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DAN IMPLIKASINYA TERHADAP PEMBENTUKAN
KEPRIBADIAN ANAK

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**INTRODUCING NEW RELIGIOUS IDEAS TO
MATHLA'ULANWAR: KH. UWES ABU BAKAR (1939-1973)**

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Abstract

Mathla'ul Anwar was established in 1916 by several Bantense *kijais*, an Indonesian term used to attribute religious teachers, including KH. Tubagus Muhammad Sholeh, KH. Entol Muhammad Yasin, KH. Mas Abdurrahman, KH. Abdul Mu'thi and others. *Mathla'ul Anwar* is one of the largest Muslim associations in Indonesia along with *Nabdlatul Ulama* or NU (mostly seen as the most prominent representative of the "traditionalist" Muslim groups established by several *pesantren* leading religious teachers in 1926 and *Mubammadiyah* (the largest group of the modernist or reformist Muslims established in 1912). KH. Uwes Abu Bakar wrote several treatises and books, including *Al-Waqud, Tarhibul Atfal, Surat Imam Malik kepada Harus Al-Rasyid dan Wazirnya, Tuntunan Bergaul and Bermasyarakat, and Isblahul Ummah Fi Bayani Abli Sunnah Waljamaah*. KH. Uwes divided Islamic law into two parts, (*ibadah*) divinely based ritual that was immune from changes and *muamalah* that was a result of human interpretation and was vulnerable to changes. He viewed that all products of *ijtihad* of *ulama* should be included into the latter part. The diversity of those products of thought was natural as every human had his own method of interpretation as well as his conclusion. At the same time, as a mankind, those *ulama* were also not immune from making errors. Critical attitudes were highly required in order to adhere or reject certain religious opinions of *ulama*. Since the focus of the study is *Mathla'ul Anwar*, I would like to focus on the impacts of this religious renewal towards members of *Mathla'ul Anwar*. To view the impacts of this religious renewal, it is important to highlight the succeeding developments of religious thought within *Mathla'ul Anwar* after the publication of the book. There were at least three general features of religious thought growing in *Mathla'ul Anwar* in 1970s.

Keyword: *Mathla'ul Anwar, KH. Uwes Abu Bakar and His New Idies Religion*

INTRODUCTION

Mathla'ul Anwar was established in 1916 by several Bantense *kijais*, an Indonesian term used to attribute religious teachers, including KH. Tubagus Muhammad Sholeh, KH. Entol Muhammad Yasin, KH. Mas Abdurrahman, KH. Abdul Mu'thi and others.¹

Since the beginning, *Mathla'ul Anwar* took serious works to improve the standard of Islamic educational system through introducing a modern graded system in which there were nine classes ranging from A, B, I, II, III, IV, V, VI, and VII and each of these classes took one year. Students would spend nine years of study before graduate from the *madrasah* of *Mathla'ul Anwar*. One teacher would supervise one class and give teachings based on the curriculum that had been designed for each of those nine classes.² *Mathla'ul Anwar* operated this kind of educational system until 1950 when it replaced its nine graded system with a new reformed system of schooling introduced by the newly independent government of Republic of Indonesia.³ As a religious group, *Mathla'ul Anwar* established its own system of religious thought that was in the early decades very much similar to that of NU. In matters of theology, it associated itself with *the Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah* (followers of the teachings of the prophet and a part of the majority of Muslims, or wellknown as a *Sunni* faction) of the *Ash'ariyah* stream (one of the Sunni theological schools in Islam besides *Mu'tazilah*, *Qodariyah*, *Murjiah*, and *Jabariyah*). However, unlike most of Javanese *kijais* who in a variety of grades and ways showed their tolerance to syncretistic attitudes of people's religiosity, *Mathla'ul Anwar's kijais* strongly rejected all kinds of heretical traditions and regarded them as the inherited products of Hinduism and Buddhism.⁴ In matters of Islamic law, it solely referred to the *Syafi'ite* school of thought (one of the four major Islamic schools of law in addition to *Hanafite*, *Maliki*, and *Hanbalite*) and did not tolerate to the idea of *talfiq*, exercising different ideas of schools of Islamic law in certain religious

¹ Other names of the founders of Mathla'ul Anwar were *kiai* Tegal, KH. Abdul Mu'thi, *Kiyai* Soleman Cibinglu, KH. Daud, *kijai* Rusydi, *kijai*. Entol Danawi, KH. Mustaghfiri, *kijai* Saiman, KH. Muhammad Rais, and KH. Entol Ismail, Pengurus Besar (PB) Mathla'ul Anwar, *Sejarah dan Khittah Mathla'ul Anwar*, Jakarta: PB Mathla'ul Anwar, 1996, p. 10, Tim Penyusun, *Mathla'ul Anwar dalam Perspektif Sejarah Gerakan Islam di Indonesia*, a paper presented at the Seminar on the History of Mathla'ul Anwar, May 1991, p. 16.

