Pioneer Manuscript in Refuting Wahhabism: The Perspective of Kiai Dimyati bin Abdul Karim as-Surakarta as a Basis for Islamic Moderation

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Abstract

The study of manuscripts on religious moderation, especially those related to counter extremist and Wahhabi doctrines, missed a manuscript written in 1926. The manuscript was written by Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim as-Surakarta, under the title Lawāmi’ul Burhān wa Qawāṭi’ul Bayān. The main motivation in writing the manuscript was to educate people so that they are not influenced by wahhabism. This research is a study of manuscript Lawāmi’ul Burhān wa Qawāṭi’ul Bayān by Kiai Muhammad Dimyati. The manuscript has perspective about the importance of rising together against the narrow Islam of Wahhabism; Islam suppresses local cultural expressions, feels right about himself, seems unfriendly and different, and also downplays the role of women. This article finds that Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim has conducted a critical study of the Wahhabi doctrine, which according to him is mono-perspective and does not tolerate differences in interpreting Islamic law (mazhab).

Keywords: Manuscript; Wahhabi Rejection; Islamic Moderation.

Introduction

Indonesia has cultural diversity that requires a plural and multicultural perspective of thinking. These perspectives and views give recognition to different groups of thought, especially to minority groups. Each group in principle has the right to obtain equal recognition for ethnic, religious or other ownership status. Multiculturalism will also avoid the dichotomy of dominant and minority groups. It would be even more terrifying if the dichotomy between majority and minority groups as mentioned above, was instituted in order to keep minority groups from accessing power. Indonesian intellectuals, including kiai in Islamic boarding schools, have the awareness to address the diversity of views in religion.

In the 18th century, on the Arabian Peninsula, Wahhabism began as a purification movement within Islam. It was established by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792 AD). According to el-Fadl, Abdul Wahhab’s central argument is that Muslims have deviated by departing from the principles of pure Islam, and that Allah will only accept their deeds if they return to only one true path. He claimed that Sufism, the theory of intercession, rationalism, Shia doctrines, and activities that were considered heretical had poisoned Islam, and he intended to purge Islam of all of these he believed to be contaminating influences (El-Fadl 2005, 45). At the beginning of the 19th century, Wahhabism was detected in Indonesia, which has a narrow dichotomy character in the understanding of Islamic law (mazhab). In the early stages of the establishment of Wahhabism, there was no critical intellectual response from Muslim intellectuals to Wahhabi philosophy and doctrines.

According to Dobbin (2008), Wahhabism in Indonesia was spread by 3 pilgrims who returned from Mecca, to Minangkabau, bringing Wahhabi teachings which had developed in Mecca at that time, because they had lived there for 10 years and studied Wahhabi teachings at the beginning of their entry into Mecca. Then they returned to Minangkabau with the aim of developing the Wahhabi doctrine. After arriving in Minangkabau, they began the mission by holding a ta’lim assembly, issuing
Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim as-Surakarta

Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim as-Surakarta as mentioned in this book once studied at the Tremas Islamic Boarding School, Pacitan. He was studying in Tremas when the boarding school
was led by Kiai Dimyati Abdullah (d.1934). This is in accordance with the confession of Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim as-Surakarta at the end of his book when he mentions the endorsement of Kiai Dimyati Abdullah: ‘I have given this book to my teacher who has the virtue of al-‘Allamah at-Tarmani may Allah perpetuate it in majesty and stability.”

Kiai Dimyati considered that Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim as-Surakarta was a pious santri. In recognition, Kiai Dimyati handed over the education of several of his sons under the tutelage of Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim. Kiai Habib Dimyati (d. 1997) recited the Koran under the guidance of Kiai Muhammad Dimyati for two years from 1937. Then followed his younger brother, Kiai Haris Dimyati, from 1939 to 1942 (Nadiani, 2015).

Kiai Muhammad Dimyati bin Abdul Karim educated the two sons of Kiai Dimyati was when he led the Salafiyah Madrasah Kauman Surakarta. A teacher who instructs his children to his students is a form of acknowledgment of the wisdom of the student, so it is appropriate to teach his own teacher’s children.

