

The Ulama Role in the Institution of Islamic Religious Education Perspective

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Abstract: *Ulama should not be underestimated in carrying out their mission as the heirs of the Prophets. Therefore, Ulama occupy a very respectable seat in the eyes of Allah SWT. dan in the eyes of humans. The position of ulama is not based on the appointment of a number of officials, but Ulama is the heirs of the Prophets who have the Mission and Vision to guide the people and uphold the amar ma'ruf Nahi Mungkar. It urges the people to submit to and adhere to the ulama, where the community and Ulama are united. Therefore, the Ulama in the structure of the State is highly awaited by his counsel to guide the values of truth and justice. Because Umara is a Regulator in the structure of the State that should not hit the signs of truth, justice, prosperity in carrying out its mission to reach the justice and prosperity of the country. In reaching the Mission and Vision, the advice of the 'ulama is vital in the context of upholding dignified justice. Umara should not be arrogant and be arbitrary to the Ulama because Ulama is the heir of the Prophet's Knowledge. Moreover, ulama achieve his da'wah to spread the values of Religious Education in order to direct the people into truth and Justice in the midst of society.*

Keyword: Role of Ulama, Fighting the values of Truth and Justice, in the Society

1. Introduction

As we all knows that ulama occupy a very important position in society because they has authority not only in the field of religious, social, political but also education. Educational institutions such as kuttab, mosques, Islamic school and others are the real contributions of ulama. Through established educational institutions and books that they wrote, ulama acts as translators of authoritative Islamic doctrines, and also as a bridge of transmitting religious values process especially through education.

In Islam, ulama has several religious social roles. First is as a teacher who teaches how to read the al-Quran and theory of Islam. Second is as an interpreter of Al-Quran to answer some aspects in society, and as a judge who decides cases if there is a problem among the Muslims. And the third is as preachers who preach to disseminate Islamic teachings.

Ulama as the heir of the prophets, has roles and responsibilities. One of the ulama's roles is to guide and nurture Muslims. Through that role, ulama are obliged to teach their knowledge to all the people who need it.

To teach their knowledge, ulama does at least two activities namely:

First, convey the da'wah or do religion counseling to the entire Islamic community around them through sermons and lectures in the mosques, or through the mass media.

Secondly, establishing a Islamic school to teach the knowledge to the santri. Islamic school as an Islamic educational institution is found by one or several ulama . It cause the role of ulama is very phenomenal and significant in the continuity or existence of an islamic school. Therefore, everything that applies in the Islamic

boarding school is highly dependent on the clerical leadership system of the ulama.

This pattern of Islamic boarding school leadership has been highlighted by various Islamic education and scholars. Nurcholish Madjid, for example, considers such a pattern to be undemocratic, feudal, and difficult to adhere to modern management. As a result, the education system and management of Islamic boarding school cannot compete with other educational institutions in this globalization era.

2. The Functions and Roles of Ulama

a. Definition of Ulama

Etymologically, the word ulama (علماء) is a plural form of the word عالم, which means the people who understand or have knowledge. Based on that definition, ulama are scientists of religion, humanities, social and nature.

In later development, this definition is narrowed and used only by expert of religion. Therefore, terminologically, ulama means the one who is an expert of Islam. From that definition, it can be concluded that ulama is a special person who has deep knowledge of Islam in all branches, such as tafseer, hadith, fikih, tauhid, nahwu, Saraf, dan balaghah.

In fact, if it is analyzed objectively, the terminological meaning is less precise, because it is far from its etymological meaning. Meaning in a particular sense can be used if the word ulama is used together with other words, such as nahwu ulama, fiqh ulama, ulama of tafsir, ulama of hadith, and so on. However, if word "ulama" stands alone, then its meaning must be returned to its etymological meaning, which is a knowledgeable person. [soetrisno Ismail, *Peran Ulama dalam Institusi Pendidikan Islam*, from http: 2012 published on4 Februari 2017]

However, this paper discusses the ulama based on terminological terms, ie those who have expertise in Islam.

b. Ulama As the Heir of the Prophets

In the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, there is a popular phrase that says: العلماء ورثة الأنبياء (Ulama is the Heirs of the Prophets).

