

Wahhabi's Influence on ISIS Ideology in Indonesia: A Study on Aman Abdurrahman's Theological Thoughts

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Abstract—This article discusses the influence of Wahhabi's ideology on Aman Abdurrahman's theological thoughts and da'wa as an ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) leader in Indonesia. The primary data were obtained from the book 'Aqidah of the Prophets and Apostles' and 'Al-Urwah al Wutsqa' compiled by Aman Abdurrahman and other library materials. As a content analysis, all primary sources were read profoundly to identify Aman Abdurrahman's theological thoughts. His thoughts were then analyzed by comparing them with Wahabi's ideology and their connection with his movement in ISIS. The study revealed that Wahhabi's ideology influenced strongly Aman Abdurrahman's thoughts. Wahabi's influence was evidenced by the references he used, the concept of faith and *kufr*, and their implications in the words and deeds of a Muslim. This study strengthened the finding of Moh. Sholehuddin's previous research that indicated the Wahhabism influence on radical ideology in Indonesia.

Keywords— Wahhabism, terrorism, Islamic theology, ISIS

I. INTRODUCTION

The ideology of Wahhabi was developed by Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703-1792), a scholar of Nejd, Saudi Arabia. This ideology stemmed from the thoughts of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taimiyah. Wahhabi is a puritan's movement that rejects all forms of polytheism and heresy, and invites Muslims to return to the face of Islamic Salaf as practiced by the Prophet, Companions, and Tabiin. The legal system must be based and refer to the Qur'an and Sunnah as understood and practiced by the salaf [1].

Wahhabism became the ideology of Muhammad ibn Su'ud as a figure of the founding of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With the full support of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism continued to be spread throughout the Islamic world, including in Indonesia [1]. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is considered as a representation of Islamic government by making the Qur'an and Sunnah as the basis of the state. According to the Wahabi, a government that was not based on the Qur'an is considered a government of the *Thagut*.

As a puritanism movement, Wahhabi was categorized as a radical ideology which was the main factor leading the birth of radicalism. Islamic radicalism certainly cannot be separated

from the fundamental doctrine adopted by a person and has the potential to become an ideology for him, although, as stated by Arifin and Bachtiar, this fundamental doctrine does not always lead to radicalism. According to Mannheim, a radical ideology occurs because of the utopian mind set where ideals are not materialized. As a result, it will destroy a part or all of the current order [1, p. 173]

The emergence of Islamic radicalism, according to Nurjannah, was triggered by three factors at once, namely social, religious, and psychological [3]. Social factors emerged due to a sense of injustice in social, economic and political fields. Religious factors related to da'wa, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, and jihad were misunderstood because of a single and exclusive interpretation misused to legitimize acts of violence. This religious factor also shaped mal-attitude and behavior that was doing the prohibitions or avoiding the orders/commands. While Asrori pointed out three factors that triggered radicalism in Indonesia, namely the development of Islam in the global world, the spread of Wahhabism, and the poverty [4]. Actually, Nurjannah and Asrori have similarities in two things, namely social factors and religious understanding. However, he only mentioned the spread of Wahhabism, but did not explain what it meant, especially what was related to theological and *fiqhiah* aspects.

One of the movements with a radical ideology was the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS). It has emerged since 2013 [5, p. 6]. In March 2014, several Indonesian radical Islamic groups openly expressed support for ISIS. Among these groups was the *Tauhid Wal Jihad* (TWJ) led by Aman Abdurrahman [5, pp. 18-19]. He was identified as Amir of ISIS Indonesia [5], [6]. Although still in detention, Abdurrahman had a major role in three acts of terrorism in Indonesia, namely a homemade bomb explosion in Depok in 2004, military training in Aceh Besar in 2006, and Thamrin bomb in 2016 [7, pp. 54-55].

His real name is Oman Rochman, but he was well known as Abu Sulaiman, the father of his son, Sulaiman. He was born in Cimalaka, Sumedang on January 5, 1972. He got his education from the elementary school to the college. He worked as a coordinator of the dai; a tutor of tahfiz al-Qur'an at a *pesantren* and Islamic college in Jakarta and Bogor.

Abdurrahman wrote more than 26 titles of books or scientific articles; and translated 63 titles of Islamic books. In addition, he also wrote several lectures about Islam both inside and outside the prison. His journey in the jihadist group included the establishment of *Tawhid wa Jihad* organization (2004), ISIS Indonesia (2014), and being involved in the *Jamaah Anshar Tauhid* (JAT) and *Jamaah Anshar Daulah* (JAD) [4, p. 41-56]. Abdurrahman's jihad journey received a sharp criticism from Abu Jihad al-Indunisy or Sofyan Sauri, a conscious terrorist ex-convict. Al-Indunisy thought he was a stowaway in the global jihad, withdrew from the jihad program in Aceh, and even questioned his status as a cleric [6, pp. 61-105].

