Emancipatory Thought in Reflecting on Islamic Theology

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discuss emancipatory thinking in Islamic theology. This research method uses a qualitative type through literature study with content analysis. The results of this discussion include reasoning in traditional theological ideas, emancipatory ideas in Islam, and emancipatory paradigms for Islamic social theology. This study concludes that emancipation is basically inseparable from the theory of critical reading that has developed in the contemporary era which is associated with critical interpretation of religion. In this regard, an emancipatory divine reasoning is needed, but not fixated on defending God, but more importantly building a commitment to solving various problems of human life and social realities.

Keywords: Divinity; Emancipatory; Islam

Introduction

The idea of divinity in Islam is the legacy of Wasil Ibn 'Atha', Abu al-Hasan al-Asy'ari, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, and al-Ghazali. These experts focus on talking about the existence of God (Setio, 2020), even to the point of causing a debate between the Mu'tazilah and the Ash'ariyah. The Mu'tazilites represent the rationalists (human free choice) and the Ash'arites represent the view of God's absolute will (Muarif & Yunus, 2019). Differences of opinion between groups have led to a very long debate. In the debate, things that are forgotten are the social problems of humanity. A foundation of the emancipatory idea of divinity.

There are a number of scholars who try to see the social aspect of the idea of divinity. Among others, Dahlan, M. (2012), "Nalar Ilmu Kalam Emansipatoris," *Religi Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama.* This paper requires that the science of kalam which dwells on discussions about God to begin to be

directed to social aspects in an emancipatory manner (Dahlan, 2012). In line with that, Abas, Z. (2016), "Konstruksi Paradigmatis Pemikiran Teologi Islam Kritis," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, also requires the existence of an Islamic theological paradigm that discusses humanitarian issues critically (Abas, 2016). Hakim, L. (2010), "Konstruksi Teologi Revolusioner Hassan Hanafi," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin.* This paper describes the revolutionary thought of Hassan Hanafi to build an emancipatory Islamic theology (Hakim, 2010). Syukur, S. (2014), "Rekonstruksi Teologi Islam Kajian Kritis terhadap Usaha Pembaharuan Menuju Teologi Praktis," *Jurnal Theologia.* This paper describes the need to critically reconstruct Islamic theology as a renewal to create a more practical Islamic theology (Syukur, 2014). Jihad, Z. A. (2016), "Teologi Islam dan Solusi bagi Realitas Ketimpangan Sosial, *Jurnal Pikir: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan dan Hukum Islam.* The view in this paper requires a theological thought in Islam that is able to overcome social inequality in real life (Jihad, 2016).

Today, various views on Islamic theology seem to require a renewal from traditional theology to an emancipatory modern theology. The term emancipatory is understood as a view that requires the involvement of religion in social aspects of humanity (Dahlan, 2012). Previously, in traditional theology known as the science of monotheism, it seemed that the discussion only focused on divine issues (Setio, 2020). Mu'tazilah and Asy'ariyah as the flow of kalam in Islam have provided a reasoning foundation about the existence of God (Muarif & Yunus, 2019). Based on these two schools of kalam, one can think of an idea of an emancipatory divinity in the Islamic world. Emancipatory has the meaning of liberation, freeing mankind from various shackles in the form of economic, social, political and other shackles. Historically, the term emancipatory basically cannot be separated from the theory of critical reading that developed in the contemporary era which is associated with critical interpretation of religion.

Based on the explanation above, the discussion formula was prepared, namely the formulation of the problem, the main questions, and the purpose of the discussion (Darmalaksana, 2020a). The formulation of the problem in this discussion is how emancipatory thinking in the reflection of the idea of God is. The purpose of this discussion is to find out emancipatory thinking in the reflection of the idea of God. This discussion is expected to be useful for writers and readers.

Research Methods

This research is a qualitative type through literature study with content analysis (Darmalaksana, 2020b).

Results and Discussion
1. Traditional God Idea

Before entering the stage of emancipatory divine reasoning, it is better to know in advance about traditional divine reasoning, because the two are equally related. The idea of traditional divinity has not yet discussed the problems of human life and social life. Traditional experts formulate divinity in the speculative area, namely defending the existence of God, purifying His nature and essence (Gusmian, 2008: 5).

