ANALYZING ISLAMOPHOBIA AS HATE SPEECH: AL-ATTAS' VIEWS ON THE CORRUPTION OF KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

The phenomenon of Islamophobia has always been a contemporary issue; especially in a world that is supposed to be global and full of diversity. In fact, in some Muslim-majority countries, the phenomenon is actually spread. Further study found that among the reasons was a misunderstanding in exploring and understanding Islam as a religion. Especially on the meaning of Islam as a universal religion for humans. Methodologically, this literature research model uses a historical literacy approach in the form of a Western phobia of Islam (especially religion) in the Middle Ages (anti-semitic), primary sources of Islamic teachings, and Islamic religious philosophy specifically excavated from Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Al-Attas' analysis is used based on his capacity to understand ideas about metaphysics and Western civilization and Islam itself. The theoretical study is focusing on al-Attas' conception of 'corruption of the knowledge' that occurs as a result of 'loss of adab'. This is a global challenge for contemporary Muslims, the 'pursuit of knowledge' ; that is, the spread of 'erroneous science' that is like true, but contains falsehood and brings damage to the correct understanding of Islam. This study found that 'the corruption of the Knowledge' about Islam often results in Islamophobia; which begun with misunderstanding about the very essential things in Islam. Muslims join in

phobias towards their religion because of the loss of adab. Most of the misconceptions result from 1) studying Islam without referring to scientific authority 2) framing social media about Islam 3) Secularization which reduces Islam is only limited to ancient Arabic culture.

Keywords: *al-Attas, Islamophobia, hate speech, secularization, loss of adab.*

A. Introduction

Hate Speech, or the well-known 'ujaran kebencian' in Indonesian law, is one of the ecological effects of the human interaction; especially in social media. The case, as happened to Muslims after 9/11 in America. Furthermore, such as making legitimacy that Islam is an enemy of international peace.[1] The legitimacy, as if to be go-international; even tend to be popularized through social media to various Western countries, also Islam; with America as its 'locomotive'. Even though they still recognize the existence of good Muslims, they still recognize that Islam (and some of its teachings) teach the hate speech that is 'predicted' to lead to violence in the name of religion. The proof: there is a dichotomy, between 'friendly Islam' (Islam ramah) and 'hard Islam' (Islam keras); 'Radical Islam' (Islam Radikal) and 'Moderate Islam' (Islam Moderat); and various terms with similar synonyms above.[2]

However, despite the spread of Islamophobia it has been considered a 'truth' in the world community; still some academics who are able to critically analyze, that the phenomenon is not far from racial action, even in a hurry; because it only puts excessive emotion and prejudice on the entire Muslim world.[3]

Interestingly, it is al-Attas' in-depth analysis; which uses the perspectives of 'Loss of Adab' and 'Corruption of the Knowledge' which continue to occur, due to the 'Secularization' which is launched academically. The impact, not physically visible immediately; but in the long run, the emergence of leadership or government that does not have the appropriate qualifications and capacity to lead and be able to uphold justice for those they lead.[4]

This 'out of the box' analysis naturally arises from in-depth studies, especially of the West, Islam, Secularization, and the natural views of the two poles. For this reason, this article seeks to emphasize the relevance of al-Attas's analysis.

B. Literature Review

Various studies have mentioned, that Islamophobia is caused by many things. Linking Islam to terrorism, is one of the 9/11 trends; which is dominated by social media framing which leads to indifference about Islam. That, closing productive dialogue between religions, so that understanding of Islam is reduced; limited to what the media reported. Thus, based on his research, Douglas Pratt had found these pattern and relationship.[5] Psychologically, the framing affects the growth of Islamophobia. However, most people seem aware that such a thing is classified as racist or hate speech.[6] In a hurry, there are a number of countries which state that Islam is radical, then stressing the need for de-radicalization.[7] Of course, the policy has drawn academic protest; because academics find that the term radicalism, which is often associated with Islam, is very confusing and problematic.[8] Furthermore, this has implications for increasing the number of exposure to Islamophobia; in fact, some Muslims also hate their own religion.[9]

In the midst of the debate, some academics present a moderate perspective; namely improving the quality of education and understanding of religion that is good and right. Among other things, through inculcating good morals and character, as well as emphasizing religious practices that are based on true religious knowledge. Many academics believe that the true teachings of Islam are full of tolerance; but a lot of distortion of the true value of Islam, resulting in people misunderstanding Islam[10].