² Pengurus Besar Mathla'ul Anwar, *Sejarah dan Khittah Mathla'ul Anwar*, Jakarta: Pengurus Besar Mathla'ul Anwar, 1996, p. 11.

³ Interview with KH. Mahnun, 18 July 2015.

⁴ KH. Mas Abdurrahman, *Al-Jawaiẓ fi Abkam al-Janaiz*, n.p., n.d., pp. 45-46

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practices, and often condemned the religious ideas advocated by reformist groups, mainly Muhammadiyah, as false doctrines, particularly in matters related to an independent religious exercise, *ijtihad*.⁵

In politics, *Mathla'ul Anwar* did not clearly formulate specific political points of view since it took policies to associate with other organizations in driving its political aspiration. For instance, from 1915 up to 1928, it joined the *Syarekat Islam* or SI, the only ever largest Muslim political group in the political history of Indonesia and established in 1912⁶ and from 1928 up to 1952, joined NU.⁷ *Mathla'ul Anwar's* withdrawal from SI was not because of its purely political dissatisfaction with the latter rather due to its disagreement with the growing dominance of the "modernist" religious thought promoted by *Muhammadiya* leaders within SI's leadership circles. From this historical perspective, I would like now to elaborate the roles of KH. Uwes Abu Bakar who took the leadership of *Mathla'ul Anwar* in 1939 in introducing new religious ideas to *Mathla'ul Anwar*.

DISCUSSION

A. Profile And Educational Background

KH. Uwes Abu Bakar was born in Menes in 1912. His educational careers were entirely spent in Menes where he studied in the *madrrasah* of *Mathla'ul Anwar* from 1919 up to 1926. Like other students of this *madrrasah* who preferred to live in one of the existing *pesantrens* around Menes areas in order to enhance their expertise in religious knowledge, a young Uwes studied religious sciences in several *pesantrens* in Menes under the guidance of several *Mathla'ul Anwar's* teachers who organized their own *pesantren*, such as KH. Entol Muhammad Rais, K.H. Abdul Latif and KH. Mas Abdur Rahman.⁸

Political Careers in *Mathla'ul Anwar* and Elsewhere. After finishing his

⁵ Interviews with KH. Ma'ani Rusydi, 19 July 2002, and Nahid Firdaus Abdurrahman, a grandson of KH. Mas Abdurrahman, 5 August 2003. See also Tim Penyusun, *Sejarah Mathla'ul Anwar dalam Perspektif Sejarah Gerakan Islam di Indonesia*, a paper presented at the Seminar on the history of Mathla'ul Anwar, May 1999, p. 25.

⁶ *Mimbar*, 20 February 1990.

⁷ Anonymous, *Menapak Jejak Mengenal Watak: Sekilas Biografi 26 Tokoh Nabdlatul Ulama*, Jakarta: Yayasan Saefudin Zuhri, 1994, pp. 74 – 77. See also Tim Penyusun, *Mathla'ul Anwar ...*, pp. 21-28.

⁸ E. Oji Mahmunji, *Riwayat Hidup Singkat KH. Uwes Abu Bakar Al-Marhum*, n.p., n.d., p. 1.

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seven years of study in the *madrasah* of *Mathla'ul Anwar*, he got a licence from the central board of *Mathla'ul Anwar* allowing him to teach religious knowledge elsewhere or establish a new *madrasah*. *Mathla'ul Anwar* applied a very selective method in awarding this licence. Only would those who had a high qualification be given this licence after successfully passing several tests conducted by the director of educational affairs of *Mathla'ul Anwar*, KH. Mas Abdurrahman. Uwes' intellectual potency assured the director to send him to such a number of *madrasahs* of *Mathla'ul Anwar* outside areas of Menes as those in Lampung and in Suka-mandi. Uwes spent eight years of teaching in both areas from 1930 up to 1938. Because *Mathla'ul Anwar* at that time affiliated with NU, Uwes also taught in *madrasahs* of NU where the *madrasahs* of *Mathla'ul Anwar* were located.⁹ In 1938, he returned to Menes where he taught in his alma mater.

In Menes, his career in *Mathla'ul Anwar* rapidly advanced as he was elected as the general chairman at the third Congress of the organization held in 1939 or only one year after his return to Menes. He was the third general chairman since the foundation of the body only after KH. E. M. Yasin and KH. Abdul Mu'thi. The process of his election was very intense indeed. There were two factors contributing to this intense situation. First, in this Congress, members of *Mathla'ul Anwar* for the first time witnessed the rise of a new generation within the organization as most of its founders were ageing and some of them even already died, such as KH. Entol Muhammad Yasin in 1937 and KH. Tubagus Muhammad Sholeh in 1926. Second, there were more than one candidate, each of them had a special worth, including KH. Entol Djunaedi, K. Asrori, K. Chabri Abdurrahman, and K. Uwes Abu Bakar.¹⁰

KH. Djunaedi was a son of KH. E. M. Yasin, and graduated from the Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Returning from Cairo in 1927, he introduced a new idea of the upgrading of the *madrasah* of *Mathla'ul Anwar* from seven to nine grades. He himself then supervised pupils at the highest level of class. K. Asrori was among the most brilliant pupils of K.H. Mas Abdurrahman and people believed that he was the most fitting successor of the latter. His credit also came from his status as a graduate of the *Pesantren Darul Ulum Jombang* where many NU's prominent figures came from. K. Chabri was the eldest son of KH. Mas Abdurrahman. His credit was solely from his important genealogical link. Compared to these three

⁹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰ Tim Penyusun, *Mathla'ul Anwar* . . . , p. 45.