The Mu'tazilah seems to display a very high insight into rationality. For the Mu'tazilah, the idea of divinity must instill the belief in a causal relationship. For example, poverty that afflicts the people is better not attributed to destiny, but rather to look at the factors of cause and effect. This formulation of God's problem refers to rational arguments, not speculative beliefs like the Asy'ariyah formulation. This group is a follower of Abu Hasan Ali bin Ismai'il al-Ash'ari. According to this class, God has attributes that can be recognized from His actions. It is the same with His actions which show that He is omniscient and other attributes. This argument is the speculative thought of Asy'ari (the founder of the Ash'ariyah school) when he decided to separate himself from the Mu'tazilah who felt disappointed with the Mu'tazilah who were unsatisfactory in explaining the fate of humans (Ahmad al-Syahrastani, 2004: 150).

In the same discussion, they also debated the issue of God's power, will, and justice. The Mu'tazilah argue that God's will and power are limited, what limits it is His will, namely the freedom that has been given to humans to choose and carry out their actions. His Sunnah governs nature and creation, justice, and the obligations imposed on humans. While the Asy'ariyah argue that God has an absolute will. He can act arbitrarily and according to his will without anyone limiting and forbidding.

Mu'tazilah understand justice from a human perspective. For them, justice is closely related to rights. Therefore, justice means giving someone their rights. God has an obligation to reward those who do good and is obliged to punish those who violate His commands and prohibitions. Meanwhile, Asy'ariyah understood justice from the perspective of God's absolute will and power. Therefore, they mean justice by putting things in their place. What is meant by putting something in its place is someone who has absolute power over whatever he owns (Athaillah, 2006: 291).

This school has forgotten its real responsibility in answering empirical humanitarian issues, because it is too busy discussing divine matters. And only explain the attributes of God and all forms of shortcomings, so that the traditional divinity building only dwells on concepts or theories (nadzar)

without practice ('amal). Finally, the traditional idea of divinity is not grounded.

2. Emancipatory Ideas in Islam

The word emancipation comes from the Latin emancipatio which means liberation from power. Emancipation is a liberation movement from a person or group who wants liberation from hegemony and domination of the ruling group. The emancipation movement arose because it wanted a revolution from an imperialist to a liberal state and from a centralized to a decentralized one. The emancipation movement is rooted in a proletarian group that wants an acknowledgment of its existence (Zuhriyah, 2012).

To answer the problem of traditional divine reasoning, Hassan Hanafi answered with a specific thought, namely according to him the thought of divine science should start from the reality and human problems, then return to the original source to get a theoretical answer. Because it focuses on the reality of human problems, emancipatory scientific reasoning is no longer fixated on defending God, but more importantly building commitment to various issues of human life and social reality. Comprehensively, emancipatory reasoning does not stop at dismantling the text, but the text is used as a means of liberation. This is because the reality of domination is not only in the area of discourse, but also real and material domination (Gusmian, 2008: 4).

The idea of divinity was formulated for the benefit of humanity. On that basis, the idea of divinity does not recognize a pantheological system. Although revelation is placed as a differentiator, the Qur'an still emphasizes the use of reason, empirical aspects and intuition. In fact, Allah SWT says, so that Muslims think praxis and empirically, not mystically: "And do they not see that We drive (clouds containing) water to a barren earth, then We grow with rain water plants from which eat animals. their livestock and themselves. So do they not pay attention?" (Q.S as-Sajdah: 27).

In this verse, one of the strengths of Islamic teachings that stands out is explained, namely the existence that grows and goes along with the prophetic tradition, so that the truth of Islam becomes open along with the development of the interests of Muslims. In the process of transforming the meaning of the Qur'anic texts and Hadith as sources of divinity, experts should no longer be top-down, departing from reflection (text) to praxis (context), but on the contrary must be bottom-up, namely from bottom to top: from praxis (context) to reflection (text). With this perspective, the understanding of the context of the text of the scriptures is not only seen in the context of the structure of the text (*siyâq al-kalâm*), also not only in terms of the context in which the text was revealed (*siyâq al-tanzîl*)(Dahlan, 2012).

Prophet Muhammad's efforts to make changes need to be interpreted in an actual way, for example the Prophet Muhammad SAW changing the tradition of worshiping idols in Mecca to worshiping Allah, it should not only stop here but must be followed by new meanings according to current conditions, so that the reading of the events of the Prophet's life does not run historically, but also becomes historical. The term fusion of horizons holds the view that contemporary divinity must give birth to new insights, so that today's experts become the shapers of new history in traditions with emancipatory perspectives by understanding and building the realities of life and social humanity today (Dahlan, 2012).

3. Emancipatory Islamic Theology

The discussion about emancipatory includes two dimensions. First, material reality, namely a model of religious interpretation that questions the ideology of hegemony (power) which is based on real and material life or questions hegemony which is based on empirical reality. Second, a transformative vision, namely a model of religious interpretation that is committed to structural changes, as well as hegemonic relations in the relationship between the giver and receiver of narrative (ulama-ummah) and political relations (ruler-people) (Verdiansyah, 2004: 176).

