunisiyya*. (Saudi: al-Darul as-Su'udiyah Lin al-Nasr wa al-Tauzi', n.d).

²¹ Nuh, & Shahab, *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia...*, 145-150.

²² Ibid.

The spreading of Islam in Indonesia was not at one time together, but it spread gradually, because the majority of the practice of the ancient religion of Indonesia archipelago was based on animism, dynamism, and Hindu-Buddha. Even after they believed in Islam, most of them still practiced the worship of their ancient religion. Instead, the existence of Islam in Indonesia recognized the other Hindu empire, such as the King of Pasa Zainul Abidin, who recognized the existence of Majapahit as the Hindu empire at that period. Once also the Malay empire had sent their Muslim delegation to Indonesia, at 1281 AD approximately. Therefore, it might be believed that Islam spread before Marco Polo reached Indonesia.²³

Abdullah bin Nuh in his book informed also that the king of Majapahit once gave a mandate to Ali bin Ibrahi (Raden Rachmat Sunan Ampel) for village of Ampel and he was given mandate by the king of Majapahit to spread Islam. The king of Majapahit also once gave a mandate to Raden Fatah²⁴ for Bintara region and Mohammad bin Ishak for Giri.²⁵

The short description above shows that the process of Islamization in the earlier stage of Islam in Indonesia was accepted well by the local society, particularly the local kingdoms. It can be proven that there was co-existence and high tolerance of Muslim immigrants among the local society, even despite different beliefs among the Muslim immigrants and the Majapahit Empire. Islam spread peacefully in Indonesia without any cultural clash with the local society and local traditions. The failure of many Indonesia ancient empires was not because of Islam, but it might be one among many factors.

Abdullah bin Nuh also added in his analysis that the arguments based on the tombstones of Fatimah binti Maimun near with Liran

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ According to Mataram story told that Raden Fatah was a first King of Demak empire. He was the youngest child of the last King of Majapahit before Islam.

²⁵ D. H. Graaf, & T. Pigeaud, *Kerajaan-Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa*. (P. U. Grafiti, Trans.), (Jakarta: PT Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1989); Nuh & Shihab, *Al-Islam fi Indunisiyya...*

Gresik who died in 475 AH/1101 AD having Arabic words. He identified that if Fatimah binti Maimun died in that year, it was during the empire of Kediri period. However, most of theories of the coming of Islam to Indonesia were through the Malay Peninsula and North Kalimantan while Fatimah binti Maimun was in Java. Therefore, it might be before Fatimah binti Maimun, Islam had arrived to Indonesia through Sumatera and Kalimantan.²⁶

In order for Abdullah bin Nuh to strengthen his argument on those issues, he referred to ancient Arabic books (*kutub al-Turats*).²⁷ According to some Muslim historians, the communications between Muslim Arabs and Indonesian archipelago or the East Asia was very old. In the initial stage earlier, it was just trade relationship, but afterwards there was missionary mission in spreading of Islam. It can be estimated that the Arab traders and the missionaries had relations with local residents of East Asia, particularly Indonesia since the 2nd century of Hijra. Likewise, the relation between Arab traders with Tiongkok had been there since the 1st century of Hijra. Therefore, it could be said that there was a relation with local residents in the Indonesia archipelago around that period too, because Indonesia was located in very a strategic position in the trading route between East and West.

Syiakh Rabwah al-Dhimasqi in his book *Nukhbat al-Dahr* wrote about Sant (Champa), a land in Vietnam in which there was an empire in 7th century CE (approximately). He narrated that Islam had reached there during the time of the third caliph. Utman bin ‘Affan

²⁶ Nuh & Shahab, *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia*... 145-150.

