

Dialogue in Indonesia

Smiling face of Indonesian Islam

On September 1996 Newsweek magazine published a report on Islam in Indonesia entitled "Islam with a smiling face". According to the article in that journal, the face of Islam in nusantara (another name for Indonesia) is different than other Islamic countries. It was mentioned that the face of nusantara Islam has these characteristics: peaceful, moderate and shows positive response toward the ideas of democracy, modernity, pluralism and human rights.

However, there were some western intellectuals who had different impression of Islamic face in Indonesia especially when compared with the Islam that is embraced in its country of origin such as in Arab peninsula. In that context of comparison, the impression of Indonesia's Islam is impure (corrupted). Clifford Geertz for example was hesitant to say that Javanese Moslem as Islam followers. Instead of calling the Islam in Java as Javanese Islam, he chose to call it the religion of Java. Another figure who tend to be negative on the uniqueness of Indonesia's Islam is C.L.M. Penders. According to Penders, the people of Java embrace the Islam only on the external. Islam as a new religion could not replace traditional Javanese culture that was influenced by animism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The core of ideas and the doing of the Javanese are not representing a real Islam. For Penders in the Javanese context, the sharia, that is the Islamic law, was never replaced the traditional law that existed beforehand.

Back to the title of the Newsweek magazine above, there might be some questions in our minds. "Is the smiling Islam (Indonesia's Islam) identical to a weak and impure Islam?" The more recent incidents of terror acts on behalf of religion in some parts of the world is triggered us to even question more "Is the pure Islam as practiced by the people in its country of origin identical to terrorism?" If that is so, then the kind of Islam practices far from its country of origin is amicable and not spreading terror and at the same time also weak and impure in its teachings. Or in a simple way (we can say) that the more a person embrace Islam in its purity, the more dangerous he is. But the less Islam of a society the better relationship between its members. Logically at the back of the questions above, we can direct people to a wrong understanding that the Indonesia's Islam with its smiling face that brings peace and friendship is caused by the impurity of their practiced Islam.

The spreading of Islam in Southeast Asia

The spreading of Islam in Southeast Asia region needs to be understood as a slow process that started with the arrivals of the Moslem traders around the 9th century (see Map 20). Within the period of 10th to 12th century, the Moslem traders were actively engaged in the area of Palembang port, South Sumatra who was the capitol of Sriwijaya

(Zabaj) principality (kingdom), and in West Sumatra in the port of Barus (fansur) as well. The major conversion of people into Islamic faith in those areas took place at the end of the 13th century to the beginning of the 14th century. The process of conversion started from the coastal area and slowly moved into the inland. Islam mostly embraced first by the local leaders and then later on followed by the commoners.

The existence of a Moslem community in Nusantara (Indonesia) at the time was also recorded by world's adventurer. Marcopolo recorded that at the end of 13th century there were two small principalities in Aceh North Sumatra and in Perlak and Samudra Pasai. While an adventurer from Morocco, Ibnu Batuta who visited the area in 1340s recorded that the ruler and the people in Samudra Pasai were Moslems according to the school of Syafi'i. They were actively practicing *jihad* against the non Moslems.

In the early of 15th century the ruler of Malacca converted into Islam. However, in 1511 the Portuguese subduct the Malacca and the center of trading moved to somewhere else in Nusantara. According to an avid Portuguese writer Tome Pires, the rulers in Northern and Eastern Sumatra between 1512 to 1515 had already converted into Islam.

Cloves and Nutmeg were the two commodities that traded in the area of Malacca, Maluku, Ternate and Tidore. The traffic caught the attention of the Portuguese and the Otoman as well. The interest of the Otoman towards the trading in Nusantara at the end of 15th and on 16th century was coincided with the rising of Islamic political prestige, thus several principalities in Nusantara were able to get political supports when they had to deal with The Portuguese invasion. In return the Sultans were acknowledging the Otoman empire.

