BEING PIOUS AMONG INDONESIAN SALAFIS

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Abstract

This essay is a brief explanation on the development of the process of Islamic Puritanism among Salafis in Indonesia. The article argues that the Salafis in Indonesia are in the process of puritanization and Arabization. Being pious, to them, means that one has to become an Arab and a Puritan Muslim. This puritanization of Islam is shown by purifying Islamic doctrines from any deviation. That is, religious concepts and practices should be based on the Qur'an and the Sunna only. Likewise, Salafis present themselves as like Arabs as their men let their beard grows, wear turban and trousers above their ankles, while their women wear enveloping veil (niqab). The research also found out that the using of Arabic words, like abi (father), umi (mother), 'ami (uncle), 'ama (aunt), akhi and ukhti for friend, are widely popular. Changing name from Javanese to Arabic is another form of Arabization. The acts of piety among Indonesian purist Salafis show that Salafi challenges both secular and traditional worlds which aim to create a stronger bonding every the followers among them, but, at the same time, distance them from other groups.


Keywords: Salafi, Wahhabism, pietization, Salafism, Arabization,

A. Introduction

Contemporary development of Islam was marked by the mushrooming of the emergence of various fundamentalist Muslim groups. Islamic fundamentalism has brought about important influence to the Muslim world, particularly the ideology of Islamic puritanism. Islamic puritanism in the sense of the need to return to “a pure and pristine Islam” by following salaf’ or al-salaf al-sālih, the pious ancestor, has become one of important doctrines promoted by these fundamentalist Muslim groups. Fundamentalist Muslim groups in the Muslim world insist on the purification of Islamic teachings from non Islamic elements. There is re-Islamization which means that Muslim identity, as an inherited cultural legacy, originated from the pious ancestor has to be expressed explicitly in daily life.\(^1\) Instead of being concealed Islamic identities are strongly shown in explicit terms. Resorting to an explicit formulation is important to make choice and to disentangle the practices and discourses where a religion is embedded in a particular culture.\(^2\)

From the perspective of religious piety, Islamic Puritanism becomes the foundation of everyday life identities practiced by puritan Muslims. Pious men are those who attempt to strengthen religious mental identity by practicing religious rituals and producing religious identity.\(^3\) Pious men are those who consistently perform religious rituals

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and follow identities urged by the religion. In this case, acts of piety, a process of becoming and being good Muslim, manifested in explicit forms of religious identities among Muslims can be interpreted. Despite producing religious identities, pietization also means establishing sacred and religious orders, and even, challenging existing secular orders and arrangements.\(^4\) In the context of Muslim world, some Muslim groups have tried to establish enclaves to set up religious order which differs to that of surrounding society.

This work tries to examine an example where the process of religious pietization happens among purist radical Salafis in Indonesia. They believe that good Muslims are those who believe that Islam has to be purified from any deviance by going back to the Qur’an and Sunna. In daily practice, they want to implement a pristine Islam as practiced by the pious ancestors or al-salaf al-salih.\(^5\) Instead of producing physical identities such as wearing *jubah* and turban, *niqab* for women, let their beards grow, and speaking Arabic, they develop particular social arrangement which differ from surrounding orders. The phenomenon of Salafi in Indonesia has been widely analyzed by some scholars. Hasan in some of his works elucidates the nature, the dynamic and development of the early period of Salafi in Indonesia,\(^6\) and the linkage between Indonesian Salafi to their transnational network. Wahib continues to discuss the development of Indonesian purist Salafi after the dissolution of Laskar Jihad.\(^7\) Wahib et.al. discuss about Salafi

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\(^5\) Ibid., p. 125.


engagement and disengagement to the wider members of society. Meanwhile, Wahid concentrates on the way purist Salafi nurtures and encourages the growth or development of their movement in the map of Islamic movement in Indonesia. Hasan, Wahib, and Wahid in some part of their works also discuss Salafi attitudes, including retreating from secular world by creating Salafi enclaves in the form of pesantren, as a part of maintaining their system of beliefs, but they skipped the discussion of the attitudes, identities and piety. Therefore, they do not pay close attention to the attitudes and identities of Salafi as a part of piety.

