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# **A study of social resistance, religious radicalism and thought of dayah scholars**

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## **Abstract**

This article describes public resistance to religious radical groups and the relationship between the religious thought of Dayah scholars ulama with moderate Islam (Rahamata lil alamin) in Aceh Indonesia via comparative qualitative research methods. As a result,

the need for understanding wasathiyyah is found to be significant in today's increasingly plural society. In conclusion, from sociological aspects, moderate Islam preached by Dayah scholars in Aceh help to reduce the potential of social conflicts in the community.

**Keywords:** Social, Resistance, Religious, Radicalism, Dayah.

## Un estudio de la resistencia social, el radicalismo religioso y el pensamiento de los eruditos de Dayah

### Resumen

Este artículo describe la resistencia pública a los grupos radicales religiosos y la relación entre el pensamiento religioso de los eruditos Dayah ulama con el Islam moderado (Rahamata lil alamin) en Aceh Indonesia a través de métodos comparativos de investigación cualitativa. Como resultado, la necesidad de comprender wasathiyyah se considera significativa en la sociedad cada vez más plural de hoy. En conclusión, desde los aspectos sociológicos, el islam moderado predicado por los estudiosos Dayah en Aceh ayuda a reducir el potencial de los conflictos sociales en la comunidad.

**Palabras clave:** social, resistencia, religioso, radicalismo, Dayah.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to describe Dayah scholars, their religious preaching, and their social role. Before discussing the subject mentioned above, this paper invites us to flash back a social phenomenon in Aceh that is post-conflict and post-tsunami 2005 that is relevant to this subject. It has begun with the incident occurred on Thursday evening August 20, 2015, hundreds of residents from Lamblang Trieng village of Darul Imarah District, Aceh Besar, protest

against the salafi-wahabi group in the gampong. Together with the head of sub-district, head of villages, and community leaders, they visited Ma'had As-Sunnah to issue an ultimatum to the head of the Ma'had and his followers to leave their village immediately within 3x24 hours. According to observations by [balaiipsa.com](http://balaiipsa.com), while the residents take that action against Wahabi's followers, they have confirmed that beforehand to the Police (Kapolsek) of the Darul Imarah section and to local district Military Command (Koramil) hoping to prevent any violence from their action of depriving Wahabi's followers.

The Wahabi's principle on preaching sunnah and bid'ah possesses serious impacts on the community, as follows: (i) disrupting family and neighborhood relationship; (ii) threatening community relations and their activities in the mosques; and (iii) breaking up the unity of the Muslims due to the struggle in preaching (da'wah) such as at mosques, mushalla, offices, and schools. According to one of the residents in Aceh Besar who joined the persecution against Jailani's group, we are concerned over the existence of such group, they are an exclusive group, and often carry out hidden preaching of their thought.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Before discussing moderate Islam, the authors want to explain a theoretical perspective, namely system theory. In this theory, the system is interpreted as a unit formed from several elements (elements). These elements include components or parts that are mutually

binding and functional to each other. Each is cohesive to each other, so the totality of the unit is maintained intact. The review is seen in terms of its form. So, the understanding of the system can be applied to things that are immaterial in kind and process, it can also be applied to material things. For those who are immaterial, the decomposition or determination of the model is more likely to function as an analytical tool and is a method, arrangement, plan, scheme, procedure or method. The system is a method that has a pattern and consistent, even the mechanism is often called automatic. With regard to this study, Qur'an is the best example of an intellectual system.

So it is appropriate and proper for a Muslim to explore Qur'anic epistemology to be used as an Islamic scientific system. This epistemology is the Qur'anic literature is moderatism (*al-wasaṭiyyah*) which is at the practical level is the ability to place the dimensions of *ilāhiyyah* and *insāniyyah* according to their portion and position (Sabil, 2018). There are several studies related to *salafi-wahabi*, i.e (Abbas, 1995). Anwar (2016), Ahmad (2013), Shihabuddin (2009) and Zulfahri (2018) a former follower of *salafi-wahabi* in Aceh used to do armed-movements to the government of the Republic of Indonesia in 2010 because they perceive that the government does not implement Islamic law). They describe that the *salafi wahabi* an ideology is problematic, and many considered that it is to be a source of ideological violence carried out by extremist or radical groups.

