



Article History

Submitted:

24-06-2018

Reviewed:

12-08-2018

Aproved:

12-09-2018



Kiai Muhaimin and His Outreach Activity of Dakwah for Promoting Moderation and Preventing Conflict: Seeding Pluralism vis-a-vis Preaching Religion

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Abstract

Dakwah (English: Preaching) by Kiai (English: Javanese terminology referring to a Muslim cleric) commonly takes place in mosques, Islamic Boarding Schools, Majelis Taklim, or other Islamic religious forums. The dakwah is practiced mostly by inviting adherents of Islam to be a truly Muslim (Muslim Kaffah), or evoking non-Muslims to convert their religion into Islam for the sake of their salvation in the hereafter. However, a kiai in Yogyakarta who is familiarly called Kiai Muhaimin has practiced a unique style of dakwah. He preaches Islam not only in his in-group communities and habitual places but also in churches and other religious places of worship. His dakwah thus has been reaching a wide range of places of worship of besides Islamic ones. He did not call for non-Muslims to convert to Islam. Rather, he has promoted tolerance and a better understanding of pluralism. Likewise, he aims his religious standpoints on Islam in Muslim communities for seeding actual pluralism among Muslims. He has formulated a conceptual framework of Islamic moderate dakwah as a philosophical basis for building tolerance and coexistence in Indonesian multicultural society and socio-religious life. Through the organization he established, i.e., FPUB (Interfaith Brotherhood Forum), he put into practice such an Islamic moderation.

Keywords: *Kiai Muhaimin, dakwah, Islamic Moderation, Pluralism.*

Dakwah yang dilakukan oleh seorang Kiai biasanya dilangsungkan di Masjid, Pondok Pesantren, Majelis Taklim, atau forum keagamaan Islam lainnya. Kegiatan dakwahnya dalam banyak kasus dilakukan dengan menyerukan pengikut Islam supaya menjadi Muslim yang sempurna (Muslim Kaffah), dan membangkitkan mereka yang tidak menganut Islam agar tertarik masuk Islam demi keselamatan mereka di akhirat. Namun, dakwah semacam itu tidak berlaku jika kita melihat praktik dakwah yang ditunjukkan oleh seorang Kiai dari Yogyakarta, yang akrab dipanggil sebagai Kiai Muhaimin. Dia tidak hanya mengajarkan Islam di komunitasnya dan tempat-tempat lazimnya dakwah Islam, tetapi juga di gereja-gereja dan tempat ibadah lainnya. Dakwahnya telah menjangkau beberapa tempat ibadah selain Islam. Dia tidak mendakwahi non-Muslim agar tertarik melakukan konversi menjadi Muslim, tetapi justru mempromosikan toleransi dan pemahaman pluralisme. Demikian juga, pernyataan religiusnya tentang Islam di komunitas Muslim adalah untuk menumbuhkan pluralisme aktual di kalangan umat Islam. Dia telah merumuskan kerangka konseptual bagi dakwah moderat dalam Islam sebagai dasar filosofis untuk membangun

toleransi dan koeksistensi dalam masyarakat multikultural dan kehidupan sosial keagamaan di Indonesia, seperti yang dilakukannya melalui organisasi yang ia dirikan, yaitu FPUB (Forum Persaudaraan Umat Beragama).

Kata kunci: *Kiai Mubaimin, Dakwah, Moderasi Islam, Pluralisme*

URL: <http://e-journal.iainpekalongan.ac.id/index.php/Religia/article/view/1505>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.28918/religia.v21i2.1505>

INTRODUCTION

The identity of “Islam as a missionary religion” is one of the most obvious depiction of Islam which no one can deny. It could be referred into the discourse on *dakwah* in Islam that has been emerging since the early days of Islamic history up today. The discussion covers Qur'an verses's talks on *dakwah*.

In certain paragraphs of the Qur'an, among others, the law on carrying out *da'wah* is proportionally discussed. As an example, it can be reviewed in the interpretation of paragraph 104 of Ali 'Imran. Al-Qurtubi's interpretation (*al-Jāmi' li Abkām al-Qur'ān*) explains the word *minkum* here as the expression of showing a portion (*li al-tab'id*). It means that the missionary is an obligation to be performed merely by the clerics, not wholly communities. In this way, the interpreter drew legal conclusions that the task of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* is *farḍu kifāyah* (Qurtūbi 1993; 106). Ibn Kašīr explained more detail that every Muslim is obliged to preach, but specifically the task is taken care of by a group called as *ulama'* (Kašīr 1999; 390).

In cultural context, Indonesian Muslim used to refer to the *ulama'* as *kiai*. Although the term *kiai* has been very popular in Indonesian society, but it was first introduced by Geertz in 1960 on an academic context through his anthropological study to describe the identity of *ulama'* in social life of Indonesian Muslim societies (Geertz 1981). Meanwhile, Horikoshi consistently distinguished the use of the term *kiai* from *ulama'* due to the formal function each of both has played. Ulama' do more administrative functions, while *kiai* tend to act on a cultural level (Horikoshi 1987).

