DECONSTRUCTING MUHAMMAD IBN ABDUL WAHAB’S TEACHINGS THROUGH JACQUES DERRIDA DECONSTRUCTION THEORY

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Abstract

In the beginning, Islam came to Indonesia peacefully. Islam entered Indonesia through acculturation specifically in Java in the hands of religious leaders called Wali Songo. Opposite to that way, the Wahhabi’s teachings who wanted to purify Islamic religion lead by the prophet and his companions period makes Islam’ in Indonesia become exclusive. The Wahhab’s teachings which is in contrast of Islam Nusantara creates discomfort among all moslems, in particular, followers of NU, the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia. This is what the writer wants to answer by unloading the exclusive Wahhabism and intolerant thinking using the deconstruction analysis by Derrida. Before that, Foucault analysis of power relation will be used to broaden the language meaning dimension that influences language social system that is the background of Wahhabi’s teaching. Using the deconstruction method, the researcher will unload hierarchical text elements to find new reading result of the existing text to produce a more tolerant meaning. This research is expected to be thinking contribution in solving religious teachings conflicts that root from reading texts exclusively, and to construct awareness among moslems about discourse of relative truth, especially as a new way of reading the texts with exclusive thinking.

Keywords : Wahhabi, deconstruction, power relation, relative truth
Introduction

Indonesian Islam or “Islam Nusantara”, especially in Java has always appeared to be very different from Islam in the Arabian peninsula or Wahhabism. Islam in Indonesia was able to adapt to the local culture, thus showing a tolerant face, but in Arabian Peninsula is a radical Islam. (Naupal, 2014, p. 260) Wahhabism defend a very conservative, literal interpretation of Islam and treat another muslims with hostility. This sect got into Indonesia since the early of the 19th century and his teachings are exclusive and intolerant with a slogan of reform perturbs the order of Islam Nusantara.

The Wahhabism in Indonesia genealogy comes from the Wahhabi's school in Saudi Arabia. This school encourages muslims to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah, cleanse Muslims from misleading of heresy and superstition. He claimed that he had implemented the correct and pure Islam and the true representatives of Islam or prophet of Muhammad's message and the other muslims have deviated from the true beliefs of Islam. He want to reform movement to restore pure Islam in accordance with quran and sunnah, but act radically in solving various problems of others who are not in accordance with his teachings. According to him there is no truth except his truth and it becomes the religious claim. The consequence will appear is that the other truth cannot be accepted. Then, religion become the source of the spirit to coerce and cleanse the other from misleading of heresy and superstition.

Wahhabism is a school who refuses the other truth and is extremely rigorous, and condemn the other who don’t share his teachings that causes violence. Unfortunately he justify it as command from god’s will and the followers are usually the ones who have doctrine their mind, not like dialog, all-dogmatic, anti-criticism. Religion is then used as ideological base and symbolic justification over conflicts. The example of conflicts between Wahhabism and the others in Indonesia can be seen in Aceh (See http://www.understandingconflict.org/en/conflict/read/55/The-Anti-Salafi-Campaign.), in Bogor (See https://www.islamnusantara.com) and Cianjur, the west Java(See https://satuislam.wordpress.com).

Conflict in the exclusive behavior of Wahhabi that does not admit the truth of Islam from different perspective other than their own perspective. Even they think other moslems with different understanding are considered unbelievers. Wahhabi has made moslem to be in many factions when they claim other moslems as unbelievers, because their practice is not based on the practice done by the prophet and his companions or salafus sâleh. These moslems are considered as bid’ah masters and stamped as musyrik or unbelievers (kafir).