If we trace the source, there is no standard Hadith (al-kutub al-tis'ah) that contains that phrase. This expression is only found in books not the standard hadiths books. Therefore, the authenticity of this phrase as the hadith of the Prophet is possible to be criticized.

The critics of the authenticity of this phrase as the hadith of the Prophet grew stronger, if the view was directed at his mukharrij, ie رواه ابن النجار (Ibn al-Najjr). In the study of 'ulm al-Yad, Ibn al-Najjr's authority was not accepted as mukharrij hadith.

Apart from «daif (weak) or mardud (rejected) of the phrase as the Prophet's hadith, that phrase became famous and have a place in the hearts of Islamic society. Therefore, it is not wrong if the phrase needs to be commented further.

Like other prophets, the Prophet Muhammad, when he died, did not leave the kingdom or the property to be inherited to his people. All he left behind was only the religion of Allah that must be nurtured, upheld, and defended.

Thus, ulama as a person who has more knowledge of Islamic needs to inherit the knowledge and continue the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad. All the behavior and actions of the ulama should not be out of the provisions contained in the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet. The consequence of his position as the heir of the Prophet Muhammad is having crucial function and responsibility.

c. Function and Role of the Ulama in the Society

In relation to the heirs of the prophets, ulama have the following functions and responsibilities:

- 1) As an announcer of Islam. With this function, scholars are obliged to convey amar ma'ruf and nahimunkar to all mankind. Their religious knowledge must be taught to their wife, children, and the whole Islamic society;
- 2) As a spiritual leader. Ulama must lead and guide Muslims in the spiritual aspect, for example in the field of aqidah, shariah, and morals;
- 3) As the bearer of God's message. ulama are obliged to keep God's message. In that sense, ulama are responsible for maintaining religion from destruction, keeping the religion from being polluted by humans, and fulfilling all the commands of God;
- 4) As truth upholder. Ulama, who know Islam better, should be the pioneers in upholding the truth. If there is an ulama who does not uphold this function, then the one who is being destroyed is himself, then followed the destruction of Muslims.

3. Perspectives of Islamic Education Institution

a. Definition of Institution of Islamic Education

Based on Big Indonesian Dictionary, institutions have several meanings: (1) institutionalization or institutions; (2) something instituted by law, custom, or tradition; (3) the building or place to held activities of associations and organizations. However, the author of this paper refers to institution established by a particular government or foundation.

The experts have different perspective in providing a definition of Islamic education. For example, M. Arifin said that Islamic education is an education system that can provide a person's ability to lead his life in accordance with the ideals of Islam, because Islamic values have animated and colored his personality.

Hasan Langgulung, as quoted by Azyumadi Azra, said that Islamic education is a process of preparing the young generation to fill the feelings, transferring knowledge and Islamic values which are harmonized with the human function to charity in the world and reap the rewards in the afterlife.

If you look at the two definitions above, it can be concluded from the definition proposed by Zakiah Daradjat who said that Islamic education is the formation of Muslim personality.

Meanwhile, Abdul Muid said that Islamic education is a process of personal formation of Muslims and Muslimah who brought change in the charity's altitude, either through oral, acts and everyday behavior.

Based on the definition of the institution and some definitions of Islamic education above, the meaning of Islamic educational institutions in this paper is an educational institution established by the government or private organization parties, which aims to form learners into human beings with a Muslim personality.

b. The style of Islamic Education Institutions

Islamic education, institutionally, appears in various forms. Beside the public institutions, there are other institutions that reflect the uniqueness of their orientation.

In the history of Islam found that around the 4th century H, there were several shades of education. They were the educational system of the theology, Sufism, philosophy, and Jurisprudence (fiqh). Institutions used by each kind of education can be through khuttub, surau and etc.

Each educational styles above has a special institution, although the common style is utilizing the mosque. This condition lasted until the year 495 H, especially after Nizam al-Mulk built the Islamic school (madrasah). Thus, Islamic school (madrasah) is an educational institution which considered as a new foundation in the implementation of Islamic education. Based on the perspective of Indonesian, Islamic educational institutions have grown rapidly, both managed

by the government and private. This institution covers all levels of education, ranging from kindergarten to College.