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figures, K. Uwes was unknown among members of *Mathla'ul Anwar*. His wide travelling of teachings in areas outside Menes was one of the major factors of his unfamiliar reputation. His sole credential was only that he was a former pupil of KH. Mas Abdurrahman. Not many of them at that time paid much attention to his experiences as results of his wide travellings. People even described him as a “dumb” because of his infrequent speaking in the front of public audience.¹¹ Only was KH. Mas Abdurrahman who viewed Uwes' great experiences as a valuable capital in chairing an organization having successfully expanded its influence in vast areas, like Karawang, Tangerang, Lebak, Pandeglang, Bogor, and Lampung.¹²

In the session of the election of the new general chairman, most of participants of the Congress were reported to incline to KH. Djunaedi. However, their first choice was unexpectedly disrupted by KH. Mas Abdurrahman's opposition and, thus, the Congress faced a deadlock. KH. Mas Abdurrahman then preformed a prayer (*istikbarah*) asking a divine answer for the most appropriate figure for the new leader. During, or perhaps after, performing the prayer, KH. Mas Abdurrahman surprisingly proposed Uwes as the new leader. The charismatic stature of KH. Mas Abdurrahman played a major role in easily achieving consensus among participants and, therefore, Uwes became a new general chairman.¹³

This process of selecting leadership brought about rife frustration among members of *Mathla'ul Anwar*, particularly KH. Djunaedi and his loyal supporters, although they did not explicitly showed their discontent. However, several months later their opposition soon surfaced as KH. Djunaedi and his sister, Nyi Hajjah Zaenab, the chairwoman of the *madrasah* of *Mathla'ul Anwar* for girl, established their own *madrasah*, named *Maslakhul Anwar*.¹⁴ This political tension was the first incident faced by *Mathla'ul Anwar*.

Uwes Abu Bakar led *Mathla'ul Anwar* until his death in 1973 during which he was elected seven times. Compared to other general chairmen who had and have led the organization since the beginning up to now, KH. Uwes held the longest time of leadership. KH. E. M. Yasin led this group twenty one years (1916-1937), KH. Abdul Mu'thi two years (1937-1939), K.H. Muslim Abdurrahman nine months (1973-1974), KH. Nafsirin Hadi eleven years (1974-

¹¹ *Ibid.*,¹² *Ibid.*,¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48.¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

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1985), KH. Entol Burhani six years (1985- 1991), and Drs. H. Irsyad Djuwaeli, the current leader, has led the organization from 1991 up to now.

In addition to his activities in *Mathla'ul Anwar*, K. Uwes was also active in NU holding the chairmanship of the executive board of the Pandeglang NU branch from 1939 before being forced to resign in 1952 because of the different political views on the separation of the NU from Masyumi, the largest Muslim political party after Independence and established in 1945.¹⁵ In politics, he was a member of the Japanese-established advisory council of Pandeglang from 1942 till 1945 and, at the same time, was also one of the vice-general chairmen of the advisory council of Banten.¹⁶ After Independence, he joined Masyumi and he became a member of parliament of Pandeglang and West Java from 1945 till 1955. In the 1955 general election, he was elected as a member of parliament of Masyumi from 1956 till 1959. The abolishment of parliament and the introduction of the Guided Democracy by President Sukarno in 1959 ended K. Uwes' membership in parliament. The banning of Masyumi in 1960 forced him to retreat from politics.¹⁷ However, in 1964 when the anti-Communist set up their own association, *Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya* (Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups, or Sekber Golkar), KH. Uwes joined it and occupied one of the vice general chairmen of this association.¹⁸ In 1967, he was involved in attempts to rehabilitate Masyumi through the creation of the *Badan Koordinasi Amal Muslimin Indonesia* (Coordinate Association of Indonesian Muslim Works, or BKAMI) in which he held one seat of the vice general chairmen. This effort, yet, failed to be materialized due to the refusal of the New Order government. Later on, the BKAMI then created a new Muslim party, *Partai Muslimin Indonesia* (Indonesian Muslims Party, Parmusi).¹⁹ Enduring internal ruptures within this new party, partly because of the government's intervention on internal affairs of the party, caused a split in its leadership. KH. Uwes was involved in these conflicts as he

¹⁵ E. Oji Mahmudji, *Riwayat ...*, p. 1

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*,

¹⁸ E. Syibli Syarjaya and Jihaduddin, *Dirasab Islamiyah I: Sejarah dan Khittab Mathla'ul Anwar*, Menes: Perguruan Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes, 2003, pp.29-30. See also Pengurus Besar Mathla'ul Anwar, *Sejarah ...*, p. 44.

