

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE OF MUADZ BIN JABAL OF KENDARI

Sapriillah Syahrir

Senior Researcher at Balitbang Agama Makassar

Jln AP Pettarani No 72 Makassar

Email: pepilitbang@gmail.com

Abstract: Salafism has become an interesting phenomenon in recent years in Indonesia, including in Southeast Sulawesi. The presence of Salafi groups in Kendari wins an enthusiastic welcome from the society. This research is intended to describe the role of the Islamic Center of Muadz bin Jabal (ICM) in managing *da'wah* (Islamic missionary) and religious education in Kendari City. This study employs qualitative research methods. Data are obtained through interviews and observations. The research findings indicate that the Islamic Center of Muadz bin Jabal or ICM is one of the Salafi groups that have quite influential *da'wah* and educational roles in Kendari City. The ICM manages its ideology and religious knowledge through educational institutions, *da'wah* assemblies, radio broadcast, and face book.

Keywords: ICM, Salafi, *da'wah*, education.

An Overview of Salafi Group Development in Kendari

Since year 2000, Salafi movements have started giving influence in Kendari City. Minhajussunnah Boarding School (*pesantren*), which has been well developed up to the present time, is an instance of a well-organized group of Salafi movement (Ali Saputra, 2010). Furthermore, in 2006, Wahda

Islamiyah (WI) was also established in Kendari City. The movement of WI in Southeast Sulawesi has so far focused more on Islamic education, social, and *da'wah* movement. In Kendari, WI organizes some integrated educational institutions ranging from kindergarten to high school levels, whereas in Kolaka, Bombana, and Muna, WI takes charge of some Elementary and Junior High Schools. Its social movement is more in the form of distributing aid from the central WI or other donations to people in need. Islamic missionary movement is carried out intensively through a routine agenda of recitation of the Qur'an in mosques (Sapriallah et al 2016).

Wahdah Islamiyah has spread its wings over the campus of Halu Uleo University (UHO) through the LDK (On Campus Missionary Institution) of Ulul Al-Bab centered in Laode Muallim mosque (on campus mosque). The development of this movement is clearly outstanding. The number of its active participants is more than 500. This comprises as many as 45 male student mentors (*ikhwan*) and 90 female student mentors (*akhawat*). As for the number of its sympathizers, it can reach thousands of students. At least every new academic year they always manage to convince lecturers to involve students to participate in a program called *Bimbingan Baca Qur'an* (Qur'an recitation lesson), which is more popular with the name BBQ. The Quran recitation lesson is a major program in the LDK (Basic Leadership Training) of WI to serve students who seek to improve their Qur'anic recitation skills or even those who are at the

introductory stage of learning to recite the Qur'an. The program is successful as it gains full support from the campus. WI itself benefits quite a lot from Ulul Al-Bab's LDK programs. The new cadres of WI come from alumni of Ulul Al-Bab LDK (Sapriallah, 2015).

Another Salafi group that also carries out routine recitation activities is the Islamic learning circle of Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah. This circle pick up this name to identify their new group. At least this is the official name applied in the pamphlet of the announcement for the learning schedules displayed at the UHO campus mosque and at Nur Amaliah mosque (one of their base camps). The founders of this group used to serve as members of the Minhajusunnah foundation. However, since an uncompromised dispute took place and force them to split up, they set withdrew and formed their own recitation group.

The Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah group is a community or an Islamic learning gathering, not a structured organization. They do not apply the concept of head or group leader. They only put an *ustadz* (religious teacher) in charge to routinely deliver Islamic preaching. As a result, the number of the association's members is not recorded. The participants taking parts in the preaching sessions usually come from residents around the mosque where the session takes place. This group is an affiliation of the Salafi group from Ma'had Nasyad Al-Islami (MANIS) on Baji Rupa Street in Makassar. Nevertheless, this group has formed a

foundation named Markas Da'wah Arrisalah (Islamic Missionary Base Camp of Arrisalah), which is situated on Prof. Rauf Tarimana Street (Kambu) (Sapriallah et al, 2016).

In 2008, the presence of Salafi groups was more and more flourishing with the emergence of the Islamic Center of Muadz Bin Jabal, which was founded by an alumni of Islamic University of Medina. This particular group quickly gained public attention in Kendari as its movement was relatively massive and received more funding support compared to other Salafi groups. The Centre currently has two campuses and formal education programs range from kindergarten to high school levels. It has a radio station that broadcasts everyday at 94.3 FM.

A Closer Look at the Islamic Center of Muadz bin Jabal of Kendari

The idea of establishing ICM cannot be separated from Ustadz Zezen' s personal experience. He grew up in his father's *pesantren* in Kolaka and then went to Ngruki *pesantren* in Solo before studying at the Islamic University of Medina. Upon completing his university study, Zezen was accepted to serve as a *da'i* (Islamic preacher) at ICC (Islamic Cultural Center) of Dhamam, Saudi Arabia. His experience as a "religious worker" at the ICC has had a major impact on the "idea" of the establishment of the Islamic Center of Muadz Bin Jabal. ICC of Dhamam is the center of Islamic cultural studies founded by a Saudi Arabian IT expert, in response to the 1993 Gulf war (Iraq-Kuwait), which is

followed by the Saudi Arabia's policy of bringing in international troops based in Dhamam. ICC Dhamam was founded to introduce Islamic culture and to avoid misunderstandings between the Foreign Army and the local Muslim community. ICC of Dhamam's application of *da'wah* method that adopts acknowledgement techniques apparently effective in introducing Islamic culture to foreign soldiers based in Dhamam. Consider the following interview:

In ICC Dhamam, the pattern of *da'wah* is interesting. Every *da'i* pays a visit to foreign military camps to explain Islamic culture. For example, they inform to the soldiers that Islam has a custom that every day such sounds and such words will be announcing out loud and upon hearing them residents will go to the mosque. So don't be surprised and don't make moves ... consequently this way effectively introduce Islam to the army. In the ICC of Dhamam record, from 1993 to the deportation time there were about 4500 soldiers converted to Islam, if not mistaken (interview with Ustadz Zezen).

