

## ISLAMIC THEOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE: The case of Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School

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**Abstract:** This article aims to explore the role of Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School in building sustainable peace based on Islamic theology. The theological approach chosen is *Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah* in *Asy'ariyyah* formulation. This belief applies a moderate attitude and keeps people away from judgmental or disbelieving attitudes. This research uses a qualitative approach, combining interviews and document analysis of Darunnajah's peace education programs, including international language and cultural collaborations and data from official reports and the institution's website. Theological concepts are analyzed using authoritative primary and secondary references to explain how Pesantren, as an Islamic educational institution, integrates Islamic values with local wisdom to shape students' character and promote peace. The results show that Darunnajah applies a holistic approach involving character education, foreign language skills, and classical Arabic book literacy. It also fosters awareness of global peace and cross-cultural understanding while maintaining Islamic identity. This study concludes that Darunnajah's integration of Islamic theology as the foundation of peace education can serve as a model for sustainable peacebuilding.

**Keywords:** Islamic boarding school; Darunnajah; theology; peace; collaboration; value

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah dalam membangun perdamaian berkelanjutan berbasis teologi Islam. Pendekatan teologis yang dipilih adalah *Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah* dalam formulasi *Asy'ariyyah*. Akidah ini menerapkan sikap moderat dengan menjauhkan umat dari sikap menghakimi atau mengkafirkan tindakan seseorang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara dan analisis dokumen, mencakup program pendidikan perdamaian Darunnajah yang bekerja sama secara internasional dalam bidang bahasa dan budaya, serta data dari laporan resmi dan situs web lembaga. Konsep teologis dianalisis melalui referensi primer dan sekunder yang otoritatif untuk menjelaskan bagaimana pesantren, sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam, mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai keislaman dengan kearifan lokal dalam membentuk karakter santri dan membangun perdamaian. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa Darunnajah menerapkan pendekatan holistik yang mencakup pendidikan karakter, keterampilan bahasa asing, dan literasi kitab klasik. Pesantren ini juga menumbuhkan kesadaran akan perdamaian global dan pemahaman lintas budaya, sekaligus menjaga identitas keislaman. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi teologi Islam sebagai dasar pendidikan perdamaian dapat menjadi model bagi pembangunan perdamaian yang berkelanjutan.

**Kata kunci:** pondok pesantren; Darunnajah; teologi; perdamaian; kolaborasi; nilai

## Introduction

Islamic theology is the primary teaching of Muslims in running life. A person who claims to be a Muslim will rely on the teachings of Islam. Islamic theology, which contains the teachings of the Islamic faith, covers several aspects, including divinity, prophethood, afterlife, the Quran, hadith and others. According to Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 AD), Islamic theology or *kalam* science is “Science that involves arguing with logical proofs in defense of articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate from the beliefs of pious ancestors (*salaf*) and people of the *sunnah*.”<sup>1</sup> They are the earlier people of three generations following companions of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH.<sup>2</sup>

In Indonesia, *Ahl al-sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, through the *Ash'ariyyah* approach, is the chosen theology. Almost all Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) make this formulation as a foothold in faith. The founder of this method, Abû al-Hasan al-Ash'ârî, posited the balance of faith in the middle between the extreme poles of Khawarij and Murji'ah<sup>3</sup> and between the revelation and the reason.<sup>4</sup> This approach keeps people away from judging or disbelieving and emphasizes the balance between belief and action. Thus, a very famous term emerged in the *Ash'ariyyah* terminology of “*ahl al-Qiblah*” (the people who face Makkah in their prayer) should not be convicted of disbelief by major sins committed.<sup>5</sup> This creed also places the position of revelation above human reason. The intellect serves to understand the existence of God and as a medium to comprehend information from revelation. This kind of faith determination makes fellow Muslims feel more secure under the teachings of Islam.

*Pesantren* represents Indonesia's indigenous Islamic educational system that has evolved over

centuries, centering around the Kiai's leadership in cultivating students through foundational Islamic principles of faith, jurisprudence, and ethics.<sup>6</sup> This pluralistic educational environment fosters essential social competencies including independence, mutual respect, empathy, honesty, and fairness, while integrating local wisdom to create harmonious community dynamics that students are expected to carry into broader society.

However, the authors identify a significant gap between these idealized *pesantren* values and the complex social realities that graduates encounter in contemporary Indonesian society, where conflicts, youth violence, and moral degradation continue to proliferate across various communities. This disconnect raises critical questions about the effectiveness of traditional Islamic educational approaches in addressing modern social challenges, yet the analysis remains superficial in several key areas. Hence, they propose examining Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School's peace-building approach as a potential model.