This article tries to elaborate the attitudes and identities of the member of Salafi from the concept of piety. I argue that as a religion group, Salafis have a particular concept of piety and they implement this concept in their daily practices. Throughout this article, some questions raised are: What and how is the concept of piety according to Salafis? How do they implement the concept of piety in their everyday life? Before answering these two questions, this work will cover a brief discussion on the development of Islamic puritanism in Indonesia. The discussion then, continues to answer those questions. The first answer will present an overview of the concept of piety according to Salafis, and the position of the concept in relation to Islamic puritanism. The second answer will elaborate the practices, attitudes and propositions of Salafis in the implementation of the concept of piety in their daily life. This section will concentrate on two issues, e.i. the view of Salafi on western and local culture, and their physical identities in everyday life. This practice will be elucidated from the perspective of Turner’s concept of acts of piety. According to him, piety refers to habitual acts and attitudes of obedience which can be seen from individuals practices and activities. Everyday practices embody a set of behaviors, deeds, and dispositions which determine the concept of particular religious beliefs, practices and

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objects. In this context, the concept of piety has a close relation to the creation of identities which manifests among believers in practicing their doctrines and teachings. Despite manifest in religious ritual, the identities embody in the form of religious symbols demonstrating superiority within religious field over others. Moreover, for religious men, acts of piety also mean challenging secular and profane world. For Salafi, Western and traditional world are considered as the profane.

B. Islamic Puritanism in Indonesia

Salafi is known as a group of Muslims who propagate Islamic Puritanism for them. The implementation of Islamic doctrines in their pristine form is a must to maintain the holiness of Islam. Under the framework of puritanization, religious activities should be based on al-Qur’an and ensure the Sunnah as two Islamic main sources in order to purity Islamic doctrines deviations and invalid religious innovation (bid’a). The purification is aimed at separating Islam from all un-Islamic facets, and this is needed to become pious Muslims.

The initial phase of the development of Islamic Puritanism in Indonesia can be traced back to the Dutch colonial period in nineteenth century when some Muslims from Minangkabau, West Sumatra, propagated ideas similar to that of Islamic Puritanism after returning from the pilgrimage to Mecca, well known as Padri Movement. This is considered as the early period of Islamic Puritanism in Indonesia. However, the Padri movement has been defeated by the Dutch Colonial because of their involvement in some rebellions against the Dutch. The failure of Paderi Movement gives significant impact to the decrease of

11 Ibid., p. 123.
the dissemination of Islamic puritanism in the archipelago. Hamka argues that Islamic puritanism was hibernate in the post Padri Movement until early twentieth century when Muhammadiyah was set up in 1912.\textsuperscript{14} This was strengthened by the establishment of \textit{al-Irsyad al-Islamiyyah} known as al-Irsyad in 1914 and Persatuan Islam, known as PERSIS, in 1923. These organizations are known as modernist Islamic organizations which propagate the idea of calling back to the Qur’an and Sunnah. These organizations become main agent of the idea of Islamic modernism in Indonesia. They play an important role in the development of Islamic Puritanism in Indonesia until the contemporary period.

However, instead of the modernist organizations set up in the colonial period taking the lead, the development of puritan Islam in the period of Independent Indonesia was enriched by the emergence of new modernist organizations like Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, hence forward DDII) which was established in 1967.\textsuperscript{15} Initiated by M. Natsir, a former Indonesian prime minister (1950-1951), DDII was set up to strengthen Islamic propagation in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{16} This institution has trained \textit{muballigs} (Muslim preachers) and has sent them to remote areas of Indonesia.\textsuperscript{17}

DDII has a close relation to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, the heartland of the Puritanist Wahhabi.\textsuperscript{18} This relationship has made DDII one of the main gates for the entrance of Puritan Islam in Indonesia. The development of Islamic Puritanism was followed by the establishment of Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (Institute for the Study of Islam and Arab, LIPIA) in 1980, an institution financially supported by the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. DDII and LIPIA play important role in the further dissemination of Islamic Puritanism in the period of Post New Order. LIPIA has produced hundreds of

\textsuperscript{14} Hamka, \textit{Ayahku}, pp. 75–6.
\textsuperscript{17} Robert W. Hefner, “Print Islam: Mass Media and Ideological Rivalries among Indonesian Muslims”, \textit{Indonesia}, no. 64 (1997), p. 84.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 86–8.
graduates who have been able to continue their studies in Saudi Arabia,\textsuperscript{19} and the Middle East alumni play important role in the propagation of wahhabism in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{20}