The patterns of *da'wah* employed in ICC seem to greatly affect Ustadz Zezen in developing ICM in Kendari. The ICM of Kendari is expected to serve as a center of Islamic studies in Kendari City. In fact, he particularly seeks to actualize the term "center" in the true sense while simultaneously casts a symbolic criticism of the Islamic Center building in Kendari that not functions as a center for

Islamic activities. Even worse, the building seems to be not well maintained. This is shown in the following interview:

Upon finishing college in Medina, he did immediately return to his homeland. Instead, he worked at ICC of Dhamam in Saudi Arabia. It is said to be the center of Islamic culture. Anyone who wants to learn Islam can come to this center. He was assigned as a *da'i* to deliver sessions for Indonesian migrant workers. From this experience he realized that the idea of Islamic Center should be developed in the country. Anyone who wants to learn Islam can come. He has a network with the *masyaikh*, and wealthy people from that city offer us to build an Islamic study center. In 2008 this has been initiated and *Alhamdulillah* it gain good appreciation from the local community (interview with Ustadz Anwar, ICM management)

In 2004, Ustadz Zezen returned from Medina as the attaché of the Saudi Arabian embassy stationed in Kendari. He was initially prepared to serve as an embassy attaché in Bandung, West Java. However, on the advice of his father, and thanks to the help of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, ustadz Zezen chose Kendari as his working area. His father's advice was based on the consideration that Bandung had already developed many *pesantren* with influential religious leaders while in Kendari there were still very view *pesantren* there was almost no influential *Kyai* (religious leader)

(processed from an interview with Aan, the secretary of Baitul Arqam Education Foundation)

His father's prediction seems to be correct. The presence of Ustadz Zezen began to be appreciated when began to actively perform religious preaching. His position as an attaché of the Saudi Arabian Embassy makes it easier for him to get aids and donations from Saudi Arabia. In 2008, Ustadz Zezen began to pioneer the construction of ICM building. At the same time, with some assistance from alumni from Medina, Ustadz Zezen opened an *I'dad Duad* (*da'i* preparation) class, which was attended by 20 people from different places. These participants were then technically involved in construction of the ICM building.

Ustadz Zezen thought at first about developing his father's *pesantren*, Baitul Arqam, in Kolaka. However, in reality *pesantren* has some limitations as it only function internally. Ustadz Zezen then chose to combine the models of ICC Dhamam and that of the *pesantren* of Baitul Arqam. In addition to managing religious education ranging from Elementary to High School levels, ICM also provides religious consultations on the radio and Islamic learning sessions (preaching) at the mosque of Muadz bin Jabal.

The idea of establishing a radio station seems to come from Ustadz Zezen's childhood experience in Kolaka. As a child, he often listened to religious lectures broadcast through the radio station of Suara As'adiyah Sengkang, which has a quite wide frequency range. While in Medina, Ustadz Zezen also listened to a radio station that has a 24

hours broadcast of recitation of the Qur'an. Based on such experience, Ustadz Zezen chose a missionary path (*da'wah*) through the radio station of Muadz bin Jabal: 94.3 FM.

Da'wah through radio is felt quite effective. The nature of the sessions is more natural because listeners "choose" to listen, not "forced" to listen. The impression of being patronized is reduced compared to direct preaching. There are two memorable experiences Ustadz Zezen went through relating to the presence Muadz bin Jabal radio station, as in the following:

Once, if I'm not mistaken it was already 1 o'clock pm, my phone suddenly rang. I wondered who was calling at such time. I picked up the phone and I heard a voice of a women. Hello, she said, I am a *pramuria* (commercial sex worker) and I'd like to have a visit to your place. I myself did not know what a *pramuria* was. I asked, what is a *pramuria*? She answered, a café waitress. I asked, what is the matter? She said, Ustadz, I overheard radio Muadz bin Jabal and I felt as I was dragged back to my childhood time. I want to change. The situation was that she turned on the radio in the café and accidentally found the frequency of 94.3 FM playing *murattal* (recitation of the Qur'an). Her childhood memory came out. She felt that she was carried away to the atmosphere of her childhood wherein she often listened to recitation of the Qur'an. I said, because it's late at night, so just come tomorrow.

The next day she came with clothes like that of a *pramura*. She wanted to change. I suggested that she return to her family. Apparently her family environment is not good. Some of the family members are drug sellers and gambler. So I said stay at my home and follow the learning and preaching sessions. After three months, if not mistaken, she changed and wore a veil. Her father came and furiously asked her to come home but we did not let her go. That time ICM had just newly established and we did not want to have conflict, so we arranged to send her to the family of a relative who can help maintain the morals that she already had. It was the family of her relative in Kolaka if I'm not mistaken.

In addition to stimulating individual awareness such as in the case above, *da'wah* through a radio broadcast can also have implications on the participation of citizens on religious education institutions being managed. A high school *santri* (Islamic boarding school student) said that her father sent her to an ICM school because he often listened to Muadz bin Jabal's radio broadcast.

ICM is institutionally comprised within the organization of YAPIBA (Baitul Arqam Education Foundation) of Kolaka. In YAPIBA handbook it is stated that ICM is under the sponsorship of YAPIBA and is granted full or autonomous power to manage itself. Its position as part of YAPIBA can be looked at from two perspectives. First, Ustadz Zezen does have close ties with Pesantren Baitul Arqam in Kolaka. Ustadz Zezen's father is

the founder of the *pesantren*. Zezen's sibling serves as the leader of the Foundation. The learning system especially at the high school and Prokid levels employs the system adopted from Pesantren Baitul Arqam. Secondly, its position as an administrative branch of YAPIBA facilitates the formal legal aspects for the founding of ICM foundations and educational institutions. The idea of establishing educational institutions was never hindered by the aspect of legality because YAPIBA has long been registered in the system of Kesbangpol.