According to the modern history scholars, the Moslem traders who roamed around in Nusantara area came from Arab (The hadrami clan). Meanwhile, the proofs from Aceh and several other places in Sumatra said that they came from Gujarat, Malabar and Tamil.

Within the period of 16th to 17th century, the local Islamic scholars was said were related to various Sufi order whose teachings were also shared by those Moslem traders. For the local people, the members of Sufi order were considered as holy and were able to be the channel of God's grace. This was one of the reason that made Islam was easily embraced by them.

Meanwhile, in Java region Islam was brought in by the trader from China. They interacted with local people who were Hindus and Buddhists. The sovereignty of Hinduism Buddhism embraced by the Majapahit kingdom were stayed for. 1293 up to 1527. The trader and Moslem migrants from China came in with their success and wealth from the trading activities. That was the main attraction that caught the attention of the local rulers towards Islam. However, even though they were converted into Islam, the custom of Hinduism and Buddhism remained. Around the mid of 14th century, Ibnu Batuta described the region of Java as the land of the infidels.

Tracing The Transmission of The Idea of Islamic Religiosity from The Islamic Center of Study in Mecca and Medina to Nusantara

Within the period of 17th to 18th century according to the history, Islam experienced political setback. Those centuries is known as the dark ages of Islam political history. Nevertheless, on the other side of it, history record that there was a deeper interaction among the scholars from different parts of the world who came to Mecca and Medina bringing their own respective Islamic tradition. Both holy cities served as a melting pot and gave birth a new synthesis that later on spread to different places carried by the voyage of the Moslem merchants. Generally speaking, the synthesis that born out of the interaction of the Islamic scholars was revolved around the intellectual, moral and social reconstruction of the Islamic society. Our understanding on the interaction among the Moslem scholars and their work in this intellectual web would help us to see how the Islamic revival and renewal spread all over the world.

Indonesia whose geographic location is quite far from the two holy cities Mecca and Medina tend to be looked down or even marginalized by the intellectual reviewers of Islam. Because of that geographical factor, Islam in Indonesia often times is considered as not real Islam. Though Islam in Indonesia is influenced by the culture in Nusantara yet its role in the intellectual dynamics that took place in the Middle East was not minimal and cannot be downplayed.

It is also incorrect to say that the relationship between the Islam in Indonesia and Middle East is more of political rather than religious. (Due to the relationship and political support of Otoman empires to Nusantara's principalities against the Portuguese rulers). The interaction between the Islam in the Middle East and Nusantara had been established since the coming of the Moslem traders around 11th and 12th century. The merchants from Arab, Persia and India often times visited the ports in Nusantara while bringing the teachings of a Islam to the local people. After that, around 13th century, the sufis and Islam scholars started to arrive as well.

It is recorded that on the 17th and 18th century there were several scholars from Nusantara who studied in the two holy cities. They joined in the circle of interaction of the international scholars. They focused their attention to the studying of Hadith and involved with several sufis orders. In their intellectual activity, the scholars circle emphasized more on the balance between shariah (Islamic law and doctrines) and tasawwuf, the mystical aspect in Islam. Regarding this harmony between the field of shariah studies and tasawwuf was reiterated earlier by Moslem intellectuals such as al-Qusyari and al-Ghazali. In the interaction among the scholar in the circle, the harmony between the two was brought up again. They believed that only by full commitment to the shariah, the exaggeration of the aspects in tasawwuf could be managed.

Even though those scholars studying in Mecca and Medina were committed to the harmony between the shariah and tasawwuf, yet they were differ in their way of spreading the teaching. Most of them opted to do it peacefully and slow in their approach. However, there were some scholars who chose radical ways such as Ibn'abd al-Wahab in Arab and Uthman Ibn Fudi in West Africa which in times were adopted by some intellectuals in Nusantara.

The Idea of Islam Religiosity in Nusantara Between 15th to 18th Century

The theme of the religious idea of Islam that developed since the beginning of the 15th century can be obtained from a question proposed by Sultan Mahmud from Malacca. He focused his attention to the esoteric aspects of religions. He later on sent an emissary to Pasai in Northern Sumatra to ask, "Are those who are condemned and blessed will be in their respective space forever?"

