

THE EFFECT OF ORIENTALISM: THE CHALLENGE OF DA'WAH FOR ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to reveal the influence and dangers of orientalism at Islamic universities in Indonesia. Research method with qualitative approach. The research results or findings from this study are many Islamic universities in Indonesia have been infected and influenced by Orientalist understanding in understanding religion. Orientalist methodologies and scholarship have been widely used and taught in Islamic campuses without any criticism and adjustment to Islamic teachings. So that it has an impact on the understanding and perspective of students and lecturers on Islamic campuses, there are those who then think that all religions are true, it is permissible to marry between different religions, you can't be panicky about religion, question the authenticity of the Qur'an and other understandings of relativism. Of course, these kinds of ideas deviate from the teachings of Islam which is perfect from all sides. Then it becomes a challenge and obligation for Islamic universities to refer back to important concepts in every Islamic discipline and apply it in the context of contemporary sciences in response to 'scientific' approaches this modern era.

Keywords: Orientalists, da'wah, Islamic colleges, liberalism

INTRODUCTION

Entering the 20th century Indonesian Muslims, especially Islamic scholars and intellectuals are faced with the challenge of da'wah thought, busy stemming the invasion of thought brought about by the modernization and westernization movements. Understand that all religions are true (religious pluralism), Trancendent Unity of Religion, and other new ideologies, which basically the seeds have existed since the Dutch colonial era. If we look at history, since the entry of the Dutch colonialists to Indonesia, they have used the orientalists to study Islam and distort the understanding of Islam so that Muslims



are no longer strong in holding their religion and in the end it is easy to be conquered.

Among the orientalist figures used by the Dutch were Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje¹ with his "association" theory trying to westernize Muslims namely how Muslims are brought closer to Western civilization, Western culture, Western ways of thinking and so on.² On the other hand, the Netherlands also educates and provides scholarships to Indonesian figures so think like them, Thus, figures such as Soekarno were born, whom we can witness arguing with Natsir about secularism, Soekarno at that time thought like Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Turkey that if Muslims want to progress, they must follow the West completely.³

In the last decade, Islamic studies based on orientalist methods have warmed up again, even become a new movement that enters the hearts of the Muslim base. Which some people continue to develop to the operational level of social life, such as the legalization of interfaith marriages (in this case between Muslim women and non-Muslim men) and so on.⁴ What is more worrying is that one of the sources for the birth or means of spreading the notion of religious pluralism is being taught formally in Islamic universities, through the Ulumuddin course, especially "Comparative Religion" which is based on Orientalist concepts, it is even a main subject for students.

This is acknowledged by Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra, who at that time served as Chancellor of IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, said that:

“As an academic institution, although IAIN is limited to providing Islamic education to its students, but the Islam that is taught is a liberal Islam. IAIN does not teach fanaticism of Islamic schools or figures, but

¹ **Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje** (born in Tholen, Oosterhout, February 8, 1857 – died in Leiden, June 26, 1936 at the age of 79 years) was a Dutch orientalist. Like his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who enjoyed being a Protestant minister, Snouck from a young age was directed to the field of theology. Graduated from high school, he continued to Leiden University for courses in Arabic Theology and Literature, 1875. Five years later, he graduated cum laude with a dissertation *Het Mekaansche Feest* (Celebration in Mecca). Not quite proud of his Arabic language skills, Snouck then continued his education to Mecca, 1884. In Mecca, his friendliness and intellectual instinct made the scholars not hesitate to guide him. And to further win the hearts of the Meccan scholars, Snouck embraced Islam and changed his name to Abdul Ghaffar. Lihat Fajriudin, *Historiografi Islam: Konsepsi Dan Asas Epistemologi Ilmu Sejarah Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2018). h. 117

² Delier Noer, *Gerakan Moderen Islam Di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996). h. 26

³ The fierce debate about secularization between Soekarno and Natsir can be read in the book “M. Natsir Versus Soekarno, published by the Islamic Education Agency (Jadi) Bandung.