The organizational management of the ICM is being continuously refined. Currently there are only two divisions that work well. These are 1) division of education managing TPA (Qur'an Recitation Education), SD (Elementary School), SMP (Junior High School), SMA (Senior High School) and Prokid; 2) division of da'wah that manages preaching sessions, radio, and social media. The division of economy is still managing to find a firm shape. So far, ICM's fundraising takes the form of business cooperation, whereas its *Ummrah* and *Hajj* travel business is still run as a branch of a *Hajj* and *Ummrah* travel business in Jakarta and is considered as a private business, not an inherent part of the institution. Currently ICM's financial resources come from the management of educational institutions, voluntary contributions from the *ikhwan*, and financial aids from individuals and institutions from Saudi Arabia. (Processed from an interview with Aan). An example of the aids from Saudi Arabia is the ICM campus (donated building) on

Boulevard Street. The great campus that houses students from different education levels was funded by Sheikh Soleh bin Abdul Aziss As-Sawi through the Office of Religious Affairs of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Jakarta. The building was even inaugurated by Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, and the Attaché of the Saudian Embassy, Ibrahim bin Sulaiman An-Nughaimisy, on May 16, 2015.

The location of ICM's campus 1 is quite strategic as it is situated around the area of Halu Oleo University (UHO) campus. This location was selected for technical reasons as it was an available space, and also because it was adjacent to the UHO campus. The purpose of a scientific-based development of Islam becomes very contextual with the position of its current location. The location wherein the ICM is situated covers an empty space, it is even almost like a forest. According to the police records, this location is marked as a red or a crime-prone area. The presence of the ICM became a blessing for the region. Little by little the settlements of the citizens have grown and become part of ICM's preaching sessions' participants. Ustadz Anwar acknowledges that some people choose to move to the location around the ICM because they want to send their children to ICM schools and also to regularly follow the Islamic learning sessions in the ICM.

At its early stage, ICM opened regular preaching sessions on various themes of Islamic teachings and formed a university student *pesantren* program or *I'dad Duad*, that is,

da'i preparation school. Colleagues, relatives, alumni of Baitul Arqam's *pesantren*, as well as any citizens interested in the program were recruited and trained with a teaching curriculum that had been designed. The alumni of *I'dad Duad* phases 1 and 2 then become an important part that helped ustadz Zezen in developing ICM's *da'wah* mission, which is based on the theology of *Ablussunnah wal Jamaah* with more emphasis on *Salafussaleh* religious practice. The *I'dad Duad* program was then discontinued and was replaced by a university student *pesantren* program. It follows that, in 2015 ICM re-opened a cadre program, the *Imam* and *Da'i* (Prokid) program, that adopted the system of *I'dad Duad*.

The ICM has been increasingly developing and winning public approval since it opened the programs of Qur'an Recitation Program, Tahfidz al-Qur'an Elementary School, and Tahfidz al-Qur'an Junior High School in 2011. The enthusiasm of the people of Kendari City to send their children to schools organized by the ICM continues to grow. In the academic year 2016/2017, the Elementary and Junior High Schools has to turn down some student applications for the reasons of classroom capacity limit and the implementation of strict passing standards.

ICM expanded its education wings by establishing a High School with a boarding system in mid 2015. The development of this school was accompanied by the development of ICM campus 2 located on a strategic area near the POLDA (Province Police Station) office of Southeast Sulawesi. At the same time, ICM also opened a

diploma 2 program named Prokid (*Imam* and *Da'i* Cadre Program).

The spreading out of ICM's network not only takes place within the city of Kendari but also reaches out to Wakatobi and Raja Ampat, Papua. The establishment of ICM in Raja Ampat does not face any difficulties, although its development is not as vast as that of the Kendari ICM. As for the establishment in Wakatobi, it has to deal with some constraints from the local community, as they accuse ICM to be part of the Wahabi and ISIS networks, claim it to be a *pesantren* owned by the past Regent, and blame the presence of ICM schools to be ruining the existence of Babussalam *pesantren*.

In the social context, the ICM positions itself open to the public in spite of their presenting different appearance from that of the general public. Consider the following interview:

We realize that sometimes clothing becomes a barrier between the *da'wah* activists and the general public. We tend to be considered exclusive. Yet Islam taught us morals. Good morality according to Hasanul Basri *rahimallah* which we always refer to is "*antakuna gariban bainannas qaaribun minhum*". Good morality is that you "become a stranger in the middle of human beings while being close to them". In ICM we uphold this principle. We are alien and seem different in terms of dressing (for example) but we always remind the *da'i* to avoid having a dispute with the general public

as long as there is a ground and proposition that support what the local community practices. An example of these is the case of *qunut*. This is a debatable issue. For example if we are performing prayer led by an *Imam* who practices *qunut*, we perform *qunut* along with the worshippers. We should not dispute even though we normally do not practice *qunut*, as there must be greater benefit in preserving harmony. (Interview with Ustadz Zezen).

The moral system applied refers to the concept derived from that of Hasan Basri, “be foreign to humans but be close to them”. This philosophical sentence shows that the religious system of Salafism with its different expressions, for example different style of fashion, does not necessarily cause ICM to move away from society. It is *garib lakin qariib*, different but close. With this philosophy, ICM preserves its Salafist identity while creating activity programs that are close to the needs of Muslims in Kendari City.