After the fall of the New Order of Indonesia, Salafi has played an important role in the development of Islamic puritanism in Indonesia. As a group of Islamic movement, Salafi has been widely coloring Islamic movement in Indonesia since the beginning of Indonesian reformation period. Salafi movement has attracted great attention when they established Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wal Jama’ah (FKAWJ) or Ahlussunnah Wal Jama’ah Communication Forum. This FKAWJ set up Laskar Jihad in 2000 under the leading coordination of Ja’far Umar Thalib. Laskar Jihad was very popular and widely known as a militia group by its calling for jihad to Ambon (Maluku) for about two years. It could mobilize thousands of Young Moslems to join jihad in Ambon. They also involved themselves in the horizontal conflict in Poso Sulawesi.\textsuperscript{21} The involvement of Salafi to some horizontal conflicts in some geographical areas through Laskar Jihad has boosted their existence in the landscape of Islamic movement in Indonesia. Some Salafi enclaves in various places, usually in the form of pesantren, have been set up by ex militia of Laskar Jihad. The enclaves have become sacred world where Salafis study Islamic teachings and implement their doctrines of puritanism.\textsuperscript{22}

C. Puritanism: The Foundation of Salafist Acts of Piety

Piety originates from the Latin word pietas, which means deep respect and obedience to God. It is also associated with pity, the feeling of sorrow and compassion. In sociological terms, it means the everyday practices that embody a set of dispositions and characters which in turn determine taste for and perceive particular religious beliefs, practices and


\textsuperscript{20} Hasan, \textit{Laskar Jihad}., pp. 47-8.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid}., pp. 45–7.

objects.\textsuperscript{23} This means that the concept of piety has a close relation to the creation of identities which manifests among believers in practicing their doctrines and teachings in the form of religious rituals and symbols. In relation to religious piety, among the believers, religious practices and rituals are symbolic capital needed in the process of pietization. Muslims need to perform some religious rituals and activities such as praying (\textit{salat}) five times a day, fasting (\textit{sawm}) during Ramadan, and going pilgrim (\textit{hajj}) to Mecca in the process of pietization among Muslims. These rituals indicate obedience to God and will make Muslims to become good Muslims.

The concept of Salafi piety has its root from their Islamic theology (\textit{aqīda}). They are followers of Wahhabism who have their own references in practicing religious rituals. The main facet of the doctrines of Wahhabism is calling back to the Qur’an and Sunnah. Islam sought to be purified from any deviance and this is the only way to increase the quality of Muslim religiousness. Muslims are not allowed to add or reduce Islamic teachings and rituals. Rituals must be based on the main sources of Islam and any religious innovation is considered \textit{bid’a} and all various forms of \textit{bid’a}, they argue, are misguided (\textit{kullu bid’a ḍalāla}) and will lead Muslims to Hell (\textit{kullu ḍalālat fi’l nār}).\textsuperscript{24}

Any non-Islamic element is considered as only contaminating Islamic teachings and will most likely decrease religious consciousness of Muslims. During my fieldwork, the spirit of this puritanism vividly can be seen from Salafis in their daily lives. They try to implement literal meanings of Qur’an and Sunna in their lives. This practice has created physical identities of Salafi such as male letting their beard grow, wearing turban, cloak, and trousers right to ankle and female wearing niqab. Moreover, they also have produced some words or phrases indicating the ignorance of Salafi to accept any non Islamic element such as \textit{bid’a} (religious innovation) or \textit{ahl al-bid’a} (proponents of religious innovation), \textit{beragama tanpa dasar} (practicing religion without valid proof), \textit{kaki tangan dan agen Barat} (agent and pander of the West).

The aim of Islamic purification upheld by Salafi is to maintain the


\textsuperscript{24} Sewed, “Dakwah Salaf adalah Dakwah TAUHID”.

\textit{Al-Jāmi’āb}, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2017 M/1438 H
holiness of Islamic doctrines.⁵ Therefore, the notion of radical purist Salafi on piety is identical with purity, purifying Islamic teachings from any deviation and innovation and not allowing Muslims to practice heretic innovation (bid’at) and other un-Islamic elements while urging them to apply pristine Islamic teachings in the whole aspects of their lives. In this case, Muslims should comply with Islamic teachings as practiced by the holy prophet and the early pious generation of Muslims (salaf al-ṣāliḥ) who had practiced Islamic doctrines under the guidance of al-Qur’an and Sunna. They believe that good Muslims are pious Muslims in the sense that they have to practice pristine Islam as practiced by pious ancestors.