The character of exclusive, rigid, and militant possessed by this ideology can inspire anyone to commit acts of violence and to oppose

anyone who is considered an enemy, even to fellow Muslims. In addition, the Salafi-Wahhabi is also called an authoritarian ideology, it is an authoritarian because the Wahhabi sect considers its teachings to be the purest and most Islamic while others are referred to as innovator(*bid'ah*) or people who deviated religion. According to Anwar (2016), official Wahabiyya is religiously dogmatic, socially conservative and politically acquiescent (the core of Wahabi teachings is dogmatic, conservative, and politically passive).

Other research's findings relevant to this article include Amiruddin & Kamaruzzaman (2013) in their book *Ulama, Separatisme dan Radikalisme di Aceh* According to them: there are four potential conflicts in Aceh's post-conflicts 2005, first, the radicalism that is the deviated sect, Christianization, the clash of ideas in the issue of the formalization of Islamic Sharia. Second, the issue of Neo-separatism. Third, land/agrarian issues. Fourth, foreign intervention in natural resource management in Aceh. While it is clear that the main issue in Aceh is religious radicalism. This is apparent from those who are studying in the Middle East, based on the research by the ulama in Aceh, the scholars were well aware of this threat, they are thinking of an exit strategy from the threat of radicalism from the Middle East, especially from Yemen. Now, the term *santri* turn into Garuda Santri and non-Santri Garuda. The former refers to the *santri* who developed the tradition of the *ahlal-sunnah wa al-jama'ah*.

While the letter refers to the *santri* who carries out a mission of *jihad* as in the *Khidamat Maktab* era in Peshawar, Pakistan. The latter

is the most alarming when they back home from Yemen. There are four matters concerning aqidah that are misleading: (i) their belief in the substance of God just above the sky (arasy); (ii) believing that the substance of God is bounded in time, place, and direction;(iii) believing in kalamullah that is alphabetic and spoken; and (iv) believing that the Prophet Adam and Prophet Idris, peace be upon them, are not the Messenger of Allah.

The misleading aspects in their worship include: allowing the intention (niat)of praying outside the takbiratul ihram; prohibiting the qunut at the Subuh prayer; banning the celebration of the birth (Maulid) of the Prophet Muhammad SAW; prohibiting zikir and doa in a congregation; and mandatory to follow only the Qur'an and hadith in aqidah, syariah and morals. These are different from Islamic education and teaching by Dayah scholars very easily accepted rejection from the people in Aceh.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study applies the descriptive qualitative method, its analysis model is inductive or the analysis is presented based on existing data. Based on this descriptive model the authors obtain data and technique of analyzing data as meaningful information, focusing on the survey consisting of research methods and techniques, data collection methods, data analysis methods and related formulas with it. This descriptive qualitative method is chosen because it can give an in-

depth overview of a social phenomenon. Through observation, in-depth interviews, data displays, interim conclusions and coupled with data documentation and data analysis are important in conducting this research method.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Unlike most of the Salafi Wahhabi groups, the Dayah scholars' thought does not experience social resistance in Aceh. The authors' explanation below regarding Aceh Dayah scholars and their religious understanding both in terms of scientific genealogy and other aspects.

The Dayah scholars are undoubtedly experts in Islam, their track record in Islamic knowledge has a sanad or genealogy of scholars from major Islamic scholar from Arab and Africa affiliated to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), so the Islamic thought and knowledge of Dayah scholars linked to rahmatan lilalamin, the knowledge literacy and its genealogy helped us to understand the religious context properly and led us to the core of religious teachings that are loving brotherhood, not hostility, love is not hatred, being helpful and burdensome, being rahmat for all mankind or maslahatul ummah according to the Maqasid Syar'iyah. This is apparent from early days to the present, Dayah scholars are loved by the people, politicians and government leaders. Although view people dislike Dayah scholars those who dislike are very small in numbers because they were misled.