With such pattern, people will have no fear and prejudice towards the identity of the Salafi, which has been taken somewhat negatively in Indonesia. The presence of the ICM in Kendari shows that the Salafi is not an exclusive group of people who dissociate themselves from society. They exist and lead the way to a religious system that seeks to return to the Salafi religious practice. This open pattern also makes some people in Kendari do not feel indoctrinated and dictated with the religious understanding maintained by

ICM through its *da'mah*. This is noticeable in the following interview:

At the ICM we do not use a system that binds. That's one of our strengths. So everyone who comes does not have to be a member and there is no membership system. We make our sessions open to the public. It is up to the congregation whether to accept our way or not. So we are not an organization that has a permanent membership (interview with Ustadz Zezen).

Officials of the ICM claim that their organization is different from those of the NU, Muhammadiyah, Hizbuttahrir, or Wahda Islamiyah. The ICM has no organizational structure other than the foundation structure. It does not have a cadre system to recruit new members. It also does not implement a membership system that binds each participant as part of a group identity. Therefore, ICM does not have membership lists, cadre recruitment patterns, and region-based boards. The only administrators are the foundation organizers working within a limited scope. People who are recruited to be administrators are those who are closely related to Ustadz Zezen or those who are considered potential to develop the ICM program (interview with Ustadz Anwar, Ustadz Syamsul, and Ustadz Heru). The implication is that ICM does not have a permanent congregation. There is no one to be called "ICM follower", said Ustadz Syamsul. People who participate in ICM

preaching sessions, regularly or irregularly, are not automatically referred to as ICM followers. They may refer to themselves as part of the ICM or they may not. ICM implements an open and non-exclusive system that enables all those who wish to learn religion of Islam to have access through studies of religious text books opened every Tuesday evening and Friday evening as well as the *tahsinul Qur'an* that is open every Wednesday evening.

The ICM's Model of Religious Education Movement

The ICM is currently focusing more on educational activities as well as *da'wah*. The educational programs managed by ICM are of formal systems comprising the levels of Kindergarten / Qur'an Recitation Program, Elementary School, Junior High School, High School, and Prokid. *Da'wah* activities are conducted through routine preaching sessions, spreading out of the *da'i* to the community every Friday and on certain events, and managing ICM funded mosque constructions in Kendari City.

ICM's religious educational organization implements two systems. These comprise a system adopted from the National Education Service and a self-developed education scheme. The learning system in ICM schools is not much different from that of the national public schools. All subjects in the national education, including PPKN, are also taught in ICM schools. The addition of religious lessons is delivered outside of the regular lesson hours. For

Elementary and Junior High School levels there are additional religious lessons, namely History of Islamic Culture, Fiqh, al-Qur'an & Hadith, and Akidah Akhlak. Certain points in the religious lessons are synchronized with the understanding of ICM. For example, the textbook section explaining about the 20 attributes of God is revised by ICM teachers with an explanation that the attributes of God is not limited (interview Ustadz Zamil).

Schools managed by the ICM are not quite different in appearance from other integrated Islamic schools. Male students of Elementary, Junior High, and High Schools wear shortened trousers with a special uniform of ICM model. Schoolgirls wear long head scarf. Some Junior High School students and most of the High School as well as the Prokid students wear veils. Male teachers (*ustadz*) grow beard and wear *gamis* shirt with shortened trousers. Female teachers (*ustazah*) wear long headscarf and veils of dark color (black, dark blue, and dark brown). Cleaning service personnel and security guards also resemble the performance of the *ustadz*, although some of them wear t-shirts. This typical Salafi fashion adds in its own color into the world of national education.

ICM teachers assure that wearing veil is not an obligation in ICM schools. What is required is a long headscarf that covers down to the finger tip of an *akhwat* (Salafi term for female Muslim) at a standing position. Wearing veil is optional. However, since the ICM has succeeded in making veil as a culture (wherein the *ustazah*

wear veils), most of the female students (especially in high school and Prokid) also wear veils. This is particularly interesting because the veil is implanted through developing a habit or through a cultural approach introduced daily. In cultural studies this pattern is called habituation, a pattern of developing a habit that causes a tradition to be adopted with a natural sense without any compulsion.

The exclusive product of ICM schools is *Tabfīd al-Quran* (memorization of the Qur'an). All ICM schools are registered in the National Education Service under the names of SD - SMP TA (*Tabfīd al-Quran*). At the elementary and junior secondary levels it is required to memorize at least one *juḏ* (section) per year. It is expected that Elementary School children can memorize at least 6 *juḏ* upon graduation. The system similarly applies to students of Junior High School level.

ICM's Elementary and Junior High School education programs are currently among the favorites in Kendari. Although the fee is relatively high for Kendari area (registration fee for Elementary School is 4 million and the monthly charge is 225 thousand for academic year 2016), it does not stop the public interest to send their children to the ICM. Every year the ICM has to turn down prospective students by reasons of the high number of applicants and ICM's high standards for admission.

Along with the development of its campus, the ICM also developed high school education and Prokid programs with a boarding system. This program is available for both

male and female students. This boarding school system is similar to that of the *pesantren*, both for the high school and the Prokid levels. The only difference is that there is no preaching session after morning prayers. The learning system implements a full day school mode. The learning process begins at 07.30 by performing a demonstration of the Qur'anic memorization tasks to the assigned *ustadz*. The classroom sessions start at 08.15 and ends at 17.30. After sunset the program is Arabic textbook study, and it is scheduled from Sunday evening to Friday evening.

Routine Preaching Sessions for High School and Prokid Levels on Campus 2 ICM:

- Sunday evening: The Theology of *Ahlussunnab wal Jamaah*, by Ustadz Zezen
- Monday evening: *Fiqih* (Prayers for the death), by Ustadz Damar
- Tuesday evening: Interpretation of *Arbain Imam Nawawi*, by Ustadz Ahmad Laode
- Wednesday evening: Interpretation of *Syarab Riyadussalihin*, by Ustadz Awal
- Thursday evening: *Adab* (Morals), by Ustadz Syahidin
- Friday evening: The Nature of the Prophet's Prayers, by Ustadz Ismail

The learning mode at the High School level also applies two systems, namely the national education system and ICM internal system. In certain situations, ICM even modifies the national curriculum, such as by replacing the History lessons with Islamic History lessons and by filling

the subject PPKN with lessons of Theology or Theology Reinforcement. According to ustadz Ismail (the vice principal of the High School), this step was taken on account of some technical reasons and also because the learning basis of those subjects is similar. PPKN and Theology are subjects that aim to build human character.