Instead of the ideology of puritanism, Salafi attitude towards the worlds has its root in the concept of al-wala’ wa al-bara’ (lit. loyalty and disavowal). Al-wala’ wa al-bara’ means the adaptation of a servant to what is liked or hated by God which covers words, deeds, beliefs and people.⁶ According to Salafis, this concept plays decisive role in determining good or bad Moslims. It is a part of ‘aqīda (Islamic theology) which can measure the quality of faith to the oneness of God.⁷ It is a rope that tightens the faith to God.⁸

D. Rejecting Local Customs and Western Ideas

According to Berger, the rejection of the secular world has become an important character of religious revivalism in the modern world. As a response to the process of secularization, religious revivalist groups create religious subcultures designed to keep out the influence of other community.⁹ Instead of rejecting the secular world, Turner argues that

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⁵ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.
revivalist groups also represent a challenge to traditional one,\textsuperscript{31} and this also happens to Salafi in Indonesia as will be discussed later.

Purification also means purifying religious world from profane or secular one. Salafi believes that secular worlds are sources of religious deviations and innovations (\textit{bid'a}). Some Salafis argue that the spirit of Islam decreases because Muslims are busy with their profane world.\textsuperscript{32} They also believe that the purity of Islamic teachings envisages two serious threats i.e. folk customs and western values. Folk customs become sources of religious innovations (\textit{bid'a}) and superstitions (\textit{khurafāt}) which contaminate Islamic teachings by adding or reducing religious rituals (\textit{shari'a}) and beliefs (\textit{‘aqīda}). Some religious innovations which originate from customs such as \textit{yasinan} and \textit{taḥlīl} in some occasions such as in mourning days (seven days, forty days, 100 days after the funeral) and several religious gatherings. These practices contaminate the pristine of Islamic teachings.

At the same time, Salafi believes that western ideas and practices intrude on the consciousness of Islamic religiousness and this weakens the spirit of Islam. Secularism which separates sacred and profane, and democracy with its derivative values and practices such as political party, general election, and the concept of nation state are among western ideas which imbue Muslims and separate them from Islamic teachings. In this case, they urge Muslims to revive Islamic teachings and implement them in daily life.

Local tradition is one of the sources of Islamic deviation. Customs and local traditions are sources of superstition (\textit{tahayyul}) and innovation (\textit{bid'a}) that are harshly forbidden by religious teachings. Indonesian Islam is almost entirely overwhelmed by corrupt local traditions. Folk customs became confused with Islamic doctrines. Wahabism, which propagates Islamic puritanism, endeavors to realize the pristine form of Islam founded only on its fundamental sources. Religious ideas and activities, therefore, should be based on the main sources of Islam, al-Qur’an and


\textsuperscript{32} Interview with several informans, Agustus - Oktober 2007, Kebumen.
Sunnah. The only way to consistently adopt this path is by following the pious first Muslim generation (al-salaf al-sālihin). Any religious assimilation is considered religious deviation and syncretism, therefore, it is not allowed. This indicates that the attempt at pietyzation among the Salafis is closely connected with symbolic struggles against traditionalists (who are associated with syncretism and therefore heretic).

In the study of religions, struggles against traditional values have become important character of pietyzation among the proponents of religious fundamentalism. Turner argues that among religious fundamentalism, in spite of puritanization, pietyzation also means eliminating traditional values which are considered making religious practices far from the sources. In this case, religious fundamentalism believes that religious practices and rituals should be oriented back to the original sources.

The ontology of purifying Islam from folk customs can be seen in various forms. For example, a member of Salafi reject the tradition of tahlilan (chanting lā ilāha illa Allāh) and yasinan (reciting yāsin, a sura in the Qur’an) that are practiced on several occasions like seven days, forty days and thousand days after funeral, a tradition commonly performed by traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia. They believe that such religious practices are parts of bid’a. Tahlilan and yasinan are just customs and not parts of Islamic teachings.