The Dayah scholars have contributed significantly to the struggle against colonialism and defending Islam so that their history and existence is well-noted by the Acehnese. In addition, after the conflict between Jakarta and Aceh, the Dayah scholars has been playing a strategic role in strengthening Islamic education, as explained by Fahmi (2015):

The historical record shows that Aceh Dayah scholars extraordinary role in social life, either in fighting against colonialists before Indonesia's independence and post-independence and during Aceh's conflict, post-Aceh conflict in 2005. Dayah scholars have concentrated on Islamic education in Dayah -based teaching. Asan informal educational institution, the Dayah only focuses on Islamic studies, mainly on the teaching of tauhid (aqeedah), tafsir, Fiqh, ushul fikih, tasawuf, hadith, and other Islamic aspects of studies (2015: 20).

The basic characteristics of the Ahlu sunnah wa Jamaah are as follows: first, moderate(tawassuth); second, fair (I'tidâl); third, tolerant (tasâmuh); fourth, harmony (tawâzun); fifth, commanding the good and forbidding the evil (Amar Ma'rûf Nahi Munkar); sixth, good relationships (ta'ruf); seventh,cooperation(ta'âwun); and eighth, communicative (tawâshaw). Tolerance means the concept of mutual respect and cooperation among different groups of society, ethnicity, language, culture, politics, and religion. Tolerance is a noble concept that is an organic part of the religious teachings, including Islam. There are many verses of the Qur'an that speak about the tolerance and attitudes of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace

be upon him) to non-Muslims, such as in the charter of Medina, reflecting high tolerance (Fathurrohman, 2012).

Furthermore, Fahmi (2015), describe that understanding the Islamic study from Syafii works is growing. One of those is Islamic thought by Imam Nawawiin his work that is called Minhajut Thalibin that study the book of al-Muharrar in more detailed. This minhaj is later narrated by Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haitami with his book Tuhfa. The example above shows the genealogy of thought and the advancement of the Fiqh/Ushul Fiqh by the scholars and the followers of Syafii (syafiiyah). This continues to grow up to mutakhir in scholars, such as the book of al-Mahalli authored by Imam Jalaluddin al-Mahalli, the book of Fathul Muin by Imam al-Malibari, the book of Ianahtut Thalibin by Said Abu Bakar Syatha, and many other syafiiyah books.

These books are the basis of the thought of the Dayah scholars in Aceh who believe in the Mazhab Syafii is a basis for studying legal issues in Islam, from the purification (thaharah) to the freedom for slavery Fahmi (2015), the authors find that the consistency of the Dayah scholars in Fiqh based on syafii sects contributing to the peace in worship, in practicing and teachings religion among the Acehnese, although people did not deny the other three sects (mazhad) in Fiqh. According to the authors' observation, the process of education and teaching in the Islamic boarding school has been carried out centrally by religious teachers

whose seniors mostly have their own charismatic values. This can be shown from the conversations of Dayah's students when they describe the profile of their scholars.

This means that those who learn from the teacher (ulama) tend to follow their thought, then they establish their own Dayah so that the Dayah based education is spreading throughout Aceh, and became an element in da'wah movement. This shows that the role and function of Dayah in social life are strategic especially after independence. The scholars are an important element who address and solve various problems faced by society. Their role became patron-client for social life in Aceh, both by ordinary citizens and by the rulers. The result of the Authors' observation is supported by Sabil (2018) who explains that:

The movement of the Dayah scholars is sort of the tawasuf model, this can be seen from their references. The books that are referred to as learning materials and other references in Dayah are the fruit of the thought the moderate scholars. They are neither textual-literalists nor liberalist-contextual, but they moderate the texts with reality. Therefore, the movement of the Dayah scholars as in the case of the Dayah Mahadal Ulum Diniyah Islamiyah Masjid Raya Al-Aziziyah Samalanga is a moderate Islamic scientific movement that takes a middle ground between text and context (2018, 21).

Following on the above understanding, the authors also find a similar explanation given by Black (1999), he explains that:

Dayah scholar's movement including from MUDI Mesjid Raya Al-Aziziyah has nothing to do with radicalism and extremism gave that the ideology adopted is based on the foundation of the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, especially with the Shafii school of thought which respects the human culture. In contrast to the social movements of the Salafi-Wahhabi such as in Saudi Arabia that is seen as triggering the birth of radicalism and extremism. The pattern of education that combines intellectual and contextual aspects contributes to harmony in its implementation so that religious social life in Aceh continues to uphold manhaj of the great Islamic scholars or more popular manhaj or scientific methods based on the understanding of the Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah. This appears from the daily routine of teachings of ibadah and muamalah (1999, 13).