²⁷ The Arabic books which Abdullah bin Nuh referred were Sulaiman Sulaiman Al-Basari, from Siraf at Teluk Persia, 237 AH (851 CE) he arrived to Tiongkok, India and the East Archipelagoes through sea lane, he wrote books entitled *Silsilat al-Tawārikh* and *Akhbārul al-Hind Wa as-Šin*; al-Mas’udi from Baghdad, he traveled during 25 years old and wrote books entitled *Murudju al-Dzahab* 330 AH (941 CE) and *At-Tabin wa Isyraf*; al-Biruni in 931 AH/1000 CE in Sina and India; Ibnu Batutah from Tangerang, he traveled more than 25 years and reached Indonesia in 1350 CE, his book done in 751 AH; Ibnu Churdazbeh Abdullah bin Achmad, he wrote a book *Al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* in 850 CE and died in 912 CE; Al-Ja’qubi wrote *al-Buldan*, and he died in 292 AH (835 CE), Ibnul Faqih in 903 CE with his a book *Mukhtaşor Kitab al-Buldan*; Buzruk in 10th century CE wrote *‘Ajaibu al-Hind*, Syaikh Rabwah ad-Dimashqi with his work *Nukhbatu al-Dahr*, etc.

sent a delegation at that time to Tiongkok.²⁸ In his mission to Tiongkok, there was a possibility that Utman bin 'Affan also sent a delegation to Nusantara archipelago because in 30 AH Islam was in Indonesia and the envoy spent four years in his mission.²⁹ Likewise, another way through which Islam reached Indonesia was from the immigrants of Alawiyyin genus who escaped from their country because of persecution by Umayyah genus and al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf had arrived at the Zefti sea zone and stayed there.³⁰ Zefti was situated at Sumatera lands.

Based on the description above, Abdullah bin Nuh believed that the coming of Islam to Indonesia and Nusantara in general was not in the 12th or 13th centuries CE as described by most Western writers. According to him, Islam came to Indonesia very early. Islam came and spread to Indonesia during the delegation of Sa'ad Ibn Waqqas (R.A.) to the East. Hence, his views refute the views of Western theory of the coming of Islam to Indonesia in 13rd CE which are based on proofs such as the tombstone physically spread in several regions of Indonesia and through Marco Polo's documents. In this regard, Abdullah bin Nuh referred to the ancient works of Muslim wanderers before Marco Polo reached Indonesia.

Abdullah bin Nuh listed the similar names of countries of the East which were taken from ancient Muslims books:³¹

²⁸ Nuh, *Ringkasan Sejarah Wali Sanga...*

²⁹ M. Y. Owadally, *Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas*. (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 2006). Most of the Muslim historians including the Chinese Muslim historians have proved that Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (r.a) came to China to spread the Islam (da'wah) under the instruction of Muhammad SAW more than 1300 years ago. While during the Caliphate of Utsman a delegation was sent to China also under the leadership of Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas and it can be proven with the ancient graves in Guangzhou. China particularly Guangzhou has a long history of Islam since 1300 years ago and Sa'ad built the first famous Mosque in China by the name Huaisheng Mosque.

³⁰ A. Ajteh, *Sekitar Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia*. (Solo: Ramadhani, 1985). This statement is in line with theory of Aboebakar Atjeh in his works that the hostility between Bani Ummiyah and Bani Hasyim caused to the cruel acts by Mu'awiyah to Alawiyyin groups of descent of Ali (r.a.), and then famous with Shi'i sect al-Haddah. Therefore, most of them run away to save their life to East lands, and they arrived to East archipelago in particular Indonesia lands.

³¹ Nuh & Shahab, *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia...* 145-150.