Actually, this solution has long been thought of by a Malay Muslim philosopher. His analysis of the things that have befallen modern-day Muslims is due to corruption of knowledge, which makes people misunderstand about Islam. In fact, this incident also happened to Muslims; which made him hate things that smelled of Islam. Of course, this is classified as an unfair act (zulm) against Islam; especially towards himself. This point is the basis for idea, that the most appropriate way to avoid these misunderstandings is through education; which al-Attas calls *ta'dib*. Several studies on *ta'dib* in the perspective of al-Attas, have found the conclusion, that the 'corruption of the knowledge' is what caused some confusion in the muslim minds and also non-Muslims. Furthermore, the effects of the spreading of the corrupted knowledge, although seen as bringing technological advances and others; but decreasing morality.[11]. For this reason, *ta'dib* can actually be offered as a theoretical basis in explaining the occurrence of Islamophobia.

C. Research Method

This study becomes interesting when viewed with multiple perspectives. Some data or research which classify the 'Islamophobia' as 'Hate Speech' was collected qualitatively using library research based on several researches about Islamophobia theories. Some others data was quantitatively collected from literature conclusion among researches about Islamophobia as socio-behavioural phenomenon; among social change which framing Islam as world's peace threat, especially in order to understanding labelling Islam as source of terrorism teachings at 9/11[12].

These data and facts, supported by several studies on Islamophobia in Europe; which specifically highlights the spread of Islamophobia as 'prejudice' to all Muslims. 2008 data from the Pew Global Attitude Project and the 2010 Pew News Interest Index mention, that the 'prejudices' towards Islam, developed further politically into a more radical conservative movement; which representations appear in the form of hate speech[13]. This phenomenon, is a kind of social change that significantly builds a mindset that emphasizes more emotional, which is not uncommonly based on misunderstanding about Islam; which is historically closer to 'understanding Islam through the Western view'[14]; This is like emphasizing Edward Said's conclusion, that Orientalists sometimes misunderstand Islam; especially because of Western methodologies and frameworks that project their worldview[15].

This theoretically strengthens Huntington's conclusion about 'Clash of Civilization'; namely the conflict between Islamic and Western civilizations in the form of cultural, cultural, to scientific, political, social and economic dominance. Furthermore, that the West refers to Islam as a religion, does not participate in the agenda of globalization, gender equality, social change, development of science and technology, to accuse Islam of curbing human freedom in general. For this reason, the West says that Islam is 'hostile' to Western civilization; the top of which is proven by the tragedy of 9/11.[16]

However, that does not mean that all scholars and Westerners think so. This is evidenced by various scholarly analyzes such as John Esposito, as also examined by Aleksandra Lewicki who said that the liberal Citizenship Theory encountered a blind spot when faced with Islamophobia. Both stated similarly, that carrying Islamophobia, means inconsistent with the values of human equality (human equality) or egalitarian values embodied in the practice of liberal citizenship[17]. It is here, that Islamophobia sociologically contains Western misunderstanding of Islam, also Western philosophy itself.