As for Kiai Muhammad Muqri bin Ahmad Kafrawi bin Mahmud, he also studied at the Tremas Islamic Boarding School. On the front page of this manuscript, his name is stated, “The copy of the Lawami’ book is Muhammad Muqri bin Ahmad Kafrawi bin Mahmud Surakarta. One of the students at Pondok Tremas too.” In addition, he also studied at the Manbaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Surakarta. He comes from Tegal, Surakarta. He is the son-in-law of Kiai Mansur Popongan (1955) the founder of the Popongan Islamic Boarding School in 1926, and the son of Kiai Hadi Girikusumo Mranggen. Kiai Muhammad Muqri married Kiai Mansur’s daughter, Masyfu’ah.

The marriage was blessed with offspring including Kiai Salman Dahlawi (d. 2013). He is the successor of the Popongan Islamic Boarding School after Kiai Mansur’s death. He also became a murshid of the Naqsyabandiyyah tarekat replacing Kiai Mansur (Islah Gusmian, 2017). Kiai Muhammad Muqri was a very productive scholar. Various kinds of writing. Some are copies, notes from boarding schools, and even original works. The fields of knowledge that he writes are also quite diverse, including Arabic grammar, fiqh, guidelines for writing sermons, interpretations, sermons, prayers, Sufism, and diaries (Islah Gusmian, 2017).

However, the greatness of the name of the Tremas pesantren deserves serious attention so that it becomes the reason for Kiai Dimyati bin Abdul Karim’s choice. The reason is that not a few pesantren leaders have also studied at this boarding school which will later continue the process of scientific transformation in their respective regions.6 This fact illustrates that the existence of the Tremas pesantren is quite taken into account in producing ulama cadres, even according to Mas’ud (2004), at least Tremas Islamic Boarding School can be compared to Tebuiren Jombang Islamic Boarding School and Salafiyah Solo Islamic Boarding School in terms of applying the classical model of learning system (school). Kiai Dimyati bin Abdul Karim’s upheaval of scholarship at the Tremas Islamic Boarding School was quite significant for his intellectual development, especially since it took around 12 years. He mastered various disciplines from fiqh, tasawuf, kalam to literature. His mastery of this variety of knowledge will later help construct Kiai Dimyati bin Abdul Karim’s views in addressing social and national issues by prioritizing the logic of thinking diverse, not black-and-white or monoperspective (Dhofier, 1980).

*Lawâmi’il Burhân wa Qawātî’ul Bayân as A Response to Wahhabi Ideology*

Kiai Dimyati bin Abdul Karim as-Surakarta is the pioneer of the traditional Indonesian academics who responded seriously to Wahhabi doctrines, and writing book *Lawâmi’il Burhân wa Qawātî’ul Bayân* in 1925. This book existed before the emergence of Nahdatul Ulama (NU), in 1926, as Sunni organization that has become the representation of Indonesia’s heterogeneous Islam.

The book is expected to be able to educate people so that they are not influenced by the new age movement. Therefore, the book was written in the *pegon* script which was commonly used by the public in the period before the birth of state schools. Before Latin script was introduced massively through classes. The book in Javanese reminds us of the prolific author of *pegon* from Semarang, Kiai Sholeh Darat (d. 1903). The challenges of different times gave birth to different manuscript. Kiai
Sholeh faced people who were confused about their own religion from Javanese-Islamic discourses by Dutch researchers. Therefore, the books from him were born containing guidelines for the straight faith and practical guidelines for worship which were strengthened by the Sufistic approach of al-Ghazali.

The teachings of Wahhabism that are opposed by the book are also mentioned. The Wahabi-Salafi with their new movement have believed that they are more Islamic than the previous ulama. In the book, they say: "We have converted all of you to Islam again, because since 600 H until now you have been polytheists ...". Another teaching is the prohibition of relying on the Prophet, the saints, and taking blessings (ngalap barokah) from pious people. In addition, Wahhabism also forbids pilgrimages to the graves of the Prophet, especially to the graves of the saints. Even this movement has destroyed countless graves of saints and pious people.