There are two terms in the kindergarten level, namely Raudlatul Atfal and Bustan al-Atfal. The next level is known as Islamic school (madrasah) which consists of three levels, namely Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (junior high school), and Madrasah Aliyah (senior high school). Besides Islamic school (madrasah), there is another institution called Islamic boarding school (Pondok Pesantren). The term of the higher education is known as al-Jami'ah.

4. Ulama Position in Central Modernization of Pesantren

a. Definition of Islamic boarding school (pondok pesantren)

The word "pesantren" (hut/ boarding) comes from the Arabic فندق which means hotel, dorm, house, and simple residence. This term has been known in Java and Madura before the '60s as residence made of bamboo. Thus, the cottage is meant here is a dormitory where students live, which is generally made of bamboo.

The word "pesantren" comes from the word "santri" who has prefix "pe" and suffix "an" which means the residence of the santri(student). The word "residence" here is not only in the sense of residence to stay, but also a place to gain knowledge by the students from the teacher.

From the definition of boarding school (pondok pesantren) above, it indicates that boarding school (Pondok Pesantren) was born from Indonesian culture. Hence, historically, Islamic boarding school (pondok pesantren) not only contains the sense of Islam, but also the sense of Indonesia authenticity.

b. The point of the ulama's role in islamic boarding school (pondok pesantren)

The boarding school consists of five principal elements. They are ulama, students (santri), mosques, huts, and classic books. Those five elements are the characteristic of islamic boarding schools, as well as distinguishes it with another educational institutions. Although these five elements support the existence of an Islamic boarding school (pesantren), ulama play a central role.

The existence of an ulama in the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) is like the heart for human life. The intensity of the ulama shows an authoritarian role, because ulama is a pioneer, founder, manager, caregiver, leader, and even the proprietor. Because of the ulama's stature, many Islamic boarding school (pesantren) are disbanded when the ulama is passed away. As one of the dominant elements of an Islamic boarding school (pesantren), the ulama set the rhythm of development and survival of a pesantren with expertise, depth of knowledge, charismatic, and skill. Therefore, it is uncommon to find a boarding school that does not have a good educational management, because everything lies in the wisdom and decision of the ulama.

The power and depth of the ulama's knowledge is the main capital for all the authority. All students (santri) and people, who are in the boarding school environment, must be obedient to the ulama. Ulama is known as a key figure, his words and decisions must be held by them, especially by the students (santri). In this case, ulama spend more time to educate their santri than any other activity. Therefore, clashing the ulama with the ruler is a very uncouth act because the Ulama is the role model of the people, both from the fatwa of his jurisprudence, and wisdom. [Abdul Mu'id, *Peranan Ulama dalam Pesantren Modern*, published on 4 Februari 2017]

c. Modernization of Islamic boarding school (Pondok Pesantren) management

Nowadays, there is a strong tendency of Islamic boarding school (pesantren) to consolidate institutional organization, especially on leadership and management aspect. Traditionally, the leadership of Islamic boarding school (pesantren) is held by one or two ulama who are usually the founders of the Islamic boarding school (pesantren). However, the single leadership of ulama is no longer adequate because of the development of institutional pesantren (mainly due to the diversification of education includes Islamic school and public schools).

Many Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are now developing institutional foundations, which are basically collective leadership.

In this regard, Nurcholish Madjid offers four things about Islamic boarding school (pesantren) leadership:

- 1) The charismatic leadership has shown the undemocratic aspect of Islamic boarding school (pesantren) leadership. Moreover, if there is an actions to maintain distance and sense of altitude of students (santri). This kind of leadership will lose its democratic quality;
- 2) Since the ulama's leadership is charismatic, then it naturally becomes personal. That fact implies that ulama cannot be replaced by others and is difficult to be subjugated by modern administration and management;
- 3) A scholar, besides being a religious leader, is also a traditional mobility within the feudal society. When religious feudalism is abused, it will be more dangerous than ordinary feudalism.
- 4) Because of the basic leadership of the Islamic boarding school above, technical skills factor becomes unimportant. This deficiency has become one of the causes of the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) is left behind.

What Nurcholish Madjid proposes above is a whip for Islamic boarding school (pesantren) to organize the organization and management in order to compete with other educational institutions in this modern era.