Not just a sociological perspective; methodologically, seeing Islam as an enemy, will indeed conclude 'Islamophobia'; let alone see the Islamic teachings in bits-and-pieces; or study it without going through proper scientific authority. As first, we can understand 'Islamophobia' as part of hate speech; according to Michel Rosenfelda's report in defining hate speech as "speech designed to promote hatred on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin".[18] The analysis is relevant if used as one of the reasons for the emergence of Islamophobia, namely misunderstanding about Islam. That perspective, methodically, proved to be quite valid in proving that hate speeches containing Islamophobia are more motivated by their emergence based on ignorance about Islam; because of that, often, hate speech is more nuanced 'speech without purpose' or 'wrong purpose' if addressed to Muslims who are not perpetrators of terror. A more complete definition, while emphasizing that Islamophobia is categorized as hate speech can be found from Andrew F. Sellars which begin with defining hate speech as "speech that carries no meaning other than hatred towards a particular minority". The traits from hate speech was: 1) Targeting of a Group, or Individual as a Member of a Group; 2) Content in the Message that Expresses Hatred 3) The Speech Causes a Harm 4) The Speaker Intends Harm or Bad Activity 5) The Speech Incites Bad Actions Beyond the Speech Itself 6) The Speech is Either Public or Directed at a Member of the Group, 7) The Context Makes Violent Response Possible 8) The Speech Has No Redeeming Purpose.[19]

A fairly comprehensive theoretical study; given the phobia's emergence after 9/11, it proves that Islamophobia is considered to lead to a kind of 'discrimination' or racial action. It is called racial, because Islam is often associated with 'Arabization'; especially, because physically all of its worship uses Arabic.[20] Even other studies, in fact, found that the idea of Islamophobia tended to 'revive' colonial ideas that had always faced Islam.[21]

In harmony with the studies of Zempi and Cloud, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas has long been highlighting the superiority of the West over Islam. Among the proofs, that the Western worldview deliberately disseminated to Islam, especially through the knowledge and sciences that come from the West. Some of these Western sciences tend to create confusion among Muslim scientists in: 1) understanding Islam itself, and 2) efforts to 'reconcile' Islam and the West. Both, or at least one of them, always fails because 1) not understanding Islam through authoritative sources, 2) ignoring differences in principle to impose the Western worldview to be accepted by Muslims and 3) misunderstanding about the West itself.[22]

The failure, raises things that are not proportional, one of them was Islamophobia itself; phobias caused by basic incomprehension due to the three things above. For this reason, al-Attas' methodology is important for answering things like phobias towards Islam as in the introduction above.\

D. Result

Based on previous researches and methods, we can formulate problems regarding Islamophobia; first, by definition, Islamophobia is classified as hate speech. Second, the beginning of Islamophobia introduced to the world of social media, or in general became a global issue, especially after 9/11. Third, Islamophobia as a social phenomenon, is classified as a racist movement rooted more in the misunderstanding of Islam itself; even though the culprit is also a Muslim.

SMN al-Attas, as a well-known Malay Muslim philosopher, has indeed been observing such problems for a long time; which clearly brings malaise to the Muslims community and their inferiority complex in various fields. Starting from the history of secularization in the West which is based on a phobia against Christianity; Western civilization further assumes that religion cannot explain metaphysical things such as God, religion, reality, also the meaning of science. Western civilization considers that religion is only limited to the cultural or socio-cultural phenomena of traditional societies which are still influenced by beliefs in metaphysical-speculative matters[23].

Al-Attas' view is seems to be relevant to analyse Islamophobia, which uniquely appears instead in the majority Muslim country itself. Being interesting, because of the overall analysis; not just aspects of political economy, but the two dilemmas of Muslims are more interpreted as 'the corruption of the knowledge' circulating among Muslims, which until now the process is still ongoing; even though it has been going on for a long time.