This intolerant and exclusive religious teachings are not in line with the essence of tolerant and human Islam. The good school of religion is inviting others to accept its truth through their consciousness not through oppressing and coercing, particularly in plural society like Indonesia. This is what interests the writer to unload the texts used as arguments by Wahhabi’s teachings. This writing uses the method of deconstruction of Derrida. With this method, the
writer plans to unload the single truth claim that appears in Wahhabi’s teachings. This is done by postponing the meaning that Wahhabi believes, unloading the texts and formulating new meanings over the Wahhabi’s truth claim. The writer hopes to find the root of their exclusive and intolerant attitude and tries to invert the arguments used by Wahhabism to turn into the face of a more human Islam. The writer specifies this writing with takfîr claim. It means making people unbelievers (people who deny/cover the truth/do not follow the truth, as the truth embraced by Wahhabi).

**Model of Religious Claims**

There are three models of religious claims as responses from religious community towards other groups. The first one is exclusivism; a perspective and outlook of a religion that claims that the truth only exists in its religion and that it does not exist in other religion. This outlook folds inward and refuses anything that is against its belief. The second one is inclusivism. This perspective claims that the embraced religion has a more perfect truth and salvation compared to those of other religions; this means that there is recognition and tolerance to the reality of the existence of truth and salvation of other religions. Inclusiveness tends to do reinterpretation to the established teaching systems, so it becomes relevant and acceptable. This perspective avoids its followers from confirming that they are the owner of the universal truth. The third one is a perspective and outlook that believe that all different beliefs and their complexity and contradictions really have the coherence to meet at the end of human pilgrimage. Some implications of this perspective are to keep the clear boundaries on one hand and present the constant reform towards other religion on the other hand.(Panikkar, 1978: pp. xiii-xix)

In addition to the three truth theories of religious claims, Panikkar believes in the importance of pluralism. The pluralism he means is a perspective that aims at creating inter-religion dialogues and communication to bridge the gap of ignorance and bilateral misunderstanding of various different cultures and to let these cultures to express their own views. This pluralism does not aim at defeating each other nor forcing the possibility of one universal religion. (Panikkar, 1978, p. xix).

If we analyze, based on the typology of religious claims as presented above, Wahhabi’s group can be concluded as exclusivism. This is due to the fact that there is a belief in its followers to have an absolut truth and the others are considered wrong. As a consequence, its followers can not accept other truth that comes from other.

Derrida denied the absolut truth and offered critical processes from inside which he called “deconstruction” or uncovering. The deconstruction method processes aims at opening the other possible meaning containing in the texts by turning the hierarchy, metaphysic of a text and by postponing the meaning over a text and looking for the undecidable containing in the text, which got specific attention from him, were “the unthinkable” and “never being thought”. Through
Derrida’s deconstruction of a text, I tried to reinvented the meaning that has been marginalized or forgotten. In the end, the new meaning does not come from outside the text but from the text itself. Using the hierarchy, metaphysic of a text, a new way of reading the text is found. (Derrida, 1997, p.24) . Meanwhile the goal of using the Derrida’s deconstruction method is to show the failure in presenting the absolute truth, the method unveils the hidden agenda that consists of a lot of weaknesses and lameness of the texts. (Norris, 2006, p. 13). There are two key words from deconstruction that play instrumentally in analyzing the Abdul Wahhabi’s teachings . The two words are turning the hierarchy of binary opposition and difference.

According to Derrida, when doing the deconstruction of the texts, the writing plays an important role as it is undoubtedly a product of narration and has not the main position as the narration. The writing is a sign of a sign where the meaning of word is not stable and unlikely to have constant concept. The writing forms a text. La difference (not difference) marks the turning where the writing takes distance from spoken language. This distance reminds that the writing is the held, the unheard logocentrism. La difference is something that cannot be presented by voice, because it is deaf, static, active everywhere, not present anywhere. (Derrida, 1981, p. 6) In this reseach the term deconstruction, means to see the way the essential message of the text is betrayed by the author.

The writer uses the Derrida’s deconstruction method only to specifically see the text that is used as argument by Wahhabism of his intolerant attitude that he uses as his truth claim. Then the discussion of Wahhabism’s truth claim will be taken by looking at the power relation behind the truth claim. Because claim does not exist by itself, the truth is not beyond the power, but it is inside the power. So to sum up the power is the truth (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). In this case, we must remember the discussion of Foucalt about power is not about what power is, but it talks about how the power is practiced, accepted and seen as the truth and how the power functions in certain sector.