⁴ Adian Husaini, *Pluralisme Agama Haram Fatwa MUI Yang Tegas Dan Tidak Kontroversial* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2005). h. 35

examines all these Islamic schools and figures with modern frameworks, perspectives and methodologies. To support this, IAIN students are also invited to study religions other than Islam in a fair, open and without prejudice. Comparative religion is the main subject for IAIN students.”⁵

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of religious studies based on Orientalist concepts in Indonesian Islamic universities is indeed very dangerous. A scholar – so that it can be called scientific – is then reluctant to say that his religion is the right one. If he sees other religions from the point of view of his religion, then he is said to be “not objective”, or “unscientific” and his expertise is not recognized. The objective-scientific is to view religions in a neutral position, aka non-religious.

A scholar of religious studies will be said to be a great scientist, according to this method, if he does not behave towards the truth of religions, or view all religions as true according to their respective religions. If asked which religion is true, he would answer, "All religions are true according to their respective adherents." Or he replied, “All religions are true, because they are both the right path to the same God.” At the very least, while teaching on campus, he was required to be scientific, or “religiously neutral”.⁶

The invasion of Orientalist thought on Islamic universities has had a major impact on changing the mindset and perspective of lecturers and students towards religions outside of Islam. In recent years it can be seen clearly the impact or influence of this Orientalist study. Some examples can be mentioned here, among others:

1. Student Thesis

From the writer's search for the final project or student thesis, it was found that many student theses clearly describe the influence of religious pluralism on students, as examples of which are:

- a. *The Concept of Islamic Education in Religious Pluralism*, by: Umi Barokah, a student from the Tarbiyah faculty of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, who concluded that: First, Islam recognizes the existence of religious pluralism. Second, the concept of Islamic

⁵ This statement is published in the book *IAIN and Modernization of Islam in Indonesia*, Editors Fuad Jabali and Jamhari, published in collaboration with CIDA and the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education Development, Ministry of Religion, RI with Logos Wacana Ilmu publishers and IAIN Jakarta Press, 2002. h. 117, which is the result of an interview with him on March 9, 2000.

⁶ Adian Husaini dalam artikelnya “Studi Agama-Agama dalam Studi Islam dan Barat” www.insistnet.com/ diakses pada tanggal 27 Mei 2022

education in religious pluralism formulates Islamic education that combines normativity and contextuality, so that Islamic education is more humanist and tolerant. Even in the suggestion, suggesting that education practitioners start responding to offers about education based on religious pluralism.

- b. ***Religious Pluralism and Religious Dialogue (Study on Nurcholis Madjid's Thoughts)***, by: Kurniawan, student majoring in Comparative Religion UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The conclusion is that, religious pluralism is only a different entity at the exoteric level, while at the esoteric level, religions meet each other. This is the essence of the religions that God revealed to His prophets and messengers.
- c. ***Religious Pluralism in Modern Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Study of Tafsir al-Manar and Fi zilalil Qur'an)***, by Mujtahidur Ridho, a student majoring in Tafsir Hadith UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. With mentor Dr. Djam'anuri, MA dean of the Ushuluddin faculty. Concluding that, religious pluralism is a religious truth that is not only found in Islam, as believed by classical scholars, but also in religions other than Islam, such as Judaism, Christianity, Magian, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and others, who believe in God, the Last Day, and do good deeds. In the interpretation of al-Manar, Muhammad Abduh said, religious pluralism is really a reality phenomenon in religious life that must be practiced as a whole. This means that those who are adherents of religions other than Islam can also be said to be true in faith and belief, if they still recognize the three elements of truth; namely faith in the One God, believe in the last day, and always do good.

2. The Rise of Books Religious Studies Based on Pluralism

Comparative religion books or methodologies for the study of religions that generalize all religions, and place Islam as the object of study whose position and condition are as if the same as other religions. Nowadays, it is mushrooming and crowded in Islamic universities in Indonesia. Among others are:

1. Peter Connolly (ed), *Various Approaches to Religious Studies*, Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2002
2. Adeng Muchtar Ghazali, *Comparative Religion Science Early Introduction to the Methodology of the Study of Religions for LAIN, STAIN, PTAIS*, Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2000
3. _____, *Religion and Diversity in the Context of Comparative Religion*, Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2004

4. Taufik Abdullah dan M. Rusli Karim (ed), *Religious Research Methodology An Introduction*, Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2004
5. Harun Nasution, *Islam is viewed from various aspects*, Jakarta: UI Press, 2001
6. And many other similar books.

