

## RECONSTRUCTING “NASIONALISME” WITHIN QUR’ANIC EXEGESIS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF AHMAD HASSAN’S *TAFSIR AL-FURQAN*

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**Abstract:** *This study examines Ahmad Hassan’s interpretation of ‘Nasionalisme’ in Tafsir Al-Furqan by employing Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It aims to analyze how discourses of ‘nasionalisme’—particularly those concerning love for the homeland and obedience to political authority—are constructed, negotiated, and legitimized within a Qur’anic exegetical framework. Using qualitative library research, the primary sources consist of Tafsir Al-Furqan and Ahmad Hassan’s Islam dan Kebangsaan, while secondary sources include scholarly books, academic journals, and other relevant works. In terms of methodology, this study applies Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of CDA, encompassing textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. The findings demonstrate that Ahmad Hassan constructs a form of religiously grounded “Nasionalisme” through conditional theological framing. Love for the homeland is articulated as a legitimate Islamic value insofar as it remains consistent with tawḥīd and shari‘ah, while obedience to political leaders if it aligns with Islamic law. From a discursive perspective, Ahmad Hassan’s interpretation functions as an alternative to the dominant secular nationalist discourse that appear during the presidency of Soekarno. His exegetical strategy reveals an effort to reconstruct ‘nasionalisme’ not as an absolute political loyalty, but as a moral and religious commitment oriented toward justice, social responsibility, and resistance to ideological domination. By positioning ‘nasionalisme’ within Islamic normative boundaries and Indonesia’s socio-political context, this study contributes to the broader discourse on Qur’anic exegesis and the dynamic relationship between Islam, ‘nasionalisme’, and the nation-state in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** ‘Nasionalisme’; *Tafsir Al-Furqan*; Ahmad Hassan; Critical Discourse Analysis.

**Abstrak:** Studi ini hendak mengkaji interpretasi Ahmad Hassan tentang Nasionalisme dalam Tafsir Al-Furqan dengan menggunakan Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA) karya Norman Fairclough. Ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana wacana nasionalisme—terutama yang menyangkut cinta tanah air dan ketaatan pada otoritas politik—dibangun, dinegosiasikan, dan dilegitimasi dalam kerangka tafsir Al-Qur’an. Penelitian ini menggunakan Tafsir Al-Furqan dan Islam dan Kebangsaan karya Ahmad Hassan sebagai sumber primer. Dari segi metodologi, penelitian ini menerapkan model CDA tiga dimensi Fairclough, yang mencakup analisis tekstual, praktik diskursif, dan praktik sosial budaya. Temuan dalam artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa Ahmad Hassan membangun bentuk “Nasionalisme” yang didasarkan pada agama melalui pembingkaihan teologis bersyarat. Cinta terhadap tanah air diartikulasikan sebagai nilai Islam yang sah sejauh tetap konsisten dengan tauhid dan syari’ah, sementara ketaatan kepada pemimpin politik jika sejalan dengan hukum Islam. Dari perspektif diskursif, interpretasi Ahmad Hassan berfungsi sebagai alternatif wacana nasionalis sekuler dominan yang muncul pada masa presiden Soekarno. Strategi eksegetiknya mengungkapkan upaya untuk merekonstruksi nasionalisme bukan sebagai loyalitas politik mutlak, tetapi sebagai komitmen moral dan agama yang berorientasi pada keadilan, tanggung jawab sosial, dan perlawanan terhadap dominasi ideologis. Dengan memosisikan nasionalisme dalam batas-batas normatif Islam dan konteks sosial-politik Indonesia, studi ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas tentang penafsiran Al-Qur’an dan hubungan dinamis antara Islam, nasionalisme, dan konsep negara-bangsa di Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci:** Nasionalisme; Tafsir Al-Furqan; Ahmad Hassan; Critical Discourse Analysis.

## Introduction

“Nasionalisme” for Indonesian society, particularly for Muslims, plays a highly important and strategic role in maintaining national resilience within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, “Nasionalisme” does not merely function as an established discourse of nationhood; it also emerges as a complex and sensitive issue within the socio-political and religious spheres. This complexity is especially evident in the intersection between religion and the state, as well as in the ways Muslims understand and interpret religious teachings, including the Qur’an, in relation to national loyalty.