The relevance of al-Attas' views can instead be found in various other figures; both after and before. A study by James Carr, for example, uses Foucault's perspective; that the hegemony of the neo-liberal era government created Islamophobia as a kind of 'government truth' popularization or as neoliberal regime of truth. Also Professor Seyala Benhabib of Yale University emphasize that In a double standard, people are influenced to see that the 'mysterious' attack which is considered to involve Muslims as terrorists is an activity and general character of Muslims that seriously threatens world peace. but on the one hand, they consider the wars that took place in Palestine, India, Myanmar and Muslim minority countries as a

dynamic of developing countries; without being called an act of terrorism.[24]

The conclusion above, it happened axiologically, which lead to misunderstanding about Islam.[25] because 'the corruption of the knowledge' which lead to the emergence of leaders who do not have the capacity and good quality, as al-Attas' further conclusion in the concept of 'Loss of Adab'.[26]

Loss of Adab, does not have instant results. However, sequentially, it creates a 'vicious circle' which maintains these conditions to continue to recur and occur. The issue of leadership (governance) as above, is one of the consequences. While the problem that is actually fundamental, is the Loss of Adab itself; which resulted in 'Corruption of the Knowledge' simultaneously; then bring up the leader as happened above. Al-Attas himself, emphasized that "Adab is the discipline of body, mind and soul; the discipline that assures the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place…".[27]

The statement has many implications. Adab, directly become a requirement for someone to seek good and right knowledge. Because good and right knowledge, does not bring damage to nature and humans. Philosophically, this lack of eternity is proven to spread confusion about the Islamic worldview; also the difference with the West and other civilizations. The occurrence of Loss of Adab cannot be separated from confusion about fundamental philosophical concepts, namely at the level of worldview and their sources. The Islamic worldview, for example, was developed from God's revelation; which the meaning of 'revelation' (*wahy*) and 'God' (*Ilāh*) in Islam is very different from the Western civilization view on God and revelation.[28]

Worldview itself, is a kind of cultural matrix or basic thinking, in which contains the basic concepts of reality and truth; which subsequently construct a collection of beliefs, frameworks of thinking and understanding, frameworks of action, research frameworks.[29]

Al-Attas himself, asserted that the concept of worldview in Islam is translated as 'ru'yatu al-Islam lil wujud', namely the Islamic vision of reality and truth whose source is God's revelation to His Messenger. This concept penetrated through Arabic Arabic into the life of Arab society, in line with the occurrence of Islamization in the Arabian peninsula by Rasulullāh Muhammad (peace be upon of him).[30]

In worldview, there is also a fundamental concept about knowledge; which specifically divides knowledge based on subjects and objects, to a universal level and particularity. This, of course, presupposes a more in-

depth epistemological study. This, too, will affect the way and people's judgment and understanding about something.

Practically, for example, because of the many stories in social media that talk about the tragedy of 9/11 as a terrorist act which incidentally is considered to represent Muslims; the news viewers are more influenced by things that are still in the form of prejudice; but already completely blocked as valid information.[31] The event presupposes, that humans 'know' through their five senses and their minds. In particular the West, these two things are indeed very important, because of their rejection of the metaphysical source of the coming of knowledge to humans. Unlike the epistemology of Islam, which not only recognizes these two things, but also metaphysical matters such as *khabar shādiq* intuition, and revelation.[32]

Al-Attas' analysis had several similarity with Hossein Nasr. Both agreed that modern science, which was specifically developed based on secularization, had clearly brought about the aspect of 'desacralization of nature'; which every natural reality had no connection with the Sacred Reality; God. Sacred, which understand here as the spiritual aspect behind the nature; such as God, truth, and others; was important, because it was containing wisdom and the value of eternal truth. Secularization is only concerned with the acquisition of truth in a rational-empirical way. In fact, the eternal truth was brought by the Prophets, - in the language of al-Attas - has blessed the earth with teaching wisdom from God to the human[33].