There are number of researches on Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School. First of all, Duna Izfanna's study entitled “A comprehensive approach in developing *akhlaq* A case study on the implementation of character education at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah.” She investigated how Islamic boarding schools shape students' character through various methods. These institutions successfully build character by providing educational content, creating a supportive environment, and giving students opportunities to practice what they learn.<sup>7</sup> Another study is done by Busthami Ibrahim in his research entitled “Transformational leadership and organizational commitment: moderator role of *pesantren* employee job satisfaction in Indonesia”. He examined leadership models at Darunnajah, focusing on transformational leadership styles and their impact on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. He

<sup>1</sup> ‘Abd al-Rahmân ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldûn*, ed. Abd Allah Muhammad Al-Darwish (Damascus: Dar al-Balkhi, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> E Chaumont, “Salaf Wa I Khalaf,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. C. E. Bosworth et al., New Editio (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 100.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Zahrah, *Târîkh Al-Madhâhib Al-Islâmiyyah* (Kairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldûn*.

<sup>5</sup> Abu al-Hasan Al-Asy'ari, *Al-Ibânah 'an Ushûl Al-Diyânah* (Kairo: Dâr al-Anshâr, 1977).

<sup>6</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Duna Izfanna and Nik Ahmad Hisyam, “A Comprehensive Approach in Developing *Akhlaq*: A Case Study on the Implementation of Character Education at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah,” *Multicultural Education and Technology Journal* 6, no. 2 (2012): 77–86, <https://doi.org/10.1108/17504971211236254>.

also investigated how job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.<sup>8</sup> The subsequent study is conducted by Fajar Suryono. He analyzed on human resource management through the cadre development program at Darunnajah entitled “Leadership Caderization Development at Pesantren Darunnajah Jakarta.” He examined how successful task delegation produces leaders, enabling the *pesantren* to survive for hundreds of years. This program trains its staff through guidance and relevant assignments to prepare cadres ready to lead the organization in the future. All of this is grounded in transformative Islamic values.<sup>9</sup>

However, all of these studies differ from what the authors will conduct in this research. None of these articles address the role of theology as a foundation for building peace in Islamic boarding schools. The authors analyze several concepts from authoritative theological references that serve as the foundational basis applied in the *pesantren*, which integrate Islamic values with local wisdom to shape students’ character and contribute to peacebuilding. The objective of this paper is to reveal Darunnajah Islamic boarding school’s experience in cultivating sustainable peacebuilding and to examine various types of initiatives.

## Method

This article applies a qualitative approach in reaching its aims and objectives. Through the interview method, the author managed to get information on peace education activities run by Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School through several language and cultural programs which the school initiated in collaboration with several parties abroad. In addition, the author also

refers to primary works in the form of annual official reports issued by Darunnajah, as well the institution’s official website. Meanwhile, in exploring theological concepts related to the issue of peace, the author analyzes primary sources, such as several authoritative Muslim scholarly works and secondary references, through relevant books, articles, and journals. Then, formulate it into a formulation that the Darunnajah Islamic school teaches. From here, the authors get a complete picture of Darunnajah in building sustainable peace based on Islamic theology.

## Islamic Theology on Peace

The concept of peace has strong and deep rooted in Islamic teachings. It reflected in various aspect of Muslim lives. The name of the religion ‘*Islām*’ is derived from the *sa-li-ma* which means to be safe, sound, faultless, blameless, unimpaired and so on.<sup>10</sup> The importance of peace which means *salām* in Arabic language is so important to the extends that the word and its derivative forms are repeatedly appeared in the Qur’ān, 79 times as noun, 50 times as adjective likewise showed 28 times as verb.<sup>11</sup>

In *al-Asmā’ al-Husnā*, the beautiful name of Allah, several relevant terms address the concept of peace. One of the main concepts is the word ‘*salām*,’ which means peace or safety.<sup>12</sup> *Salām* is not just a word of greeting or salutation to others but also a prayer and hope for peace for them. In the dictionary of *Mufradat al-Qur’ān*, it is mentioned that this word is a state of tranquillity that holds on to deliverance from evil and avoidance of all evil.<sup>13</sup>

Some scholars explain the concept of *salām*. Al-Ghazali explains that this word is one of God’s names in *al-Asmā’ al-Husnā*, which means that Allah, the Almighty, is pure from disgrace and ugliness. A man must follow these attributes as well as other

<sup>8</sup> Busthomi Ibrahim et al., “Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment: Moderator Role of Pesantren Employee Job Satisfaction in Indonesia,” *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* 12, no. 4 (2023): 1934–43.

<sup>9</sup> Fajar Suryono, Mohd Rumaizuddin Bin Ghazali, and Muhammad Bin Hashim, “Leadership Caderization Development at Pesantren Darunnajah Jakarta,” *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 2, no. 6 (2023): 2227–48, <https://doi.org/10.55927/eajmr.v2i6.4563>.