That question of Sultan Mansur had been studied before by Islamic mystic al-Jilli. He taught his pantheistic conviction that everything is God. In that conviction, evil is not eternal. Al-Jilli based his conviction on the prophetic tradition of Bukhari and Moslem (book I, Hadith 419),"Abu Hurayrah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: *"I heard messenger of Allah saying, 'when Allah created the creatures, He wrote in the book, which is with him over His throne: 'verily, My Mercy prevailed over my wrath'".* According to al-Jilli mercy is the essential attribute of God, it prevails in the end. Thus, hell is only a temporary state.

The interest of the Malacca ruler to Islam mysticism leave us an impression that Malacca was not only a famous center of trading but also a center of religious study.

The development of Islam in Malacca was a continuation of the trading route that spread from Mogul empire, the Malacca archipelago and Middle East region. When Malacca fell into the hand of the Portuguese, the political and religious supremacy fell into the hand of Aceh principality in the northern region of Sumatra. Aceh in turn developed into a center of trading and resistance against the Portuguese. Aceh was supported by the Islam principalities such as Gujarat, Abisinia, Arab and Turkey as well. The Otoman empire was known had sent 500 cannons.

The region of Malacca and Aceh in the history of Islam in Nusantara were the busy center of economy and religious study. Many history, religious tradition, theology and Islam mysticism literatures were translated. Next, we will discuss several Moslem scholars whose influence are rather strong to the development of Islam in Indonesia.

The Tensions Between Islam Heterodoxy and Orthodoxy in The 17th Century

Since Malacca fell into the Portuguese's hand, Aceh became the busy center of trading and religious study. The interests of people on Islam mysticism had not been faded. It was

influenced as well by the echoing of Islam mysticism that was loved in the empire of Mogul.

The Mogul empire that located in India, dominated the political power in an area of five times bigger than the Otoman empire during its time. The political success was due to the roles of Sultan Akbar (1556-1605), Jahangir bin Akbar (1605-1627) and Awrangzib bin Shah Jahan (1658-1707).

Sultan Akbar who ruled Mogul empire since he was 12 years old, showed an interest to religious discussions. Initially he focused on Islamic theology and later on developed into an interests toward the holy men in Hinduism, the Christians priests and scholars of Mahdi's school. During his ruling, he endorsed the teaching of Din al-Ilahi, that is a belief in God (theism) based on the common elements in the teaching of Hinduism and Buddhism. The teaching he initiated later on developed by adding the teaching of Islam in it.

The combinations of those teachings had caused tensions within the orthodox and the institute of justice in Mogul empire. However, the heterodox teachings continue to spread and develop and was continued by Jahangir (1605-1627). Later on, during the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1657) and Awrangzib (1658-1707), the heterodox teaching was purified. A lot of Hindu temples were destroyed, mix marriages to the Hindus were forbidden and those who taught syncretism between Hinduism and Islam were executed.

The tensions between the heterodox and the orthodox in the Mogul empire finally reached Aceh Sultanate. In Nusantara the tensions was represented by two groups of Scholars. The first group figures were Hamzah al-Fansuri and Shams al-Din (al-Sumatrani), known as sufis figures who popularized the teaching of wahdat al-Wujud, that is a mystical teachings that emphasized the philosophical understanding of the sufis teachings. The significant scholars who belonged to the orthodox were Abdul al-Rauf Singkili and Nuruddin al-Raniri. Later on this second group corrected the mystical teaching of Islam that tend to be too pantheistic.

The Islamic Mystical Teaching al-Wahdat al-Wujud

The Mystical teachings of al-Wahdat al-Wujud were spread by Hamzah al-Fansuri and Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani. Al-Fansuri was known as an important intellectual in his time. He often traveled to visit the center of Islamic studies such as Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Baghdad, place where he joined the Qadiriyyah order. He spread his understanding of Islamic mysticism as far as Pahang, Kedah and Java. His work in Malay and Arabic were laden with mysticism in Islam.