The propaganda of ISIS which stated that all parties or countries that did not use God's law were polytheists and infidels [5, pp. 9-11] resembled the theology of Wahhabism [8]. Some similarities in theological understanding become interesting to study in order to know whether there is a relationship between the two. It was also highlighted by Sholehuddin's research on *Laskar Jihad* led by Ja'far Umar Thalib showing that this movement was inspired by Wahhabi's ideology [9, p. 64]. The thoughts and movements of *Laskar Jihad* have in common with what Abdurrahman had done.

This study aimed to reveal the influence of Wahhabi's theology on Abdurrahman's thoughts and actions as the Amir of ISIS Indonesia. Abu Jihad al-Indunisy once wrote a book about Aman Abdurrahman's ideology [6] but did not specifically unveil the theological aspects. Likewise, Ahsanil Mustofa only highlighted Abdurrahman's concept of *Thagut* using a semantic congenital study [7]. Both of these studies and several other writings did not find the influence of Wahhabi's ideology in the ISIS theology and movement. The findings of the study become important input for the government and society to take strategic steps to stem the Wahhabi's theology to spread widely over the religious groups in Indonesia.

II. METHODS

This is a library research whose were taken from books, articles, or lectures written by Aman Abdurrahman as primary sources, especially the article entitled *Al-Urwah al Wutsqa* and a collection of writings entitled *Aqidah of the Prophets and Apostles*. Both books have been printed for personal use and obtained from documents belonging to official Indonesian government institutions. Other sources in the form of library materials are related to the teachings of Wahhabi as the object of this research.

To analyze the collected data, the author used a theological approach, specifically Ash'ariyah theology to see the ideological aspects. This was conducted by looking for other references to compare with, and to identify the basis for conveying his views. In addition, I also tried to understand theological discourse that is developing in the Islamic world.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section describes at a glance about Abdurrahman as a leader of ISIS in Indonesia. Furthermore, it will elaborate the theological view adopted by Abdurrahman and its implications for the Islamic political concepts and actions of ISIS in

Indonesia. The next part, the theological and semantic analysis of Aman Abdurrahman's thinking and the influence of Wahhabi understanding in it will be revealed.

A. Aman Abdurrahman's Theological Thoughts

Abdurrahman's theology was specifically included in his writings *Al 'Urwah al Wutsqa* that was published on the blog www.millahibrahim.wordpress.com. In his preamble, Abdurrahman said that this was a summary of what we believed in the problem of monotheism in the form of differences among terms before and after *Hujjah*. [10] In addition, his thoughts have also been compiled in the book entitled *Aqidah of the Prophets and Apostles*. [11] Here are the main points of Abdurrahman's theology:

• The Essence of Islam Religion

In explaining the nature of Islam, Abdurrahman said someone should surrender to Allah (QS. 2:112, 31: 22), avoid himself from *thagut* (QS. 2: 256, 16: 36), disengage himself from worshipping other than Allah, idolize polytheists, and show hostility to idolaters except to believe in Allah (QS. 60: 4, 16: 36). The religion that Allah acknowledges is Islam and that the law belongs to Allah (QS. 3: 85, 12: 76, and 6: 121). The honor of a Muslim's blood will be maintained if he truly carries out two sentences of creed and worships only to Allah as narrated by Bukhari no. 25 and Muslim 22.

After explaining several ulama's arguments and opinions about Islam, Abdurrahman stated that the essence of Islam was to make all worship only addressed to Allah, including the obedient to the *tasyri* which is the reconciliation of the Allah's laws. If the law rests against other than Allah including idolatry, such act, according to Abdurrahman, must be the same as those of Christians who are called polytheists because they follow the laws made by monks and pastors who have separated the law of God as where in QS. Al Taubah: 31 [6, pp. 7-9].

• The term Mushrik before the Hujjah

Abdurrahman considers that the person who committed a great act of shirk or kufr before the revelation of the Quran was still considered polytheistic or infidel. He postulates with several verses of the Qur'an, like QS. Al Taubah: 6, 113, al A'raf: 173 and al An'am: 137. They also belonged to unbelievers, such as Bilqis disbelief in QS. Al Naml: 23-24. This view is also supported by the hadith and the views of scholars [10, pp. 12-18].

• Kafir After the Hujjah

According to Abdurrahman, the person who committed shirk after the revelation, he was an idolatrous kafir, while a Muslim did great shirk then he is an idolatrous apostate. This is worse than the original paganism in accordance with the ijmak ulama [10, p. 19] sourced from QS. Al Maidah: 5 and al Baqarah: 89 as well as some views of scholars [10, pp. 19-20]. After the revelation was understood as *hujjah*. This specifically meant that the Quran had already been accepted by the Prophet Muhammad through revelation, no reasons for human beings not to believe in Allah. This was the basis of monotheism. The revelation of the Quran was not intended individually to Muhammad SAW himself, but it was for all humankind [10,

p. 21].

- *There is no Udzur due to the reasons of Jahil, Takwil, Ijtihad, and Taqlid in Shirk Akbar*

Abdurrahman did not accept all reasons, including the absence of knowledge, different interpretation or takwil, and understanding of ijtihad as well as the reason of taqlid in carrying out great shirk to not be punished as polytheists and pagans. This is based on QS. Al A'raf: 172-174.