Within the Islamic tradition, “Nasionalisme” is a relatively modern concept. It was unknown at the time of the Qur’anic revelation and only developed in Europe in the late eighteenth century before spreading to the Muslim world through colonial encounters. One of the earliest moments in which the idea of “Nasionalisme” was introduced to Muslims occurred during Napoleon Bonaparte’s expedition to Egypt, where he introduced the term *al-Ummah al-Miṣriyyah* (the Egyptian nation), alongside the already well-established concept of *al-Ummah al-Islāmiyyah*.<sup>2</sup> As this notion evolved, it gave rise to various national entities (*umam*) within

the Muslim world. However, European “Nasionalisme”, which entered Muslim societies in tandem with imperialism, was regarded by some as an instrument that contributed to the fragmentation of the Islamic community.<sup>3</sup>

The secular character of European “Nasionalisme” prompted resistance among certain Muslim groups, who viewed it as neglecting religious values and weakening the universal solidarity of Islam. Ideologically, Islam is understood as a transnational and universal religion, whereas “Nasionalisme” is perceived as local and particularistic. Despite this tension, more moderate perspectives emerged that sought to reconcile Islam and “Nasionalisme”. From this viewpoint, “Nasionalisme” is not necessarily antithetical to Islam but can serve as a means of strengthening national cohesion, provided it remains grounded in the principles of *ukhuwah islāmiyyah* and social justice.<sup>4</sup>

Debates surrounding “Nasionalisme” in Indonesia cannot be separated from the views of key national and Islamic figures. Soekarno, for instance, asserted that there should be no distinction between religious majorities and minorities, as religion is a matter of individual belief, while the state must stand above all groups. This perspective underpinned the adoption of Pancasila as the state ideology. However, Soekarno’s position was strongly contested by several Islamic leaders, including Mohammad Natsir and Ahmad Hassan. They regarded the “Nasionalisme” promoted by Soekarno as potentially chauvinistic and analogous to *‘aşabiyyah*, a form of tribal partisanship associated with Arab society prior to Islam.<sup>5</sup>

Among the figures involved in this debate, Ahmad Hassan occupies a particularly significant position. He is widely recognized as a prominent ulama, Qur’anic exegete, jurist, critical thinker, and socio-political activist who exerted considerable influence on the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> Through his major work, *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, Ahmad Hassan not only interpreted Qur’anic verses textually but also responded to the social and political realities of his time. His views on “Nasionalisme” and religious practice were deeply intertwined with the ideological struggles that unfolded during the colonial period and the early years of Indonesia’s independence.

Ahmad Hassan’s critical stance toward religious traditions can be seen, for example, in his rejection of the practice of *talqīn* for the deceased.<sup>7</sup> In his interpretation QS. al-Naml (27): 80,

إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ۗ

“Verily, you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear

the call when they turn away”

He argued that a deceased person can no longer receive religious instruction or reminders, as one’s deeds alone determine one’s response to the angels’ questions. This rejection reflects Hassan’s scripturalist and puritan orientation while also illustrating the close relationship between his Qur’anic interpretations and his ideological outlook.

Against this background, the present study focuses on how “Nasionalisme” is represented and constructed in *Tafsir Al-Furqan* by Ahmad Hassan. Specifically, this research seeks to address the following question: How is the discourse of “Nasionalisme” constructed in Ahmad Hassan’s interpretation of QS. al-Nisā’ (4): 97 in *Tafsir Al-Furqan*, and what socio-political factors influence this construction? The objective of this study is to critically analyze the relationship between the tafsir text, nationalist ideology, and the socio-political context that shaped Ahmad Hassan’s thought.

Several previous studies have examined *Tafsir Al-Furqan* from different perspectives. For instance, Ayu Annisa (2024) employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the concept of leadership in Javanese-language tafsir.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Diyah Pratiwi (2025) investigated the construction of Nusantara Islamic identity in *Tafsir Al-Furqan* through a hermeneutical analysis of the social verses of QS. al-Baqarah.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Aty Munshihah (2025) highlighted the dialectical relationship between Ahmad Hassan’s puritan ideology and the Qur’an’s linguistic discipline.<sup>10</sup> However, these studies have not specifically addressed “Nasionalisme” as an ideological discourse in Ahmad Hassan’s tafsir, nor have they sufficiently examined its articulation within the context of Indonesia’s national political dynamics.

Therefore, this study argues that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) constitutes a relevant and necessary theoretical approach. CDA enables Qur’anic interpretation to be understood not merely as a linguistic product but as a form of social practice shaped by ideology, power relations, and historical context. In this study, “Nasionalisme” is operationally defined as an ideological construct that links religious loyalty with national identity, manifested in discourses of love for the homeland, obedience to state authority, and resistance to actions perceived as undermining the national order.