Abdul Muhaimin, as a *kiai*, in the discourse of proselytizing views that this missionary activity will not bring benefit universally to humanity and even has the potential to spark conflict, if it is only interpreted as an activity or activity invites someone or a group of people to do good and prevent evil, either through verbal or written in order to create personal and social changes in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, or in other languages, invites to embrace Islam perfectly.

According to him, *dakwah* must be interpreted as an activity to invite someone or group of people to respect, honor and cooperate with each other to create harmony and peace in the life of society, nation and state in a frame of faith in God Almighty. So if there is an act of *dakwah* by inviting people into good or forbidding them from the abomination but in the same time carrying out in ways that discriminate and humiliate any other party, it is not regarded as a *dakwah* commanded by the Shari'ah. Likewise, Shari'a has never commanded to perform *dakwa* in the way of encouraging hatred and constructing clash among societies and nation.

It has been common sense of Muslim to understand that *dakwah* is only permitted to be carried out in central places of Muslim community, such as mosques, *majlis taklim*, *majlis dzikir*, Islamic boarding schools, Islamic institutions, and some others. Nevertheless, Kiai Muhaimin understands that *dakwah* need to be performed upon non-Muslims communities aimed to build tolerance and coexistence among Muslims and non Muslim communities. Though, it does not mean ruling out *dakwah* from the Muslim community. That is why in every Christmas, he is always busier than priests (*pastur* and *romo*) because he has to give sermons (*dakwah*) in various churches located in Yogyakarta.

The above views and activities of Kiai Muhaimin's *dakwah* do not certainly appear in empty context. Its difference from the common *dakwah* which is understood and practiced by Islamic religious leaders has placed Kiai Muhaimin as a cleric who has a revolutionary vision on *dakwah*, and in the same time it indicates the paradox within him when he understands and practices the *dakwah* between preaching Islamic doctrines on one side and spreading pluralism on the other side. The interface of *dakwah* understood by Kiai Muhaimin as a preacher of Islamic teachings and as a propagator of pluralism shows an interesting aspect to be studied academically.

Thus, this research is dedicated to answering the questions: how did Kiai Muhaimin seed the pluralism which principally recognizing the truth of religion existence other than Islam while as a *Kiai* he preached about the absolute truth of Islam as religion? How did he realize the vision of his *dakwah*, namely the building of a tolerant and harmonious society in the frame of pluralism in Indonesian public life? And how did he build an integrated concept of *dakwah* and pluralism as the ideology for his *dakwah's* activity?

This study uses qualitative methods. I obtained primary data through interviews, observations, and document studies in which relevant to the study. I conducted interviews to Kiai Muhaimin. I did observations on his activities and places, and I did also review toward published documents which providing any information about him. The interdisciplinary approach used in this study is *dakwah* studies, and conflict resolution.

Theoretical debate on *dakwah* must be referred on terms of language, which *dakwah* comes from Arabic, i.e. *da`â, yad`û* means call, invitation, and appeal. In Indonesian, the word *dakwah* has become one of the standard vocabularies in the Indonesian dictionary (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1990; 181). The term *dakwah* is expressed by the Qur'an in various forms as much as 211 times (Bâqî 1992; 326). The analysis of these verses results a thesis that the used term of *dakwah* in the Qur'an has a broader meaning than the meaning of *dakwah* which is often used by Muslims. The measure of the success *dakwah* is when the second party who is invited giving a positive response, namely to come or fulfill the invitation. So, *dakwah* contains the contents of active and challenging meaning, in contrast to the meaning of *tabligh* which means to convey. The measure of a *mubaligh* success is when he succeeds in conveying the message of Islam and its message, while the response of the community is not his responsibility (Mubarak 2002; 19). These all meanings of *dakwah* need to be examined in the other context. *Dakwah* practices by Kiai Muhaimin provide a new paradigm of persisting *dakwah*.

Then, conflict resolution theory used here is Johan Galtung's theory (1969: 167-191) which argued that the occurrence of conflict in the midst of social life is often motivated by factors of differences in the interests of individuals and groups. These interests are initially derived from certain perceptions held by one individual to different individuals, certain groups towards other groups, and one group to another. Another theory derived from phenomenological research concluded that conflict can be resolved by interreligious dialogue within the framework of finding peace agreements and building mutual understanding through various joint social activities (Arsy 2013: xxxi), through a strategy of revitalizing local wisdom, forums of harmony between religions, and socializing the principle of tolerance under government policy region (Arsy 2013: xxxii), and massive-coordinated efforts made by religious leaders by campaigning for a peaceful life (Arsy 2013: xxxiii).