<sup>10</sup> Hassan Hanafi, *Islam in The Modern World* (Cairo: Dar Kebaa Bookshop, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> A. Faosiy Ogunbado and Al-Otaibi, “Religions Quest for Peace: A Comparison between Islam and Christianity,” *International Journal of Sustainable Development* 4, no. 8 (2012): 19–28.

<sup>12</sup> E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society Trust, 1984).

<sup>13</sup> al Raghīb Al-Isfahani, *Mu’jam Mufradāt Alfādz Al-Qur’An* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1972).

attributes. He comes to Allah, the Almighty, with a sincere heart by abandoning evil acts such as cheating, deceiving, envy, and various evil acts. He is asked that his intellect also be able to control his passions and anger. From there, a man will be safe in his speech and actions.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, al-Razi he explains that *salâm* means salvation for humans from lack of danger. There is nothing that harms him in life in this world and his religion.<sup>15</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, a prominent Indonesian commentator, emphasizes that *salâm* is the core of Islamic teachings. The context of peace is also mentioned with the word *ishlâh*, relating to the issue of conflict among Muslim brothers. Reconciling is a consequence of the nature of a believer that must be presented with a genuine attitude. Someone who upholds the value of peace will teach peace and harmony among fellow human beings.

Furthermore, the term of *ukhuwwah* emphasizes that all Muslims are brothers and, even more broadly, includes the brotherhood of humanity. This concept is fundamental in reducing internal conflict and building solidarity. Shihab emphasizes that strengthening *ukhuwwah* is the primary foundation for reducing conflict and building sustainable peace.<sup>16</sup> The Quran addresses the issue of peace in the term *ishlâh*, which means peace or reconciliation.<sup>17</sup> *Ishlâh* emphasizes the importance of resolving conflicts in a peaceful and just manner. In the modern context, *ishlâh* is very relevant in overcoming various disputes, both on a small and large scale.<sup>18</sup>

Another concept related to peace is the term '*adl* (justice). It is an important pillar in the concept of peace. The concept of '*adl* explains that peace must be built on a solid foundation of justice.

Without justice, peace will only be a vain mirage. It is one of the basic principles in achieving good leadership, which cannot be uphold without justice. It is through justice that the society can be in peace.<sup>19</sup> In the current global context, the concept of *adl* is very relevant to addressing the various social and economic inequalities that are often the root of conflict. Contemporary scholars emphasize that the application of the concept of *adl* in public policy and international relations is the key to creating true peace.<sup>20</sup>

Another term in Islamic teachings which is necessary in achieving peace is concept of *tasâmuh* (tolerance). This concept is a crucial aspect that is inseparable from the element of peace in Islam, which means being broad or ample.<sup>21</sup> The term *tasâmuh* implies an attitude of spaciousness when facing differences in various contexts, including religion and culture. In an increasingly heterogeneous world, the *tasâmuh* has become very important in building social harmony. These concepts of peace in Islam are not only relevant for Muslim communities but also offer valuable perspectives on values for building inclusive and sustainable global peace.

The above concepts of peace are an important part of the curriculum taught in Islamic boarding schools. In addition to learning in class, the *pesantren* also requires the students to practice the meaning of peace through daily life.<sup>22</sup> Social interactions among the members of the boarding school community, including students, teachers, and *Kiai*, are shown with mutual respect. They are taught differences through their backgrounds, from ethnicity, region, culture, and habits. These daily activities require them to respect and appreciate other cultures. This certainly reflects the importance of building harmony among the residents of the *pesantren*.

<sup>14</sup> Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Al Maqasid Fî Syarh Al-Asmâ Al-Husnâ* (Cyprus: Al- Jaffân wa Al-Jâbî, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Ibn Umar Al-Razi, *Lawâmi' Al-Bayyinât Syarî Asmâ Illâh Ta'âlâ*, ed. Thaha Abdul Rauf Said (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1990).

<sup>16</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an* (Mizan, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> Burhanuddin A. Gani, "Konsep Perdamaian Dan Keadilan Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah* 16, no. 2 (2020): 157, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v16i2.6565>.

<sup>18</sup> Suleiman Mohammed Hussein Buayo et al., "The Approach of The Holy Qur'an And Prophetic Tradition To The Conflict Management (Tadbîr Azmât)," *Ponte Academic Journal* 79, no. 12 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.21506/j.ponte.2023.12.3>.

<sup>19</sup> A. Faosiy Ogunbado, *Leadership in Islam: Ibn Khaldun's Perspective* (Bandar Seri Begawan: UNISSA Press, 2019).

<sup>20</sup> A. Gani, "Konsep Perdamaian Dan Keadilan Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an."

<sup>21</sup> Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*.