The analytical framework employed in this study follows Norman Fairclough’s CDA model.<sup>11</sup> This study does not examine discourse merely from linguistic elements but rather relates it to its context.<sup>12</sup> In other words, language is understood as a form of social practice, used in accordance with specific situations and conditions to achieve certain

goals. The theoretical foundation of Critical Discourse Analysis is based on several historical and social developments.<sup>13</sup> Within this process, the discourse of “Nasionalisme” will be discussed comprehensively, using the method of Critical Discourse Analysis developed by Norman Fairclough (1995), as elaborated in *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theoretical Framework, Methodology, and Application* by Haryatmoko.<sup>14</sup>

The theoretical framework employed in this study consists of three stages of analysis. First, *language as text*, which involves the analysis of linguistic texts, both spoken and written, encompassing words, phrases, and sentences. In the context of this research, the analysis focuses on textual elements in the form of words and sentences that constitute the object of study, particularly the discourse of “love for the homeland and obedience to leaders” in *Tafsir Al-Furqan* on QS. An-Nisā’ (4): 97. Second, *discourse practice*, which refers to the analysis of discursive practices, including the processes of text production and interpretation, as well as the ways in which texts are consumed. At this stage, the analysis is directed toward examining the relationship between the tafsir and the historical context in which the exegete lived, particularly during the era of President Soekarno’s administration. Third, *sociocultural practice*, which involves the analysis of sociocultural practices by examining the relationship between the text and the changes or influences occurring within society, encompassing social, cultural, and socio-political as well as religious conditions.<sup>15</sup> Through this framework, the study aims to contribute new insights into the discourse of “Nasionalisme” in Qur’anic interpretation in Indonesia.

### **Ahmad Hassan: Biography, Ideological Formation, and Discourse Production**

Ahmad Hassan was a prominent Muslim intellectual whose life and thought unfolded across two critical historical periods in Indonesian history: the colonial era and the early post-independence period. Born in Singapore on December 31, 1887, Hassan grew up in a transregional Islamic milieu shaped by colonial power, economic mobility, and religious reformism. His father, Ahmad Sinna Wappu Maricar—who bore the title Pandit—played a formative role in shaping Hassan’s intellectual orientation, particularly his strong commitment to scriptural authority and religious discipline.<sup>16</sup>

Hassan’s life experiences were marked by migration, economic struggle, and sustained engagement with diverse social environments, all of which significantly influenced the production of his religious discourse. In 1921, he migrated from Singapore to Surabaya to manage a batik business owned

by his uncle and teacher, Abdul Lathif. After the business failed and was transferred to a relative, Hassan established a tire retreading enterprise, which also proved unsuccessful. These repeated economic setbacks did not marginalize Hassan intellectually; rather, they positioned him within the lived realities of colonial society and sharpened his critical awareness of social and institutional structures, including the state.<sup>17</sup>

In 1924, Ahmad Hassan relocated to Bandung, a city that functioned as an important intellectual and political hub during the late colonial period. There, he studied weaving at a government vocational school and earned a diploma, reflecting his engagement with modern forms of education. More significantly, Hassan resided in the house of Haji Muhammad Junus, one of the founders of *Persatuan Islam* (PERSIS).<sup>18</sup> His close association with PERSIS played a decisive role in shaping his ideological orientation. As a reformist organization, PERSIS promoted a puritanical approach to Islam that emphasized direct engagement with the Qur’an and Hadith while rejecting religious practices perceived as un-Islamic innovations (*bid’ah*). This puritanism also informed Hassan’s critical stance toward secular “Nasionalisme”, which he viewed as potentially undermining Islam’s normative authority.

Bandung also became the site of Hassan’s direct engagement with nationalist ideology through his frequent interactions with Soekarno. The two figures met regularly at a printing press owned by a Chinese entrepreneur, where Soekarno published the newspaper *Pikiran Rakyat* and Hassan printed his *Tafsir Al-Furqan*. Their encounters often developed into prolonged and intense debates that revealed deep ideological tensions between Islamic reformism and secular “Nasionalisme”. While these exchanges influenced Soekarno’s appreciation for Islamic reformist ideas, they also reinforced Hassan’s critical attitude toward “Nasionalisme” that was detached from religious foundations. Hassan’s unwavering defense of his views during these debates demonstrates the extent to which ideological conflict informed his intellectual trajectory.<sup>19</sup>

Living through both the colonial and post-independence periods, Ahmad Hassan occupied a complex ideological position vis-à-vis the state.<sup>20</sup> On the one hand, he rejected colonial domination and supported moral and social reform among Muslims; on the other hand, he remained critical of nationalist projects that subordinated religious authority to secular political frameworks. These experiences directly shaped the production of his tafsir, which cannot be understood merely as a textual or theological endeavor but rather as a form of ideological intervention within a contested sociopolitical landscape.