DISCUSSION

A. Brief Biography

The role model of the Muslim community who is familiarly called Kiai Muhaimin was born in Kotagede, Yogyakarta, 65 years ago, precisely on March 13, 1953. Since childhood, he was already attached to Islamic religious education. His parents paid great attention to the religious education of his sons. The reason is, he was, only allowed to get an Islamic education, and even he never received formal education.

Islamic religious education adopted by Kiai Muhaimin is an Islamic religious education that is identical to Javanese natives, namely *Pondok Pesantren*. In his teenage years,

young Muhaimin attended *Pondok Pesantren Al-Munawwir* Krapyak Yogyakarta. He got a lot of inspiration in understanding Islam and preaching Islam under the supervision and education of KH. Ali Ma'shoem. Uniquely, even though in his lifetime he had never received formal education and only received non-formal Islamic education in *Pondok Pesantren*, his thoughts and actions actually showed the opposite. His figure is more known from his thought and activity to seed pluralism rather than his figure as *kiai*.

Kiai Abdul Muhaimin, has long been known as a figure of religious harmony in Indonesia. In 1997, along with dozens of other religious leaders, he established a dialogue forum to establish inter-religious harmony. Exactly, March 24, 1997, with 70 other religious leaders, Kiai Muhaimin declared the establishment of *Forum Persaudaraan Umat Beriman* (FPUB). The declaration was conducted at his pesantren, *Nurul Ummabat*. At the time, no one dared to be the place of the FPUB declaration. The establishment of FPUB was motivated by the existence of violence in the name of religion. Since he was active in FPUB, Kiai Muhaimin was often invited to lecture in churches, including during Christmas celebrations. Through various humanitarian activities that he conducted, Kiai Muhaimin had a broader mission. He seeks to weave interfaith peace in the frame of national diversity (Sarwindaningrum 2011).

Since the 1990s, this Caretaker of *Pondok Pesantren Nurul Ummabat* Kotagede Yogyakarta opened his house's door for all religious followers who wanted to know the life of Muslim society in Indonesia. In the guest book, I found several guests such as Buddhists, Catholics, Christians, and Hindus, whether from within Indonesia and overseas who had visited and conducted various interfaith activities.

Chika Yoshida, a Buddhist student from Chiba University, Japan, had lived at Nurul Ummabat for 1.5 months. "The only Muslim community in the world that globalization cannot penetrate into is *pesantren* community", Yoshida wrote in the guest book. This Kiai Muhaimin's *pesantren* has been visited by guests from over 70 countries, including the Palestinian religious community, US President Barack Obama's envoy, and Buddhist monks. They leave a positive impression.

Kiai Muhaimin said, opening the door of his Islamic boarding school is an effort to provide a way for people of different religions to learn from each other and to accept each other. Awareness of diversity grows from Muhaimin's childhood. Born into the Nahdlatul Ulama's (NU) family and life in the Muhammadiyah majority's community, Muhaimin has known differences since childhood. "I always did fasting and celebrating Eid in different date from my neighbors. However, for me, the difference is actually beautiful because the neighbors also respect us," he said.

Up to now, Kiai Muhaimin is still active as the FPUB's Coordinator who continues to campaign for peace in diversity. His work resulted in an award awarded to him, namely the Tasrif Award and the Award from Sultan Hamengku Buwono X as the Kiai of Cultural Preserver. While in addition to being active in FPUB, he also received job orders in several other similar organizations such as the Chair of the Toya Mili Consortium, Chair of the Palm Consortium, Chair of the Indonesia Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP), the Impulse Board of Trustees, and several positions in other non-profit organizations.

B. Pluralism and Islam; An Integrative Concept

Pluralism comes from two words "plural" and "ism", plural which means plural (many), whereas "ism" means understanding. So pluralism is an understanding or theory that assumes that reality consists of many substances (Pius 1994: 604). Pluralism is also often used to designate the reality of social diversity and at the same time become a principle of diversity. Pluralism here is the idea of Kiai Muhaimin in addressing the plurality of Indonesian people with various differences including differences in culture, religion, ethnicity, language, skin color and ideologies from one human to another.

The historical record proved that the Indonesian nation began from the Majapahit, Mataram, Sriwijaya, Islamic kingdoms of Demak and until the birth of Indonesia, was a nation that is diverse in culture, ethnicity, language, and faith. Society has believed in many beliefs and is considered as influential in his life, namely animism, dynamism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam came by bringing teachings of liberation, enlightenment has no caste differences, and so Islam is easily accepted and spread throughout the archipelago (Indonesia) while on the other hand the Hindu-Buddhist community has colored the culture of society at that time. From this interface between cultures that have developed in the community with new cultures that come later, among them are unavoidable in the sense that the unification of culture or with other languages both complement each other. Humans cannot be religious without culture, because culture is human creativity which can be a form of expression of diversity (Masdar 1998: 139).