The enthusiasm of the society in Kendari and the surrounding areas to send their children to the educational institutions belonging to ICM began to be noticeable in the second year. In the first year (academic year of 2015/2016) the number of TA High School students of ICM was only 21 (male and female), but in the second year (academic year 2016/2017) the number increased approximately 99%. The current number of ICM's TA High School is 40 (comprising male and female students). All students are hosted in a boarding school system, male and female.

For the Prokid level, the entire learning system is based on the curriculum developed by the ICM. The purpose of the Prokid is to train qualified *imam* (prayer leader) and *da'i* within the community of Kendari. The Prokid system in the Islamic education is similar to the system of the *Ma'had Aly*. Its learning system is more relaxed than that of the High School. Regular learning sessions only run until 12 o'clock at noon. The *mabasantri* (the official term used by ICM for Prokid student) is more

directed to self-study, memorizing and reviewing the books taught by the team of *ustadz*.

The choice of education course is not without reason. Ustadz Zezen considers that the educational path more effectively introduces the teachings of Islam understood by ICM. Consider the interview below:

This education means to change the civilization, and it must be carried out with *tarbiyah* and *tasfiyah*, education and purification of religion. The aim is to restore Islam to its source the way the first generation understood it. Next we instill Islamic values to the society, and that should be as early as possible. If we want to build an Islamic State, I think we agree that it should be through education. If at this point of time, for example, our country suddenly converts into an Islamic State, are we ready? Do our friends who support the ideology of *khilafah* have *pesantren* to produce *ulama* (Islamic scholar)? In the Arabic proverb, it says *tarju najata walan taslub masalikaha inna safinata lam tajri alal yabas*, you want success but you do not go through its way, indeed a boat does not sail on land. Prior to building a state, the Prophet SAW performed *tarbiyah* and *tasfiyah*, education and coaching. *Tasfiyah* leads to purification and cleansing. Other corresponding terms *takbilyah* and *tabliya*, discharging and filling in (interview with Ustadz Zezen)

The path of *tarbiyah* is the path to the formation of future generations. *Tarbiyah* is the way to achieve *tasfiyah* (purification). The Salafis realize that the religious situation of Indonesian society is not without Islamic religious knowledge. However, according to them, the system of religious understanding develops in Indonesia is not in accordance with the system of religious understanding of the Salafi. They want to develop a true, clean and straight Islamic creed (which is explicitly written in the *kitab ma'bad*). In their opinion, there are some views and religious understanding in Kendari society that are contrary to the true, clean, and straight faith. An example of these is the emergence of Shi'a and Ahmadiyah groups. There are also religious practices which have no foundation in the primary texts (Qur'an and Sunnah), such as the traditions of *barzanji* (the ritual of reciting the work of al-Barzanji) and *maulidan* (celebration of the Prophet's birthday).

To change the views and religious understanding of the community as mentioned above, it would not be effective to directly deliver *da'wah*. Preparing the young generation through education is an effective way to instill early beliefs of the Salaf or the first generation of Islam. Through education, young generation “purify” their faith according to the Islamic teachings understood by ICAT teachers as the true teachings of Islam. Through the educational path also, the young generation are emptied (*takhliah*) and then filled or decorated (*tabliyah*) with religious

lessons, especially with *tauhid* (faith of monotheism) that is true, straight, and pure.

ICM's Religious Perspective

The *Khittah Ma'bad* as quoted above confirms that the principle of ICM's understanding and education is that "the *Qur'anul Karim* and *As Sunnah As Shohibah* should apply as the main reference to every issue of education and teaching, with reference to the understanding of the pious first generation of Islam." The emphasis of ICM's understanding lies on the phrase "with reference to the understanding of the pious first generation of Islam (*salafussaleh*)". This explicitly indicates that ICM is part of the Salafi movement in Indonesia. All Salafi groups in Indonesia always declare themselves as followers of the pious first generation of Islam, more popularly referred to with the term *salafussaleh*. The term first Muslim generation refers to the Companions of the Prophet, the *Tabi'in*, and the *Tabi'i tabi'in*. The whole way of interpretation and religious practice of this *salafussaleh* are referred to as the role model of this religious group. This is the reason why they are called or call themselves Salafi.

However, the party of ICM apparently does not want to be identified as Salafi. They prefer to call themselves *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*. This is related to the negative image of the Salafis in Indonesia, as they are commonly identified as the basis of radicalism and terrorism. Groups associated with the terrorist networks in Indonesia are usually also linked to Salafi groups. The similarity of appearance and

religious reasoning (the difference only comprise certain issues and methods of *da'wab*) causes the Salafi groups to be easily equated and labeled as part of a radical and hard-line religious movement. This situation is also sensed by the ICM. Consider the interview as follows:

When we planned to open a branch in Wakatobi, we went to the Regent. The vice regent gathered all community leaders with their complete custom garments. Then I explained the purpose of this ICM establishment and they all agreed. We bought 10 hectares land there. The price was three billions at that time. The official initiation of the construction was attended by the Saudi Arabian Ambassador. Suddenly we were called by the local government. We found that some community leaders had already gathered. One of the officials said, "It would be better for us to bleed in advance instead of killing each other after the *pesantren* (has been established)." I said, "what's this? It Looks like something serious?" He said, "We have information that ICM is supported by ISIS. Secondly, ICM is among the extremists like FPI while this is a tourist area. We fear that if it is established the *santri* will attack the café, whereas this territory will be proclaimed as a tourist area". Furthermore, there is already *pesantren* Babussalam in this area, they fear there will be an unhealthy competition in recruiting students. Fourth, we are Wahabi. (interview with Ustadz Zezen)