*Tafsir Al-Furqan*, Hassan's most influential work, stands as a testament to this context of discourse production.<sup>21</sup> Classified as a second-generation tafsir—produced between the early twentieth century and the early 1960s—it reflects the intellectual refinement of earlier exegetical traditions while responding to the pressures of modernity, “Nasionalisme”, and state formation. Hassan intentionally wrote his tafsir to make the Qur'an accessible to non-Arabic-speaking Muslims, while simultaneously discouraging *taqlid* (uncritical imitation). By emphasizing the Qur'an and Hadith as the ultimate sources of authority, Hassan positioned his tafsir as both a religious guide and a critique of ideological frameworks—including secular “Nasionalisme”—that he believed threatened Islamic norms.<sup>22</sup>

In this sense, Ahmad Hassan's life experiences were not merely biographical details but constitutive elements in the formation of his exegetical discourse. His encounters with colonial modernity, reformist Islamic movements, and nationalist leaders shaped his ideological stance toward the state and informed the way “Nasionalisme” was negotiated, contested, and reconstructed within his tafsir. Therefore, *Tafsir Al-Furqan* should be read as a product of ideological struggle, in which religious interpretation functioned as a medium for articulating Hassan's position on Islam, “Nasionalisme”, and the authority of the modern nation-state.

### The Textual Dimension of QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 97

QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 97 is selected in this study as a representative text for analyzing the discourse of “Nasionalisme” in *Tafsir Al-Furqan* due to its explicit engagement with themes of place, belonging, migration (hijrah), oppression, and moral responsibility. Unlike verses that discuss hijrah purely in a historical or legal context, this verse directly addresses the ethical consequences of remaining in an environment that obstructs religious practice. For Ahmad Hassan, this textual configuration provides a discursive space in which attachment to one's homeland can be critically evaluated and ideologically rearticulated. Therefore, QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 97 functions as a strategic textual locus for examining how “Nasionalisme” is negotiated within Qur'anic interpretation.

The verse states:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضَ اللَّهِ وَأَسِعَةَ فَتُهَا جَرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

“Indeed, those whose souls are taken by the angels while they were

wronging themselves, [the angels] will ask, ‘In what condition were you?’ They will reply, ‘We were oppressed in the land.’ The angels will say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?’ For such, their refuge is Hell, and what an evil destination it is.” (QS. An-Nisā’ [4]: 97)<sup>23</sup>

At the textual level, Ahmad Hassan’s interpretation begins with a close reading of key lexical and grammatical elements. The phrase *zālimī anfusihim* (“those who wronged themselves”) is central to his analysis. Grammatically, the use of the active participle *zālimī* attributes agency directly to the subjects, indicating that the wrongdoing is self-inflicted rather than imposed solely by external forces. Through this lexical choice, the verse establishes moral accountability, even in the presence of oppression. Ahmad Hassan emphasizes this aspect to argue that structural hardship does not automatically absolve individuals from ethical responsibility.

Another crucial textual feature is the dialogical structure of the verse. The verse unfolds in a question-and-answer format between the angels and the deceased, creating a moment of interrogation and justification. The repeated use of interrogative clauses—“In what condition were you?” and “Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough?”—serves a rhetorical function that exposes the inadequacy of the excuse offered by the oppressed individuals. Ahmad Hassan interprets this dialogical structure as reinforcing the Qur’an’s evaluative stance: oppression is acknowledged, but moral complacency is condemned.

Within this textual framework, Ahmad Hassan introduces the phrase “love of the homeland” as an explanatory concept. Although the phrase itself does not appear explicitly in the Qur’anic verse, Hassan employs it to articulate the underlying motivation that prevents hijrah. Textually, this move represents an exegetical expansion, linking the semantic content of *al-arḍ* (the land) and *al-hijrah* (migration) to a form of emotional and ideological attachment to place. In Hassan’s reading, excessive attachment to one’s homeland becomes the implicit cause of *ẓulm al-nafs* (self-wronging).<sup>24</sup>

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, this lexical insertion is significant. By framing “love of the homeland” as the unspoken rationale behind the refusal to migrate, Ahmad Hassan redefines “Nasionalisme” as a discursive practice subject to religious judgement. At the textual level, the negative evaluation embedded in *zālimī anfusihim* is thus extended to critique a type of “Nasionalisme” that prioritizes territorial attachment over religious obligation. This demonstrates how textual interpretation functions as a site of ideological positioning.