5. Ulama and its Role From Time to Time

The intellectual tradition established in the classical period, the time of the Prophet Muhammad, had determined the shape and pattern of Islamic thought. Therefore, everything that developed in the Middle Ages was more conservative. If people could feel the rapid development of Islamic education marked by the spirit of criticism, polemic in the form of papers, munazarah and teaching in Islamic school (madrasah), halqah in mosques and libraries in the preceding centuries then in this middle age people experienced conservatism in the education system. Therefore, this period is known as the taqlid period, because the excitement of jithad has become extinct.

Nevertheless, many real scholars and ulama create an important new works, although they are sometimes less prominent. These scholars often develop their creativity in the royal courts and amirs so they get fully supported by the authorities. Therefore, there is new cultural activities that can be said to be the savior of the Islamic world from total stagnation of culture and intellectual. The new activity is developed rapidly in the middle ages which has been known the existence of teaching institutions in the form of Islamic school (Madrasah). Islamic school is a place for doing teaching learning activities with the guidance of instructors or mudarris namely a professor. The huge development of education creates great ulama who mastered science, medicine and famous philosopher without leaving their islamic side. The main purpose of all forms of Islamic education is to inherit the cultural heritage from one generation to another. it is hoped that the generation will have a higher ability than the previous generation morally and intellectually.

6. Ulama Serabutan (Freelance Ulama); Conception and Reality of their Ulama Side

The word "serabutan" is derived from the Java language which means uncertain. But this vocabulary is often used in different occupations. if it is based on one's activity then freelance jobs (kerja serabutan)are jobs that tend to do anything or play a role in many jobs. This definition envisages us at the root of the tree / plant fiber, which has many branches to absorb food or simply survive to hold tree.

Eventhough the use of this language is often used for harsh workers or other domestic work done by house keeper, it does not mean that the work is a humiliating or lowly job. in fact, domestic servants, or Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI) who become workers abroad have high salary an even become a hero for the country. The word 'ulama' comes from the basic verb 'alima (knowing); transformed into the noun 'alimun (the person who knows - mufrad / singular) and' ulama (plural taksir/ irregular plural). Based on the term, ulama can be referred to the Qur'an and hadith. The most famous phrase in this regard is: 'innama yakhsya Allahu min' ibadihi al ulama 'means: indeed the most pious to Allah among His servants is the

ulama (Q.S. Fathir: 28). 'Al ulama-u waratsatu al anbiya' means: the ulama are the heirs of the prophets - hadith. In essence, taqwa is not easy to use for categorization, because the one who knows the level of one's devotion is only Allah. The words al-'ulama 'and al-'alimun are derived from the same infinitive but both have significant meanings. This difference of meaning can be observed in the Al-Qur'an when the word al-'ulama 'is mentioned only twice and the word al-'alimun mentioned 5 (five) times, and the word al-'alim as many as 13 (thirteen) time.

The word "serabutan" (freelance) is deliberately based on the activity and the noble role of a multiprofessional, professional, intelligent, morality, and mastering all fields in his islamic activity. Then, those people can be called as *ulama serabutan* (freelance ulama)

rasulullah had exemplified the activities of concept of freelance activities. consciously or not, rasulullah is a great scholar in history, religious leaders, military leaders, scholars, political leaders, economists and even great traders of his era. His Companions also inherited this kind of roles as a propagator. They do other activities such as bureaucratic figures, interpreters, teachers, writers, institutional or agency managers, philosophers, scientists, even as assistants and other activities.

The spread of Islam in indonesia conducted by the wali songo or nine guardians from java throughout the archipelago was also done in freelance jobs. They became bureaucrats, troop leaders and traders. For example, famous sunan kalijaga as puppeteer and gamelan player. His hobby become his alternative way in preaching. Besides wali sanga, there is a Sunan Serabut. He is Raden Panji Sekar (Raden Sekar Sungsang), the son of Maharaja Sari Kaburang, king of Daha (Hindu Kingdom) in South Kalimantan. He converted to Islam and married te daughter of sunan giri., in Gresik in East Java. Likewise, ulama in the present, many ulama have more than one profession. Sometimes they become politicians, bureaucrats, lawyers, writers, and businessmen. Only a few of them have a single occupation

G. The Social- Religion Roles of Ulama in the Past

The use of the word al-'ulama 'in the Qur'an always begins with an invitation to reflect deeply on the essence and existence of God and His verses both written and unwritten. The invitation is to look for causation toward things that will happen so that it can generate new theories. The word al-'alimun is accompanied by the end of an event. Al- Qur'an tells them to contemplate this incident as an evaluation in order to prevent the incident.