Dakwah which campaigns for harmony in diversity within the umbrella of religious pluralism which is carried out by Kiai Muhaimin is certainly not without a conceptual framework that is used as a foothold. Like the *ulama'* who must base their actions on the *shara's* arguments, so did Kiai Muhaimin in his pluralism *dakwah*. He made a concept that was relevant between Islam and pluralism as a paradigm that became a theoretical foundation in preaching pluralism in the midst of national diversity (multicultural society and cultural diversity).

C. Takwa as the Paradigm of Pluralism

Muslims will be great when they are able to show that piety is not just a personal character, but also has very broad social implications. Often in sermons, recitation, etc., the verse is revealed “*yā ayyuballaḥīna āmanut-taqullāha haqqa tuqātib*” (QS 3:102). But unfortunately the verse is only cut to that point, and is not read in full. So when we feel to be the most pious, then we verdicts other people as *kafir*, heretical, apostate, and so forth.

In fact, piety has a very humanistic, very ethical, and highly cultural social character. The Qur'an (QS 3: 103-104) recommends “*wa'tasimū bi hablillāhi jamī'a walā tafarraquū*. That is the social character of *haqqa tuqātib*. Those who identified as *tamūtunna illā wa antum-muslimūn* are they who do *wa'tasimū bi hablillāhi jamī'aw-walā tafarraquū*, which does not cause conflict and chaos. If this verse is understood in the light of Qur'anic interpretation, so *maḥmū mukhalaḥ* of the sentence *walā tafarraquū* is the obligatory to honor and help each other.

This kind of cohesiveness is now lost. What is happening now, when there are differences of opinion, then other people (who are different) are removed. In fact he claims to be the one who feels entitled to enter heaven, and the others go to hell (Interview with Kiai Muhaimin on May 4 2015)

Thus piety should be understood not only in the personal dimension, but socially it should be used as a foundation for creating the building of a life of nation and state which is peaceful in diverse social spaces, as well as the multicultural character of the Indonesian nation (different languages, ethnicities and religions or beliefs). So the parameters for the quality of one's piety are not sufficiently measured in terms of their personalities, but it requires a social domain in which they build a multicultural social interaction. Because piety is the basis for building how it responds to diversity in a frame of peace and tolerance.

D. Islamic Universalism as the Roof of Pluralism

Today's phenomenon of Islam is that Islam is built in a single format. The definition of a single format here is including formalistic-symbolic side of religious practices and understandings of religious doctrine. In religious practice for example, the devotion of a Muslim is not infrequently measured only from the side that looks formalistic-symbolic. the closer someone is to religious symbols, the more closely he is with the title of piety. Kiai Muhaimin gave an example;

“For example, the most pious person must, sorry, his forehead tattooed. If the forehead is not tattooed it is less pious. Then it must be bearded. It is said that if someone was bearded, there would be many angels hanging from the beard. I am not anti-bearded. But such symbolic claims are not true. Anyone who want to be bearded, so please! I myself can't keep a beard. My hair is very rare, later if I keep my

beard even like a goat. The problem is aesthetic issues, appearance problems, so!” (Interview with Kiai Muhaimin on May 5 2015)

Likewise in understanding religious doctrine, it is not uncommon among Muslims who only understand Islam with its Arab face. They consider Islam to be Arab. So that when Islam must be present and appear in a different space and time with Arabs, it is not impossible that conflict will occur. Just as when Islam grew in a pluralistic Indonesia, but Islamic doctrine which used was formatted in a single truth. It is not distinguished which is the doctrine and which can be acculturated with the local culture (Indonesia). Although Islam is an universal religion. It is labeled as *ṣāliḥ li kulli zamān wa al-makān*. Islam is non-territory. Kiai Muhaimin said:

“Just like other religions, when we learn history. For example, Buddha was born in India. But when India no longer matches the ethics of Buddhism, Buddha left. The Christian was so called because of Jesus of Nazareth. Now looking for Christians in Nazareth is very difficult, there is only the site left. Islam was born in Mecca, but it is wrong to identify Islam as an Arab. Moreover, Saudi is very wrong. The Saudis, we all know, those who lead are not Quraysh descendants, but Bedouins. So, we do not deserve to assume Islam is synonymous with Arabic.” (Public lecture transcript of K.H. Abdul Muhaimin 2013)

As a universal religion, Islam has logical consequences to be able to acculturate, adapt, coexist with local-culture and local wisdom. He said, “If Islam is Arabic, then there will be only in Arabia, not in Indonesia!”.

In reality, the resistance of some Muslims to non-Arab local culture where Islam develops as in Indonesia, is sometimes caused by a lack of understanding and belief that Allah has guaranteed the existence of Islam as a pure and noble doctrine, "*liyudḥirahū 'alad-dīni kullih* " or Allah will win Islam over all religions (Qur'an 48:28), or "*al-islāmu ya'lū walā yu'lā alāih*" means Islam will win and will not be defeated. Fear of globalization, local culture, and other religious missions makes their reasoning for the essential and primary vision of Islam namely *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* to be reduced and even closed. In a hadith, *Irbamū man fī al-ardī, yarhamkum man fī al-samā'* (love those who are on earth, you will surely be loved in the sky).