The second figure that belonged to the same school with Hamzah Fansuri is Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani (died in 1630), who were recognized by the experts on the history of Islam as the student of Fansuri. Just like his teacher, Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani was known as an

avid writer and knew several languages. His work includes theological review field and Sufism

The teaching of wahdat al-Wujud that they taught was inspired by Ibn Arabi (an expert on tasawwuf, died at the end 13th century) and al-Jilli. They proposed the genesis of the universe according to the concept of emanation of Plotinus, and furthermore said that every emanation is the aspect of God himself.

The emphasis on the unity between God and nature were brought up by Hamzah Fansuri in his work *Asra al-Arifin fi Bayan Ilmik Suluk wa al-Tawhid*. In the introduction of his work it was said that, "human were made by God out of nothing and were perfected with ear, heart, soul and mind. Therefore, human should seek God by knowing our makrifat".

Specifically, the emphasis of the unity between God and nature was proposed by Hamzah Fansuri in his book *Zinat al-Muwafidin*. In the third chapter he explained his idea that the nature is the end of human way. Human who has reached this state don't feel joy and sadness, noble and low, rich and poor. Human in this state do not see himself (herself) anymore but Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala. For him (her) the manifestation in nature is the manifestation of God.

It was named as such since its main discussion was on God's form and human's form or other God's creation.

This concept had become a huge dispute between the Islamic scholars and the Sufi followers. One of Sufi scholars, al-Raniri was one of the avid opponent of wujudiyah that was popularized by Hamzah Fansuri. He commented s follows,

"A thing that is one in point of its being does not become multiple or manifold even if it be seen in many places. If, for example, a man, or a lighted candle is placed in a certain position, and mirrors of different kinds are set about them - some large, some small; some long, some short; some exact, some distorting; some clear, and some dull, and so on - will there not be reflected an image of the man and candle in each mirror with a different shape and form? But the man and candle have not become several, nor has the shape and form of them altered, nor have they passed into the mirror, nor is one of the reflections linked. to any of the others. Reflect on this illustration, oh man of discrimination, so that you may obtain wisdom and intuition and to God is due the loftiest similitude"

*Another comparison that can be made with reference to God's Being - is that man and the Fixed Archetypes (a'yan thabita) may be compared to different mirrors, and that God manifests and displays Himself in each of the Exterior Forms (a'yan kharijiyya) in a way appropriate to the receptivity of each of them without being limited to any one of them; yet His lofty Essence never become plural, manifold or subject to change on account of the plurality and multiplicity of His manifestations. Oh, traveller, take care that your feet do not slip from the path of Faith and you fall into the unbeliever of **the heretical Wujudiyya** who say: The world is God and God is the world. God is exalted above the words of those **arch-heretics**. (jawahir al-ulum fikashfi'l ma'alum)*

There's a similarity between Hamzah Fansuri and al-Raniri in term of their discussions about the genesis of the universe based on emanation theory of Neo Platonism. The difference is, those scholars who were considered as heterodox such as Hamzah Fansuri

believed that the radiance of God is an aspect of God. All entities that exist are one and is God. Meanwhile, those who considered themselves as orthodox Sufi proposed that those radiance is not more than the reflection of the Divine just like what al-Raniri said in the quotation above.