¹⁹ For a complete explanation on the creation of Parmusi and the involvement of Muslim associations see Ken Ward, *The Foundation of the Partai Muslimin Indonesia*, 1970, Abdul Azis Thaba, *Islam dan Negara Dalam Politik Orde Baru*, Jakarta: Gemma Insani Press, 1996 and Mintaredja, H.M.S., *Renungan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Masyarakat Islam dan Politik Indonesia*, Jakarta: Permata, 1972.

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along with minority leaders led by Jaelani Naro created a new executive board challenging the existing executive board led by the dominant *Mubammadiyah* leader, Djarnawi Hadikusuma.²⁰ These lasting clashes produced severe failures of the party in the 1971 general election. KH. Uwes who was among the party's list of candidates for parliament unsuccessfully won sufficient votes. Disappointed by the poor result of this general election pushed him to leave politics at whole in 1972.²¹

Mathla'ul Anwar under KH. Uwes Abu Bakar's Chairmanship The first task faced by KH. Uwes in his early leadership of *Mathla'ul Anwar* was to consolidate the organization following the controversial result of the third Congress. Strongly supported by KH. Mas Abdurrahman until his death in 1944, Uwes succeeded in organizing a Congress in 1943 in which he was without any contender elected as the general chairman. The battle for revolution in which the *madrasah* buildings both in Menes and other areas were badly devastated contributed to reunite the already divided leaders of the group. In 1949, returning from the battlefields, KH. Djunaedi and his sister, Hj. Zainab, rejoined *Mathla'ul Anwar* as they fused their own *madrasah* to the association.²²

In 1950, *Mathla'ul Anwar* obtained a legal recognition of its *madrasah* from the government. By this official status, alumni of the *madrasah* of *Mathla'ul Anwar* were equal with those of public schools. However, this official promotion also forced the organization to adopt a new system of schooling introduced by the government in which schools were divided into three stages: elementary with six years of schooling, secondary with three years, and high school with also three years. *Mathla'ul Anwar* then split its nine-graded system of schooling into two stages: elementary and secondary. The organization seemed to well appreciate these changes of schooling as long as they did not give any significant impacts on fundamental elements of its educational system. The fact was not always as that as expected.

The government in fact also obliged all schools to include secular matters, including English lessons, in their curriculum. Although *Mathla'ul Anwar* had included such secular subjects as Indonesian language, geography and history, into its curriculum since the period of the Japanese occupation, it

²⁰ *Ibid.*,

²¹ E. Oji Mahmunji, *Riwayat ...*, p. 1 and Syibli Syarjaya and Jihaduddin, *Dirosab Islamiyah I ...*, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*,

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still showed its reluctance to implement the government's instructions, particularly related to the inclusion of English lessons. As the government set the inclusion of all secular matters as one of the requirements of gaining financial aids and maintaining the legal status of school, *Matbla'ul Anwar* finally adopted secular matters into its education curriculum, although with the continuing resistance, particularly from senior religious teachers (*kiai*) who still believed that the introduction of secular matters, particularly English lesson, meant the continuance of the colonial system of education producing infidels²³

In the early 1950s, *Matbla'ul Anwar* for the second time encountered internal ruptures. However, unlike the 1939 conflicts that were purely internal affairs in nature, the 1950s was predominantly driven by political tensions in Masyumi. Few years after its creation in 1945, Masyumi faced internal splits. In 1947, the SI wing seceded from the party due to its different views on the new cabinet structure of the government led by a Communist Prime Minister, Amir Syarifudin.²⁴ In 1950, internal disputes again arose in Masyumi as leaders of NU were unhappy with the new structure of leadership of the party resulted from the 1949 party Congress in which *kijyais* lost their decisive position in the party's leadership. NU's loss of the post of the ministry of religious affairs in 1952 because of Masyumi's decision to promote Faqih Hasyim of *Muhammadiyah* as a new minister exacerbated the fractured situation. NU felt humiliated by this last decision and, in its 1952

Congress, decided to withdraw from Masyumi and established its own party, NU.²⁵ NU's political withdrawal divided members of *Matbla'ul Anwar* into three general groups ranging from those supporting NU, Masyumi's supporters, and those inclining to make *Matbla'ul Anwar* independent. As the number of the second group supporters grew insignificantly and finally joined the third group, the conflicts were then between the first and the third along

²³ Tim Penyusun, *Matbla'ul Anwar* . . . , p. 65.

²⁴ Interviews with KH. Muhsin, 20 July 2002, KH. Mahnun, 18 July 2002, and KH. Rafiudin, 20 July 2002, all of them are former students who witnessed the first adoption of secular subjects to *madrasah* of *Matbla'ul Anwar* along with their following controversies.