<sup>22</sup> Fauzi Ahmad, "Pendidikan Inklusif Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Dalam Praktik Sosial Di Pesantren Zainul Hasan Genggong Probolinggo Jawa Timur," *Proceedings Ancoms 1st Annual Conference For Muslim Scholars* 2, no. 110 (2020): 715–25.



## Pesantren and Peace

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia have a long history. It is rooted in the spread of Islam by the *Wali Songo* (Nine saints) in the 15th century. As the oldest Islamic educational institution, the *pesantren* was established to educate the community to understand religious teachings and form characters based on Islamic values. The *Wali Songo* (Nine saints) used *pesantren* as a center for spreading Islam, a place for religious learning and moral development of the community.<sup>23</sup> They are more likely to use cultural approaches and local wisdom in the community. From there, they received a warm welcome from the public without significant opposition.

The *pesantren* presents a friendly, polite, and calm face of Islam. This happened not without reason but because of the unique foundation of thought and method, which the Nusantara scholars passed down from generation to generation. At least several main factors make the *pesantren* a center for spreading peaceful Islam, including the first, the foothold of Moderate *Aqîdah*. Most *pesantren* are based on the *aqîdah* of *Ahl al-sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (*Asy'ariyyah*), which is moderate.<sup>24</sup> Second, the argumentation approach in *Fiqh* is comprehensive. *Fiqh* taught in *pesantren* generally refers to the four authoritative schools, and the one applied by most Indonesian Muslims is the Syafi'i school. This is taught gradually, systematically, deeply, and structurally.<sup>25</sup> By referring to these opinions, religious comfort is maintained. In the process of argumentation, it is not only fixated on the text but also considers *Ijmâ'* (scholarly consensus), *qiyâs* (analogical reasoning), *istihsân* (juristic preference), and other interpretation arguments that are by *maqâsid al-Syarî'ah*, even customs and traditions or local wisdom.<sup>26</sup> The argument is in a solid frame based on the methodology formulated by scholars

and avoids the deviant approach that often occurs in the hermeneutic approach.<sup>27</sup> Third, Sufism that Prioritizes *Adab* (ethics). One of the disciplines that is so dominant in the *pesantren* is Sufism. This science emphasizes self tempering to achieve clarity of heart, which is taught in this place through books such as *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, *Bidâyah al-Hidâyah*, and *Ihyâ' Ulûm al-Dîn*. Even in modern institutions such as Muhammadiyah, there is a well-known book, Buya Hamka's *Tasawuf Modern*. These books emphasize the importance of manners towards teachers, others, and society and the relationship between a servant and his Lord. Manners and the heart are emphasized in education, which produces gentle and wise individuals who spread Islam. Fourth, the exemplified *Kiai* (a religious leader). The *Kiai* of *pesantren* are moral figures highly respected by the community. Their humble attitude, compassion for *santri* (students) and the community, and the simplicity of their lives are real examples of how Islam is practiced in peace.<sup>28</sup> Fifth, the relationship between the *Kiai* and leaders in the government is well maintained. Many *pesantrens* have good relations with the government. This relationship allows cooperation in maintaining social stability and spreading Islamic values that are constructive, not destructive. Thus, there are thousands of *pesantren* under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, where both parties, religious institutions, and the ministry become complementary partners in their work.<sup>29</sup>

During the Dutch colonial period, the *pesantren* became the center of resistance and the formation of struggle cadres. Figures such as Imam Bonjol and Prince Diponegoro were inspired by the values taught in the *pesantren*. In addition, this

<sup>27</sup> Muntaha Artalim, "Fahm Al-Nusûs Al-Syar'iyah Wa Istinbât Al-Ahkâm Bayna Maqâsid Al-Syarâ'ah Wa Al-Ta'wiliyyah Al-Hadîthah: Dirâsah Tahliliyyah Naqdiyyah," *At-Tajdid* 20, no. 39A (2016): 151–92.

<sup>28</sup> M. H. Darajat, "Is It True Aristotle and Confucius Adhere to the Teachings of Tawheed?," *TSAQAFAH : Jurnal Peradaban Islam* 16, no. 01 (2020): 245–64, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v16i2.5062>.

<sup>29</sup> Fatmawati Fatmawati and Ade Sofyan Mulazid, "Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Ministry of Religious Affairs Policy in Entrepreneurial Development of Pondok Pesantren," *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 25, no. 2 (2021): 137, <https://doi.org/10.29300/madania.v25i2.5571>.