In addition, the reality of the understanding of a single doctrine which is considered as the most correct is all-*syaria* euphoria, such as the phenomenon of the “mushrooming” of Islamic banks, *syaria* pawnshops, *syaria* savings and loans, *syaria* hotels, *syaria* spas, and so on. It is as if Islam is only one aspect of *syaria*. Though, ethics, aesthetics, and spirituality are more substantive than *sharia*. This fact shows the need for a new perspective in interpreting Islam today.

Muhaimin said that he had taught Sufism for 18 years at his pesantren. It turns out that the wealth of Islamic spirituality is extraordinary. In Sufism there is no claim of truth that causes us to be very closed-minded. Imam Ghazali entered heaven not because he composed *Ihya' ul-Ulumud-Din*, but only because of his one's experience when writing. By the time he dipped his pen, there was a fly. So he let the fly suck the ink until it was full and then let it fly. Apparently, it made Imam Ghazali go to heaven. Az-Zamakhshari authored the book *Usfuriyah*. He said he had met Sayyidana Umar in a dream. Then Sayyidana Umar told me that he had gone to heaven not because he defended the Prophet, but because he saved a sparrow that became a toy for a child. In another very popular story there is also a prostitute who enters heaven for giving a drink to a dog.

The basics of *naqli* shown by Kiai Muhaimin are also supported by an explanation based on personal experience in seeing Islam and the principle of universalism. According to him, the more advanced the knowledge, the truth of Islamic universalism is increasingly revealed. The more modern a society with its bizarre lifestyle offerings, Islam will eventually become the most objective and rational choice because of its character *ṣālib li kulli zamān wa al-makān* and *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*. This requires thinking maturity called open-minded. In fact, now in developed countries, Islam is developing rapidly because it places Islam in the universalism framework or *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*.

E. Tolerance and Coexistence as the Ethics of Pluralism

When Muslims in Indonesia are generally noisy about the issue of non-Muslim leaders, for Kiai Muhaimin it is an ironic fact, because Indonesian Muslims should not exclude themselves from making an association with adherents of other religious beliefs. It shows more hostility and narrows them. There is a social ethic in the context of society, and nation-state under Pancasila which must be addressed deeply when it is associated with Islam.

Kiai Muhaimin said the *naqli* argument of the need for Muslims to show the ethics of social interaction with non-Muslims with the principle of tolerance that appears in the story of the Land of Saba', which existed long before the time of the Prophet, led by a queen named Bilqis, where he became Muslim after meeting Prophet Sulaiman. Before becoming a Muslim, he had become a successful king or queen. Even though, she is a sun worshiper. It turns out she was able to build the Land of Saba' to be *baldatun tayyibatun wa rabbun ghafūr*.

“Why can he who is not a Muslim be called a successful leader and make Negeri Saba' *wa rabbun ghafūr*? Meanwhile, we claim very anarchist that people who can solve the problem are only Muslims. Bilqis is not a Muslim, but there is *wa rabbun ghafūr*. This is proof of how in the context of statehood and nationality it is necessary for Muslims to create tolerance and coexistence in its various forms. (What really does God want to show us? Bilqis was able to build a democratic and just society.

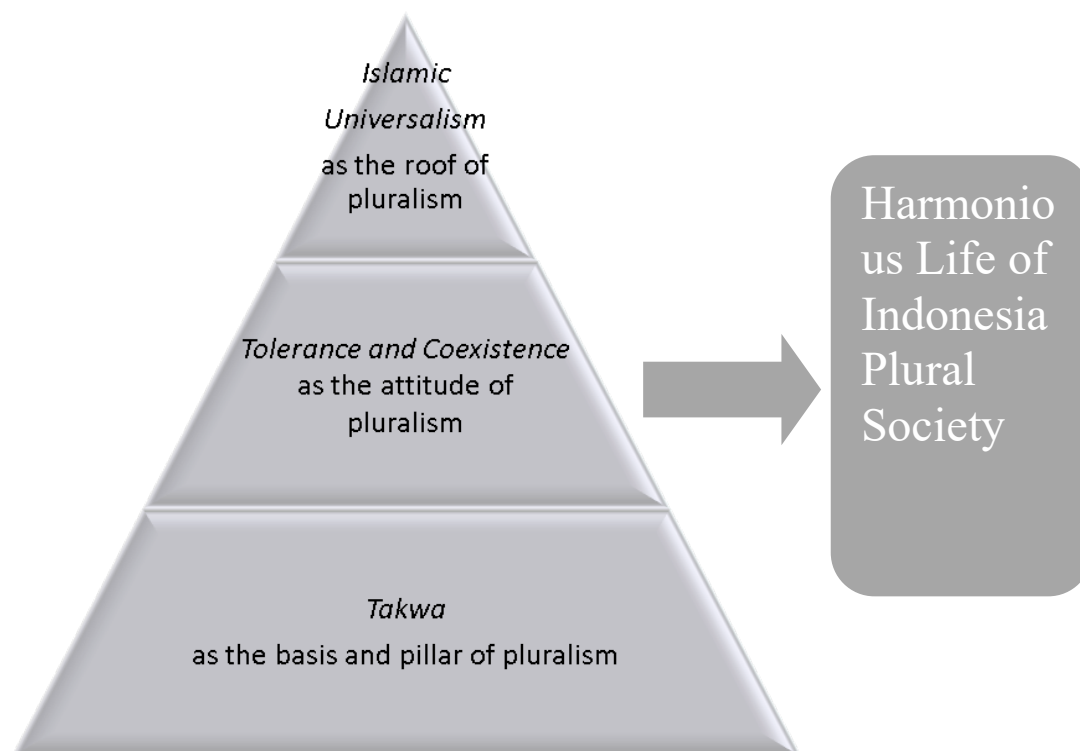
Remember, “*ya’dilu huwa agrabu lit-taqwā*”, the fair is closest to piety. But why can't we be fair with fellow Muslims especially with non-Muslims?)

