

Development of Modern Thoughts in Islam

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By Eka Hendry. Ar

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For more than 14 centuries, history has proved that Islamic teachings come with a variety of thoughts, social cultural backgrounds, periods through which the development and the dynamics evolved. The primary mission of mankind as the khalifah fil ardh (the caliph of the earth, is to practice the Islamic teachings (Shariah) in accordance with the provisions of the primary source of Islam itself, i.e. the Qur'an and Hadith. At least, a long history of Islam as a religion of revelation suggests that the existence of Islamic teachings can grow and develop in every corner of the world, with a variety of spreading patterns that give the nuances and the mosaics in the development of the religion the present day.

At first, the teachings of Islam were revealed by Allah through the Angel Gabriel, to His Messenger, Muhammad (pbuh) was in order to respond to the various challenges that emerged at the time. As for the matters related to the issues of aqidah, Shariah, muamalah, and morals/ethics, which were decided by Prophet Muhammad through his words, deeds, and opinions are referred to as the Hadith/Sunnah. However, in the subsequent developments after the death of Prophet Muhammad, the revelations that had been memorized by his companions, were later collected and published in a mushaf known as the Qur'an. So is the case with the Hadith, given the widespread Muslim territory, split among the people regarding the circulation of false Hadith had triggered the need to search, compile and conduct a rigorous selection which was done during the reign of Umar bin Abdul Aziz (99-101 AH/717-720 AD). Finally, in the 3rd century of the Hejira year, there were big names with an expertise in the Hadith, such as Imam Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Nasa'i, Tarmidzi and so forth.

After the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD or in the 11th year of the Hejira, the expansion of the Islamic powers and the teachings of Islam were continued by the companions, tabi'it and tabi'in to various parts of the world, especially the regions of Africa, Central Asia and Europe. The extent of the spread of Islam, either through trade routes or invasion carried out

by the companions has resulted in more complex issues among Muslims. In addressing such issues, the Prophet during his life had provided space for the companions and generations to come (scholars) to perform *ijtihad*, in order to solve problems faced by Muslims, of course with the provisions and norms contained in the Qur'an and Hadith.

The book, *The Development of Modern thoughts in Islam*, written by Eka Hendry provides an overview to readers about the trail and the development and dynamics that occurred in the Islamic world. Starting from the early presence of Islam as a doctrine brought by Prophet Muhammad until its development today. At the beginning, the author gave a little introduction on the advent of Prophet Muhammad, who in addition to being the Messenger of God, also introduced the teaching of Islam to complete the previously established religions and traditions. A struggle that was impossible without direct guidance of God (Revelation), in answering all challenges and resistance posed by the pagan Quraish of the period. Thus, it is reasonable when Michael Hart put Prophet Muhammad on top position as the number one of the 100 most influential people in the world. Moreover, given the time it took, which was relatively very short, i.e. 23 years for Prophet Muhammad and his companions to change an order of society, with all its deep-rooted tradition and culture.

In the next section, the author outlined some of the dimensions found in Islam, one of which as quoted from Ninian Smart, among others, the doctrinal dimension (philosophical), narrative (Mystical), the ethical dimension (legal), practical dimension (ritual), experiential (emotional) and social dimension (organizational). Then the dimensions are substantially grouped into three main areas, namely, the esoteric domain (philosophical and mystical dimension), the formal/legal domain (ethical and practical dimension) and internalization and externalization (experiential and social dimension) in the historical-empirical context, where the latter can be categorized into the esoteric area in the manifestation of religion.

The substance in the Islamic reform is a theme discussed individually and in depth in this book. "Islam as a perfect religion and does not need any reform" is a statement built on the ontological constructs, as if Islam is already final and has been revealed in a comprehensive manner. In this discussion, it was also mentioned that reform is introducing a new Islamic model that differs from that taught by Prophet Muhammad. The views simply proposed what is called 'the purification of Islamic teachings from all forms of irregularities'. There was even a movement called the revival of Islamic teachings. Regardless of whatever the terms used, be it *tajdid* (reform), *nahdhah* (revival), purification,

revivalism, modernization, liberalization or renaissance, in this case the author stated that there is a movement against the teachings of Islam, and the matter should be addressed so that the movement will not be interpreted incorrectly.

The concept and scope of the study cover the definitions of the development of thoughts in Islam are also discussed in depth in this book including understanding the nature of being modern, modernization and modernism; the tradition of reform of thoughts in Islam, from orthodoxy to rational and authentic thinking, to the anti-thesis of the condition of Moslems. Historically, the development of thoughts in Islam could not be separated from the influence the Western modern thoughts on the Islamic world. The critical interface between the Arab world and modern Western civilization in the late 18th century was the momentum of “renaissance” according to Albert Hourani. This period was marked by the emergence of some intellectuals returning from Europe and then adopted the ideas of development achieved by the West, particularly France. In the 18th century, France was one of the countries with a high civilization in Western Europe. There are even people that argued that France became a model (prototype) of a modern state at that time.

Furthermore, this book also features several taxonomies of thoughts of reform in Islam, including Albert Hourani, Fazlur Rahman and Charles Kurzman. The taxonomy model was used by the author to facilitate research related to thoughts. In this case, the author also admitted that lack of taxonomy model is likely due to generalizing the thoughts of the important figures, but the shortcomings of this taxonomy model can be overcome with the figure study model, since individual characteristics can be maintained consistently against changes in a person's mind. In addition, the thoughts of Islamic reformists such as Mohammad Syahrur, Mohammed Arkound, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd Hasan and Hanafi are also discussed in this book, as well as Nurcholis Madjid with his reform model of the Islamic thoughts in Indonesia.