<sup>23</sup> Agus Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo* (Depok: Pustaka Iman, 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Much Hasan Darajat, "Al-Baqillani' Thought on Selected Theological Issues of The Qur'an" (Universiti Malaya, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, Dan Tarekat* (Yogyakarta: Gading Publishing, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Nihal Abd al-Qadir Husein, "Dawr Ushûl Al-Fiqh Fî Ithrâ' Al-Qânûn Al-Wadh'î," *Majallât Kulliyyât Al-Dirâsât Al-Islâmiyyah*, no. 21 (2024), p. 828–830.

institution continue to adapt to the times through the renewal of the education system. Among them, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor successfully introduced the concept of modern *pesantren* that integrates the *salafiyah* (traditional) curriculum with modern-based general education. The dynamic and creative curriculum design is by Islamic teachings as exemplified by the the Muslim scholars<sup>30</sup> so that the *pesantren* can face new challenges in the millennial era, such as the need for technology and innovation in various methods for the educational process. This will undoubtedly encourage the transformation of this institution to be more relevant to the needs of dynamic contemporary society.<sup>31</sup>

Data on Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia show a significant number of 36,600 institutions.<sup>32</sup> This number reveals the excellent potential for *pesantren* to play a role in various fields in Indonesia, including in encouraging a harmonious and peaceful social life. This role is also evidence to refute the claim made by Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana. He mentioned that *pesantren* institutions were dangerous and unable to contribute anything to the Indonesian nation.<sup>33</sup> This opinion is, of course, reversed with the current reality. Islamic boarding schools have a significant role in instilling peace values and building social harmony in Indonesia. As a traditional Islamic educational institution, the *pesantren* have long been an integral part of Indonesian society, combining Islamic tradition with local wisdom. This is to create a distinctive Indonesian Muslim character different from Muslims in other parts of the world, such as the Middle East. The *pesantren* not only focuses on religious education but also promotes the values of peace, harmony, and tolerance for the surrounding community.<sup>34</sup>

In the global context, *pesantren* contribute to efforts to prevent extremism and promote *wasatiyyah* teachings in faith. Thus, this creed can be manifested in the form of social activities. *Pesantren* Nurul Jadid, for example, does not only focus on local social issues. It also plays a role in building an inclusive and stable society. It contributes significantly to social development and peace at a broader level.<sup>35</sup> This role is increasingly important in the era of globalization, where the *pesantren* are required to take on more roles in Indonesia and the world.

### Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School

Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School Jakarta is one of the leading Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that has contributed significantly to the character building and intellectual development of its students. Established in 1961, this institution was founded by KH. Abdul Manaf Mukhayyar, KH. Mahrus Amin, and KH. Kamaruzaman.<sup>36</sup> The institution implements a unique education system by incorporating Islamic values as its main philosophy in character education. Through an integrated holistic approach, Darunnajah not only teaches knowledge, but also creates a conducive environment and provides opportunities for students to practice the values taught in daily practice. From this, they can directly experience education while in the *pesantren*.

Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School is a *waqf pesantren*. The founders of this institution have pledged to endow their personal land into *waqf* assets owned by Muslims and managed professionally by the Nazir Board.<sup>37</sup> The administrators of the Nazir Board

<sup>30</sup> Much Hasan Darajat, Yenrizal, and Duna Izfanna, "Al-Ghazali's Thought on Creative Thinking" 8, no. 2 (2024): p. 228, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/tasfiyah.v8i2.11710>.

<sup>31</sup> Ahmad Mansur Suryanegara, *Api Sejarah 1* (Bandung: Surya Dinasti, 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Muhammad Ali Ramadhani, "Pesantren: Dulu, Kini, Dan Mendatang," 2022, <https://kemenag.go.id/opini/pesantren-dulu-kini-dan-mendatang-ft7l9d>.

<sup>33</sup> Achdiat K. Mihardja, *Polemik Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: Perpustakaan Perguruan Kementerian PP. dan K., 1954).

<sup>34</sup> I Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education:

Creating Moderate Muslim in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): p. 185, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212>.

<sup>35</sup> Moch. Zainul Hasan and Munirul Abidin, "Peran Dan Strategi Penanaman Nilai Moderasi Beragama Di Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid," *JlIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 7, no. 7 (2024): p. 6769, <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i7.5270>.

<sup>36</sup> Abdul Haris Qadir and Irfanul Islam, *Sejarah Darunnajah Ulujami Jakarta Abad XX* (Jakarta: Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah, 2022).