We are often lazy to think. So that Islam becomes the enemy of civilization in the realm of thought and in the social sphere Islam becomes the enemy of humanity. It is very worrying if Islam is built by very puritan ways of thinking.

The concept of tolerance and coexistence proposed by Kiai Muhaimin derives from the word of Allah *wa lā tafarraqu*, not to be easily divided, and *wata’awanū*, we must help one another, with the spirit of humanity. Both are relevant to the substantial meaning of prayer services.

“Nowadays a lot of dakwah is done in ways that are very rough and very contrary to the substance of the Islamic religion, not only in dakwah even social life. It is no longer *amar ma’ruf nāhi munkar* that is put forward, but *amar ma’ruf nāhi munkar*. It is expressed Allahu Akbar, how come I am angry, this is weird. We pray, Allāhu Akbar, glorifying Allah (*muftabatun bit-takbir*), ends with *assalamu ‘alaikum (muftabatun bit-taslim)*. That is, with this theory of prayer, if we start something by glorifying God, it must end by making peace on the left and right. There is no theory in Islam, Allah Akbar while using rock! If there is such a thing, then he does not know the teachings of prayer. Yes, maybe you know, just because there are people who just want it. So, instead of ta’awun and avoiding conflict or *tafarruq*, the character of a Muslim must maintain and unite.”

As a basis for tolerance and coexistence that must be used as ethics by Muslims in associating with others, Kiai Muhaimin also quoted the hadith in the book of Ramadan Al-Buti, that there was a Jewish soldier, when he was killed by a friend, he suddenly said two *shabada* sentences. Companions, who were already emotional, convinced that the Jews were reciting the creed just to save themselves, finally killed. After the war, all complained to the Messenger of Allah, that there was a prophet’s companion who killed the *shabada* Jews. Finally the companion was summoned, “*Why did you kill the Jews who were shabada?*” He reasoned that the Jews were *shabada* just to save themselves. It turned out that the companion was actually scolded by the Prophet. “*Do you know and have cut open his chest, and saw his heart that he was reciting the Shabada just because he wanted to be safe?*” Even though at that time he was in the midst of death. Just like that, companios are finally asked to do expiation (*kaffarat*).



Picture 1. Kiai Muhaimin's Pyramid of Pluralism
(A Concept of Integration between Islam and Pluralism)

F. Seeding Pluralism vis-a-vis Preaching Religion

Every religion has the aggressiveness of the teachings to be preached. However, the aggressiveness of religious teachings does not have to be interpreted monolithically immediately, or even arbitrarily consider the people of other religions to come out of the "right path". Because of every religion requires its adherents to preaching their truth and faith to others who in practice often give rise to rifts and conflicts between religious communities.

In the context of *dakwah* carried out by Kiai Muhaimin, how could he integrate two things which looks like paradox -*dakwah* and pluralism- manifested in pluralistic Indonesia? Such as the *dakwah* he did in several churches at Yogyakarta. He did it by committing the following principles:

First, Kiai Muhaimin's proselytizing denied any elements of hatred. God's verses and prophetic tracts are preached according to their function and context, namely to advise and correct the less or not the right ones, and justify the less true, and not to curse the wrong or legitimize hatred against other people or people of other religions. More often he displayed verses that show common ground or similarities between Islam and other

religions such as Christianity. As he said he had delivered in a sermon at one church when explaining the truth of God's conviction in religions;

“Most classical commentators argue that the intended group of people are Bible believers, or part of the book, namely, Jews and Christians. However, it is very possible that the word contains a broader meaning, and relates to all societies that base their views on a revealed scripture, which is now partially altered or completely lost. At first the community embraced the doctrine of the Oneness of God and held that his submission to Him (Islam in the original sense) was the essence of all religious truth. The differences between them are the result of sectarian pride and are mutually closed”.