1. Selahath, Salamath, Silahi
Al-Qaswini Zakaria bin Muhammad in his work *‘Ajaib al-Makhlūqāt* said that Silasilahi’s Island was composed of many islands. Those who came there, did not have the desire to go out from there because of its prosperity. In the Silasilahi there was gold. Abdullah bin Nuh supposed the Silasilahi’s island were the islands of Sulu and the Philippines.
2. Kalah, Kal, Kelabar, Kelah Bar.
Ad-Dimashqi in his work talked of the Kalah, Kal, Kelabar, Kelah Bar situated between Randa and Sarbazah. According to Abdullah bin Nuh, Randi was Kalimantan and the surrounding island of Sarbazah was Sriwijaya; therefore, Kalah was situated around Malay Peninsula or it might even mean Kedah.
3. Zarbazah, Sarbaazah, Sarirah according to Abdullah bin Nuh were originally derived from the word Sriwijaya, a country in Sumatera centuries ago.
4. Waq – Waq
This word mentioned in the ancient Arabic books. In the “‘Ajaib al-Makhlūqāt” it was summarised that Waq-Waq Islands had a relationship with Randi Island which was governed by a female monarch. Abdullah bin Nuh compared this with the several Islands in West Irian (west region of Indonesia) namely Fak-Fak and Wewak.
5. Langalus Island, al-Dimashqi said in his book that this island was situated near with Sumatra.
6. Tri Islands, al-Dimashqi said that these islands were situated under the equator line. Abdullah bin Nuh analysed that this meant it might be near to Sabah islands (100 mil) named Alawiyah, so, this island was might be North Kalimantan.
7. Magaskar was probably Makasar.
8. Fansur was Pantjur or Barus in Sumatra.
9. Samthar was a reference to Samudra (Ocean), etc.

The Spreading and Development of Islam in Indonesia

The coming of Islam to Indonesia based on the above description was brought by *ulama* from Arab, among them were Alawiyyin who escaped the cruelty of Umayyah dynasty in that period, *ulama* who

came from Mecca as the delegation of Muhammad SAW and Caliph of Rashidin, and the Muslim travellers or traders from Arab peninsula who reached to Nusantara Coasts particularly Indonesia.

Some of the historians stated that Islam came to Indonesia in peace. This account is in line with the result of national seminar of the coming of Islam to Indonesia that Islam came to Indonesia peacefully through the trading route, because of the Muslim missionary (*dā'ī*), who was also a merchant.³² The process of Islamization was also recognized by some *ulamas* by peaceful even though there were Hindu-Buddha empires at that period.

Abdullah bin Nuh described the spread of Islam to Indonesia without any resistance from the local society; therefore, Islam developed, was accepted, and was honoured by the local residents. According to him, Islam was accepted by the local residents because Islam came to villages in the Nusantara coasts with good virtue, moral, courtesy, and culture. Moreover, local residents became the soft power in the spreading of Islam to all levels of local society because of the teachings of Islam. In the mind of the people there was the desire to get more knowledge about Islam. Influence due to the character of the *dā'ī* had a crucial role through out the spread of Islam to rural areas.³³

In the history of the spread of Islam to Indonesia there were unique methods used by *ulamas*, for instance the method of *Wayang*. *Wayang* is the old art tradition of Java used by Sunan Kalijaga in order to deliver the message of Islam to local residents in the villages of Java. He tried to compile Islamic tradition and teachings with local tradition of Java, whereby, he inserted the value of Islam in the performance of *Wayang* to get acceptance from the local people.

The interest of indigenous people towards Islam as the new religion or belief was much stronger than their old belief. Majority of Indonesian indigenous people at that period mainly inland, still adhered to animism and dynamism or sometimes *Kejawen*. *Kejawen* was a compilation between indigenous beliefs influenced by Hindu-Buddha teachings. As a result, most of adherents of idol

³² Nuh & Shahab, *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia*... 145-150.