In term of the response toward the teaching of wujudiyya, the orthodox scholars were varied. Scholars such as al-Raniri saw that as a heresy and strongly condemned it, and even considered it as anathema. All literatures of the wujudiyya teaching were destroyed and the followers were persecuted. Other orthodox scholar such as al-Raul Singkili tolerantly and lovingly expressed his disagreements. He said,

*“Do not accuse a man who utters such words (i.e. the world is God) of heresy. This is a very dangerous accusation to make. If the man is a **kāfir**, why waste words on it? And if he is not the saying will come back on ourselves. For the Prophet said: Let no man accuse another of leading a sinful life or of infidelity, for the accusation will turn back on himself if it is false”*

During the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda in Aceh (1607-1636), Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani was appointed as Syaikh al-Islam and enjoyed the privilege to spread his belief on the Sufi’s wujudiyya. When the Sultan and Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani died, al-Raniri came to Aceh (1637) and immediately was appointed as Syaikh al-Islam by the successor, that is Iskandar Thani. Syaikh al-Islam is a strategic position directly under the Sultan. In his position, al-Raniri was responsible in religious affairs and later on including economic and politic affairs as well

During his office, al-Raniri did an effort on a renewal on Islamic Sufi. He claimed that Islam in his time was tarnished by a heretical teaching such as wujudiyyah. With his power, al-Raniri released a fatwa that is a religious opinion about wujudiyyah heresy. As a consequence, wujudiyyah was forbidden, the books on it were burnt and those who spread and follow the teaching were persecuted.

Nevertheless after enjoying seven years in power over the religious doctrines in Aceh, al-Raniri went back to his home land. Some historian trying to investigate about his rather peculiar decision to go home. They found the reason in a journal written by a Dutch man, Peter Sourij. In short it was mentioned that al-Raniri was lost in arguing with a scholar named Sayf al-Rijal. Al-Raniri accused the new scholar spreading a **heretical doctrine**, and yet was not able to point out the mistake in the teaching since the scholar was able to explain his knowledge clearly and piously.

The new scholar was Sayf al-Rijal who study under the guidance of Syaikh Maldin (Jamal al-Din), whom Raniri expelled from Aceh.

The two words Bid’ah (heresy) and Kafir (infidel) appeared several times in the history of Islam in Indonesia. The word bid’ah means the discovery of new things that is in conflict or against the law and tradition of Islam is directed more to the other Moslem who try to propose something different or new in understanding Islam. Meanwhile the word kafir (infidel) is directed to the non Moslems such as the local people who embraced the traditional religion or other religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Christians. This had been brought up by Ibnu Batuta an explorer from Morocco who called

the Javanese in the 14th century as infidels. He also wrote that the Moslems in Pasai principality were at war with the non Moslems as an expression of jihad.

Based on this account/record, I would like to focus on the idea of kafir (infidels) atau would like to explore deeper the idea of kafir.

Is It True That Non Moslems Are Heathens -A response of Indonesian Islamic Scholar

Regarding the word of "kafir" in Arabic it comes from past tense of a verb kafara which means 'to cover'. Bagir found in al-Quran in Surah al-Hadid 20, that the word of kafir is also referring to the farmers (kuffar). Their work of tilling the land, planting the seedlings and then cover them again with soil described vividly the verb of kafara. The word kafara later on was adopted into English, became to cover.

An Indonesian islamic scholar named Bagir summaries the meaning of kafir as a denial and refusal of the truth that previously was understood, accepted and embraced by a person as a truth. The person who is labeled as kafir according to him is somebody who is because of a certain reason (vested interest) denies or being inconsistent in following the truth that he initially believed. He indeed reiterates the condition that the person has initially accepted and embraced the teaching before later on denied it. (See other explanation with different tones in quranic vocab. p.146).

According to Bagir, in al-Quran heathendom is an act of denial of the truth that had been embraced and is done consciously such as exhibited by Satan and Firaun.

In the Quran often times it is described that heathen act or denial take place after the knowledge had been gained. Bagir cites two verses from Surah al-Zumar 38 and al-Baqarah 89 to show the process of how a person fall into heathendom. *"If you [Prophet] ask them, 'Who created the heavens and earth?' they are sure to answer, 'God,' so say, 'Consider those you invoke beside Him: if God wished to harm me, could they undo that"*. The subject they in that verse refers to the Quraisy. And then the second verse, *"When a Scripture came to them from God confirming what they already had, and when they had been praying for victory against the disbelievers, even when there came to them something they knew [to be true], they disbelieved in it: God rejects those who disbelieve"*. Another verse in Surah al-Imran 86 reiterates, *"Why would God guide people who deny the truth, after they have believed and acknowledged that the Messenger is true, and after they have been shown clear proof? God does not guide evildoers"*.