Emancipatory Islam is present in paradigms and approaches that are more liberating and interact directly with human problems. There are three things that are conveyed in emancipatory Islam. First, providing a new perspective on the text and trying to see the text from the perspective of the context and human problems, because the text was actually born from the context and socio-culture of the people of its time.

Second, placing humans as the subject of religious interpretation. Aims to shorten the distance between text and reality. Wanting to produce a religious understanding that is presented in the midst of society so far departs from a text which is then revealed to be a legal product in order to give legal status to reality. Third, give greater attention to humanitarian issues than to theological issues. Emancipatory Islam wants to divert religious attention from the problems of the sky (theocentrism) to the real problems faced by humans (anthropocentrism). The emphasis is on the practical aspect so that religion is not only understood as ritualism but also liberates society from all oppression (Misrawi, 2004: 117).

Emancipatory Islam approaches the text with the framework of social reality, conducts critical reflection on social problems faced by society, then develops change strategies that are put into practice in the form of (theoretical) change action. Emancipatory Islam is expected to contribute to understanding the historical text of the extent to which it can bring about

changes to the rules of practice. This is in line with the view that the privilege of revelation is not because it comes from God alone, but it can carry a mission of justice, pluralism, liberation, humanity and civility. Emancipatory education can be said as an education that plays a role in liberating students from ignorance, backwardness, bondage, misguidance and disobedience.

The leaders have had a lot of influence on the basic ideas of emancipatory Islamic education, then gave birth to the basic principles as helpers and providers of nobility for students so that positive-constructive changes actually occur in them, including: Openness Al-Qur'an. What is meant is a process of interpretation that is integrated with social problems. So that education is no longer considered to be less responsive which results in such as high dropout rates, cases of corruption, poverty, and others; Justice. Justice is a basic principle to treat others equally, fairly, and non-discriminatoryly; Social transformation. Since religion comes directly from Allah, of course, it is important to function for the liberation of the physical, mind, and human dignity in order to provide welfare for all people; Humanity. This basic principle functions to present a dimension where there is no difference between humans in raising wealth and dignity; and pluralism. Pluralism must be understood as true ties in the bonds of civility, namely genuine engagement of diversity within the bound of civility (Syihabuddin, 2019).

4. The Emancipatory Paradigm for Islamic Social Theology

The emancipatory paradigm is a paradigm that has a close relationship with the role of education. And it also means in other terms that the emancipatory paradigm is a commitment to human problems, not to sacred texts as theocentric or ideological interpretations. The sacred texts here focus on moral messages, so they are not understood as laws but as agents of liberation and enlightenment. In theorizing the transformation of the transformative character of emancipatory interpretation, it will be defined as the basis for the mission of emancipatory interpretation in the form of liberation actions. Integrally, the interpretation of this model does not stop at dismantling the text, by making the text a vehicle for liberation, because the reality of domination is not only discourse but also real and material domination (Agustina et al., 2020).

Islam and emancipation have a close relation paradigm, one is the identity of the other, and vice versa emancipation is the Islamic revolution movement itself. Islam is a religion that adheres to egalitarian and human quality that human plurality is God's grace, not a difference in degree or

gender. However, all are the same, the only difference is the quality of dedication to the individual and social.

The emancipatory paradigm provides an explanation of what if, liberation and emancipation movements where humans cannot submit to other humans, apart from God's truth and humans must reject various forms of injustice and fight for the truth. Human oppression has often occurred during the history of human life, because human nature tends to have a prideful nature (Zuhriyah, 2012).

Conclusion

The idea of divinity needs to be reformulated from traditional reasoning to emancipatory reasoning. Traditional divine reasoning is irrelevant because it is unable to solve the problems of human life, on the contrary it only defends God and purifies Him. Meanwhile, emancipatory reasoning is needed to answer the problems of human life and social humanity today. From all the explanations above, emancipatory in Islam becomes important and meaningful. At least, there are several factors that became the basis for the birth of emancipatory Islam. First, Islam is a religion capable of presenting a true human dimension. Second, Islam encourages freedom of thought and dynamic constructive dialogue. Third, Islam is a religion that encourages change and freedom. Instead, there have been several attempts to build emancipatory strategies in Islamic learning. First, pay attention to religion into religiosity. Second, deepen the context of the development of social problems. Third, emphasize the formation of attitudes. Then, there will be the creation of emancipatory Islam in the sense of God, although sometimes it is still difficult to put it into the life of human problems. It is hoped that this research has benefits for the development of Islamic treasures. This research has limitations, so a more in-depth study is needed.

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