Second, if it is performed verbally, Kiai Muhaimin's proselytizing is always delivered with polite words and behavior (*bi al-hikmah wa al-mau'idah al-hasanah*), does not offend, or quips the beliefs of other people, let alone berate him. Because according to him the rudeness of speech in *dakwah* activities will not only damage the harmony between the religious communities, but also are not permitted in Islam. As contained in the Qur'an; Ali Imran: 159; "If you are violent again, they will run away from your environment. Therefore forgive them, ask forgiveness for them and consult with them in all matters". (The interview was conducted on June 12, 2015. This material in his memory was delivered in a Christmas lecture at the GKI Gejayan Church).

Third, Kiai Muhaimin's preaching is carried out persuasively in the context of universal goodness which leads to the creation of harmony not in a partial-specific context. According to him because first, the compelling attitude only makes people reluctant to follow what is preached, and secondly because it is the universal context that can build common ground to create constructive dialogue between all believers.

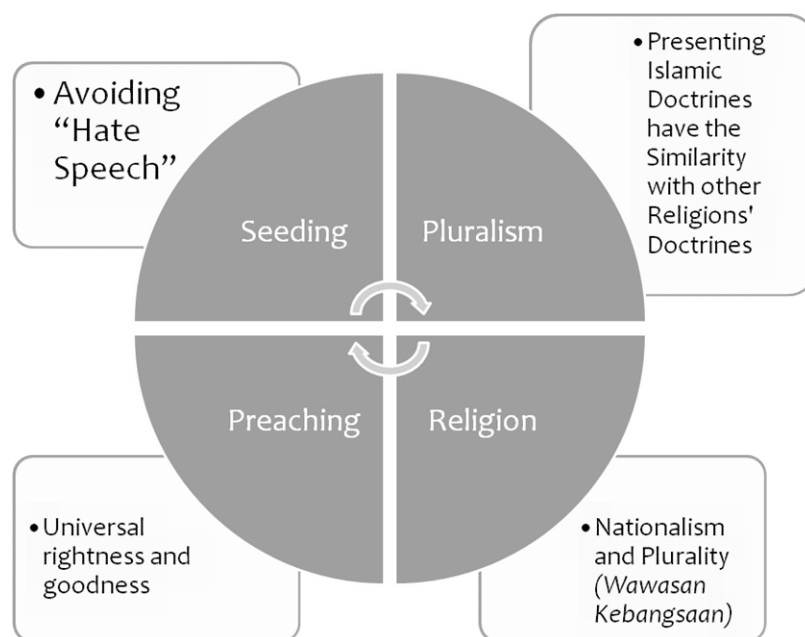
"We must view all human beings as God's creation and we must respect each other and work together without reducing our faith," he said in a lecture at the New Samirono Church in Yogyakarta. (The person in charge of the Samirono Baru GKJ Christmas Service, Untung Suripno, said that this was the first time to invite other religious leaders to speak at the Christmas celebration. "This year, we deliberately invited Kiai Muhaimin because we want to help strengthen religious harmony in Indonesia," he said. Thursday, December 25, 2014.)

Fourth, Kiai Muhaimin's *dakwah* is carried out without using words that trigger conflict such as vilifying religion or even insulting "God" which is the belief of other religions. Because according to him, Allah said in the letter Al-An'am: 108, "and do not curse the worship they worship, because they will curse Allah beyond the limits and without knowledge" (The interview was conducted on 12 June 2015)

Fifth, Kiai Muhaimin's *dakwah* is always associated with nationalistic insights such as nationalism and Pancasila. This nationality insight is the basis for togetherness in peace that

must be created by all religious people who are the preachers' concern. This means that his knowledge of national insight looks comprehensive. This nationality insight also serves as a platform for its elaboration on pluralism and the background of the occurrence of religious conflict in Indonesia.

Kiai Muhaimin said, the Qur'an gave dramatic stories about the close relationship between Muslim-Christian relations in ancient times. It shows that in fact there were no problems among these religions. According to him, the sharpening of conflict due to religious differences in Indonesia is the result of discriminatory international politics in the United States. This condition was also triggered by the pressing policies of the New Order government. "Today's Indonesian people are actually victims of all the political intricacies. Actually, the Indonesian people have always been a harmonious nation and can appreciate differences," he said (Sarwindaningrum 2011).