²⁵ According Thaba, the main factor of SI's withdrawal was purely political since its leaders looked for a position in the structure of the cabinet of Amir Syarifudin who sought support from the Islamic element in order to strengthen the legitimacy of his cabinet since he failed to persuade Masyumi leaders. Abdul Azis Thaba, *Islam dan Negara* . . . , p. 160. About SI's secession from Masyumi see also George McTurnan Kahin, *Nasionalisme dan Revolusi di Indonesia*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementerian Pengajaran Malaysia, 1980, pp. 258 – 262.

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with the second groups, or between the pro and anti NU. The pro-NU argued that it was a moral obligation for members of *Mathla'ul Anwar* to maintain the inherited affiliation with NU whatever the status of NU was. Their argument referred to the fact that since 1928 when *Mathla'ul Anwar* was in the hand of the founders, it joined NU. Furthermore, in 1938, it hosted the 13th National Congress of NU. They also viewed that the reason of the founders of *Mathla'ul Anwar* to no longer joined SI and then joined NU in 1928 was because of little respect to *keiyai* showed by modernist groups that dominated SI at that time.²⁶ Now, the same situation took place in Masyumi. Meanwhile, supporters of the anti-NU group argued that NU was no longer a purely religious and social organization as before. Political affiliation was viable to change every time. An explicit political affiliation to a certain political party whatever the party was would be dangerous to the sustainability of education institution operated by *Mathla'ul Anwar*.²⁷

In the 1952 Congress, the second group won the battle as *Mathla'ul Anwar* in the final session issued a statement declaring its independence not only from political parties but also from any religious and social organizations.²⁸ By issuing this declaration, *Mathla'ul Anwar* thus cut off its affiliation with NU as well as Masyumi. However, this declaration of independence did not prevent its members to personally affiliate with any political parties as long as those parties championed Islamic ideas. Instead of solving the dilemma, this declaration brought about fierce resistances from the supporters of the first group. The inflammatory speech of KH. Wahab Hasbullah, the general chairman of NU, when visiting Menes in 1952 gave fuel on fire.²⁹ The pro-NU group unilaterally declared its separation from *Mathla'ul Anwar* and established its own *madrasahs*, such as *Anwarul Hidayah*, *Mathla'ul Li Nabdlatil Ulama*, or Malnu, *Ablussunnah Wal Jamaah*, and *Nurul Amal*. KH. Uwes who was at that time the general chairman of the executive board of NU of Pandeglang branch was forced to resign and replaced by K.H. Hamdani, one of the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 163 – 165.

²⁷ Interview with KH. Ma'ani Rusydi, 19 July 2015.

²⁸ Interview with KH. Ma'ani Rusydi, 19 July 2015.

²⁹ Pengurus Besar Mathla'ul Anwar, *Sejarah dan Khittab ...*, p. 24 and Syibli Syarjaya and Jihaduddin, *Dirosab Islamiyah I ...*, p. 16. See also Tim Penyusun, *Mathla'ul Anwar ...*, p. 70. In 1959, the non-affiliation status of the organization finally gained a legal recognition from the government. By this government decision, Mathla'ul Anwar was regarded as an independent social and religious organization similar to that of Muhammadiyah and other socio-religious associations. See footnote number p. 34.

prominent leaders of the pro-NU group.³⁰

This split caused the fall of a number of *Mathla'ul Anwar* branches in Menes areas and faced new rivalries in operating *madrasah* and recruiting new pupils. However, suffering at the local level did not hamper *Mathla'ul Anwar's* expansion program at the national level. Its early success in establishing a number of branches in areas of West Java and Lampung placed it among nationally widespread Muslim organizations along with NU, *Mubammadiyah*, Persis, *Al-Iryad*, and *Al-Washliyah*. Due to this national standing, *Mathla'ul Anwar* received a financial grant from the government in running its educational institutions.³¹ Many local *madrasah* foundations thus joined the already recognized national organizations, including *Mathla'ul Anwar*. Therefore from 1952 up to 1960, *Mathla'ul Anwar* received a number of proposals of joining presented by local *madrasahs*, such as *Anwariyah* of Bandung, *Al-Iman* of Magelang, *Ma'had Islam* of Semarang, *Nabdbtul Wathan* of NTB, *Nurul Islam* of Donggala, *Ichsaniyah* of Tegal, and several *adrasah* in Aceh under the leadership of Muhammad Isa. In 1960, *Mathla'ul Anwar* soon became the third largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, only after NU and *Mubammadiyah*.³² However, compared to those two massbased Muslim organizations, *Mathla'ul Anwar* did not rely on a vast number of individual members rather on a number of education institutions, although in its 1953. Congress it created a special regulation on procedures of individual recruitment.³³

The declaration of political non-affiliation that was regularly issued by *Mathla'ul Anwar* in its Congresses (1953 and 1956) seemed to be unconvincingly enough to stop the rise of allegation of its closeness with Masyumi. The decline of Masyumi's political power in the last 1950s due to the involvement of its leaders in separatist movements exerted great influence over *Mathla'ul Anwar*. The fact that many of its members were active in Masyumi and showed their support to the separatist *Darul Islam* (DI) movements in West Java in 1950s and 1960s bolstered its political enemies consisting of secular nationalists, communists, and NU's supporters to further

³⁰ Interview with KH. Abdul Hadi Mukhtar who witnessed the event, 14 September 2002.