Moreover, the clause “*alam takun arḍullāhi wāsi‘ah*” (“Was not the earth of Allah spacious?”) is interpreted by Hassan as negating any absolutization of territorial boundaries. Linguistically, the possessive construction *arḍullāh* relocates authority from national territory to divine ownership. Hassan reads this as textual evidence that attachment to land cannot supersede obedience to God. Within CDA, this linguistic move reflects a displacement of nationalist logic by a theocentric worldview, in which space is morally evaluated based on its conduciveness to religious practice rather than its political or emotional significance.

Ahmad Hassan further interprets *hijrah* in QS. An-Nisā’ [4]: 97 not merely as physical relocation, but as an intentional and ethical act aimed at achieving meaningful social transformation. Textually, *hijrah* is positioned as a verb of agency (*fatuhājirū fihā*), underscoring action and moral choice. This emphasis allows Hassan to recontextualize *hijrah* within the Indonesian experience of colonial oppression. In this rearticulation, *hijrah* symbolizes resistance to unjust structures and the pursuit of social liberation.<sup>25</sup>

Through this textual framing, Hassan constructs an Islamic conception of “Nasionalisme” grounded in moral struggle rather than sentimental attachment. Love of the homeland, when aligned with *hijrah*, is redefined as commitment to justice, religious freedom, and collective emancipation. Conversely, love of the homeland that inhibits struggle is discursively marked as a form of ideological stagnation. Thus, at the textual level, QS. An-Nisā’ [4]: 97 becomes a vehicle for evaluating competing notions of “Nasionalisme” within an Islamic ethical framework.<sup>26</sup>

In sum, the textual analysis of QS. An-Nisā’ [4]: 97 reveals how Ahmad Hassan mobilizes diction, grammatical agency, interrogative structure, and semantic expansion to construct a critical discourse on “Nasionalisme”. Before advancing to ideological interpretation, the text itself establishes a moral hierarchy in which religious responsibility supersedes territorial loyalty. This demonstrates that, even at the level of language, Hassan’s tafsir functions as an intervention in the broader debate on “Nasionalisme”, faith, and the authority of the modern nation-state.<sup>27</sup> In his view, love of the homeland signifies a form of liberation both physical, in terms of freedom from colonial rule, and intellectual, in terms of emancipation from foreign ideologies that contradict Islamic principles. This spirit of *hijrah* thus reflects resistance against colonialism and imperialism, as well as an effort to build an independent and sovereign nation grounded in Islamic values.<sup>28</sup> As a prominent Islamic thinker in Indonesia, Ahmad Hassan regarded love of the homeland as an expression of love for religion,

emphasizing the close relationship between faith and social responsibility. Accordingly, from his perspective, love of the homeland is not merely a patriotic sentiment, but also a religious obligation that reflects the depth of one's faith.<sup>29</sup>

### **Dimensions of Context in Discourse**

Ahmad Hassan began composing *Tafsir Al-Furqān*, one of the most monumental works in the tradition of Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia, in 1928 a year that coincided with the historic Youth Pledge. The second edition was published in 1941, although it had only reached Surah Maryam at that time. The tafsir was eventually completed, encompassing all thirty *juz*, in 1953 with the support of the businessman Sa'ad Nabhan, and was republished in its complete form by Ahmad Hassan in 1956. In 2006, *Tafsir Al-Furqān* was reprinted in a single volume by Pustaka Mantiq in collaboration with Al-Azhar University Indonesia. This publication history indicates that *Tafsir Al-Furqān* was written across both the pre-independence and post-independence periods. Consequently, Ahmad Hassan articulated his ideas on "Nasionalisme" within this tafsir, particularly through the theme of love for the homeland as reflected in his interpretation of QS. An-Nisā' [4]:97, first published in 1941. His writings illustrate how Qur'anic exegesis functioned as a medium of intellectual liberation for Muslims who had been marginalized under colonial rule.