³³ Nuh & Shihab, *Al-Islam fi Indunisiyya*...

worship begun to convert to Islam and Islam developed at the period because of high social acceptance by indigenous people.³⁴

The short description above can be evidence that Islam came, spread, and developed in Indonesia peacefully without any cruelty and force. The battles among empires in that century were not because of the coming of Islam or because of differences of beliefs. For instance, the battle conducted by R. Fatah with Majapahit was not because of the rise of Islam, but because Raden Fatah had a mandate to rebuild the previous empire of his predecessor. In addition, the battle between Muslim empires of Demak with Hindu Padjadjaran was because Padjadjaran allied with Portuguese in order to rule and monopolize the trading in Sunda Kelapa (currently famous with Jayakarta or Jakarta).³⁵

Furthermore, to explain the process of Islamization in Java land, Abdullah bin Nuh explained that the King of Cakarabuana travelled from the Pasundan land to Mecca for Hajj with his daughter and his younger brother and sister whose name Ratu Mas Lara Santang and Kian Santang. She got married with Sultan Makhmud Syarif Abdullah of Egypt, the 21st descent of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Ratu Mas Lara Santang and Sultan Makhmud Syarif Abdullah had two sons, Syarif Hidayat and Syarif Nurullah. Then, Syarif Hidayat became a great *'alim* and came to the Java Island. He lived in Gunung Angasaran, Cirebon, West Java, and lived with his family of Cakrabuana. Pengeran Raja Sengara or the famous with Kian Santang³⁶ also came back to his fatherland of Java, and brought a mission to Islamise his family and community, but the king of Padjadjaran rejected his message of Islam. He was then expelled from Padjadjaran to Cirebon. According to Abdullah bin Nuh, if this story was based on fact, Kian Santang might be story of Haji Purwa in Cirebon.³⁷

Abdullah bin Nuh's argumentation is in line with Pangeran

³⁴ Nuh & Shahab, *Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia...* 145-150.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Kian Santang also had several nicknames such as Walgn Sungsang, Sangiang Lumajang, Pangeran Gagak Lumaji, Garangtang Setra, Haju Duliman (Dzul-Iman), Sunan Rahmat, Baanullah, etc.

³⁷ A. B. Nuh, *Ringkasan Sejarah Wali Sanga*. (Surabaya: Teladan, n.d); Sulendraningrat, *Sejarah Cirebon*. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1985).

Sulaiman Sulendraningrat in his book on *Sejarah Cirebon*. Sulendraningrat was the 35th descendant of Sunan Gunung Djati. Sulendraningrat told of an empire of Banjaransari in the swamp of Lakbok, Banjar, and Ciamis in the early 7th CE with its king named Raja Admulya or Pangeran Lelean Anom. Throughout his leadership, Raja Adimulya was famous with his community as a king with just and wise character; therefore, his society lived in prosperity. However, they still adhered to Sang Hiang or Hindu-Buddha beliefs. Then, his reign transferred to his first son Pangeran Ciungwanara and continued to first daughter of Ciungwanara named Ratu Purbasari. Ratu Purbasari transferred the capital of Banjaransari Empire to Pakuan Bogor and changed its empire to Padjadjaran. Ratu Purbasari had descendents until Raja Siliwangi. Raja Siliwangi married with a Princess of Mangkubumi Singapura/Mertasinga Caruban named Rara Subang Larang, who was a Muslim. Raja Siliwangi and Rara Subang Larang had two sons and a daughter, who were Pangeran Walangsungsang Cakrabuana, Ratu Mas Lara Santang, and Pangeran Raja Sengara/Kian Santang. These relatives of Raja Siliwangi inspired their society to adhere to Islam.³⁸

Furthermore, Ratu Mas Lara Santang had two sons. One of them was Syarif Hidayat who became famous as Sunan Gunung Jati Syarif Hidayatullah. Pangeran Cakrabuana in 1479 CE gave a mandate to Sunan Gunung Djati to stop giving any tax or tribute to Hindu-Padjadjaran Empire. This decision had a crucial impact over the control of Padjadjaran Empire over the Sultanate of Cirebon because with that decision, de facto Sultanate of Cirebon proclaimed independence and became the first Islamic empire in the Java land whereas Demak became the second Islamic empire after Majapahit collapse in 1517 CE. It might be said that Padjadjaran was the seed of Cirebon³⁹ and the Sultanate of Cirebon was next stage of Padjadjaran after being Islamized (Sulendraningrat, 1985). Then, Cirebon proclaimed the Islamic Empire as the basis of spreading of

³⁸ Sulendraningrat, *Sejarah Cirebon*. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1985).