Picture 2. Kiai Muhaimin's Principles on Integrating the Preaching Religion and Seeding Pluralism

G. Toward Tolerance and Coexistence in Multicultural Society

One thing that is not less important in the context of pluralistic society is that *dakwah* must be carried out in a spirit of togetherness and in a way of cooperation. Cooperation in the goodness of upholding the truth is not only a religious obligation, but a vital need. Another problem that is often an obstacle for the optimal and maximum implementation of *dakwah* is extremism; if it is not shunned then it will become a boomerang and a great danger that confronts Muslims. Islamic texts clearly appeal to Muslims to take the middle

path and reject extremism, radicalism, and religious rigidity. Indications of extremism are blind and intolerant fanaticism. Extremism is seen in people who refuse to change opinions and cling to prejudices and rigidity. This made him unable to see the interests of others and the goals of the *Shari'ah*. Such a person, who not only claims that he is the right one (truth claim) but also arbitrarily says other people are wrong and stupid. This problem will become even more critical and surprising when he develops a tendency to accuse others of being heretics, misguided, and perverted.

To prevent extremism, what is urgently needed is additional information through a dialogue that emphasizes a tolerant and coexist environment among Indonesian people. For this purpose, Kiai Muhaimin on March 24, 1997, with 70 other religious leaders, declared the establishment of *Forum Persaudaraan Umat Beriman* (FPUB). The declaration was made at *Nurul Ummabat*, an Islamic Boarding School which he established. his declaration was driven by frequent riots in the name of religion.

He did visits to churches during Merapi eruption. These were one of his efforts to reduce religious conflict. This activity began following the eviction of 200 Merapi refugees from Ganjuran Catholic Church, Bantul, DI Yogyakarta, by a group of people.

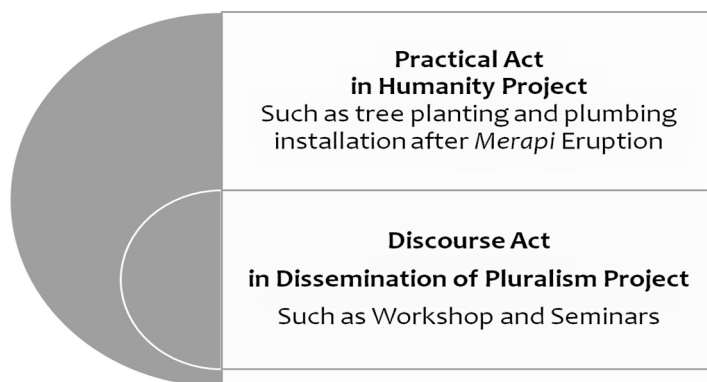
"This group carries the issue of Christianization and prohibits refugees from taking shelter in the church. In fact, I did not see any Christianization efforts at the time. This group's activities actually added to the concerns of refugees who were upset and made the church afraid," he said. (The interview was conducted on 12 June 2015).

Merapi eruption left various home works to be deal with. At the following time, Kiai Muhaimin was completing helping rebuild waterways and reforesting the forest of Merapi slopes which are damaged by lava and hot clouds. The mission to knit peace in diversity is still being carried. For the installation of water pipes, for example, he collaborated with Catholic nuns in surrounding area. He also coordinated with Yoseph Suyatno Hadiatmojo Pr, pastor at the Somohitan Church, Girikerto, Turi, Sleman, Coordinator of the FPUB Peace Campaign who was also installing a water pipe in the western part of the Boyong River. For reforestation, Kiai Muhaimin designed tree planting by children from various religions where 112,500 trees have been planted around Merapi. In his hands, humanity is also a tool to reach a wider humanity.

He has been holding various seminars and workshops as a medium of dialogue between leaders and adherents of religions, under the auspices of FPUB institution. So far, by means of FPUB, Kiai Muhaimin has successfully held dialogues in more than 120 villages at Yogyakarta area. He promotes multiculturalism, tolerance, and mutual respect for each other. These pluralism programs become FPUB's platform that representing himself as a man who is always in the forefront of the struggle for seeding pluralism (tolerance and coexistence) in the midst of Indonesian plural society, which on the one

hand this national multiculturalism is the nation's wealth, but on the other hand it implies a potential conflict.

Picture 3. Praxis Dimension of Preaching Religion toward Peaceful Coexistence



CONCLUSION

Kiai Muhaimin has proposed his authentic idea of how to integrate two paradox activities in the same sense; performing *dakwah* and seeding pluralism. He has proved and applied his idea by committing the five principles of moderate *dakwah* during proselytizing activity. Stand on his conceptual framework of *dakwah*, it will lead to the conflict and disintegration of the nation if *dakwah* in multicultural and pluralistic society, such as Indonesia, do not practice in certain attitudes and ways. Therefore, *kiai*, *ustadz* or preachers must understand well that Indonesia's nation is multicultural composed of ethnic, races, and other religions than Islam. In other words, the existence of other religions and beliefs must be considered while someone is preaching religion. So, there must be an ultimate purpose in their *dakwah* namely peace building among the nation in a harmonious life.

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