In this writing, the texts used by Wahhabism as arguments to claim his single truth will become an open text that the writer will read using the Derrida’s deconstruction method. In this writing the text covers everything written or taught by Wahhabism to his followers.

Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab and “takfir” Claim

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1115-1206 H/1701-1793 M) was born on 1703 M/1115 H in a village called Uyainah al-Yamâmah, Middle Najd province, Saudi Arabia. It is located on south-west of the capital of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh and died on Syawal 29, 1206 H (1791 M) (Al-Jundul,1979, p. 120) at 86 years old after dedicating himself for 46 years as the Minister of Information of Saudi Arabia. He and his followers called his group as al-Muwahidûn (tauhîd supporters) and denied called as wahhabi (Gibb & Kramers,1953), p. 618).
The growth of Wahhabism in Indonesia was related to the influence of Saudi Arabia. Abd Aziz Saud had an important role in the spread of Wahhabi’s teachings. This Saudi Arabia’s influence was done through the Indonesian Islamic Da’wa Council (DDII) which was a representative of Islamic World League (Rabithah al A’lam Al islamî) in Indonesia. This organization was established by Muhammad Nasir, an ex-Masyumi leader who wanted Jakarta Chapter as the Official Philosophy that was rejected by Soeharto. To release from this deadlock, he established DDII as his strategic choice. (Hasan , 2008, p. 38).

DDII was a propaganda agency that operated nationally and it issued a range of religious articles which then were followed by mobilization of missionary throughout the country. Through its missionary and mosques, they spread the ideas of Ikhwânu1 Muslimin and islamic jama’at which were supported by the articles of Hasan al-Bana, Sayd Qutb, Maududi, Sayyid Hawwa, and Mustofa As-Siba’. The development of these ideas inspired militant youths of radical islam who did not want to compromise with any state authority. Their criticism towards the people in power was written in daily news of Abadi which was supressed by the authority in 1974. This made DDII to turn its organizational functions as true religious teaching movement. (Hasan, 2008, pp. 47-49).

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, founder wahhabism is prolific writer. His books are quite a lot, like al-Qawâid al-Arba’ah, Kasyf asy-Syubuhât, Kitab at-Tauhîd, Tafsîr Sûrat al-Fâtihah, Mukhtasar Sahîh al-Bukhârî, Mukhtasar Sîrat al-Nabawiyyah, Usûl al-Imân, Kitâb al-Kabâ’ir, al-Usûl al-Salâsah, an so more (al-Jundul, 1979, p. 13). As mentioned above that the basics of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab’s teachings were based on the thinking of tauhîd (oneness of God) and the spirit of purifying Islam teaching. This then led to the thinking of takfîr other moslems in a great deal both implicitly and explicitly written in his books and treatise, as described in his messages in some of his writing.

Wahhabism became a hotly debated issue in Indonesia. The strong thought of Wahhabi and its intolerance is shown to the Islamic orthodox mazhabs that have been generally accepted by Moslem community in Indonesia, especially the followers of NU. Their ritual and liturgy are considered perverted and heresy. In Wahhabi’s perspective, all of these followers have denied the pure tauhîd teaching. He had succeeded in aligning moslems (Wahhabi) and non-moslem (Non- Wahhabi) in his context with the moslems in the era of Prophet Muhammad. He closed it with information that Prophet Muhammad always fought those people and motivated his followers not to be afraid to bear arms to fight moslem of non- Wahhabi.