Talking about the study of religion at Islamic universities in Indonesia cannot be separated from the figure who initiated it for the first time, namely Prof. Dr. Abdul Mukti Ali. Some even call him the "Father of Indonesian Comparative Religion". Mukti Ali as mentioned by some people is one of the figures who have a big contribution to the fertile and rampant secularism, liberalism and pluralism in Indonesia today. While studying at the University of Karachi Abdul Mukti Ali interacted a lot with a number of Western orientalist scholars who wrote about Islam, who later met again when he studied at McGill University, Canada.

Mukti Ali's understanding of Islam changed fundamentally while at McGill, this mainly resulted from her introduction to the method of studying religions, and very close friendships with professors of Islamic studies at the university, especially Wilfred Cantwell Smith, an American Christian pastor, founder of the Center for Islamic Studies at McGill University.⁷

Smith is a person who Mukti Ali has always admired for his friendly attitude towards Islam and the methodology he uses in studying Islam. According to Mukti Ali, Smith is not only interesting from his sympathetic side to Islam but also from the holistic approach he uses. That Islam is not merely a normative phenomenon, but must be viewed from another angle, as a historical fact and like other religions in the world, Islam appears in human civilization. So the approach used is also a humanitarian approach. Empirical humanity is the approach chosen to approach the teachings of Islam and the phenomenon of its people.⁸

After returning to Indonesia, this model of religious studies was developed by Mukti Ali at Islamic universities, then we can understand why books on religious studies in higher education are currently increasingly being crammed with an orientalist-style historical approach. This method has changed the way of thinking of so many scholars who are trapped in the "equating" of Islam with other religions, by placing Islam as part of the product of history. In fact, Islam is a revealed religion that has a distinctive character, which is different from other religions. Al-Quran is also a revelation text that is not the same as

⁷ Azyumardi Azra dan Saiful Umam, *Mentri-Mentri Agama RI: Biografi Sosial Politik* (Jakarta: PPIM, 1998). h. 181

⁸ Kusuma et. All (ed), *Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Islam Rekaman Implementasi IAIN Indonesia Social Equity Project (IISEP) 2002-2007*, (Jakarta: IISEP bekerjasama dengan Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi Islam DEPAG RI). h. 10

other books which are human texts and historical texts. Therefore, the method of understanding also cannot simply use an approach to understanding historicity which is all relative.⁹

This orientalist-style religious study has been tested on Islamic students for approximately 30 years. As if he was relentless, for 30 years Mukti Ali did not tire of introducing his version of religious studies, because according to him studying comparative religion would lead to a "tolerant" attitude between religious communities. Likewise Prof. Dr. Harun Nasution developed orientalist understanding at IAIN Jakarta, especially when he was Rector (1973-1984) and as Director of Postgraduate (1990) IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.

After Harun Nasution and Mukti Ali, from IAIN campuses, some of which have become Islamic universities emerging scholars who believe and doubt about Islam. In fact, many are actively campaigning for doubt and destruction against Islam. Many emerging students, lecturers, doctors or professors in Islamic studies are competing to be extreme in attacking and doubting Islam.¹⁰

For example, on May 5, 2006, Sulhawi Ruba, 51, lecturer in the History of Islamic Civilization course, in front of 20 students of the Da'wah Faculty of IAIN Surabaya, explaining the position of the Koran as a result of human culture. "As a culture, the position of the Koran is no different from grass." He then wrote Allah's words on a piece of paper the size of the palm of his hand and stepped on it with his shoe. "Al-Quran is seen as sacred in substance, but the writing is not sacred," he half shouted, with slightly wide eyes. Similarly, among students on September 27, 2004, in the ta'aruf event for new students of the Ushuluddin Faculty, IAIN Bandung, a student who became the host started his speech by saying "Welcome to join in the god-free area." Another student, a student majoring in Aqidah Philosophy, clenched his fists and shouted "We are doing dhikr with big dogs." And there are many more examples of deviations from the understanding of Islam among lecturers and students at Indonesian Islamic Colleges which are the result of the spread of this orientalist method.¹¹