Moreover, Wahhabism prohibits assemblies of selawatan, wiridan (remembrance), and mauludan. Even though these are things that are usually done by most Muslim communities, also those in Indonesia (Bruinessen, 1994). This book was born from a concern of the scholars in Tremas who conveyed to Kiai Muhammad Dimyati about the existence of "slander" in the body of Muslims. This chaos is related to sectarianism in carrying out the sharia (Woodward et al. 2010, 28). As it is today, sectarianism is the target of harsh criticism from those who do not yet understand. Accusing those who are sectarian as followers of the imams of the sect, not followers of the Prophet saw. This kind of situation causes concern among Muslims. Are they religious or not? In a moment like this, a pious person must actually show his knowledge. Kiai Muhammad Dimyati said: "... because I see how much my friends need the students at Pondok Pesantren Tremas in particular, and other than those like me who are limited in their knowledge in general, to an explanation of the various sects they follow, the truth, and anything related so that they are not overwhelmed by worries and misguided superstitions, so that they are not deceived by the devil and his helpers by misguidance, so that they are not deceived by the whispers of the followers of lust in spite of the many words that exist. they know that the religion practiced by the pious previous scholars is true and followed, so what is after this truth except error?"

To provide this answer, Kiai Muhammad Dimyati compiled this book in five chapters. The first article explains the arguments for establishing branch laws in Islam and the differences in the schools of thought within them. The second chapter discusses some of the schools that have been lost and the four schools that continue to last. The third article explains that it is almost impossible to find an absolute mujtahid today (Rijal n.d.). The fourth article is about the obligation for a Muslim today to follow one of the four schools of thought (taqlid). The fifth article contains instructions which according to Kiai Muhammad Dimyati, will be useful for Muslims.

According to Kiai Dimyati bin Abdul Karim, Wahhabism make bad views about sects. Even worse, they want to narrow Islam by imposing one possible law on many things. He said,

"Be assured that the priests (schools), may Allah always be pleased with them, get guidance to the right path from Allah SWT. Do not be deceived by the chatter of the babblers of this day and age, and what the ignorant fools say... the difference in sects is what causes the lack of unity... These words arise from a lack of knowledge, poor understanding, and ignorance of what the followers of the madhhab are doing."

The Wahhabism movement that would later take over Mecca, and spread far across the ocean has responded. The practice of different schools of thought that was common in Mecca was banned, although it was eventually allowed again. Sites that are "verses" (signs) that are anchors for us to remember Islam in the past are destroyed. More than that, this movement will be very dangerous if it enters the archipelago.

Kiai Muhammad Dimyati as-Surakarta is not alone. A few months after writing this book, he wrote Lawāmi’ul Burhān wa Qawāṭi’ul Bayān, With the support of his teacher, Kiai Dimyati bin Abdullah at-Tarmisi (d.1934) and Sayid Hasan bin Abdullah Ba’bud at-Tarmisi, this Lawami’ book was compiled to counter Wahhabism, anti-mazhab teaching. Kiai Muhammad Dimyati and Sayid Hasan bin Abdullah Ba’bud at-Tarmisi, which have genealogical similarities from the Tremas Islamic
Boarding School, are some of the names of the many Indonesian scholars who reject the Wahhabism movement. The similarity of their views on Wahhabism gave birth to the opinion of the importance of rising together against the narrow Islam of Wahhabism, that Islam suppresses local cultural expressions, uniformity of Islam against diversity, and downplays the role of women in public space, etc. This he wrote *Lawānī 'ul Burhān wa Qawāṭī 'ul Bayān* book become prominent and important because it strengthen the establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization in 1926.

Conclusion

Studies to counteract radicalism, extremism, liberalism, and hate speech are very crucial things in society with the characteristics of being easy to conflict with socio-religious issues. The existence of religious issues that occur makes the Muslim community confused to find the truth through people who they think are right in terms of *aqidah* and morals.

Entering the era of globalization and advances in information technology and the era of disruption, reason plays an important role in life, be it personal life or group life, including religious life under the auspices of a Pancasila state. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a new study so that people with these characteristics do not get carried away with currents that have almost eliminated diversity.

The reason is, the current conditions, Muslim communities are often involved in conflicts between people and these conflicts are dominated by religious conflicts that easily provoke them, not least the people of Central Java. Moderation contains justice so that one is not trapped in the views and ways of life of extremists. When looking at religious moderation, we need to understand religious moderation by reasoning without being trapped in extremism.

References