In al-Qawâid al-Arba’ah, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab said, “Actually those musyrikîn (people who are allying non-Allah) in our era are worse compared to those living in the era of our Prophet” (tt , p. 47). It is necessary to note down that what he meant by musyrikîn in his era were the moslems who are not in the same ideology as his. The statement of takfîr is easily found in many of his writings/books. And In his book of Kasyf sy-Syubuhât, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (tt. pp.1-2) said:
“And the last prophet is Muhammad S.A.W, he was the one who destroyed the pictures of the shalihîn (the sholeh people). Allah sent him to a community who said their prayers, were pilgrims to Mecca, gave religious meals, said a lot of prayers to Allah. However they (Quraisy community who were ‘kafir’) made some creatures as mediators between them and Allah”

From the two statements above by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab we can comprehend that Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab wanted to push his followers’ understanding to conclude that the other moslems were actually musyrikîn. And if the Prophet had fought the musyrikîn with the attitudes mentioned before, then Wahhabism could also fight the moslems who became musyrik as they had the same characteristics of musyrikîn in prophet’s era. The invitation to fight other moslems was clear from Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab’s statements in Kasyf asy- Syubuhât, (p. 2). That statements is “and you know that Prophet has fought them due to their shirk”

Deconstruction Over Takfîr Claim of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab

The main aspiration of deconstruction is freedom. Free to refuse the power of natural order, identity purification or institutional that helps personal’s determination with legitimacy, also knowledge competency or skills. When interpretation has to follow the basic rules that have to be watched and kept by the authority, deconstruction comes to tease so to unrest the authority. Deconstruction has pre-assumption that there is destroying principle pinned in each written texts. Deconstruction acts like a virus spread from the beginning that breaks down everything before text is assembled or instituted. (Haryatmoko,2010, pp. 31-32)

In the takfîr discussion, the opposite of kafir is moslem. On the other hand, kafir is contrasted with mukmin. Linguistically, kafir comes from the word kufur, meaning covering the truth; it violates the known truth and does not thank. A person is called a moslem when he says syahadât. The function of syahadât is the door to Islam, the distinguisher of moslem and kafir. From this we can summarize what kafir is when someone does not want to say syahadât. When the term kafir is used to stamp other moslems who are not in the same teaching, this has to be further investigated. Based on the explanation above, when someone becomes a moslem, he actually has stayed away from the kafir group. So when we stamp some one as kafir, this is in contrast with the definition. Furthermore this moslem has the faith to the oneness of Allah and believes in the Prophet Muhammad and his teachings. In other words, the real thing is to be kafir or to be mukmin. Wahhabism does not perceive the verses of Quran and Sunnah thoroughly; they perceive them litterally, atomistic, and incomplete.

If we search in the verses of Quran that kafir or kufr has many meanings. There are kufr tauhîd as Allah said, “As for the faithless, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith” (Q.S: 2, 6) and kufr nikmat (thankfulness) as Allah said, “Remember Me, and I will
remember you, and thank Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me” (Q.S: 2, 152) and the other meanings, but Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab in perceiving the meaning of *kafir* does not refer to any text in Qur'an as mentioned above. They even come up with new meaning about *kafir* which is not found in quran or sunnah. *Kafir* means people who conduct *tawâsul*, as Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab said in his book, *Kasyfu Syubuhât*, (tt. pp. 1-2) He claims: “they (Quraisy community) becomes *kafir* as they put living things as mediator between them and Allah” and “that Rasulullah s.a.w. have fought for this.”.

This Wahhabi’s text is likely to give agreement to all what Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab does and what their followers do who have fought the people who conduct *tawâsul* (people who use other people or emissary (saint) who prays to Allah) and who have been considered *kafir* by them and have to be fought to clean the teaching of Islam. The term of *kafir* shows arrogance, with the goal to down grade and exclusive the object/person to be mentioned *kafir*. No religious community will be pleased when stamped as being downgraded like being mentioned as *kafir*. When this term *kafir* is used in Quran, it was related to a specific situation in the Prophet’s time and it is unlikely to be used again today. Instead of using the word *kafir*, it is better we use other more polite term/word that is more accepted morally at present. Thus, we can say ‘people who have different faith or religion’. People with different faith maybe can be called ‘diffaith’.