Orientalist Methodology in Understanding Religion

⁹ Adian Husaini, 'Pemikiran Modern Ala Barat:Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia', *INSISTS*, 2010 <<https://insists.id/pemikiran-modern-ala-baratparadigma-baru-pendidikan-islam-di-indonesia/>>. diakses 27 Mei 2022

¹⁰ Adian Husaini, *Virus Liberalisme Di Perguruan Tinggi Islam* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2009). h. 73-74

¹¹ Henri Shalahuddin, *Al-Qur'an Dihujat* (Jakarta: Al-Qalam, 2007). h. xiv

Here are some methods for understanding orientalist-style religion taught at Indonesian Islamic universities, including:

a. Historical Method

The historical method or approach is attempts to trace the origins and growth of religious thought and institutions through certain periods of historical development, and to understand the role of the powers exhibited by religion in these periods. Joachim Wach added that this study must start from the earliest period in human history, in order to know or formulate the birth of a religion.¹²

The religion studied in this method is not only religion as a whole, but it can also be studied certain schools of a religion as well as certain figures of a religion in certain periods in history.¹³

This method is quite dominantly used in the study of religion, so the history of religion is one of the names of the study of religion itself. Apart from that, there are also those who think that the History of Religion is a branch of religious science.

b. Sociological Method

In this method, the problems of religion and society are studied in relation to each other. Among those studied in this method are the effects of community life and its changes on the experience of religion and its organizations; the influence of society on religious teachings, religious practices, religious groups, types of religious leadership; the influence of religion on social changes, social structures, fulfillment or fulfillment of personality needs; mutual influence between the community and the internal structure of the religious community (in terms of entry and exit as a member, in terms of leadership, tolerance, charisma, etc.); the influence of social phenomena (mechanisation, industrialization, urbanization, etc.) on religion; the influence of religion on ethics, law, the state, politics, economy, social relations, etc..¹⁴

Joachim Wach who also used this method in his studies,¹⁵ mentions several Western scholars who continue to develop this method, including: Futsel

¹² Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study Of Religion*, ed. by Joseph M. Kitagawa (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1958). h. 21

¹³ M Darajat Ariyanto, 'Ilmu Perbandingan Agama (Isi, Perkembangan, Dan Manfaatnya Bagi Seorang Muslim)', *Suhuf*, 18.2 (2006), 109–23 <<http://publikasiilmiah.ums.ac.id:80/handle/123456789/879>>.

¹⁴ J.A.B. Jongeneel, *Pembimbing Kedalam Ilmu Agama Dan Teologi Kristen* (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 1978). h. 68-69

¹⁵ Dalam hal ini Joachim Wach menulis buku berjudul "Sociology of Religion".

de Coulanges, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, Werner Sombart and Max Scheler.¹⁶

c. Phenomenological Method

The term phenomenology comes from the Greek, meaning: the science of symptoms or the science of symptoms. Phenomenology emphasizes the need to describe religious phenomena without prejudice.

The term phenomenology was used for the first time by J.H. Lambert (1728-1777) a philosopher, but who incorporated it into the study of religion was Pierre David Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848-1920). According to Saussaye, phenomenology is the systematization and classification of the most important aspects of religious action and of religious ideas. As for reflections on the nature of these ideas, it is the task of the philosophers.¹⁷

So this method examines religion in terms of its essence, putting aside things that are subjective and the study seeks to study religion according to what is understood by its own adherents, not according to religious scholars.

d. Typological Method

The typological method is a method that seeks to bridge empirical investigations (which are carried out using historical approaches, anthropology, sociology, psychology and others) with a normative inquiry (theological approach). So this method examines religion or religious phenomena by making certain types of various phenomena revealed by the history of religion, psychology of religion and sociology of religion. Complex religious phenomena are arranged in ideal types so that mystical types, theology, worship, religious charisms, religious leaders, religious forces, religious groups, religious adherents' psychology and so on are arranged, which this really allows for a better understanding. In the end, this method can also be used to determine the nature of religion as a whole.