Since the time of Prophet Mohammed, the motives behind the resistance toward his teachings was more of the desire to maintain the social class and influence. In the sirah nabawiyya or the stories of Prophet Mohammed it was told that one night there were three Quraisy named Abu Sufyan, Abu Jamal and Akhnaf came quietly around Prophet Moheammed's house and listened to the reading of the Quran. Their hearts were amazed and they couldn't deny the truth in it. They came back several times but then decided not to do it again. The decision was made not because they were against the Quran, but based on the interests to maintain social economical and political position in the society. Since before Islam were present, Mecca was the center of trading and business. The Kafilah group, the trader who travelled to Yemen, Egypt or Persia would definitely stopped over to pay homage to their gods and goddesses in the Ka'bah. Meanwhile The Prophet who brought the al-Quran as the revelation of one God would certainly opposing the pagan practices. Aside from that, Islam teaches equality either between slaves and slaves owner

or the rich and the poor. One thing that differentiates between human is the piety or fear of God. In that sense the presence of Islam would challenge the established paganism system socially, economically and politically.

Abu Sufyan continue to hold on to his belief in jahiliyah not because he was truly believe it as his faith in the truth in it but because it's system benefited him in maintaining his social, economical and political gain. Thus the theological beliefs was not the main reason why people during Prophet Mohammed time decided to be kafir or denied Islam as the truth that they acknowledged.

According to Bagir, both Salaf and Khalaf scholars emphasized that to judge someone as heathen or not, it has to qualify for the upholding of the convincing arguments on the truth of Islam. A person can be judged as heathen if he had a prior knowledge or believed in the teaching of Islam that is true and reliable but because of personal reason against or denies it. That person literally can be said as covering (denies) the truth that he had accepted or believed in.

An Imam (priest) named Ja'far Shadiq once said that a person could not be said as heathen if s(he) doesn't know the real truth about Islam (in jahil condition), silence or not against the teaching.

The great Islam priest Gazhali even said that the non Moslems who never received the teaching of Islam that is true and reliable, could never be said as heathens. In Gazhali's view even if the teaching of Islam had reached them but it was distorted, make Islam looks bad, those people still have hope of going to heaven. They are not heathens. If they were categorized as heathen, all their good deeds will be in vain. Imam Gazhali once commented about the Christians of Rome and Turkey in the writings of Faisal al-Tafriqah (Faisal al-Tafriqah Bayan al-Islamwa al- Zandaqah, h. 96-97 in the book of Majmu'ah Rasa'il al-imam al-Ghazali, Dar al-Kutub al'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 2013) that they could not be categorized as heathen or denying Islam because the teaching of Islam that had reached them is not a convincing one.

Rashid Rida, a modern Islam scholar also said in his work the commentary on al-Manar 4:317-318, that the heathen whose good deeds would be fruitless are only those who had received the teaching of Prophet Mohammed properly but still unwilling to accept it. Rida acknowledged that during his time there were so many people who didn't know Islam very well or its teaching to the degree that they really convinced about it. (Commentary al-Manat 33, No.2 (April 1933): 106 and Commentary al-Manar 5:413).

Meanwhile, another significant Islam scholar named Ibn Taymiyyah in his work Majmu-Fatawa 19:9 consider that a person cannot be said as a heathen until there's a convincing arguments.

A Syaikh, Muhammad Syaltut (in his work al-Islam 'Aqidah wa Syari'ah, ed. XVII, Kairo, Dar al-Syuruq, 2001, p.20) even said, "Those people who are a far and Islam had never reached them, or reached them in the form that is distorted and repugnant, or they didn't understand its dignity while they were trying to; thus they will be freed from tortures in the hereafter that is meant for the heathens. And they can not be labeled as heathen.