Ustadz Zezen well recognizes that the stigma upon the Salafi groups in Indonesia is quite serious that it puts them

in a difficult situation wherein they have to be very careful. Answering the four issues above Ustadz Zezen explained: 1) ICM is a legitimate organization of the government. In 2013 the ICM received a badge of appreciation from the government of SBY for its reforestation program. In 2015, the campus 2 of ICM was inaugurated by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin. Legitimate organizations like this are not likely to be associated with extremist organizations like ISIS. 2) About the allegations of hardliners, Ustadz Zezen only mentioned Kendari as an example. Since the presence of the ICM in 2008, ICM never once did a demonstration or café attack. The *da'wah* pattern applied by ICM is more educative in nature. 3) About the accusation of being Wahabi, Ustadz Zezen explained that ICM's practice of worship is in accordance with the practice of Muslims in Mecca. In addition, the ICM also invited some people from the government and the community leaders to see for themselves the activities carried out by the ICM in Kendari City.

The main basis of the Salafi approach is the primary texts, the Quran and verified Hadith. Anything related to the instructions of the primary texts will serve as reference for the Salafi in making actions. That is the answer for the question why Salafis generally wear *isbal* garments (above the ankles), grow beards, and wear long headscarf (some even wear veils) as a reflection of morality in fashion suggested in the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah.

The main purpose of the Salafist religious movement (including ICM) is the purification of the faith. This is evident in the ICM's *khittab* that mentions the term true, clean, and straight monotheism. Further aspects comprise performing worship in accordance with the practice of the Prophet as well as the Companions and refraining from all forms of religious heresy while countering all forms of falsification of the authentic monotheism.

In terms of physical appearance (clothing), it seems that the Salafi groups (including ICM) share physical features and characteristics. The ICM campuses, both campus 1 and campus 2, are filled with women in long-scarf, children (kindergarten age) and adults (the teachers). Most of the female, and all of the female teachers, wear dark color veil. What is slightly different is the physical appearance of the men. Most of them wear *gamis* shirt and shorten trousers, and some *ustadz* wear black cap. When Ustadz Syahidin teach on Prokid campus he wears *koko* shirt, *sarong*, and a black cap. (his look reminds people of the traditional *Kyai* and *ustadz* in the *pesantren* of the *Nabdiyyin*).

Interestingly, Ustadz Zezen mentioned that the origin of the law of clothing is *urf* (custom), as in the following:

We can be strange with creed and garments although we understand that good clothes are those used locally, as long as it does not violate the *Shari'a*, because the origin of the law of clothing is *urf*. Although there are certainly some Sunnah clothes but these should refer to the original law, that is, *mubah* (permissible). Some people usually require that

Muslims should wear a cloak and so forth, but in fact that is not necessary because it is *urf*. Even the robe and the turban that the Arabs wear today are not the clothes of the Prophet. The garments that the Prophet Muhammad SAW wore were *ida'* and *idzar*, shawls and sarongs. It was almost similar to the current *ihram* clothes. Then along with the era development changes have occurred (interview with Ustadz Zezen).

The above interview shows that the choice of clothing that is used today is more to apply religious instructions (to cover the *aurat*) and to establish identity as a group of Salafi. The interesting point is that ICM does not blame the clothes used by the society in general. They maintain that the law of clothing model is *mubah*, and it is based on the custom of the local community (*urf*). Of course, as long as it does not violate the boundaries of the Sunnah of the Prophet in terms of covering the *aurat*. They are well aware that shirts and modified trousers are not the model the Prophet's clothes, but a modification of the Sunnah of the Prophet that obliges to cover the *aurat* and to wear *isbal* (clothing above the ankle).

In one recorded preaching Ustadz Zezen mentions that *manhaj istidlal* (use of argument) applied in ICM is *manhaj istidlal ala manhaj rasulillah wa ashabibi* (according to the method of the Prophet and his companions). Notice the recording quote below:

The difference between *Ablussunnah wal jamaah* and *ablulbid'ah wa ahwa* (those who follow heresy and desire) is on

istidlal or *manhajulistidlal*, the concepts and ways of understanding the Sunnah. When the Messenger of Allah explained to us about the divisions of the *Ummah*, he explained to us about the survivors. And when the Messenger of Allah explained to us about the group of survivors he explained the *manhaj istidlal* or the concept of postulates of how survivors are saved. In the Hadith stating: “This people will divide into 73 classes, and all of them are threatened except one. Who survive? Anyone whose concept of postulates refers to the Qur’an and Sunnah in accordance with what is understood and believed by me and my companions.”. This is the group that will be saved. Although people claim to postulate with the Qur’an and Sunnah but the way they understand them is in accordance with the imam of their group (not according to the apostle and his companions), it means that they are included in the group that is threatened with hell (according to the above hadith). This is because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) identified the survivors with *manhaj istidlal*, not with the name of institutions. Then follow the group that proceed in accordance with the Prophet (this quotation is also cited in research reports by Sapriallah et al, 2016)

Manhaj istidlal ala manhaj rasulillah wa ashabibi is an important foundation in understanding the way of thinking of the ICM and the Salafi in general. The Salafi count themselves as a continuation of the *Salaf* generation from the era of the Prophet, both in terms of behavior and in the way of *istidlal* or how to derive law. In Ustadz Zezen’s

understanding, the Hadith quoted above is a clear restriction between the groups that claim to proceed according to the Qur'an but do not apply the method of the Messenger and the Companions in establishing a law. Every group can claim to carry out the Quran and Sunnah but they not follow *istidlal ala manhaj* of the Prophet and his companions.