Western scholars who use this typological method for example: William James, Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber, Howard Becker, Herder, and Hegel.¹⁸

e. Comparative Method

¹⁶ Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study Of Religions*, h. 23

¹⁷ Burhanuddin Daya, *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama Di Indonesia: Beberapa Permasalahan* (Jakarta: INIS, 1990). h. 56-57

¹⁸ Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study Of Religions*, h. 25-26

F. De Graeve, a Western scholar, said that the study of comparative religion is a branch of non-normative studies, which investigates religions scientifically. Both the similarities and differences between various religions or various religious phenomena, so as not only to reach a comprehensive understanding, also determines the presence or absence of reciprocal or one-sided influences between religions or various religious phenomena.¹⁹

From this definition, we can find out the nature of the study of comparative religion, which is non-normative. Because it is a scientific study, of course it does not give an assessment of whether a religion is right or wrong. So the conception of the definition made by F. de Graeve is that a researcher of comparative religion will not point out the weaknesses of other religions to show the advantages of his own religion.

f. Anthropological Method

Anthropology began to get serious attention in the 19th century as a study of human origins, which includes searching for extant fossils, and studying the animal family closest to humans (primates) and researching human society, what is the oldest and survive (survive). Back then, everything was done with the key idea, which was evolution. Because early anthropologists as well as almost all nineteenth-century intellectuals were evolutionists.²⁰

Other Western scholars who studied religion using the anthropological method were: Edward B. Tylor, Andrew Lang, Robert R. Marett, Wilhelm Schmidt, Arnold van Gennep, Bronislaw Malinowski, Robert H. Lowie.

g. Psychological Method

Psychological methods of explaining religion emerged in the 20th century. The views of experts are very diverse in interpreting this approach, there are those who state that religion is pressure on a person which then gives birth to individual experiences that have a relationship with God, Another opinion argues that the pressure or experience of an individual is a purely psychological matter. There are also experts who combine the two between psychological problems and issues of religiosity (God) there is a mutual relationship.

Research with this method, for example, was carried out by William James (1842-1910) in his work *The Varieties of Religion Experience*, where he

¹⁹ Komaruddin Hidayat dan Hendro Prasetyo, *Problem & Prospek IAIN Antologi Pendidikan Tinggi Islam* (Jakarta: DEPAG RI). h. 199

²⁰ David N. Gellner, *Approaches to The Study of Religion*, Terj. Imam Khoiri, *Aneka Pendekatan Studi Agama*, Peter Conn (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2009). h. 15

tries to investigate religious experiences such as conversion or conversion and conversion based on the concept of unconscious influence.²¹

h. Synthesis Method

This method was introduced by Joachim Wach, a method that tries to bridge the two major schools of thought in religious research. Where one is of the view that to study religion cannot be associated with the methods found in various other sciences. Others, regardless of the nature of the problem under study, view that the only valid method is the "scientific" method.

In Joachim Wach's view these two approaches are weak. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a new approach, which combines the two approaches. That is the approach called synthesis. This method is built on two conditions, first that a method must be integrated. As desired by Aristotle, Aquinas, Leibniz and Whitehead. The second condition is that the method must be in accordance with the problem under study. This condition gives character to the first principle, namely the principle of method integration.²²

In addition to carrying out orientalist-style methodologies in Islamic universities, Also sending IAIN students and lecturers to study in Western countries, especially McGill and Leiden, has been massively carried out by the Ministry of Religion since the 1970s. The success of sending IAIN lecturers to study Islamic studies to the West can be read in two books: Kusuma et. al (ed), *New Paradigm of Islamic Education Record of Implementation of IAIN Indonesia Social Equity Project (IISEP) 2002-2007*, published by IISEP in collaboration with the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education, Ministry of Religion, and a book by Fuad Jabali and Jamhari entitled *IAIN & Modernization of Islam in Indonesia*, published by CIDA in collaboration with the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education, DEPAG RI.