Salafi also condemns celebrating the birth of Prophet Muhammad (mawlid al-Rasūl) which is very popular among traditionalist Muslims. Traditionalist Muslims celebrate mawlid al-rasūl by reciting and chanting Kitāb al-Mawlid al-Dibaghi by Zayn al-‘Abidin Ibn Ja’far ibn Hasan al-Barzanji (also known as kitāb al-Barzanji) that consists of prose and poems on the perfection and superiority of the Holy Prophet. Salafi, however, believes that although the book consists of praises to the Holy prophet, chanting the book in the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday is not an indication of love to the holy Prophet. They say that

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35 Interview with several informans, (Agustus - Oktober 2007).
the holy Prophet never asked Muslims to celebrate his birthday, let alone chanting al-Barzanji. Four guided caliphs (al-khulafāʿ al-rashidūn) also never celebrated the Prophet’s birthday. It does not have any valid religious proof. It is clearly religious innovation (bidʿa) and it should, therefore, be rejected.36

In addition to their opposition to customs and local traditions, the process of Islamic puritanization also has expressed its rejection of Western ideas and practices. Salafi believes that Islam should be free from Western ideas and practices. This is important to them because they believe that such practices and ideas contaminate the purity of Islamic teachings and they are likely to turn Muslims away from Islam. Likewise, to them, this may lead Muslims to abandon Islamic values and replace them with Western values. In other words, this means that Western practices and ideas decrease the spirit of Islam and religious piety.

Western ideas and practices are pools of religious deviations. On behalf of freeing Islam from Western ideas, Salafi rejects liberalism and democracy and their derivative values and practices such as general election, parliamentary, and political party. In this case, Indonesian Salafis are people without political party. They are golput (golongan putih/ literary means white group), people who do not vote in the Indonesian general election. They argue that general election in which political parties are involved is not part of Islamic teachings. Islam does not acknowledge political party. The holy prophet never asked Muslims to set up political party, and his Companion also never practiced it. It is derived from Western democracy and it contradicts Islamic teachings. They believe that political party will only fragment the Muslim community into separately wrecked groups and this will lead to schism in the Muslim community. Moreover, general election also aims to elect people who will sit in representative assembly or parliament, an institution which is created by human beings and which does not have valid religious argument. Again, Salafi believes that parliament is a product of Western ideas and values and it is not acknowledged by Islamic teachings. Therefore, in their opinion,

democracy and its derived practices and ideas should be rejected.\footnote{Interview with Abdullah (Apr 2006). More discussion on the rejection of Indonesian Salafi to the West, see Ahmad Bunyan Wahib, “Dakwah Salafi: Dari Teologi Puritan sampai Anti Politik”, \textit{Media Syari'ah}, vol. 13, no. 2 (2013).}

Rationalism, particularly in the understanding of religious teachings, is another Western idea that is harshly rejected by Salafi. They believe that the prophet has given clear method to understand Islamic teachings. Prophet tradition (\textit{al-sunna al-nabawiyya}) provides both materials and methods that Muslim should follow in understanding Islamic teachings. Muslims, therefore, are not allowed to use their logical argument in understanding Islamic teachings. They should comprehend religious teachings based on what the holy Prophet has said and guided towards. Religious practices and knowledge should be based on literal meaning of the sacred text, namely al-Qur’an and Sunna. Muslims do not need to apply their logic to interpret Islamic teachings. Literal understanding of Islamic texts is the only valid method which has been taught by the Prophet and has been practiced by the early generation of Muslims.\footnote{Interview with Mustafa (Apr 2006), Banyumas.} Based on this, therefore, Salafi rejected rationalism in interpreting and understanding religious doctrines.

Salafi also reject gender equality. They argue that gender equality propagated by the feminists is a part of Western ideas which, if accepted, will destroy the Muslim family institution. \textit{“Mereka adalah perusak tatanan keluarga Islam”} (they are Muslim family destroyers).\footnote{Interview with Hasanuddin (Apr 2006), Banyumas.} According to them, Islam provides set of doctrines which regulate family institution. The doctrines determine the rights and obligations of the members of the family which should be followed by every Muslim. \textit{“Suami adalah pemimpin keluarga”} (husband is family leader).\footnote{Interview with Yuswa (June 2006), Kebumen.} Muslim feminists, however, have tried to revise the literal understanding of these doctrines by acknowledging the concept of gender equality which contradicts Islamic teachings. The adoption of the concept of gender equality proposed by feminists, therefore, should be rejected.
E. Creating Physical Identities: The Icon of Arab

Piety is very close to the production of identity. In challenging secular world, acts of piety provide a sense of empowerment as the individual comes to take on practices that may cut them off from their traditional environment and their old identities. It means that being a pious man is being different from the old traditional fashion and identity. This means that piety creates particular and special identity that differs from the others and demonstrates its superiority within religious field.