An example of this rank is when Al - Qur'an invites al-'alimun to consider the events experienced by the former people because of the sin they committed (see Q.S.Al-'Akkut verses 40-43). The mention of the word al-'alim in singular form only refers to Allah and not to other than Him. The use of this word is accompanied by the creation of the earth and the heavens as well as the unseen and the real things. This indicates that the emergence of human

knowledge coincided with the emergence of God's creations.

Kyai Haji Muchith Muzadi is one of the NU Ulama -made the categorization of Ulama based on the expertise as follows:

- 1) Ulama as Al- Quran experts are scholars who master the knowledge of qiraat, asbabunnuzul, nasihmansuh and so on. Interpreter ulama are part of Al- Qur'an that has the ability to explain the "point" of the Qur'an.
- 2) Ulama of Ahl al-hadith is an ulama who master the science of hadith, know and memorize many hadith, knowing its validity, asbabulwurudnya (the situation of arrival of hadith), etc.
- 3) Ulama of AhlUshlad-din is an ulama who is expert in Islamic aqidah extensively and deeply, both in terms of philosophy, logic, aqli and naqli.
- 4) Ulama as tasawuf expert isulama who master the understanding, appreciation, and practice of morality karimah, birth and soul and the methodology of achievement.
- 5) Ulama as Fiqh expert is an ulama who understands Islamic law, masters the theorem arguments, the methodology of Al- Qur'an conclusion and al-hadith, and understands the opinions of other ulama.
- 6) Other experts needed as helper to be able to understand Al- Qur'an and hadith, such as linguists, mantiq experts, historians, and so on. Referring to the meaning of ulama-both in language and the term- and categorization of ulama,

KyaiMuchitMuzadi said that during this time people experienced 'accidents of understanding'. most people think that the ulama are the one who only qualified in the field of religion-in this case include tafsir, tasawuf, aqidah, muamalah, and others. Even some people add that ulama are religious scholars who have boarding school (and have students).

Other scholars, for example: linguists, scientists, engineers, economists - that can be used as a facilitator to get better understand of Al- Qur'an and hadith and get closer to Allah, was never known as ulama, but often called Teachers or Lecturers. Even more troublesome, the term "ulama" circulating in our society, such as "double sex" do not come from one source. In Indonesian , the ulama means "one who is expert in the Islam matter or in Islamic knowledge".

While in Arabic, ulama (plural form of pious) only means "people who are knowledgeable". In this case, Imam Suprayogo in his book-The Paradigm of Islamic Scientific Development-affirms that for the time being, the Islamic knowledge (about monotheism, fiqh, akhlaq, tasawuf, arabic, and the like) has succeeded in producing various ulama designations, such as fiqh ulama , commentary ulama (tafsir ulama), Hadith ulama, tasawuf ulama, akhlaqulama, and others. However, there is never found ulama that hold knowledge other than those.

For example, there is no mathematic ulama, technical ulama, economic ulama and so on. Those who skilled in

the those field are simply called as masters of mathematics, engineering scholars, economic scholars, and so on. Experts in those fields are deemed to have no authority in Islamic discipline even though they are Muslims and also develop a science derived from the Islam. During this time, the definition of ulama which constructed by community is the person who examines fiqh, tasawuf, akhlaq, tafseer, hadith, and so on. Based on that statement, Suprayogo states that ulama should not only be limited to attached to a person who understands about fiqh, monotheism, tasawuf, and akhlaq ,but also people who know and understand about all things related to the object being studied.

If we use of the above ulama's definition, then ulama can be attached to various people who explore the science of anything, including for example medic, economics, science, engineering, and even art and culture. Furthermore, we do not need to distinguish between ulama and other scholars, because ultimately ulama and other scholars have no distinction. The use of different constructs on the same phenomenon but different objects occur in many field.