But then what about Christianity and The Trinity? Bagir gave an example on how to understand the verse in Quran that often times attributed to the teaching on the Trinity in the Christianity. In Surah al-Maidah 5:73 it is said, "Indeed they are heathen the people

who acclaim: 'Allah is one among the three', while verily there is no other God beside the One."

In Bagir's opinion, one interpretation that is possible is whatever written in Surah al-Maidah cannot be considered as the teaching on the Trinity as embraced by the Christian, rather than three theism monophysite, that is the people who truly believe the (existence) of three gods by acclaiming that Jesus is truly God. Bagir saw that the Trinity is a tawheed, that is three in one (unity). Bagir cited the understanding of Imam Ghazali who said that when the Christians address Allah as 'one of the three' (tsalitsu tsalatsah) that statement cannot be understood that there are three Gods. On the contrary, God is one, but three by nature. He said, "God is one in substance but three persons." The notion of person here, need to be understood as nature (Imam al-Ghazali, *Fadha'il al-Anam min Rasa'il Hujjah al-Islam al-Ghazali*, Tunis: al-Dar al-Tunisiyyah lin-Nasyr, 1972, p. 49).

Another scholar al-Syahrastani in his work *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* (ed. II, Beirut, 1992, p. 249 and 245) said more less the same things: that is, whatever meant as aqanim (plural form of uqnum, person) is not in the substance.

After he explained the view of Islam on heathendom and the accusation toward Christianity as heathen, Bagir proposes to understand heathendom as a moral category.

Bagir commences from a thesis that the observation on the texts of al-Quran and Hadith shows the roots of heathendom as a moral category rather than theology. According to Bagir heathendom aside coming from personal or other interests (enticement) over the truth, is also caused by lack of concern toward the poor and the suffering. The other side of heathendom is the negligence of giving alms to others who are in difficult and wants.

The opposite of heathendom is faith and in the al-Quran and Hadith it is said that the faith to God is seen through the good deeds to others. In the Hadith that put together by Bukhari, Prophet Mohammed said, *"Those are not included as believers whoever full while his (her) neighbors are hungry."* That Hadith shows that faith related to the awareness and social care. Bagir stresses that indifference and care less to others' difficulties or the violations toward the shariah is definitely considered as unbeliever, that is hidden heathendom. Al-Quran reiterates that in the Surah al-Ma'un 107:1-7,

"Have you seen him who denies the faith? Such is the man who repulses the orphan (with harshness), and encourages not the feeding of the poor. So woe to those praying ones, Who are careless of their prayers, Those who (want but) to be seen (of men), But refuse (to supply) (even) neighbourly needs."

Then, isn't it belying the faith is the essence of the heathendom?

Indonesia: Bhinneka Tunggal Ika

Indonesia is a tremendously diverse region. Geographically United Republic of Indonesia consists of over 17,800 islands. On this biggest archipelago in the world live together 1340 tribes and more less 525 dialects.

In relation to religious aspect, Pew Research Institute in 2009 recorded the population of Indonesia is around 220 million. Out of that number, there are 88.21% Moslems, 6.04% Protestants, 3.58% Catholics. More less 1.83% embrace Hinduism, and the rest of 1.03% are embracing local/traditional religions. Indonesia's government officially acknowledges six religions within the country, they are Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist and

Confucianism. The diversity in religions shows the reality of living side by side in trying to develop the country actively.

As a country Indonesia is truly built on diversity. The facts that the diversity was being recognized by the founding fathers was expressed in the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Sanskrit words for unity in diversity). With that philosophical as a base, the people of Indonesia is guided in their commitment in living out the plurality in harmony.

The motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is inscribed on a ribbon held by the Garuda bird. The Garuda as the country's symbol is always ties to the five pillars that serve as the collective ideology in bringing forward the Republic of Indonesia.