Of course this is a big da'wah challenge for Islamic universities, because this understanding has poisoned the academic community of Islamic campuses in Indonesia, entered into all aspects of the life of the Muslim community, entered into the joints of the lives of Muslims, damaged fundamental values in Islam. The birth of relativism, which makes a Muslim doubt his own religion, doubt the Qur'an, reject the authority of science and no longer want to uphold *amar ma'ruf nabi mungkar*.²³

²¹ Zakiah Darajat, *Perbandingan Agama*, 2nd edn (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1996). h.

²² Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study Of Religions*, h. 14-15

²³ Lukman Ma'sa, 'Sekularisme Sebagai Tantangan Dakwah Kontemporer', *Al-Risalah*, 11.2 (2020), 1-19 <<https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v11i2.788>>. h. 12

Because the enforcement of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar or da'wah is a safeguard for a society from destruction, it becomes imperative for Islamic universities to prevent the actions of a person or group of people based on wrong ijtihad-ijtihad by showing the negative consequences. Responsibilities in Islamic society regarding common safety are collective responsibilities, even more so for intellectuals.²⁴ Rasulullah SAW described in a hadith the obligation to enforce amar ma'ruf for mutual safety in a social boat:

« مَثَلُ الْقَائِمِ عَلَى حُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَاقِعِ فِيهَا كَمَثَلِ قَوْمٍ اسْتَهَمُوا عَلَى سَفِينَةٍ ، فَأَصَابَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا وَبَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا ، فَكَانَ الَّذِينَ فِي أَسْفَلِهَا إِذَا اسْتَقَوْا مِنَ الْمَاءِ مَرُّوا عَلَى مَنْ فَوْقَهُمْ فَقَالُوا لَوْ أَنَّا حَرَقْنَا فِي نَصِينَا حَرْقًا ، وَلَمْ نُؤْذِ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا . فَإِنْ يَتْرُكُوهُمْ وَمَا أَرَادُوا هَلَكُوا جَمِيعًا ، وَإِنْ أَخَذُوا عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ نَجَّوْا وَنَجَّوْا جَمِيعًا . »

"The example of the person abiding by Allah's order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those who are above us from troubling them. So, if the people in the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.'" (Sahih al-Bukhari 2493)

Criticism of Orientalist Methodology in Understanding Religion

Talking about methodological problems means entering the epistemological aspect in the philosophy of science. This aspect philosophically discusses how to apply efforts in order to develop a science, This means that we will discuss basic techniques, tactics and strategies in the delivery of knowledge in order to achieve the right goals.²⁵ So that in the study of religion, methodology is the most important aspect, because it will determine the form and building of comparative religion itself, in the reality of the object to be studied and how the truth is obtained.

Orientalists in their discussion of the methodology of religious studies are very diverse and numerous, but in general, as mentioned above, namely: historical, philological, anthropological, psychological, sociological, phenomenological, theological and synthetic methods which he hopes can produce a scientific as well as religious study.

These methods that were born from the social reality of Western culture are based on mere rationality. They have no absolute value in looking at things.

²⁴ Lukman Ma'sa, *Hadits Da'wah: Kumpulan Nasehat Rasulullah Tentang Da'wah*, Revisi (Bekasi: STID Mohammad Natsir Press, 2020). h. 31

²⁵ Abdullah Ali, *Agama Dalam Ilmu Perbandingan* (Bandung: Nuansa Aulia, 2007). h. 55

Truth relativism and value relativism are their main worldviews. So, in looking at religions as well, everything is relative. There is no single truth, all religions are true according to their respective adherents.

Even according to Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, currently Western thought about religion is colored by atheistic attitudes and even tends to reduce theology to anthropology. God is described as a product and reflection of human thought. So this concept makes reason separated from the concept of belief or the concept of God which of course will damage the concepts of belief, religiosity and truth that have been firmly believed by religious communities.²⁶

In her book *Islam Versus the West*, Maryam Jameela, a Jewish descendant who later embraced Islam, explained that Islam and the West have fundamental differences. So, according to him, imitative actions or plagiarism of Western worldviews based on materialism, pragmatism, and secular philosophy, will lead to the annihilation of Islam.²⁷ Meanwhile, Muhammad Asad said that modern Western civilization is a civilization that does not explicitly reject God. However, there is no room for God in the Western system of thinking.²⁸

So, the spirit of modern Western civilization is the spirit to subjugate religions in their materialism and relativism perspective. For the West, there are no fixed values and truths. All values must be subject to historical and cultural dynamics. What is good in one place is not necessarily good in another. because of that, the West does not have a fixed standard of values.