Based on this view, Abdurrahman explained the logical consequences of one's faith status and how to interact with it. The concept of monotheism built by Abdurrahman was based on the word of God in QS. Al Baqarah: 256. This verse is an explanation of the sentence of monotheism *laa illaaha illallaah*. In that verse, monotheism contains negation and affirmation. The first is negating the existence of new *Thagut* gods; and the latter is affirming that God is the only God [11, p. 7]. In other words, the core concept of monotheism or faith is to deny the existence of gods other than Allah. To deny gods other than Allah is kufr to the *thagut* who must fulfill the following elements [11, pp. 23–37] [10, pp. 49–59]:

- Believing and worshipping Allah n worshipping other than *thagut*. One form of worship, according to Abdurrahman, is to comply with the law of God in all aspects of life, including in the state. If the state does not obey God's law, it is *thagut* and people who submit to such a state are *polytheists thagut*;
- Leaving and escaping the *thagut*. In relation to the *thagut* state, someone has not been said to a monotheist if he does not escape himself from the *thagut*. If he still admits the *Thagut* state then he is a polytheist;
- Hating the *thagut*. The form of kufr to the *thagut* is to hate him and express hatred towards him.
- Declaring *thagut's* follower the *thagut*. People who work for the state or people who are subject to the laws of the *thagut* country must be declared as infidels. That is, if you want to be called a Muslim, you have to dare to deny or declare they are the infidels.
- Being hostile citizens of the *thagut* state. Besides hating and disbelieving the *thagut*, one should express his hostility and war against the *thagut*.

After declaring kufr to the *thagut* verbally and showing a negation of another gods, a new Muslim can proceed to the affirmation of faith in Allah and all the consequences. The faith in Allah must include the following [10, pp. 60–63].

- Believing in Allah that He is the only God who has the right to be worshiped. One of the acts of worship is to comply with by the law of God, and complying with other laws is considered shirk and kafir to Allah.
- Purifying all kinds of worship of Allah from any *thagut*. All laws of human reason are considered as pagan law and must not be obeyed.
- Disclaiming any worship of other gods. Muslims who run the pillars of Islam everyday cannot be called as people who deny worship other than Allah because they comply with humans' law.

- Loving and loyal to people of Tawhid, who live the law of God. They are those who reject all forms of man-made rules and laws in a country.

In Abdurrahman's view, there were consequences of this ideology to be highlighted. The democratic system is a *thagut* system that Muslims should deny [11, pp. 99-115] because the loyalty to the *thagut* government is polytheism [11, pp. 131-137]. Those who are loyal to the *thagut* will lose their rights, such as, the guardianship and protection, greeting and pray [11, pp. 259-263], getting the glory [11, pp. 265-266], and inheritance of wealth [11, pp. 266-268].

B. *The Influence of Wahabi Ideology on Aman Abdurrahman's Theological Thought*

The influence of Wahhabism on Abdurrahman's theological thought can be seen in his argument which always referred to Wahhab's books and Nejd scholars. Likewise, with the scholars who became Wahabi references such as Ibn Qayyim al Jawziyah and Ibn Taimiyah, Abdurrahman declared the infidels were people who do not believe in one God that is Allah, and worship not only to Allah. This claim also included those who not know or to whom da'wa did not reach [12, pp. 897–898]. Those who worship other than Allah besides worshipping Allah, they were not Muslims [13, p. 417]. For Abdurrahman, worship included following the law of Allah, and following man-made law was also worshipping other than Allah. It is clear that Abdurrahman cited the concept of kufr to *thagut* and belief in Allah [15, p. 308]

Other figures who became the main reference for Abdurrahman were Wahabi followers, such as Su'ud ibn Abd al Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn Su'ud [14], Abdurrahman ibn Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab [15, p. 380], [16], Sulaiman ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhab [17], Abd al Latif ibn Abdirrahman ibn Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1295-1292H), [18] [19], Ishaq ibn Abdurrahman, [20] Abdullah ibn Abdurrahman Abu Buthain (1282H), [21] [22], Hamd ibn Nashr ibn Utsman (1160- 1226H) [25], Sulaiman ibn Sahman (1166-1349H), [26], Abu Zubair al Syanqithi [27], Al Barbahari (329H), [28], Mahmud Syukri al Aluusi, [29], and others.

Abdurrahman's theology was built in accordance with the ideology taught by Wahhab and his followers. Abdurrahman ignored different scholars in expressing his views. Abdurrahman's ideology has similarities to the ideology of Ja'far Umar Thalib as the leader of the Laskar Jihad movement that was also inspired by Wahhabism. In addition, both of them graduated from the same educational institution identified as the place for the spread of Wahhabism in Indonesia. [9]

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Wahabi's ideology greatly influenced Abdurrahman's thoughts. This ideology contributed to his behavior and attitude towards the Muslim community in Indonesia. Even, he insisted to apply the law of God in Indonesian government and state.

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