If the sacred thing is ignored, it will have an epistemological impact on human understanding of reality and truth - in the language of al-Attas - referred to as 'intellectual confusion' which encourages injustice; which, 'injustice' is the inability to recognize the right place for an object of knowledge or subject of knowledge; thus, bringing forth knowledge that seems right, but contains destructive aspects to human life.[34]

Not far with previous analysis, Iqbal also said the same thing. Iqbal mentioned that the West tried to portray Islam by their own methods; based on the above aspects, that Islam is a religion that is anti-modernization. For this reason, the West said it was necessary to bring up a special study to give birth to a generation of Muslims who did not think stagnant because they followed the tradition of religious scholars and traditional religious thought. Iqbal also reminded Western scholars, while responding to his thoughts; specifically through various poems. Iqbal's poem, in short contains many messages that 'East' is a teaching full of wisdom.[35]

The Misconceptions about Islam do not only occur to Western World; but also to the Muslims themselves. If in the West, misconceptions about religion begin with secularization, then in Islam, misconceptions about Islam come from various directions. Either due to secularism, or the spread of 'the corruption of the knowledge' that has indeed occurred due to the inclusion of 'westernization' in the methodology of Islamic studies; which simply assumes that Islam is a 'relic of ancient artifacts' or a kind of socio-cultural phenomenon that had been rooted on Arab tribes.[36]

In Indonesia, for example, we see various interpretations of Islam. But specifically, there are several groups who profess Islam without understanding that Pancasila is the result of the formulation of the ulamas and martyrs in the past. This misunderstanding leads to pagan attitude towards the Pancasila state system; whereas, Pancasila is '*Daar al-Ahdi wa al-Syahadah*'.[37] Furthermore, in axiological impact, its led to the antithesis of the understanding of 'Pancasila-phobia', namely Muslims who support secularism as a solution, because traditional Islamic thought alleged to be conservative, puritanical, and stagnancy.[38] In fact, the secular Muslims attitude can also be classified as extreme, namely participating in banning the religious practice in public spaces; that is, religion is prohibited from dealing with the country's problems. Furthermore, the group is suing the authority of the Islamic scholars (ulamā) and sophisticatedly questioning about the main source of Islam itself; by imitating Western methods in understanding Islam[39]. Though Western methods have long been criticized by contemporary Muslim thinkers such as Iqbal, Nasr, to al-Attas.

However, there is still great hope in Indonesia, specifically mentioned by Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi that the future of Islam in Indonesia is in the hands of moderate Muslims; which consciously there have been ongoing efforts to look at the problems of Islam and Muslims holistically; without tending to be extreme liberal or conservative. This moderation is proven by various studies that try to bridge the knowledge derived from revelation and human acquisition through the five senses and scientific activities with the physical world. That attitude is proof that moderate attitude in Islam, is shown through the ability to balance between revelation and reason.[40]

This moderate attitude has also been shown by al-Attas, who makes an analysis about the disadvantages conditions of the nowadays Muslims in this contemporary age by the 'loss of adab' or 'corruption of the knowledge'; where the solution is ta'dib, as well as the Islamization of Contemporary Knowledge. This is also shared by thinkers in Indonesia such as Amin Abdullah who advocate Integration-Interconnection agenda, as well as Imam Suprayogo's 'Pohon Ilmu' metaphor, and other thinkers who have departed

from similar backgrounds; although different narratives in analyzing and providing solutions to problems in this age of muslim scientific confusion.

E. Conclusion

To conclude a short summary, that Islamophobia as social-behavioral phenomenon was developed based on misunderstanding about Islam itself. The several scholar had took that islamophobia classified as hate speech against Islam. Furthermore, in al-Attas' view, we can deduce as a kind of axiological thing that occurs due to misunderstanding about Islam as revealed religion which caused the Loss of Adab. Furthermore, it brings confusion in thinking, so that it gives birth to a secular scientific methodology and produces disciplines that are not valid in reality and the truth of Islam; even spreading errors of thought. Mistakes of thinking occur in the form of failure to understand Islam proportionally, and bring up the 'hate-speech' itself. For foregoing solution, as al-Attas had emphasis; that there must to inculcating the *adab* for muslim, therefore they can understand and carefully explain the proper and right things about Islam.

Acknowledgements

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