It is on this building of the Western perspective that the methodologies of the study of comparative religion are built. So that when these methods are applied to understand religion, what will happen is not a scientific study of religion but the destruction and elimination of the existence of religion itself. Because of the uniqueness, the sanctity and the concept of religious belief will be lost.

For example, when historical methods are used to understand Islam and religion in general, Islam will become a religion that is always evolving (*evolving religion*), religion that changes from time to time, according to the demands of the times and places. In Islamic studies with the historical method, the relativism aspect of religious understanding is emphasized. They say, human understanding of their religion is relative and related to certain socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, there is no Islamic understanding or thought that is eternal and applies throughout the ages and in all places. So Islamic studies with this model always try to make Islam adapt to modern Western values.²⁹

²⁶ Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, 'Agama Dalam Pemikiran Barat Modern Dan Post-Modern', *Majalah Islamia*, Thn 1.No. 4 (2005). h. 37

²⁷ Husaini, *Virus Liberalisme Di Perguruan Tinggi Islam*. h. 98

²⁸ *Ibid*, h. 97

²⁹ *Ibid*, h. 84-85

The number of "scientific" studies in the discipline of religious studies with all kinds of trends (historical, phenomenological, sociological, psychological, philosophical and so on) basically the same and lead to the same findings and conclusions, that existing religions are merely expressions or various manifestations of an absolute and single metaphysical nature. In other words, all religions are the same. This conclusion is based on a premise that they build on understanding the origins of religion in the Western world. That religion is a human attitude and response to an absolute divine essence.³⁰

The studies of Western scholars (orientalists) are very much different from the studies conducted by Islamic scientists. In Western studies, the study of knowledge is only understood as knowledge and is obtained only by ratio. No matter how objective they try to study, they will not achieve more than just collecting rational empirical facts and understanding them according to their secular point of view. Whereas in Islam, scientific studies are carried out on the basis of faith and charity. So the concept of science in Islam aims not only as a study of science but more than that, namely in the context of taqarrub to Allah SWT.³¹

Especially in understanding Islam, it does not depend on various branches of the social sciences that are starting to emerge, as expressed by many scholars of Indonesian religious studies. Islam already has a clear manhaj to understand Islam itself. Without the presence of these "scientific" approaches, one can even understand and practice Islam properly through the explanation of revelation (Al Qur'an and As Sunnah). Methodology The social sciences that the West is trying to force to understand Islam are only complementary in clarifying aspects of understanding Islam. This can be done after the auxiliary sciences are framed in the Islamic worldview.

This view is based on the belief that Islam is a revealed religion that has been perfect since the beginning. Allah confirms in Surah Al-Maidah verse 3:

"... This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion."

As a revealed religion, Islamic concepts are not shaped by history and do not develop in the historical process. Because, these concepts are formulated based on revelation. The concept of God in Islam is final from the start. That the monotheism and oneness of Allah which have been absolute since the birth of

³⁰ Anis Malik Thoha, *Trend Pluralisme Agama; Tinjauan Kritis* (Jakarta: Prespektif, 2005). h. 44

³¹ Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, 'Framework Studi Islam', *Majalah Islamia*, Vol. V.No. 1 (2009). h. 6

Islam until now have remained the same.³² Different from the God that Western scientists understand. That God is no longer the Supreme Being, but is a reflection of human reason and even leads to disbelief in the existence of God (atheist).³³ Likewise with the concept of worship in Islam. Muslims perform prayer, zakat, fasting, hajj and so on, have not changed throughout the ages. There is no Indonesian version of prayer or Arabic version.

The synthesis method is trying to be applied to bridge the contradiction between the "scientific" and normative methods, basically the same as the other methods developed in Barata. Joachim Wach, followed by Mukti Ali in Indonesia, uses this method, which is a combination of Western "scientific" methods and religious normative methods. Studying religion in all its aspects is not enough with the "scientific" method, On the other hand, studying religion in all its aspects is not enough with the doctrinal method alone. But must be used together.