The Salafis applies the system of *rajab* (choosing the strongest argument) in sorting and selecting the text of Hadith that looks debatable, for example the tradition of *qunut*. In the view of ICM *ustadz*, the proposition which does not allow *qunut* after the morning prayer is stronger than the proposition or the Hadith texts that allows it. Therefore, they choose not to practice *qunut* except *qunut nazilah*, which does have a strong proposition. To establish this strong proposition, they use the standard of clerical agreement on the books of Hadith considered to have a strong degree of validity.

Based on the *istidlal method ala manhaj rasulillah wa ashabibi*, the Salafi, including ICM, divide the three categories of differences: *ikhtilaf*, *bid'ah*, and *inhiraf*. First, *ikhtilaf* is the difference between the perspective of the Companions, *Tabi'in*, *Tabi'i tabi'in* and *ulama* upon a text or a practice of worship. For example, difference in the practice of *qunut*, *jabar / sirr in reciting basmalah*, the prayer of *iftitah*, and other *furuiyah* objects. In this case, the Salafis usually choose the strongest argument to preserve as religious views and appeals. Because the choice of a strong proposition (both on *sanad* and *matan*) means closer to prophetic words and

practices, strong arguments can give Muslims greater confidence to practice worship according to the instruction and practice of the Prophet and his Companions.

Ikhtilaf is in principle not good for it can damage the unity of Muslims. Differences in religious views are very reasonable but having conflicts among each other is unusual and inconsistent with Islamic views. Ustadz Zezen recounts the dispute between Abdullah bin Umar and the Caliph Usman concerning the shortened prayers at the desert at a *hajj* season. It is narrated that Abdullah ibn Umar disagreed with Usman bin Affan regarding the noon and afternoon prayers at Arafah. In the Hadith of the Prophet, prayers at the field of Arafah must be performed in the mode of *jama' qasar* (shortened and combined). However, the Caliph Usman bin Affan wanted to keep it (to perfect the *rakaat*) as usual. The reason behind Usman bin Affan's decision is that he was *mukim* and he worried that the congregation would misunderstand the noon and afternoon prayers as two *raka'ahs* only. On the other hand Abdullah bin Umar still wanted the *qasar* prayer. However, when the prayers began and Usman bin Affan led as the *imam*, Abdullah bin Umar continued to follow the way of Usman bin Affan (processed from an interview with Ustadz Zezen).

Based on the above story, the *ikhtilaf* or disagreements between Muslims in terms of *furuiyah* should be avoided. The debate between Abdullah ibn Umar and the Caliph Usman bin Affan ended with unification. Abdullah ibn Umar willingly lowered his "ego" and prayed in the manner of

Usman bin Affan who acted as the *imam* of the prayer. Abdullah bin Umar did not leave the congregation for his stronger proposition. This shows that difference in opinion does not prevent people from sticking together. Differences in opinion are *ijtihadi* but they are not absolute. *Ikhtilaf* in the case of *furuiyah* is not supposed to cause a split between Muslims. In the view of Ustadz Zezen, by quoting from Ibn Hajr Al-Asqallani, it is allowable to take a less strong proposition and leave a stronger one for a greater benefit.

Secondly is *bid'ah*. *Bid'ah* or heresy is an act associated with religious rituals but has no basis in the primary texts, either the Qur'an or the Hadith. The word *bid'ah* is indeed identical with the Salafi. All Salafi groups have an idiom and an innovative agenda of *bid'ah*. In ICM, the word *bid'ah* is rarely mentioned in the *da'wah* delivered by *ustadz*. Consider the following interview:

Usually when there are questions about the matters that are considered *bid'ah*, Ustadz Zezen does not directly blame. People are first of all directed to our basic creed. Our reference is the Qur'an and our role model is the Messenger of Allah. The religion of Islam has been perfect and the Messenger of Allah has delivered all the knowledge from Allah. Religion is not of human words but based on God's words. So if there is a Hadith about *barzanji* of course the Prophet conveyed it but if nothing is delivered on such matter, it means there is no Hadith about it. If for example there is a claim to find a Hadith on it, please show us its chains of transmission and so forth. If it was truly

performed by the Prophet, Companions, and Tabi-tabi'in, we will surely perform it too. If no one of them ever performed it why should we? (interview with Ustadz Heru, ICM administrator).

The above interview indicates that the religious traditions performed by most of the Islamic community, such as *Barzanji* and *Maulidan*, are considered heretical. In a sense, it has no basis in the primary texts (the Qur'an and Hadith). Such heresy should not be performed because it is against the tradition of the *salafussaleh*. The companions of the Prophets, the Tabi'in, and the Tabi'i tabi'in had no record of performing traditions such as *barzanji* and *maulid*. These are new traditions that have no roots in the religious practice of the *salafussaleh*, or in the ICM term, the first generation of pious Muslims. Since it has no basis in the primary texts and the *salafussaleh* practice, heresy cannot be categorized as *ikhtilaf* like the case of *qunut* and the *qasar* prayer at Arafah. All of the *ustadz* of ICM apparently do not tolerate heretical traditions although they are willing to tolerate *khilafiyah* issues.

Thirdly is *inhiraf* (deviation). This is a religious behavior that deviates from the foundation of Islam. Ustadz Zezen exemplifies Shi'a and Ahmadiyah to be in this category, as in following interview:

There are *ikhtilaf*, *inhiraf*, and deviation. We have nothing to tolerate in *inhiraf*. For example, is our difference with the Shi'a. Shi'a is not *ikhtilaf* but *inhiraf*. Ahmadiyah is *inhiraf*. The domain of such matters is no longer within that

of the *kbilafiyah*. At such point of situation, we must be firm to uphold *amar makruf nabi munkar*. Then we should explain which one is truth and which one is fault. (interview with ustadz Zezen)

Inbiraf is an intolerable theological deviation. There is no truth discussion upon this subject, firmness should be asserted upon them. Shi'a and Ahmadiyya theology in the view of ICM are considered as deviation. This rationale makes the ICM act literally hard concerning the presence of Shi'a in Kendari City. Some ICM leaders joined the action against the Shi'ite group's activities in Kendari City in October 2016.