<sup>37</sup> Much Hasan Darajat, "Peran Wakaf Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Kontribusi Pemikiran K. H. Abdul Manaf," *Proceeding Icop: International Conference On Pesantren* 1, no. 1 (2024): 13–35, <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=>

are the people who are entrusted with managing all of Darunnajah's assets. They consist of family members, teachers, and community leaders who have high integrity and understand the world of *pesantren*. The founders of Darunnajah, in order to realize the main goal of being a *da'wah* institution that can last for a thousand years, made al-Azhar University a benchmark for the sustainability of education that can survive with a *waqf* system.<sup>38</sup>

Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School emphasizes the character education of the students. They are involved in many activities related to all forms of activities that have an impact on strengthening their character. Among the activities that encourage the strengthening of their character are the following: organization, committee, scouting, sports, and various activities in certain fields, such as art, calligraphy, graffiti, graphic design, and painting. In the field of skills such as sewing, cooking, and makeup. In scientific fields, such as discussions, debates, and writing scientific papers. The students are required to participate in several programs in order to instill characters in various fields that are relevant to their future. The students are expected to possess the qualities or soft skills such as leadership, responsibility, courage, creativity, communication, critical thinking, managing time, and readiness to collaborate among others.<sup>39</sup> Armed with these soft skills, the students will have quality characters and personalities who are ready to meet the challenges and compete in the global world.

In addition, one of the excellent programs of Darunnajah Islamic Boarding school is also the strategy of developing the foreign language skills of its students. The leadership of this institution has implemented various innovative programs to increase students' interest in and ability to master Arabic and English languages. This approach includes

special programs designed to identify and develop the linguistic potential of the students, with support from the *pesantren* environment. The students are required to practice speaking Arabic and English in their daily conversations. Every morning, they are guided in language by providing new vocabulary that they need. In addition, the activity of improving language skills is also through the obligation to write essays in Arabic and English. The students are asked to compose essays every week, which are then corrected by the homeroom teachers. It is hoped that from here, the students will get used to practicing in written language. Strengthening language education is also accompanied by various Arabic language training programs abroad. Students who are interested in participating in Arabic language training in Saudi Arabia will be assisted by the *pesantren*. They can take part in Language Training at Madinah University. This program is a collaboration between Darunnajah University and Medina University, which has been running for almost four years. The students join this language training for three full weeks and practice it in Medina society as a form of direct experience. This can have a strong enough impact because they directly feel in the geographical area where the origin of the Arabic language comes from.<sup>40</sup>

The existence of language activities in the Darunnajah *pesantren* environment shows the commitment of Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School to improving the literacy of classical Arabic books among students. The implementation of this program is conducted through several programs. Among them, students from grades two to six are taught subjects such as *Khalâshah Nûr al-Yaqîn*, *Bulûgh al-Marâm*, *Ibânah al-Ahkâm*, and *Bidâyah al-Mujtahid*. Teachers teach structured learning in this class.

### Darunnajah and Building Sustainable Peace

In its history, Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School has shown a serious commitment to building relationships with various educational institutions on a national and international scale. This effort is part of the *pesantren*'s strategy to improve the quality of education and broaden the global horizons of its

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<sup>38</sup> Sri Nanang Setiono, Ihwan Mahmudi, and Abdul Haris Qodir, *Biografi KH. Abdul Manaf Mukhayyar* (Jakarta: Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Yogi Fery Hidayat and Muzakkiyah Noor, "Buletin Darunnajah: Grand Launching Universitas Darunnajah" (Jakarta, 2023).

<sup>40</sup> Hidayat and Noor.



students. Through various international cooperation programs, Darunnajah has succeeded in creating opportunities for students and teachers to engage in cross-cultural exchanges of knowledge and experience, including peace issues.

The *pesantren* has an excellent opportunity to take a role in global diplomacy. The cultural and structural dynamics applied in the *pesantren* are able to become a force to contribute to introducing Indonesia to the outside world.<sup>41</sup> Those who study in the *pesantren* will know the importance of the concept of peace in accordance with Islamic teachings. This is manifested in various activities such as international school link programs, language training, leadership training, and social and cultural visits, as well as participating in conferences, seminars, joint research, publications, and networking with any institutions abroad.

Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School has an institution called Darunnajah International Relation Office (DIRO). This institution is specialized in handling various activities related to various foreign fields. This division was formed to establish cooperation and manage the activities of students and teachers to introduce the global world through a network that the institution already owns. They participate in various programs at institutions abroad carrying an educational and cultural mission with a *pesantren* background. The program which was designed by the institution aims to prepare the confidence of the students and teachers to be able to become the nation's ambassadors so as to introduce the values of peace and local wisdom that have taken root in Indonesia, especially from the tradition of Islamic boarding schools.<sup>42</sup> Activities like this can increase the competence of the students on how to be diplomatic with the world community so that it will provide readiness when they take part in society in the future, not only in Indonesia but even internationally.

Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School, located in Jakarta, is often a pilot Islamic education institution

recommended by the government to be a reference for delegations of state guests from various circles. Here, Darunnajah gets the opportunity to introduce a unique and original Islamic education system rooted in local cultural values that are hundreds of years old in the archipelago. The students, who come from various regions, can gather and interact well with mutual respect and appreciation. The place is a comfortable and peaceful learning atmosphere for students; despite being in a big city, it is still conducive for them to study. This *pesantren* culture seems to be a special attraction for delegates who come to this institution to make it an example of educating peace.<sup>43</sup>

In its educational process, Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School makes global peace issue as one the core of their curriculum. Because this initiation, several parties and organisations are willing to work together or collaborate with the institution in several programs. Few among those programs are school link programs, social and cultural visits, language and leadership training, and networking. These activities are carried out periodically according to a predetermined schedule.<sup>44</sup>

One of the international activities of Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School is the School Link Program with Holy Family Catholic School Keighley, Yorkshire, England. This activity was designed in March 2006, beginning with the visit of the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah.<sup>45</sup> On this occasion, he wanted cooperation between the two parties to build mutual understanding and share experiences and information. Both are based on religious education, Darunnajah is deeply rooted in Islamic education and teachings (boarding school), while Holy Family Catholic School (HFCS) is based on Catholic education in the UK. Through the intermediary of the British Council, the two institutions agreed to conduct a teacher and student exchange. The School Link program

<sup>41</sup> Yanuardi Syukur, Andi Ismira, and Marwan, eds., "Indonesia Dalam Pusaran Disrupsi Global" (Jakarta: Perpusnas Press, 2022), 227–36.

<sup>42</sup> Imam Khairul Anas, "Interview," Director of DIRO" (Jakarta, 2024).

<sup>43</sup> Manaf Sofwan, "Interview," Principal of Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School" (2024).

<sup>44</sup> Anas, "Interview," Director of DIRO."

<sup>45</sup> "Blair Akan Dialog Dengan Santri," 2006, [https://www.antaranews.com/berita/30935/blair-disambut-hangat-santri-pesantren-darunnajah#google\\_vignette](https://www.antaranews.com/berita/30935/blair-disambut-hangat-santri-pesantren-darunnajah#google_vignette).



has objectives and scope of activities in the field of education and culture. Among them is the goal of building understanding for both institutions with regard to educational issues, cultural differences, and backgrounds. Both also agreed to share experiences and knowledge in order to improve the quality of learning and teaching.<sup>46</sup>

The school link activities over the past eleven years (2006-2016) have involved many teachers and students. There are 24 teachers and 13 students who have been sent from Darunnajah to HFCS, while teachers and students from HFCS who were sent to Darunnajah amounted to 20 teachers and a student. Every year, Darunnajah sends two teachers. They conduct activities related to learning and teaching activities organized by HFCS. The curriculum taught include Islamic civilization, Indonesian language, Arabic language, geography, history, math, information technology, and calligraphy. When teaching geography, Darunnajah teachers introduce ethnic and religious diversity, arts, specialties, and Indonesia's natural wealth. As for non-academic materials (extracurricular), they get the opportunity to teach scouting. As for the students who take part in this program, they get a schedule of learning activities in class according to their grade level with other students at HFCS. They follow learning activities during the two-week learning program at the school in various different subjects and live with one of the families of the school's student guardians. Outside of study hours, the students have the opportunity to train in calligraphy, scouting, and various Indonesian dances to the HFCS students.<sup>47</sup>

HFCS teachers and students felt the same way when they visited Darunnajah. They were in Indonesia for two weeks, living in the *pesantren* environment, feeling the aura and culture of the students since waking up at four in the morning. Within twenty-four hours, they were on the Darunnajah campus. From here, the teachers and students saw and experienced firsthand the dynamics of *pesantren* culture in both academic and non-academic aspects in the form

of extracurricular activities. Among the comments from Prof. Mike Hardy, a former Director of the British Council Indonesia, are as follows:

“...In 2006 we had a small idea of the value and the benefit of strengthening relationship between young people, and the leader of Darunnajah was very supportive with this idea, so we had persuaded our school in Keighley if the idea also strong.”<sup>48</sup>

The information above shows that this student exchange activity has successfully involved many participants from both Darunnajah and HFCS. They can exchange ideas and experiences in various ways, including building relationships of understanding and peace together.

Furthermore, Darunnajah International Relations (DIRO) also hold a student and teacher exchange program in the United States. Darunnajah cooperates with the American embassy in Jakarta in recruiting participants in the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (Yes) program. The United States of America funds this project. The Department of State facilitates this purpose so that participants can understand the differences in values and culture between specific communities. During the activities in America, participants who are accepted into this activity will live in one of the families in America. They will share experiences and interact with several communities in order to build a common understanding of values and culture. Some Darunnajah students who have completed this program will continue to study again at Darunnajah.<sup>49</sup> The *pesantren* always equips the students who will participate in this event with regard to creed and sharia before carrying out their duties abroad. They are also given guidelines regarding social life in the country where they will visit. Having completed this project, the students were asked to make a report as an evaluation during the program.