³⁹ Cirebon has changed from Syarumban, then Caruban, Carbon, Cerbon, Crebon and finally Cirebon. Afterwards, Cirebon was became a center of Islam in the Java island famous with Negara Puser Bumi, the country which situated in the middle of Java island.

Islam in Java with Sunan Gunung Djati Syarif Hidayatullah as the leader with support from the Wali Sanga. The short description above about the beginning of Islam in Java can be concluded with statement that Islam spread and developed in Java Island peaceably without use of force.

However, according to Herman Sjoannes De Graaf, Islamization process in Java land by Muslim missionaries was filled with violence and force. His quoted to Tome Pires, a Portuguese adventurer in his book *Suma Oriental* which stated that there were two ways of political power exchange from the Indonesian indigenous to rule Muslim; first, Javanese aristocrats who were still heathen converted to Islam; then they had authority in their region, as a result of the Muslim merchants from foreign lands and intellectual Muslims attained high dignity. Second, the Muslim immigrants who came from the different countries but lived in the country side and cities of the Java coast. They built defence buildings and attacked and captured villages where most of people were still heathen.⁴⁰

Colonization of Islamic Civilization and Culture in Indonesia

The glory and influence of Islam was erased slightly with the invasion of some colonisers such as Portuguese and Dutch. The prosperity, peacefulness, tolerance, and harmony changed with cruelty and struggle with colonisers. *Ulamas* and Indonesian Muslims united with one mission against colonisers in the battle field with strong resistance because resisting the colonisers was akin to going to a holy war. In order to decrease Muslim's resistance, the colonisers brought orientalist to Indonesia. Orientalists succeeded in destroying local tradition which contained Islamic culture and civilization with their policy recommendation to the colonial government. Obviously, the colonisers came to Indonesia not only to monopolise the traditional product such as herbs and spices, but also they brought mission for Glory, Gold, and Gospel.

The indigenous Muslims became enslaved by colonisers and were forced to convert their beliefs. Some places in Indonesia with

⁴⁰ Graaf, & Pigeaud, *Kerajaan-Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa...*

Islamic names were changed to Western names by colonisers, and many Muslim leaders were influenced by them with worldly temptations, and Islamic empires collapsed gradually because of their rapacity. Therefore, the colonisers followed the above in order to colonise local civilization, tradition, and culture from the influence of Islamic values. Moreover, even though Indonesia has been independent from the colonization, the western powers still make efforts to dissociate Islamic values from the Indonesian Muslim particularly with advent of Western ideologies.

Hamid Fahmi Zarkasyi, in his book *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam* explains that there are at least three agents or mediums used by the Western in order to globalise or westernise Muslim countries, including; Missionaries, Orientalism, and Colonization. Orientalism used to understand Islam with Western perspective which has impact on problematic interpretation of Islamic values. Missionaries played role to expand Western worldview and their ideologies to be accepted by local culture. Colonization agents conquered the Islamic world through allying with orientalism and missionaries for political and economy purposes.⁴¹

Those three agents were used massively by Dutch colonisers during colonization in Indonesia and were helped with the Dutch scholars who were experts in Indonesian culture and Islam such as Prof. Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje. Moreover, Dutch also invited Prof. C. Van Vollenhove who was an expert in Hindu-Buddhist belief culture and civilization.⁴²

Basically, the Dutch researcher focused on analysing the weakness of Islam in Indonesia and afterwards destroyed it in order to decrease the influence of Islamic values, rule, law, and culture. Therefore, they investigated the local tradition and Islamic law and then replaced it with the local law or local tradition law. As a result, the influences of Islamic law or Sharia in the Muslim society became weak and disappeared. After local tradition law was settled and applied in the society level, the Dutch scholars offered to help develop mysticism doctrines (*aliran kebatinan*) which changed to

⁴¹ H. F. Zarkasyi, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam: Gerakan bersama Missionaris, Orientalis dan Kolonialis*. (Gontor: CIOS ISID, 2008).