Ulama in this era is not only as the leader of the people (ummah), or the spiritual leader in the religion who holds the leadership in society who has the authority to stimulate and influence the congregation he leads, but also as judges, lawyers, expert witnesses, market inspectors, waqaf watchers, even as state treasurers. They are the professional and educated people in big city. They are involved in all areas of society that have non-specialized and undifferentiated capabilities. Nevertheless, the paradigm changed with the development of time because the character of the ulama is only seen as a spiritual teacher, or preachers in the community.

In mid era, group of ulama played an important role in unifying society, between one area and another. The role of the ulama experiences the development of a pure islamic role and as a religious person with a judicial function toward a broad social role and political elite.

They deal with duties of local taxes, irrigation, judicial and police affairs, and even become scribes and officials. Even in some cases, ulama become effective representatives to perform governor functions within their respective territories. Besides, ulama does not only play a role in religious field, but in government and social where their role become bridge of horizontal line in Islamic society. The roles of these ulama cover various aspects of life, including religious law, business, legal administration and educational institutions. In addition, ulama family often carries out independent orders as did by tribal leaders, landlords or sultans and even the military governors.

In this case the ulama are not considered as separate social classes, but rather groups that are scattered throughout the society from the lower classes to the upper levels. The position of ulama is not based on their appointment from some officials, but more personal in the form of a very strong bond between religious teachers and his followers.

For example, a priest who is considered to have a high authority of sanctity received recognition from ordinary people or a number of other scholars. Then, he is confirmed by the government. This aspect ties the people to submission and obedience to the ulama. the bond is not an office structure within the institution but a network of emotional ties under common commitment, to uphold families, religious communities and people as an essential expression of an Islamic social order .

Ulama are also recognized in their religious capacity in the form of official recognition by the authorities as mosque administrators, Teachers / Mudarris, Mufti and Judges, besides having special rights from the ruler to teach in mosques, and be responsible toward the quality education in the community.

Nakotsen explains that there are six types of teachers in Islamic education such as; Muallim, Muaddib, Mudarris, Shaykh, Ustadz, Imam, including personal teachers and muayyids (assistant to senior teachers). Muallim is called as elementary school teachers. Literally, Muaddib means civilized person or teacher which also called primary school teachers. Mudarris is a Mu-id's professional or assistant of professor who served to help students explain things- the difficult thing about the lecture given by the professor. Sheikh is a special nickname that illustrate theological academic excellence. The Imam is the highest religious teacher.

In subsequent developments, ulama have close relation with families of trader, bureaucrats and officials. Their followers are usually located in places such as in mosques and madrasas that are quite organized

7. Conclusion

From the previous explanation, it can be concluded that:

- 1) Ulama as the heir of prophet's has a function and responsibility that is quite heavy. The functions and responsibilities include: (a) broadcasters of Islam, (b) spiritual leaders of the Muslims, (c) bearers of the God's mandate, and (d) upholding the truth.
- 2) To carry out the function, some ulama have established Islamic boarding school (pesantren) to teach their knowledge formally. As the founder as well as the owner of the pesantren, the position of ulama at the pesantren is very urgent. therefore all policies and rules are in the hands of ulama.
- 3) To improve competitiveness and catch up on the education style in pesantren, it seems that the style of charismatic leadership by ulama needs to be revised. it is necessary to apply modern leadership and management To make a high quality Islamic educational institution.

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Author Profile



Dr. H. Abdul Muid, M.Pd.I was born in Wedoroanom RT.12.RW.04 Driyorejo-Gresik East Java on November 11, 1969 as the first son of twelve brothers of Mochammad Choiron and Dewi Nasuhah. Three of his brothers died when they were child, while the nine were alive as the children of Mochammad Choiron and Dewi Nasuhah who worked as farmers and Muezzin with a very mediocre economic situation in a remote village in Wedoroanom. Before he went to study in Central Java, he had worked as a freelancer, farm laborers, while shepherding his parents' goat and cattle, to help his parents. In the midst of the turmoil he muses while praying "Oh God Change Our Life with Education so that someday we will not become a farmer like our Dad and our Mother, because they are both very miserable". Because of that we finally decided to learn Islam while continuing study at junior high school.