When Indonesia was still under Dutch colonial rule, the writing of this *tafsir* was carried out gradually and published in serial form through Islamic magazines such as *Pembela Islam*. This project was motivated by Ahmad Hassan's aspiration to produce a Qur'anic exegesis in the Malay language that would be widely accessible to the public. His initiative was grounded in the awareness that Muslims required a practical guide to life that was relevant to their local context.<sup>30</sup> During the pre-independence period, *Tafsir Al-Furqān* functioned not only as a religious reference but also as an instrument of intellectual struggle. Ahmad Hassan integrated religious perspectives with the spirit of "Nasionalisme", frequently emphasizing the need for Muslims to rise from ignorance and oppression.<sup>31</sup> These ideas resonated strongly with the nationalist movements that were emerging in Indonesia at the time.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, *Tafsir Al-Furqān* became part of a broader effort to awaken Muslim consciousness and foster unity in resisting colonial domination.<sup>33</sup>

Ahmad Hassan implicitly criticized colonialism through his *tafsir* by interpreting Qur'anic verses contextually and linking the divine message to the socio-political realities of Indonesia.<sup>34</sup> In this way, *Tafsir Al-Furqān*

functioned as an instrument of resistance against colonialism, albeit within the intellectual and spiritual sphere.<sup>35</sup> The tafsir encouraged its readers to understand that Islam is not merely a religion of ritual practice, but also encompasses social and political dimensions capable of driving transformation. Within the context of “Nasionalisme”, this work provided a theological foundation for the struggle for independence and the pursuit of social justice.<sup>36</sup>

Following Indonesia’s independence in 1945, *Tafsir Al-Furqān* remained relevant in shaping a religious and ethical national character.<sup>37</sup> Through this work, Ahmad Hassan consistently reminded Muslims of the importance of upholding Islamic values in the life of the nation and the state. In the post-independence era, the tafsir also served as a medium for critiquing policies considered inconsistent with Islamic principles.<sup>38</sup> At a time when the nation was striving to recover from colonial domination, *Tafsir Al-Furqān* offered moral guidance essential for building a new society. It became a vital component in shaping Indonesia’s religious identity, providing guidance for Muslims to live a Qur’an-based religious life while simultaneously contributing to nation-building. Moreover, Ahmad Hassan used this tafsir to instill values of simplicity, honesty, and a strong work ethic virtue deemed essential for the establishment of a newly independent nation.<sup>39</sup>

In the post-independence period, issues such as national development, education, and the relationship between religion and the state emerged as central concerns within Indonesian society. *Tafsir Al-Furqān* offered a perspective that advocated the integration of Islamic values into social life without abandoning the spirit of “Nasionalisme”.<sup>40</sup> This perspective demonstrates that Islam and “Nasionalisme” are not inherently contradictory but rather can complement and reinforce one another. Within the discourse of “Nasionalisme”, Ahmad Hassan explicitly criticized forms of secular “Nasionalisme” that sought to detach religion from the public sphere.<sup>41</sup>

Ahmad Hassan argued that true “Nasionalisme” must uphold obedience to Allah and remain consistent with the principles of Islamic law. For him, “Nasionalisme” could not be separated from Indonesia’s historical experience under colonial rule, as the struggle against Dutch colonialism gave rise to diverse conceptions of “Nasionalisme”, both secular and religious. Through the Islamic Union (*Persatuan Islam/Persis*), Ahmad Hassan emerged as a key figure who emphasized the centrality of Islam as the foundation of the anti-colonial struggle.<sup>42</sup> At the time, “Nasionalisme” was widely understood as a means of fostering solidarity

amid Indonesia’s ethnic and religious diversity. Islam, therefore, possessed significant potential to function both as a social adhesive and as a driving force in the struggle for independence.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, Ahmad Hassan sharply criticized political leaders who invoked “Nasionalisme” as a pretext for marginalizing religious values in public policy.<sup>44</sup>

Ahmad Hassan’s thought on love for the homeland carries significant implications for the discourse on “Nasionalisme” in Indonesia. First, it offers a theological framework that enables Muslims to love their homeland without compromising their religious identity. Second, it rejects forms of “Nasionalisme” that contradict Islamic principles, thereby providing guidance for a national struggle that remains aligned with the *shari’ah*.<sup>45</sup> According to Hassan, “Nasionalisme” understood in this sense contains several problematic implications for Muslims. First, it can lead to the neglect of the laws of Allah and His Messenger. Second, it may result in Muslims who do not share the same nationality being regarded as outsiders. Third, it risks severing ties with other Muslim countries merely because they do not share the same national identity or homeland, despite the Qur’an and Hadith emphasizing that all Muslims are brothers. In this regard, Hassan argues that love for fellow Muslims itself constitutes a genuine form of love for the homeland. The following hadith illustrates his critique of “Nasionalisme”:

حَدَّثَنَا زِيَادُ بْنُ الرَّبِيعِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبَّادُ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ الشَّامِيُّ مِنْ أَهْلِ فَلَسْطِينَ عَنِ امْرَأَةٍ مِنْهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهَا فَسَيْلَةٌ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ سَمِعْتُ أَبِي {وَإِثْلُهُ بْنُ الْأَسْقَعِ} يَقُولُ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَمِنَ الْعَصَبِيَّةَ أَنْ يُحِبَّ الرَّجُلُ قَوْمَهُ قَالَ لَا وَلَكِنْ مِنَ الْعَصَبِيَّةِ أَنْ يَنْصُرَ الرَّجُلُ قَوْمَهُ عَلَى الظُّلْمِ

Ziyād ibn Rabī’ narrated to us, saying: ‘Abbād ibn Kathīr al-Shāmī narrated to us, from a man among the people of Palestine, from one of them named Fāsilah, who said: I heard my father, Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa’ say: I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), “Is a man’s love for his people considered *‘asabiyyah* (tribal or fanatical partisanship)?” The Messenger of Allah replied, “No. *‘Asabiyyah* is when a man supports his people in wrongdoing.”<sup>46</sup>

Based on this hadith, Hassan argued in his exegesis that love for one’s homeland and nation does not constitute *‘asabiyyah* which is strongly prohibited by Allah unless it contains elements of injustice. One manifestation of *‘asabiyyah*, according to Hassan, is the advocacy of governing a country solely based on the will of the people while disregarding the laws of Allah. This view reflects one of the ideas associated

with “Nasionalisme” or patriotism as articulated by Soekarno, which Hassan critically engaged in his tafsir.<sup>47</sup>

From this contextual dimension, it can be understood that this *tafsir* was written during the administration of President Soekarno. Historically, during this period Indonesian society continued to face various influences and legacies of colonialism, even though Indonesia had already proclaimed its independence. These conditions shaped the social, political, and religious contexts that influenced the emergence of this *tafsir*.

### **Sociocultural Dimensions of Society**

Indonesia, as a country characterized by cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity, possesses a unique socio-political dynamic. From an Islamic perspective, love for the homeland is often discussed within a religious framework that integrates loyalty to the state with obedience to Allah. Islam teaches that love for one’s homeland is part of religious responsibility and faith. The expression “*ḥubbul waṭan minal imān*” (love of the homeland is part of faith) is frequently used as a theological basis to support “Nasionalisme”.<sup>48</sup> In this context, Ahmad Hassan emphasized that love for the homeland must remain within the boundaries of Islamic law and should not override obedience to Allah.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the Islamic principle of love for the homeland encompasses a moral responsibility to uphold justice, maintain unity, and foster social harmony. This perspective is particularly relevant in Indonesia’s pluralistic society, where religious and cultural differences must be managed wisely to strengthen national integration and social cohesion.<sup>50</sup>

Since the period of the independence struggle, love for the homeland has served as a unifying spirit of the nation. Soekarno, in his speeches, frequently linked “Nasionalisme” with religious teachings to strengthen the legitimacy of the struggle against colonialism.<sup>51</sup> This approach succeeded in uniting various segments of society with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. However, Indonesia’s political dynamics have often presented challenges in harmonizing “Nasionalisme” with religious values. During the Old Order period, for instance, Pancasila as the state ideology was employed to unify the nation, yet it was often done by sidelining certain religious aspirations.<sup>52</sup> In this context, *ulama* such as Ahmad Hassan reminded society of the importance of maintaining a balance between loyalty to the state and obedience to Islamic law.

The Islamic understanding of love for the homeland carries several important implications for Indonesia’s religious culture. First, religious values can serve as an ethical foundation for national and state life. Second,

love for the homeland grounded in religious teachings encourages Muslims to actively participate in socio-political development without losing their religious identity. Ahmad Hassan emphasized that genuine love for the homeland is one that upholds justice and does not contradict the sharī‘ah. He also rejected secular “Nasionalisme” that separates religion from public life, as such an approach was viewed as potentially undermining the moral foundations of society.