Conclusion

Salafism movement has a bright "future" in Kendari City. The three Salafi groups (ICM, Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, and Wahda Islamiyah) consistently carry out routine traditional Arabic text book learning session activities not conducted by other Islamic groups. The ICM movement looks more prominent as its infrastructure is good. Through educational institutions (from Kindergarten to High School and higher education) and regular Qur'anic recitation in Mosque Muadz bin Jabal as well as on radio Muadz bin Jabal ICM existence in Kendari becomes stronger. The interest of the community towards educational institutions run by the ICM every year is increasing, the enthusiasm of congregation following the routine recitation over the past few years is

also quite high, and Muadz bin Jabal radio is the only radio that consistently deliver Islamic preaching.

The ICM is an adaptive Salafi group. They collaborate with the government in countering terrorism by providing *da'i* in the Police department and in some private institutions. They also propagate a relatively adaptive method of *da'wah*. They are not reluctant to display the State symbol (Red and White Flag) in front of their offices and campuses. They accept Pancasila, and they do not have political agendas that would make them easily trapped into boxes of difference. The ICM *da'i* acknowledge not to hesitate to join *qunut* behind the *imam* that perform *qunut*, as it is only *khilafiah*. The ICM *da'i* is recognized to have good ability in explaining religious narratives with a reliable text base. The social traditions considered to be heresy are not simply dropped but placed in the foundation of the primary “religious texts” primary.

The ICM will have considerable influence in Kendari in the near future. The relatively young Ustadz Zezen still has plenty of time to become a “Great Kyai in Kendari City. This is also because the pattern of regeneration of religious figures in other organizations does not come into view. It is not surprising that the ICM gains considerable trust in religious contexts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abd. Kadir R. "Paham Keagamaan Sumardi", in Kadir Ahmad. 2009. *Varian Gerakan Keagamaan*. Balai Litbang Agama Makassar
- Ahmad, Abdul Kadir. 2004. *Masuknya Islam di Sulawesi Selatan dan Tenggara*. Balai Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama Makassar.
- Anggareini, Dewi and Muhammad Aswan Zanymu. 2013. *Konstruksi Budaya Kehidupan Beragama Hizbullah dan Pengikut Ahmadiyah Berbasis Kearifan Lokal di Kabupaten Konawe Selatan* in Jurnal Kanal. Vol 1. No. 2
- Bucaille, M. 1978, *Bibel, Qor'an dan Sains Modern*, trans; HM. Rasjidi, Bulan Bintang Jakarta.
- Fromm, E., 1999, *Revolusi Harapan*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta.
- Fromm, E., 2001, *Konsep Manusia Menurut Marx*, trans. Agung Prihantoro, *Marx's Concept of Man*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta.
- Hasbullah-Bakry, 1961, *Nabi Isa dalam Al- Qur'an dan Muhammad dalam Bijbel*, Penerbit AB Siti Syamsiah, Solo.
- Klausner, J., 1979, "The Source and Beginning of the Messianic Idea", dalam Leo Landman (ed), *Messianism in the Talmudic Era*, KTAV Publishing House Inc., New York.
- Kurtz, Lester. 2007. *Gods in Global Village. The World Religion in Social Perspective*. Pine Forge Press.

- Munir, Misnal. n.d. *Messianisme dalam Pespektif Sejarah*, www.jurnal.filsafat.ugm.ac.id; retrieve on 02 Maret 2009.
- Pananrangi, Tomo. 2009. *Gerakan Tajdid Muhammadiyah di Kendari*. Research Report; STAIN Kendari
- Sachedina, A.A., 1981, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism*, State university of New York Press, New York.
- Sapriallah dan Irfan. 2010. *Menelusuri Pabam Keagamaan Agama Allah Ala Paruru*. Research Report; Bidang Kehidupan Balai Litbang Agama Makassar.
- Sapriallah dan Pendais Haq. 2015. *Stigmatisasi Terhadap Aliran GAFATAR di Sulawesi Tenggara*. Research Report; Bidang Kehidupan Balai Litbang Agama Makassar
- Sapriallah. 2009. *Potret Organisasi NU di Sulawesi Tenggara*. Research Report; Balai Litbang Agama Makassar.
- Sobrino, J. 1993, "Messiah and Messianism: Reflectians from El Salvador" in: Wim Beuken, et.al (Eds), *Messianism Throught History*, SCM Press, London.
- Subair Sunar. 2010. *Pabam Keagamaan Puang Malea di Polewali Mandari*. Research Report, Bidang Kehidupan Balai Litbang Agama Makassar.
- Syamsurijal dan Paisal. 2015. *Para Pencari Tuhan*. Research Report, Bidang Kehidupan Balai Litbang Agama Makassar.
- Toffler, A., 1989, *Kejutan Masa Depan*, Alih bahasa: Sri Koesdiyantinah, PT. Pantja Simpati, Jakarta.
- Turner, Brian. S. 1991. *Agama dalam Perspektif Sosiologi*. Kreasi Wacana, Jogyakarta.

www. fuui.wordpress.com. *Messianisme dalam Perspektif Islam*
(retrieved on 02 Maret 2009).

Zaenu, La Ode. 1985. *Buton dalam sejarah Kebudayaan*.
Surabaya

Zahari, A.M. 1974. *Sejarah dan Adat Fiy Darul Butuni* (Paper).

Zayd, Nashr Hamid Abu. 2002. *Tekstualitas Qur'an*. LKIS,
Jogyakarta.