⁴² A. M. Suryanegara, *Api Sejarah 1*. (Bandung: Salamadani, 2012).

cults in the new order era.⁴³ In fact, the weakening of Sharia Islam was not the ultimate goal, but applying the Western law gradually was the real aim.

In history of civilization side, the Dutch scholars researched the teaching of Hindu-Buddhist belief with its culture; afterwards they showed that the culture, tradition, and civilization was better than Islam. These works were attempted in order to distort the crucial role of Islamic civilization in indigenous Indonesian tradition. As a result, when Islam became weak, the colonisers found it easier to take control and attack the Muslim country like Indonesia from several sides, such as economy, culture, civilization, law, rule, values, and doctrines. For instance, sometimes the Western historians wrote the history of Indonesia subjectively, because they erased the role of *ulamas* and his students against colonisers whereas Indonesian Muslims played a crucial role in encountering colonization. Therefore, the distortion of the history of Islam in Indonesia was also done along with distortion of its civilization, culture, tradition, values, and law.⁴⁴ They blurred the history of coming of Islam to Indonesia and also its spread and development. So, the important impression of the greatness of Islamic rule in Indonesia was also lost through the orientalist mission.

Furthermore, two other European historians who wrote the history of Indonesia specifically during colonization were J.C. Van Leur and B. Schrieke. According to Syed Naquib al-Attas, the views of Dutch scholars magnified the role of Christianity and Western colonial expansion with regard to spread of Islam in the Indonesia-Malay archipelago. Moreover, they drew some similar identical teaching between Islam and Hinduism, and role of both Islam and Hinduism were not established based on firm facts. However, Van Leur's refutation of other historians with regard to Hinduization seems quite valid, but when he talked about Islamization in the Indonesia-Malay archipelago, his theory was not based on objective true facts and contradiction. Therefore, in the final

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

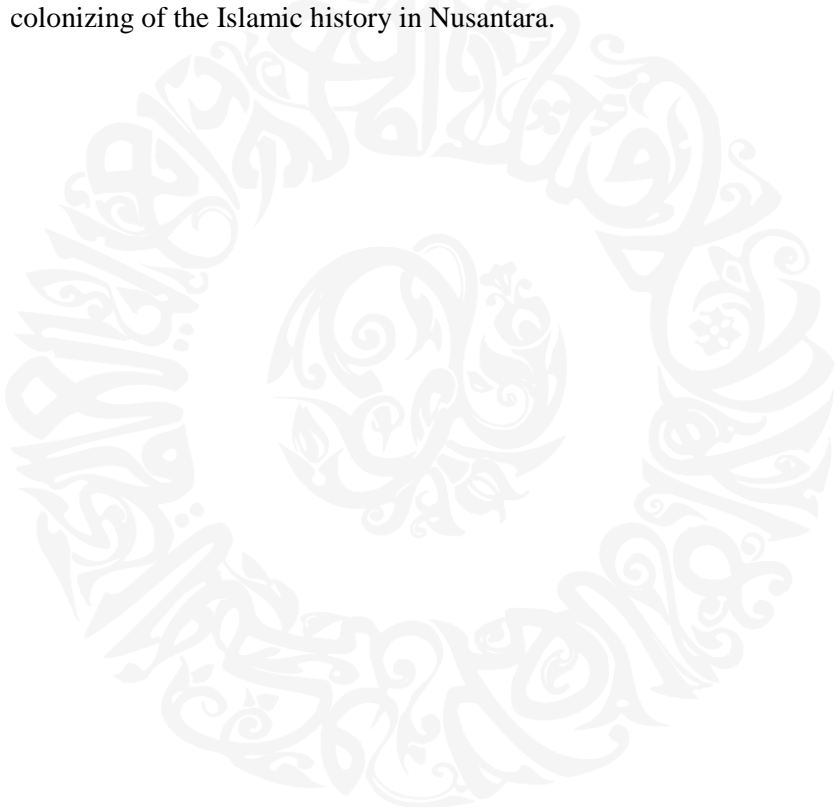
conclusion in his result, Van Leur concluded that Islam did not bring a better civilization.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