In the early period of Indonesia’s independence, several problems and tensions emerged concerning the relationship between Islam and “Nasionalisme” as the foundation of the state. This situation gave rise to two opposing groups: one group supported the view that the state should not interfere in religious matters, even though the majority of the population was Muslim, while the other group believed that the state and Islam could be closely interconnected.<sup>53</sup> Soekarno, as a prominent nationalist figure, argued that there should be no distinction between religious minorities and majorities, since religion is a personal matter. According to this view, the state should stand independently without the intervention of any particular religion, which led to Pancasila being established as the state ideology.<sup>54</sup> In the book *Islam dan Kebangsaan*, it is mentioned that Soekarno once wrote an article in *Panji Islam* issues no. 12–16 entitled “*Memudakan Pengertian Islam*” (Rejuvenating the Understanding of Islam). From this article, it can be inferred that Soekarno appeared to suggest, “Leave the Qur’an behind if the Qur’an is unwilling to follow us.”<sup>55</sup>

Soekarno’s views stood in contrast to those of figures who rejected secular “Nasionalisme” or who believed that Islam and the state should not be separated. Among these figures were Muhammad Natsir and Ahmad Hassan, who regarded the “Nasionalisme” promoted by Soekarno as chauvinistic—an excessive and uncritical attachment to “Nasionalisme”—and akin to *‘asabiyyah*, like the tribal fanaticism practiced by the Arabs prior to the advent of Islam.<sup>56</sup>

Indonesia’s socio-political and religious culture demonstrates that love for the homeland can function as a powerful force for national unity. From an Islamic perspective, however, love for the homeland must always be directed toward noble objectives, namely justice, unity, and collective prosperity. Through his writings, Ahmad Hassan offered relevant guidance for understanding love of the homeland within a framework of “Nasionalisme” that remains firmly grounded in religious values. Accordingly, a harmonious understanding of love for the homeland that integrates both religion and the state can serve as a strong foundation for strengthening national integration in Indonesia. The role of leadership

in a society with a Muslim majority carries significant responsibility, particularly the obligation to act wisely and justly. Leaders must ensure that every policy they implement not only promotes social progress and public welfare but also aligns with Islamic values and teachings. In fulfilling this role, leaders are required to restrain personal desires and avoid prioritizing power-driven interests that could harm society. Therefore, the principles of loving the homeland and obeying leadership should not be viewed solely from technical or demographic perspectives, but must also consider the views, values, and needs of the Muslim majority within society.

The concept of “Nasionalisme” related to love for the homeland and obedience to leaders must be socialized in a manner that respects Islamic principles, by providing a comprehensive explanation of its objectives and benefits, and by ensuring that the methods employed do not contradict religious teachings.<sup>57</sup> From a socio-cultural perspective, a leader needs to open spaces for dialogue with *ulama* and community leaders in order to obtain input and support. In this way, the policies adopted are not only effective from a technical standpoint but also gain moral and social legitimacy from the public. Furthermore, leaders must remain vigilant against the temptation to misuse power for personal or group interests. They are required to act with integrity and transparency, consistently prioritizing the public interest above all else. Ethical and responsible leadership is therefore the key to formulating policies that are just and beneficial for society.

## Conclusion

Ahmad Hassan’s views on nationalism, particularly regarding the concepts of love for the homeland and obedience to rulers, represent a conceptual effort to reconstruct the discourse of nationalism within the framework of Islamic values. Through his exegesis, Ahmad Hassan affirms that love for the homeland constitutes part of Islamic teachings if it does not deviate from the principles of the *sharī’ah*. Affection for one’s homeland may be understood as a manifestation of faith if it remains within the bounds of *tawḥīd* and does not give rise to attitudes that contradict Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, obedience to leadership is regarded as conditional, in that it is only justified when leadership is exercised in accordance with the provisions and values of Islamic law. Based on Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis approach, the textual dimension of the interpretation of QS. An-Nisā’ verse 97 reveals a construction of the discourse of love for the homeland that reflects the

spirit of religious nationalism. In the contextual dimension, this tafsir was composed during the presidency of Soekarno, namely the early post-independence period, which was still heavily marked by the influence and remnants of colonial policies. Meanwhile, in the sociocultural dimension, Ahmad Hassan's thought demonstrates a significant contribution to shaping public consciousness amid the dominance of secular nationalist discourse. Within this framework, Ahmad Hassan emphasizes that leaders in a society with a Muslim majority bear a substantial moral and social responsibility to act wisely and uphold the principle of justice. Therefore, public policies that are formulated should not be oriented solely toward development and material welfare but must also be aligned with normative values and the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings.

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