In addition, in 2014, Pesantren Darunnajah also established cooperation with the International

<sup>46</sup> Syukur, Ismira, and Marwan, “Indonesia Dalam Pusaran Disrupsi Global.”

<sup>47</sup> <https://darunnajah.com/santri-darunnajah-mengikuti-study-visit-program-ke-inggris/>.

<sup>48</sup> Sofwan Manaf, *School Link Program* (Jakarta: DIRO Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah, 2016).

<sup>49</sup> Rizma Ilfi, “Interview,” Program Coordinator of DIRO.”

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) based in Geneva, Switzerland. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was done by Dr. KH Safwan Manaf, M.Si., as the Chairman of Darunnajah, and Andrew Bartles-Smith as the Director of ICRC Indonesia. The implementation of this collaboration is in the form of a Workshop on the Preparation of a Guidebook for the Exploration of Humanitarian Law (EHH) with Islamic Local Wisdom. The purpose of the book is to introduce young people to the basic rules and principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), a set of rules intended to protect human life and dignity in times of armed conflict and to reduce and prevent suffering and destruction caused by war. This EHH program has been successfully piloted in 11 Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia, following the ICRC's collaboration with Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School.<sup>50</sup>

The international collaboration program in Darunnajah also includes language training activities for students, teachers, and lecturers. Since 2010, Darunnajah has collaborated with Umm al-Qura University in Mecca for Arabic language training to help them improve their Arabic language capacity. They were trained at Umm al-Qura University for 40 days on how to teach this language, both oral and written. This activity was conducted in parallel with participants from Senegal. The participants were conditioned to interact with each other so that they would build an understanding of both culture and habits. On the sidelines of the training, they were also given an introduction to the culture and values of Arab society. The participants visited several donors who use to donate some of their wealth to others. They had a dialogue with them about their traditions. In addition, the participants also visited the management of the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Medinah. They were been informed on how the management were able to manage millions of pilgrims from various countries around the world who perform *Hajj* and *Umrah* in the two mosques.<sup>51</sup> This joint program is

very inspiring for the participants in getting to know the Arab culture and can build global understanding outside the region of the participants' country.

Moreover, in order to promote global peace, Darunnajah also actively cooperates with the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in Kabul to provide scholarships for students from Afghanistan. In 2017, Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School gained the trust of the President of the Republic of Indonesia to receive a visit from a delegation of the High Peace Council of Afghanistan. At the end of the meeting, Darunnajah welcomed the cooperation with Kabul e-Maaser Vocational Institute signed by Dr. KH. Safwan Manaf (Darunnajah side), Mohammad Mehdi Bazel (e-Maaser Institute side). This event was attended by Dr. Arif Rachman MD (Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Afghanistan), and Mrs. Royani Rahmani (Ambassador of Afghanistan to Indonesia).<sup>52</sup>

After the delegates returned to Afghanistan, the Institute opened the opportunity for interested Afghans to take up the scholarship offer of scholarships to study at the Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School, as well as to learn about the different cultures of Islamic education.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

This study underscores the pivotal role of Islamic theology, particularly the moderate *Asy'ariyyah* perspective of *Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah*, in shaping effective peace education within Darunnajah Islamic Boarding School. The findings demonstrate that integrating Islamic theological principles into number of activities in the *pesantren* fosters a culture of tolerance, moderation, and mutual respect, which are essential for sustaining peace both locally and globally. This contribution enriches scholarly understanding by highlighting the practical application of theological concepts in educational settings aimed at promoting peace. Moreover, it affirms that embedding Islamic theology into

<sup>50</sup> "Kerjasama Kedua Antara-Darunnajah Dan Icrc," <https://darunnajah.com/kerjasama-kedua-antara-darunnajah-dan-icrc/>.

<sup>51</sup> "Guru Darunnajah Ikuti Daurah Ummul Qura Di Mekkah Al Mukarramah," n.d., <https://darunnajah.com/guru-darunnajah-ikuti-daurah-ummul-qura-di-mekkah-al-mukarramah/>.

<sup>52</sup> "Selamat Datang Delegasi Dewan Perdamaian Tinggi Afghanistan Di Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah Jakarta," n.d., <https://darunnajah.com/selamat-datang-delegasi-dewan-perdamaian-tinggi-afghanistan-di-pondok-pesantren-darunnajah-jakarta/>.

<sup>53</sup> Anas, "Interview," Director of DIRO."

curriculum design and character development not only supports the formation of peace-oriented individuals but also offers a replicable model for other religious educational institutions seeking to contribute to peaceful coexistence in diverse societies. This research ultimately affirms the significance of Islamic theological frameworks as a foundation for building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable peace initiatives in both academic discourse and real-world practice.

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