This study has discussed that Abdullah bin Nuh was an Indonesian scholar who had a great contribution in the revival of Indonesian intellectual heritage and in documenting the struggle of Indonesian independence. He was a scholar with interdisciplinary knowledge who had a dream for Islamic brotherhood (*ukuhwwah Islamiyyah*) among Muslim brother in this world without any fanatical issues of madhab. Abdullah bin Nuh also contributed against globalization and westernization which attacked Muslim countries, in particular Indonesia. One of his efforts on that issue was emphasizing the history of Islamization process in Indonesia which referred to ancient Muslim works. As a result, Abdullah bin Nuh rejected the opinion that Islam came to Indonesia in the 12th or 13th centuries CE, and he stated that Islam actually reached Indonesia since the 7th century CE or in the early Hijra years directly from the Mecca or *ulamas* who were missionaries from the Arab peninsula; therefore, Abdullah bin Nuh rejected the theory of Gujarat and Persia. Abdullah bin Nuh also stated that Islam spread and developed in Indonesian peaceably without any cruelty even through the majority of indigenous Indonesians at that period were Hindu-Buddhists. This statement was in line with the result of the Seminar of The History of Coming of Islam to Indonesia in 1963. The colonization of the history of the coming of Islam to Indonesia and its civilization can be found in literatures written by Western scholars, in particular the Dutch. Their mission was to deliberately blur, mislead and weaken the history of Islamic glory in Indonesia, then replace it by the crucial role of

⁴⁵ S. N. Al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*. (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1969); J. V. Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society*. (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve Publishers LTD., 1955); B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*. (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve Publishers LTD, n.d).

Christian and Western colonial expansion in the building of higher civilization in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to reconstruct it by referring to Abdullah bin Nuh's works and other Muslim scholars in order to refresh Muslim intellectual heritage, particularly in Indonesia. Moreover, this research aims to resurface the recommendations of the Seminar of the Coming of Islam to Indonesia held at Medan in 1963 due to its importance in the Nusantara Islamic intellectual heritage and in encountering of colonizing of the Islamic history in Nusantara.



TRANSLITERATION TABLE

CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR
ء	‘	‘	‘	ز	z	z	z	گ	—	g	g
ب	b	b	b	ژ	—	—	ɾ	ل	l	l	l
پ	—	p	p	ژ	—	zh	j	م	m	m	m
ت	t	t	t	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n
ٹ	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ʃ	ه	h	h	h¹
ث	th	th	th	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ʃ	و	w	v/u	v
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḍ	ḍ	ḍ	ی	y	y	y
چ	—	ch	çh	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah	—	-a²
ح	h	h	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al³	—	—
خ	kh	kh	kh	ع	‘	‘	‘	<p>¹ – when not final ² – at in construct state ³ – (article) al - or l-</p>			
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğ				
ڈ	—	—	—	ف	f	f	f				
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	k				
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	k			

VOWELS

		Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	Ā	—
	و	ū	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī	ī
Doubled	ي	īyy (final form ī)	iy (final form ī)	īyy (final form ī)
	و	uww (final form ū)	uv	uvv
	و	uvv (for Persian)	—	—
Diphthongs	و	au or aw	au	ev
	ی	ai or ay	ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a	a or e
	ا	u	u	u or ū
	ا	i	i	o or ō
	ا	—	—	ī

URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. ج jh گ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

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