If we analyze further, there is no group who is pleased to be stamped as *kafir* because the label contains an insult to the object. Non-moslem group does not want to be called *kafir* either, moreover the people who have embraced Islam. When one mentions other as *kafir*, it is clear that there is arrogance. Actually, when someone feels in the right position, he has implicit feeling to be blamed; he was afraid that his right position will be questioned by others. So, he is scared to find the mistake in his faith to the truth. That is why he has to attack the faith of the truth, so they are busy to defend their faith. So there is not time to question ‘faith’.

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab’s texts in *Kasyfu Syubuhât* (tt. p. 2); “And you know that Rasullullah saw has fought them due to this shirk”. According to the writer, behind this text, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab is actually afraid that he will be stamped as deviate and is fought by other group who has different faith of truth. So, to strengthen his faith, he needs to weaken the faith of others.

In the same book (tt., pp. 1-2) he said: “And the last Prophet was Muhammad saw, he destroyed the pictures of *shalihihîn* (good people). Allah sent Muhammad to the praying community, community who perform hajj, who give alms, who perform worship to Allah. But they (*kafr* Quraisy), according to Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab take other creatures as mediators between them and Allah”. This text gave Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and his follower justification their acts to fight people who performed *tawasül*. Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab stamped the people *kafir* and they had to be fought to purify Islam. In the writer’s analysis, behind the text there is also an implicit worries for Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab that what he did would be said as a wrong act. He
worried that the tawassul people would find their mistakes in the truth that Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab believed. So that was why Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab felt it necessary to justify what they did was correct to his followers by mentioning what the Prophet had done in his time. So what can be seen was the truth of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and arrogant justification to other belief. The fact was that behind all this there were implicit worries.

This justifies the theory of Foucault; ‘Power is the truth’. (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). Because it seems power over others or arrogant attitude appears when we feel correct. So whoever feels he has the truth can have right to be arrogant over other people.

So labelling kafir to other moslems, due to the different understanding, will turn to themselves. This happens because the moslems who have been stamped as kafir by them will also stamp the Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab followers that they are also kafir. For A, B is kafir and I am mukmin. For B, A is kafir and I am mukmin. So there is no clear meaning between kafir and mukmin.

To perceive the different understanding in comprehending the Islamic teachings that come from Allah and Prophet Muhammad, as long as the person believes and has faith over Allah and the Prophet, he is mukmin. Eventhough mukmin A and B are different in understanding Allah’s teachings. Labelling kafir to the group who have different faith, especially in Indonesia at present should be avoided, moreover among moslems. There is no takfîr for other group of people who have different faiths from Wahhabi’s group. Wahhabi’s teachings should be analyzed further by the followers especially in Indonesia. What exists is ‘different’, so this can lead Indonesia to be more tolerant and human.

**Conclusion**

Reading the takfîr claim in deconstruction discourse of Derrida asks us to postpone our understanding of the meaning and conception of the word kafir. This can help us to find other meaning behind the litterary meaning. If kafir is understood as the meaning proposed by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, we will become exclusive and intolerant and it is possible that we become extreme in our action towards others whose belief is different from ours. In Indonesian context which is multicultural, this Wahhabi’s perspective needs to be put aside as then the authority of truth in the multicultural society will become relative. There is now solo ownership of the multiculture. This is described in the first and third pillars of Indonesian ideology, Pancasila; Belief in the one and only God and The Unity of Indonesia are the foundation of Republic Indonesia.

The teachings of Wahhabi which are intolerant and exclusive as included in takfîr principles need to be overhauled so moslem community in Indonesia will be able to comprehend Islamic thoughts wihouth being coopted with motivation to dominate, to act as the solo determinant to see God over other religious believers. Labeling kafir by one group over other moslem communities due to different perspectives can turn to that group. If they understand that kafir means denying the truth that they believe, others can also do the same to them. So it is essential
that in perceiving the truth of Islam we do not label others as kafir or non-kafir. What exists is the difference. Reading the religious thoughts using Derrida Deconstruction can make the readers to postpone the perception of kafir or labeling kafir to others.

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