³¹ Interview with KH. Ma'ani Ruysdi, who was among young NU leaders demanding the resigning of KH. Uwes Abu Bakar from his post as the general chairman of the executive board of NU of Pandeglang branch, 19 July 2002.

³² Pengurus Besar Mathla'ul Anwar, *Sejarah dan Khittab . . .*, p. 34.

³³ *Ibid.*, 27

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give pressures on *Mathla'ul Anwar*. Because of this unfavourable situation, KH. Uwes asked the government to issue a legal statement explaining *Mathla'ul Anwar's* full independence status in 195.³⁴

Both the banning of Masyumi in 1960 and the crushing of the DI rebellion in 1960s in which some of leaders of *Mathla'ul Anwar* were among the arrests in fact exerted severe influences over *Mathla'ul Anwar*. Supporters of both PKI and NU had more legitimacy to further the organization, regardless its official independence standing. In 1962, KH. Uwes held an emergency meeting with some leaders of *Mathla'ul Anwar* to find the best solution in facing these political attacks. The meeting decided to change the symbols of the organization.³⁵

In 1964, as the anti-communist movement led by the army officials strengthened, *Mathla'ul Anwar* that had been suffering under the pressures of the PKI joined the establishment of the Sekber Golkar along with other anti-communist groups, such as HMI, *Muhammadiyah*, Persis, *Al-Irsyad*, and PII. Members of *Mathla'ul Anwar* in a variety of areas played major roles in outlawing the PKI and Sukarno in 1966.³⁶ It also played a role in promoting the establishment of the New Order regime. However, its support to Suharto's regime was based on a high hope on the creation of a more democratic situation in Indonesia in which Islamic ends could be materialized in political as well as socio-cultural lives. The secular tendency of the New Order government in 1970s led the post-Uwes leaders of *Mathla'ul Anwar* to take opposing attitudes.³⁷

B. The Plural Character Of His Religious Thought

KH. Uwes Abu Bakar wrote several treatises and books, including *Al-Waqud*, *Targhibul Atfal*, *Surat Imam Malik kepada Harus Al-Rasyid dan Wazirnya*, *Tuntunan Bergaul and Bermasyarakat*, and *Isblabul Ummah Fi Bayani Ahli Sunnah Waljamaah*. Although some of them used Arabic words as the title, all of those books were in Indonesian language. From those books,

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 35,

³⁵ *Ibid.* p.27

³⁶ Interviews with KH. Abdul Hadi Mukhtar, 14 September 2015 and KH. Tubagus Emi Suhaemi, 6 August 2003.

³⁷ Tim Penyusun, *Mathla'ul Anwar* . . . , pp. 90-91, Interviews with KH. Mahnun, a former leader of the *Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Pelajar Indonesia* (Indonesian Student and Youth United Action, KAPPI) of *Mathla'ul Anwar Madrasah* in Menes, 18 July 2002, and with O. Boman Rukmantara, 17 July 2015.

only was *Isblabul Ummah* that survives and has been widely read and referred by members of *Mathla'ul Anwar*. In this paper, I would like to focus on *Isblabul Ummah* that was firstly published in 1969 by the central board of *Mathla'ul Anwar* in order to record religious ideas of KH. Uwes.

The publication of the *Isblabul Ummah* was aimed at responding to the political failures of Muslim politics during two decades after Independence and the widespread of distrust among Muslim groups in Indonesia who each of them claimed to be the true follower of *Ablussunnab Wal Jamaab*.³⁸ In his book, KH. Uwes, therefore, largely elaborated the meaning of *Ablussunnab Wal Jamaab* and the main characters of the true follower of it. Unlike his teacher, KH. Mas Abdurrahman, KH. Uwes showed his high admiration towards some Muslim thinkers who were considered to be controversial in Indonesian Muslim community, such as Ibn Taimiya and Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab. He also discussed some highly sensitive religious issues such as *talfiq* and *taqlid*. As well as promoted the idea of tolerance against different or even conflicting religious opinions arisen by different Muslim thinkers and groups. The new fashion of religious thought developed by KH. Uwes Abu Bakar was resulted from several factors. First, as he maintained his political affiliation with Masyumi, he was considerably disillusioned from his traditional fellows of NU. Furthermore, in the time of the 1955 general election, many of his former fellows in both *Mathla'ul Anwar* and NU by referring to religious doctrines often attacked Masyumi and its supporters as no longer true followers of *Ablussunnab Wal Jamaab*. Second, his active role in Masyumi led him to intensively interact with many religious figures coming from different groups, including *Mubam-madiyah*, *Al-Iryad*, and Persis, such as M. Nasir, Abu Bakar Aceh who gave the preface to his book, *Isblabul Ummah*, Firdaus, Mukhtar Ghozali, and Saleh Suady.³⁹ Particularly the last name was later active in *Mathla'ul Anwar* and appointed as a member and then the general chairman of the Fatwa Council of *Matla'ul Anwar* in 1961.⁴⁰ The unification of variety of local *madrasahs* in the last 1950s and early 1960s, many of them had similar religious outlook to that propagated by *Mubammadiyah* and Persis, intensified the widespread of new religious ideas among members of *Mathla'ul Anwar*. No less important factor that contributed to the changes of religious