In the case of Salafi, cutting off old identities manifests in some forms of initiation which marks the rebirth of a Muslim. Muslims who join the Salafi group ‘undress’ their old identities, and replace them by new ones (Arab considered Islamic). Among these new ones are wearing turban (jalabiyya) and izbāl and producing particular type of mentality under the frame of following pious ancestor (al-salaf al-sālih). These become the physical and symbolic capital of their piety.

Arab color was quite strong when I was involved in some small discussions with some Salafis in some religious gatherings and pesantrens. Arabic words such as ana, antum were continuity spoken. This was strengthened by the cloak and turban they wore. For Salafi, mode of fashion can be an accurate standard for identifying good or bad Muslim. In this case, the notion of going back to al-Qur’an and Sunna plays important role. A pious Muslim is a Muslim who follows the Prophet deeds and attitudes in the whole aspect of life and vice versa. In the case of mode of fashion, on behalf of following prophetic deeds (sunnat al-rasūl), some men let their beard grow and become men with long beard. They also wear turban (jalabiyya) and trouser above their angkles (izbāl). Meanwhile some women wear veil to cover their faces when they are in public places because it is a taboo for their faces to be seen by none muhrim. According to them, this mode of fashion is the best mode which is suggested by the prophet as stated in some hadīths stating that good Muslims are those who wear clothes as the holy Prophet did, and it is a prophet deed which should be practiced by all. In their view, Muslims who follow these prophet deeds are considered good Muslim and, otherwise, Muslims who do not follow the prophet on this are considered bad.

Muslims. Musthofa and Yuswa argue that whether someone is a true believer or not can be seen from his deed, language and dress. Good Muslims have to behave like *al-salaf al-sālih* who practiced religious rituals under the guidance of God. They spoke in the language of Al-Qur’an and worn Islamic dress code. Among Islamic dress is *Jalabiyya*. It is a mode of fashion suggested by the Holy Prophet.\(^{42}\)

However, it is important to note that, mode of fashion or dress code considered as a physical symbol of piety by Salafi is popular among people in the Middle East (Arab). Salafi takes Arab mode of fashion as one of the symbols of piety. A Muslim who wears turban and *Jalabiyya* is considered as a pious Muslim. This means that being a pious Muslim is being like an Arab. In this case, pietization, therefore, means also Arabization. Wearing turban is a kind of Arabization. Even, for liberal Muslim, this mode of fashion has nothing to do with religious identity. This is just a mode of fashion commonly worn by Arabs in the Middle East. If it is worn by non Arabs, it means that Arabic culture has been adopted by them. In contradiction to liberal Muslims, Salafis consider it as a mode of fashion suggested by many hadiths. They believe that this mode of fashion is part of pious identity.

Arabization also happens in the form of the use of Arabic words in some aspects of their daily life. Salafis believe that Arabic is a symbol of piety because it is the language of Al-Qur’an. Therefore, good Muslims are those who speak in Arabic.\(^{43}\) Naming son and daughter with Arabic words is the most popular among the people. Indeed, this trend does not only apply to Salafis. It is a trend which is widely popular among Muslim societies. It is very common for Muslims to name their children in Arabic. Like other Muslims who tend to name their children with Arabic name, people who join the Salafi always name their kids with Arabic words. Ahmad, Muhammad, Muqbil, Zubair, Umar, Abdullah etc for sons; and Aisha, Fatima, Fariha etc for daughters are among the names used for their children. The Arabization process widely practiced by Salafis, however, is not only giving Arabic name for their children. They change

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\(^{42}\) Interview with Musthofa and Yuswa (Apr 2006).

\(^{43}\) During my research, Arabic as Muslim language has been discussed in some religious circles (*pengajian*). All speakers argued that Arabic is language of heaven, and good Muslims should speak this language.
their Javanese name into Arabic too. For example, Sutarjo is changed to become Abdul Qahhar. Sucipto is changed to become Abdullah. This aims to make Muslims closer to the Arabs.

*Kunya* name or teknonymy, the practice of calling people (parents) by their children’s names) is another form of the Arabization that is popularly practiced by Indonesian Salafis. During my field research, Salafis always call their colleague with the kunya. *Kunya* is aimed at giving respect to those who is called. The most common *kunya* is abu, as well as ibn, for male and ummu, as well as bint, for female. This *kunya* comes to the fore in the form of calling people by putting the word *abu* for men or *ummu* for women in front of their kids name and their surname at the end.\(^\text{44}\) For example, a man is called Abu Muqbil Yuswaji. This indicates that his surname is Yuswaji and he has a son called Muqbil. He is Muqbil’s father. So, he is called Abu Muqbil Yuswaji. Another instance is Ummu ‘Umar Nabila. This indicates that her name is Nabila and she has a son called ‘Umar. She is called Ummu ‘Umar Nabila, then. Almost all, if not all, Salafists adopt this practice.