The five pillars of Indonesia are speaking about: 1. Believe in the one Supreme God, 2. Just and civilized humanity, 3. The unity of Indonesia, 4. Democracy guided by by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives, 5. Social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesian.

The five pillars were considered by the founding fathers as principles that embrace the diversity in term of religions (even though Islam is the biggest population, Indonesia is not an Islamic State), tribal and cultural diversity. That diversity expressed its unity within the country of the Republic of Indonesia (the third pillar) and politically manifested in the form of democracy and representatives system. The unity that is expressed openly at the end is aimed at reaching a socially just society of Indonesia.

However, that is an arduous task. There were conflicts and disputes between ethnic groups especially at the end of President Suharto's era (who was in power for over 32 years).

At the moment Indonesia was trying to renew itself through the reformation movement in 1998, more conflicts and ethnicity disputes surfaced. It shows that plurality on one hand is still considered as a threat for people of a particular group who wanted to be in power over other groups/tribes.

Next, we will look into the response of the Moslems scholars regarding this diversity based on their reading and understanding of the Quran.

An Indonesian Islamic Scholar's response to The Differences According to al-Quran

Muhid M. Ag in the forewords of "Discourse & Practice of Pluralism of Religions in Indonesia" said that religion is not merely about spirituality. In his opinion religion carries physical reality as well, embodied into various symbols and communion of people. This physical dimension brings the religion into social life (considering that human is both individual and social being).

In their social interactions, often times members of one religion are encouraged by the teachings of their religion to build a good life together.

Nevertheless, when the encounter between members of different religions is not based on humility, it will lead to an attitude of looking down at other religions. We learn from the history that when our lower motives are disguised in religion sentiments, horrible human tragedy can happen such as what is happening nowadays in Myanmar in Southeast Asia and in Iraq, Syria and other middles east areas that started to crawl into Europe.

God, in the Quran had actually provide guidance on how to work with differences. In Surah Al-Hujurat 13 it is said, *"O people! We truly created you men and women, and we make you into nations and tribes so that you (will) know each other. Truly the noblest among you on God's side are the righteous ones"*

In that Surah Al-Hujurat 13, God had clearly stated that it is Him who created differences among human. God desires diversity in His creation. The diversity is not a sign of incapability to make them one. God himself had spoke in the book of Jonah 99, *"If it had been the will of your Rabb that all the people of the world should be believers, all the people of the earth would have believed! Would you then compel mankind against their will to believe?"*

God in Surah al-Maidah 48 declared that every people He created have their own way as He said, *"We have ordained a law and a Way of life for each of you. If Allah wanted He could have made all of you a single nation. But He willed otherwise in order to test you in what He has given you; therefore try to excel one another in good deeds."*

Using these references Muhid reiterates that God creates differences between human so that all of them are advance in doing good. That objective will not be achieved by looking down (the others) or annihilate the differences. Muhid regrets that often times the good done by other do not encourage us to do good as well (fastabiq al-khairat). Rather than doing so, human bring forth malice that ends up into demeaning and humiliating even destructing other groups.

In our lives together we often see despicable acts disguised in religious symbols, a legitimation that God approves all the violence and abolition of the others. God spoke in the Quran in Surah al-Hujurat 11, *"O believers! Let no men laugh at other men who may perhaps be better than themselves; and let no woman laugh at another woman, who may perhaps be better than herself."*

Aside from that God keeps on ensuring the freedom of the people even to believe or not believe to Him. In Surah al-Baqarah 256 God said that nobody should force Islam as a true religion to the others. God ensures the freedom of religion by saying, *"there is no compulsion in following a religion."*

Thus it is clear from the explanation above that God wills diversity in creation. The differences become a discourse, so that human can relate to each other and doing good together for the sake of building a common life that is just, harmonious and peaceful. Muhid adds at the end of his forewords that peace that's started with the acknowledgement of differences and diversity will guide each one of us to be open and to have a dialogue. That dialogue will bring understanding. In the Indonesian context the direction of an openness will bring us to love each other as the maxim says, "when you don't know you don't love"

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