³⁸ KH. Uwes Abu Bakar, "Prakata Pendahuluan" in KH. Uwes Abu Bakar, *Isblabul Ummah dalam menerangkan arti Abli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*, Jakarta: PB Mathla'ul Anwar, 2004, reprinted.

³⁹ Tim Penyusun, *Mathla'ul Anwar ...*, p. 76-77.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80

fashion of K.H. Uwes was his personal character who was described by his followers as a curious person who would give high appreciation towards any new ideas including religious thought.

The author divided his book into several topics: the definition of *Ablussunnah Wal Jamaah*, its history, its points of view on theology, politics, Islamic law, and proper attitudes towards different opinions on religious issues. In the last part of his book, the author also briefly described biographies of several prominent Muslim thinkers, including Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam Syafi'i, Imam Hanbali, Imam Bukhori, Imam Muslim, Ibn Taimiyah, and Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab.

In matters of the definition and the history of the rise of *Ablussunnah Wal Jamaah*, K.H. Uwes firstly referred to the prophet tradition in which the prophet explained the term and the meaning of *Ablus-sunnah Wal Jamaah*. Based on the normative texts, he believed that *Ablussunnah Wal Jamaah* had truly been existent since the very early times of Islamic history and not the result of the creation of the next generation of *ulama* as many scholars suggested. But, he also recognized the historical fact saying that *Ablussunnah Wal Jamaah* materialized as a distinctive thought and group when Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari declared his theological thought as the true doctrine of this group of thought. The author clearly showed his theological inclination to the Ash'arite thought and based on it rejected other theological thoughts, such as *Khawarij*, *Syah* (except *Istna 'Ashariyah* and *Zaidiyah*), *Mu'tazilah*, *Qodariyah*, *Murjiah*, and *Jabariyah*.⁴¹

In politics, he elaborated the concept of *Ulil Amri* that according to him meant a group of people who had a special authority to make rules and constitutions dealing with life of people. There were other terms that had a similar meaning of the word *Ulil Amri* such as *Ablul Jamaah* and *Ablul Hilli Wal Aqdi*. In the modern times, the forms of *Ulil Amri* were parliament or people's assembly in which people's representatives elaborated rules and constitutions. He rejected the notion saying that *Ulil Amri* meant a head of state since *Ulil Amri* signified a plural meaning. However, since the *Ulil Amri* elected the head of the state, it was a religious obligation for all subjects to show their obedience to the head of the state. Therefore, any rebellious action against the legally recognized government was forbidden and considered to be the *bughot* action to which the government had a full right to take military

⁴¹ KH. Uwes Abu Bakar, *Islahul Ummah ...*, p. 18-19

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actions against the progenitors of the *bughot* action.⁴² This deep concern on this issue seemed to sow his opinions on the legality of muslim led rebelims such as the PRRI and the DI/TII movement, in which many of masyumi's and matla'ul Anwar leader were involved and because of which matla'ul anwar became the main target of political attacks launched by both Sukarno's and Suharto's supporters.

KH. Uwes divided Islamic law into two parts: (*ibadah*) divinely based ritual that was immune from changes and *muamalah* that was a result of human interpretation and was vulnerable to changes. He viewed that all products of *ijtihad* of *ulama* should be included into the latter part. The diversity of those products of thought was natural as every human had his own method of interpretation as well as his conclusion. At the same time, as a mankind, those *ulama* were also not immune from making errors. Critical attitudes were highly required in order to adhere or reject certain religious opinions of *ulama*.