This methodology is also what Indonesian scholars of religious studies are trying to develop in understanding Islam, because according to them the approach to Islam is still very lame. Islamic scholars when understanding and interpreting Islam only use doctrinal and dogmatic methods, which are not at all connected with the realities of people's lives. As a result, Islam is left behind and can no longer be applied in the life of an increasingly advanced society.³⁴

This accusation is certainly very exaggerated, because Islam has been established and perfect since the beginning. Islam has been well and correctly understood by its adherents long before the emergence of the various Western "scientific" methods. Even the scholars when embodying Islam to be conveyed to the people, are never separated from considerations of social reality. In Islam it is known *asbabun nuzul*, *asbabul wurud* or *maslahah mursalah* which are considerations of social reality in understanding and interpreting Islam. The explanation of the *Tanzilyah* verses over the *Kauniyah* verses and vice versa has become a principle in Islam from the beginning. It is undeniable that there are fundamental parts in Islamic teachings that no longer consider social conditions, places and times, but therein lies the universality of Islam.

On the other hand, the synthetic or scientific-cum-doctrinal method in Mukti Ali's language, is impossible to apply to understanding religions, especially in understanding Islam. Because if examined carefully, clearly and in depth, in fact, between the Western "scientific" method and the normative approach in religion are completely opposite, even deconstructing each other. The differences between these two approaches are serious and there is a lot of confusion.

³² Regarding the oneness and oneness of God, further observe the following verses: Q.S. Al-Anbiya(21):25, Al-A'raf(7):59, 65, 73, 85, Thaha(20):13-14, Al-Maidah(5):72, Al-Ikhlash(112):1-4.

³³ Scientific studies on Western understanding of God can be read in Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi's paper, *Religion in Modern and Post-modern Western Thought*, h. 37-47

³⁴ Mukti Ali, *Metode Memahami Agama Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991). h.32

Efforts to criticize and develop the methodology of Islamic studies is not something wrong. But the tendency to deconstruct it with Western methodological tools which are clearly not in accordance with the conceptual in the Islamic worldview is a very risky and dangerous speculation. The risk is not only eliminating the structure of scientific authority but also the structure of scientific concepts in Islam, some of which are permanent and cannot be deconstructed.³⁵

Islam no longer needs new interpretations, because Islam is perfect from all sides. Even if Islam must respond to the challenges of modern-day 'scientific' approaches, what must be done is to explore important concepts in each Islamic discipline and apply them in the context of contemporary sciences. This means that scientific studies, methodologies and so on are based on understanding important concepts in Islam in the treasures of Islamic thought in the past which are then linked to the context of the present situation. If there are problems in the present, the solution is to return to the source of the Islamic worldview, namely the Qur'an and Hadith with a more contemporary-oriented understanding.³⁶

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are several orientalist influences on Indonesian Islamic universities:

1. In the past, many Muslim students chose to continue their studies to Islamic universities in the Middle East such as Al-Azhar Egypt, Medina University etc. But now, they prefer universities in America and Europe on the grounds that Islamic studies in the West are based on the critical method, while Islamic studies in the East are based on faith. These are the things that make Islamic religious lecturers flock to continue their studies in Western countries such as Islamic studies at McGill University.
2. There are courses that teach orientalist methodology in understanding religion at Indonesian Islamic universities, such as Hermeneutics and Semiotics courses in the Hadith interpretation study program etc.
3. Many research results from students and lecturers are in the form of theses, dissertations, books and journals which then challenge the laws that have been qat'i in Islam.
4. The proliferation of books on religious studies or methodologies for the study of religions that generalize all religions, and place Islam as the object

³⁵ Zarkasyi, 'Framework Studi Islam'. h. 11

³⁶ Zarkasyi, 'Framework Studi Islam'.

of study whose position and condition are as if the same as other religions.

5. Islamic Higher Education Da'wah is to organize education that refers to Islamic scholarship that is true and clean from deviant ijthahs.

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