Upon understanding the Aceh Dayah scholars' thought which categorized as moderate Islam, then the authors want to discuss further the matter of moderate or wasathiyah Islam and how the relationship between moderate Islam is or wasathiyah and the thought of Dayah scholars from the Islamic boarding schools in Aceh Indonesia, as explained below. As for the characteristics of moderate Islam, Black (1999) reveals them as follows: first, the religious thought should not only based on scriptural texts but rather captures the surrounding situation; Second, prioritizing the noble moral principles to raise goodness and benefit for the universe (rahmatan lil-'alamin); Third, Islamic da'wah is disseminated in peaceful ways, where differences interpretation to be resolved wisely; and Fourth, the religious teachings are mainly applied at the individual and family level.

While its application at the society, the nation, and the state level is the authority of politicians and statesmen. Public leaders will be held accountable for their leadership (Saiful & Arif, 2010). To gather more views on moderate Islam, the authors also refer to academicians such as Kamali (2015), Muhammad Zainul Majdi and Azyurmardi Azra and some other Islamic scholars. Their views are as follows: Azra mentions that the discourse and paradigm about Moderate Islam relatively new; there are pro-Islam observers and contra with the terms of moderate Islam. The discussion about this subject began to evolve from the beginning of the 20th century, it is also discussed by Muslim thinkers in the Arab World such as Rashid Ridha, Muhammad al-Madani, Muhammad Syaltut, Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, and Wahbah al-Zuhayli. According to Wahbah al-Zuhayli, in the general conversation among the people in the present time, *wasathiyah* means moderation and balance (i'tidal) in faith, morality, and character; in treating others; and in the system of applied socio-politics and governance (Somasundram et al., 2019).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Islam that is affiliated with *Ahlu sunnah wal jamaah* is very influential in Aceh, the Dayah scholars play a key role in preaching Islam and their thought on Islam is well received by the community because the values in the thought are moderate or *Wasathiyah*,

which means that the values are not rigid, not extreme, but very inclusive and broad contextual and contextual understanding based on a strong proposition from Islamic religious sources. The Islamic teachings of the Dayah scholars of Aceh did not cause resistance from the community, on the contrary, if the school of thought often refuted, cheated, misleading, and blasphemed Islamic practices by Dayah scholars in Aceh, that sort of thought has been denied, as in some cases in Aceh Besar.

The Government and the Consultative Assembly of the Aceh Ulama are in line with the Dayah scholars. Based on Qanun No. 03/2003, the foundation of Islamic Shari'a in Aceh is based on aqeedah of the Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah and to safeguard that aqeedah, the MPU Aceh has issued a Fatwa No 09/2014 that renewed previous Fatwa No. 07/2007 concerning 34 criteria of aqeedah Ahlusunnah waljamaah. From sociological aspects, moderate Islam preached by Dayah scholars in Aceh, based on the analysis of the data that has been described above, help to reduce the potential of social conflicts in the community, if radical ideas continue to develop while Islam Wasathiyah passively or does not move on with the existing rules, the social unrest will occur in Aceh. The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and South Asia are an important lesson for Muslims in Aceh in their efforts to prevent the entry and development of Radicalism.

The thought and values of moderate Islam as preached by Aceh Dayah scholars need to be maintained. Moderate Islam can be understood from the religious reality of Muslims from the early time of Islam until the present. Although the term moderate Islam' was born in the early 20th century, the scholars have explained its characteristics to the Muslim by understanding the Qur'an in totality (Unity) according to the theoretical system. Theologically, the majority of Acehnese adhere to Ahlu's Sunnah wal jamaah aqeedah developed by Islamic scholars and they are the foremost in spreading the values of unity and Islam based on this understanding because the religious understanding of the Dayah scholars is also proven to be very respected for culture which always refers to the Islamic history and local traditions.

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