The author also dismissed the idea that only four schools of Islamic law (*mazhab*) were legitimate, although he recognized that among a number of *mazhab*, four *mazhab* ranging from *Hanafite*, *Maliki*, *Syafite* and *Hanbalite* were the most prominent.⁴³ In relation to the question of *taqlid*, adhering to a certain *mazhab*, KH. Uwes considered it as the best way for common Muslims who did not have enough qualification for immediately understanding the complexities of Islamic doctrines. But, he also underlined that the possibility to directly refer to main sources of Islamic doctrines for those who had a high quality of religious understanding. The author also arose another question of exercising *talfiq*, combining a variety of *mazhab* opinions on a particular religious practice. According to him *talfiq* would not give any effects to the status of legality of one's religious practice and therefore could not be absolutely forbidden as many traditionalist author, including KH. mas Abdurrahman declared.⁴⁴

The author fully devoted the last parts of the book to briefly describe biographies of some prominent Muslim thinkers as mentioned above. The major aim of outlining their profiles, writings, and valuable contributions to Muslim society was to provide clear information about those figures, including their controversies along with historical background. Through this

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 145

effort, the author expected people to proportionally appreciate them and treat them justly. In his final remark, the author then condemned those, whether they were religious teachers or only common followers, who often accused one or more of those figures without any sufficient knowledge. For example, many Indonesian Muslims accused Syekh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab, Ibnu Taimiyah, Al-Afghani, and Abduh as infidels (*kafir*). This baseless accusation was one of the major factors leading to splitting conflicts among Muslim groups in Indonesia. Furthermore, KH. Uwes elaborated another factor that led Muslims to such a wrong judgement. He concluded that the politics of colonialism that exercised the strategy of divide and conquer played major role in enlarging this false notion within Indonesian Muslim communities. Thus, he suggested that the time had arrived for all Indonesian Muslims to liberate themselves from the colonial framework of politics and live in tolerant and pluralistic circumstances.⁴⁵

C. Impacts of KH. Uwes' Religious Renewal

Since the focus of the study is *Mathla'ul Anwar*, I would like to focus on the impacts of this religious renewal towards members of *Mathla'ul Anwar*. To view the impacts of this religious renewal, it is important to highlight the succeeding developments of religious thought within *Mathla'ul Anwar* after the publication of the book. There were at least three general features of religious thought growing in *Mathla'ul Anwar* in 1970s. Two sons of K.H. Mas Abdurrahman, KH. Muslim and KH. Kholid, led the first notion. Both advocated the idea that the main sources of Islam were *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, while *Ijtihad* was solely the method of analysing and interpreting both religious sources. Any religious legal rule should be based on a clear statement from both *Qur'an* and *Hadits*. KH. Muslim, for instance, ever said, that "a dog was not religiously forbidden (*haram*) because both *Qur'an* and *Hadits* did not explicitly mention that matter".⁴⁶ This group furthermore rejected the notion of obliging adherence to a certain *mazhab*. In politics, this group took oppositional stance against *Pancasila* considering it as a non-Islamic ideology. The second group more emphasized the importance of adhering *mazhab* particularly the four prominent *madhab*, well known as *Madzhabul Arbaab* that they considered as the true interpretation of Islamic law. One of the leading figures of this group was KH. Uyeh Balukia who had composed a number of religious writings, such as *Aqidah*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 217.

⁴⁶ Interview with O. Boman Rukmantara, 17 July 2015.

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Abli Sunnah Wal Jamaah adalah Kriteria Yang Relevan Dalam Arab Pembangunan Sekarang, Fiqih Syafi'i Berdalil, Mutiara Ghaniyah Syekh Abdul Qodir Jaelani, Tarjamah Azkiya Syekh Satho Addimyati etc. In politics, this group took an accommodative stance against the state. For instance, KH Uyeh viewed the state promoted ideology of *Pancasila* as the result of the *Ijma* (consensus) of Indonesian people that all Muslims had a religiously obligation to adhere it. Objection to *Pancasila* meant violating the *ijma* decision that was religiously forbidden.⁴⁷ The last group was moderate both in religious thought and political notion. They recognized the *mazhab* and declared that there was no obligation to adhere a certain *mazhab*. Every one who had an ability to directly understand the sources of Islam could exercise their own *Ijtihad*. KH. Abdul Hadi of Tangerang was among the leaders of this group.⁴⁸ Surprisingly, although there were differences in religious thought, members of *Mathla'ul Anwar* did not attack each other. It is not surprising that in the general meeting of members of *Mathla'ul Anwar*, I come across a variety of applications of religious practices.

CONCLUSION

From this study, there are at least three general conclusions. First of all, religious thought within *Mathla'ul Anwar* has developed dynamically. Therefore, this will be misleading to take a monolithic description of religious thought of one religious group as practiced by many scholars. Second, intensive interactions with new religious circumstances had brought KH. Uwes and *Mathla'ul Anwar* to absorb new religious ideas that were not inherited from the founders. Finally, political and social factors played a great role in developing new religious ideas within *Mathla'ul Anwar*.

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⁴⁷ KH. Uyeh Balukiya, *Laporan dan Pengaraban Ketua Majelis Fatwa Mathla'ul Anwar KH.U. Balukiya Syakir SY Pada Mukhtamar Mathla'ul Anwar Tanggal 10 Juli 1985 di Menes Banten Jawa Barat* in Pengurus Besar Mathla'ul Anwar, *Keputusan Mukhtamar ke XIII dan HUT ke 69 Mathla'ul Anwar*, Jakarta: Pengurus Besar Mathla'ul Anwar, 1985, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Interview with Huriyudin, 14 August 2015.

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