

## **The New Movements of Thoughts in Islamic World and Its Adverse Effect in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>**

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To all distinguish Excellencies and participants of this seminar, first of all I'd like to thank you all for this opportunity to speak about new movements of thoughts and its adverse effects based on the experience in Indonesia.

As we all know, Islam or Muslim world is currently facing serious problems. Though in the hadits it is mentioned that Islam is high and nothing is higher than Islam, but since we have not able to tackle some obstacles we are not able to show it up now. Not only we haven't led the world under Islamic government, but also we have some domestic conflicts.

In this short time, I will share and elaborate my point of view, especially regarding the experience of Indonesia. Simply speaking, I distinguished two new movements of thoughts emerged in Indonesia and it has big impact. They are liberalism and radicalism.

Both of these thoughts do not exist only in the notion of politics and economics, but they also affect the understanding of Islam. Therefore, let me elaborate the experiences of Indonesia in facing these two new movements of thoughts in Islam.

### **The Elaboration of Two Prominent New Movements of Thoughts**

Firstly, let me explain about the Liberal Islam in Indonesia.

Basically, the argument of this liberal group is to make Islam emerge as dynamic religion which is compatible with the development of science. They believe that life and civilization are not stagnant, which means there is a possibility of changes.

By its nature, Islam is a dynamic religion, but the change in Islam does not mean to change the principles contained within Aqidah, Syariah, and Akhlak. Unfortunately, liberalist

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group even complains for all these. They argued that the truth should be compatible with the reason. Even they put the reason in higher position than the revelation.

Whatever values or belief which exist without logical support should not be accepted, although it directly comes from the revelation of God. On the other hand, if the notion is logically accepted, then it is considered as the truth, although it is different with the established values of Muslim. Their argument was that Allah has given human being reason to be the vicegerent of Allah on this earth. Thus, logically Allah should have provided them with enough capacity to think and cultivate this world.

This point of view is absolutely different compared to the belief of Muslims to put the revelation and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUM) as the fundamental principle in belief. For a long time, the intellectual history among Islamic scholars believed that one is allowed to elaborate the meaning of Qur'an and Hadith only under specific requirements.

The intellectual tradition in Islam did not bestow freedom for individual to elaborate the meaning within Islamic rules and values without achieving some specific requirements. This is due to the fact that truth which is based on reasoning capabilities is absolutely relative.

Islamic liberalists consciously or unconsciously rejected this criticism. Moreover, they believe that all the existences are products of construction which are mostly under the hegemony of powerful groups in that particular time. Therefore, in order to liberalize Islam, they tend to deconstruct the established values and beliefs in Islam.

As the consequence they produce some controversial notions, such as their argument to allow the marriage with individual from different religion, to deconstruct some Islamic rules in regards of its relation to the worship of Allah such as inheritance, leadership, witness, the position of men and women in praying, etc by the name of gender equality. Even they argued that all religions are the same and Allah will guarantee all those people to enter the heaven with each of their ways. In the point of view of liberalist group, the truth is relative.

In its development, this liberal group also tried to criticize the originality and validity of Alquran and Hadiths. By using hermeneutic approach they question the basic foundation of Islam, of which even the Dutch had no bravery to do that when they colonized Indonesia. If they have accepted the validity of Alquran and Hadiths, they also demand for the criticism to the understanding of Alquran and Hadiths which they call as the critical edition of Alquran.



By this understanding, the liberalist group believes that the development of Islam will be better if Muslims start to recognize and build their consciousness to live in this current time. It means that it is the time to bring the value of Islam without binding the Syariat to be implemented. What had been conducted by Prophet Muhammad was not more than the example of phenomena, and there is no obligation to follow such deeds.

Though liberal movement of thought has shown clear evidence to be contradictory with basic principles of Islam, but its existence has emerged in a number of Indonesian universities. This group usually has no strong foundation on understanding Ushul fikh, Alquran or Ulumun Hadits. Just because of having higher level of education in studying Islam in some of western universities, they are proud of themselves and the western culture that they have obtained.

Furthermore, western people are also really concerned and systematic in doing the war of thought (ghuzwul fikri) toward Islam. The professors who are teaching Islam in their university understand well about Qur'an, hadits, Arabic language and methodology of research, though they are doing that without believe (iman). Thus, it easily generated the feeling of inferiority Indonesian students. In spite of that, they also support this project by huge number of money.

After coming back to Indonesia, some of these scholars shared their experiences and notions. Their ideas are basically not really easy to be understood by common people. But, in order to protect Indonesia from the adverse effect of this movement, the Ulama Council of Indonesia (MUI) has announced that the Liberal Islam is not compatible with Islam.

**Secondly**, despite facing the challenge of liberalism, Indonesia also has to solve the problem of the Radical Islam movement.

Basically radicalism or fundamentalism can be understood as something positive if the meaning is for implementing Islam comprehensively as its principle in Alquran and Hadits. But, it will be negative if this radicalism does not give change for the different opinion in understanding of Islam.

Islam itself recognizes the difference within it as long as it is not about the principle (ushul), but it is about the branch (furu'). Therefore, the difference in understanding fikh or the method of dakwah should not cause conflict among the Muslims.

But the reality shows that there is tendency of particular groups which intended to dominate the understanding the Islamic practices in Indonesia. In order to support their claim,

they even legalize violence practice. This movement of thought in Islam is dangerous because it will influence Muslim people as a whole. By such behavior, they present Islam as a barbaric religion before the perspective of enmities of Islam.

Some of them argued that Islam is a traditional religion which is not compatible with the development in this current time, one of the examples is because it supports violence. For instance, what Oliver Paderbone stated about Islam which has made a lot of western people misunderstood about Islam. He said that *Islam began by the sword, maintained by the sword, and by the sword it should be ended.*<sup>3</sup>

Thus, by considering the real condition of Muslim people and the countries in this age, it is our duty to show the world that Islam is a peaceful religion, as well as to brand Muslim as civilized society. Otherwise, if we do nothing, it is likely that Islam will lose most of its interest in the world.

#### **The Effort to Face the Problems**

In the end of this presentation, I'd like to underline that though those both issues which are liberalism and radicalism, have emerged as serious issues in the movements of thoughts in Indonesia, fortunately the majority of Muslim in Indonesia is still dominated by moderate groups of Islam. It can be seen through the existence of two biggest moderate Islamic organizations in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama.

But still we have to be careful. If we don't work to improve the methods of our da'wah and on the other hand they always promote the ideas of liberalism or radicalism, I am afraid that slowly the people will be influenced by these ideas.

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<sup>3</sup> Norman Daniel. *Islam and the West: The Making of An Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960) p.127