Likewise, in a place of words such as *abu* for men and *ummu* for women with kid(s), Salafists also use the words *ibn* (son) for boys (also adult single male) and *bint* (daughter) for girls (and adult single female) which are put after their surname and followed by their father’s name. For example, a Salafist who is called Umar ibn Abdillah indicates that Umar is his name and his father is Abdullah. He is, therefore, called Umar ibn Abdillah which means Umar the son of Abdullah. This applies to women too. For example, Amira bintu Umar indicates that her name is Amira, and her father’s name is Umar. Therefore, she is called Amira bintu Umar which means Amira the daughter of Umar. The adoption of this *kunya* applies in both everyday practice and formal one. In everyday activities, Salafists will call their colleagues by their *kunya*.

Arabic is also used in the form of calling relatives and colleagues. The words which are popular among Salafists are *abi* (my father) and *ummi* (my mother); ‘*ami* (uncle or my uncle) and ‘*ama* (aunt). ‘*Ami* and ‘*ama* are a pair of words which are also used to call elderly people (who are in the same age groups with their fathers or mothers). ‘*Ami* is for man and

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\(^{44}\) Further discussion on kunya among Salafis, see Din Wahid, “Nurturing the Salafi Manhaj, pp. 228.
‘ama is for woman. “Ini ‘ami. Ucapkan salam.” (This is ‘ami. Say hello to him). This is the sentence commonly suggested to their children when I visits their home. Other Arabic words which are popularly used among Salafists are akbi and ukhti. They call their brother akbi (brother or my brother) and their sister ukhti (sister or my sister). Both akbi and ukhti are also used to call friends. Akbi is used to address boys and ukhti girls. Some Arabic personal pronouns like ana (means I), anta (means you in singular form) and antum (means you in plural form) are also commonly used among Salafists. In conclusion, Arabization which is considered as pious identity among Indonesian Salafists happens in their dress code as well as in their names and spoken words.

Some Salafists argue that they adopt kunya because they believe that it is a part of piety. First Muslim generation, al-salaf al-salih, practice this kunya in their daily life. “Kami tidak beragama dengan mengikuti tanpa pengetahuan. Kunya bukan hanya merubah nama, tetapi juga sebagai penghormatan.” (We do not follow religious practice without question. Kunya does not only change the name, but also mean an honor to people we call.) As good followers of al-salaf al-salih, Salafists implement this kunya in their daily life. This indicates that for Salafists, calling people by following Arab is a part of acts of piety in their everyday life.

F. Challenging Traditional and Secular Worlds

In his “Acts of Piety”, Turner argues that in addition to signifying religious quality, acts of piety also often represent a challenge to both secular and the traditional world. This phenomenon applies to many forms of religious revivalism in modern life. In this case, challenging secular world also means opposition to the stance of secular religious people who openly accepted modernization. In the case of Islam, it manifests in the form of Islamic revivalism, which tries to bring about a restoration of Islamic beliefs and life style. In many ways the Islamic revivalism directly contradicts modern ideas. Islamic teachings are articulated through the acts of piety that create religious life styles. These religious life styles are in competition with tradition and with secular

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45 Interview with Hasanuddin (June 2006).
habitus of other Muslims as well as with other religious traditions. The phenomenon also applies to Salafi in Indonesia. The discussion on pietization among Salafis in the previous part of this paper indicates that they are in the position of challenging secular as well as traditional world respectively. Challenging secular world has a close relation to the ideology of Puritanism that insists on the Salafi rejection of Western ideas and also folk customs. The ideology of puritanism forces Salafis to purify Islamic teachings from any deviation. They believe that as a set of sacred values, Islamic teachings that originate from the Divine world, should be freed from profane ideas and practices. Along the history of Islam, Western ideas and folk customs are two entities that have involved to and influence to the development of Muslim civilization. Contemporary Muslim world is a product of the relation, both collaboration and tension, between Islam, Western ideas and practices, and folk customs. For Salafi, however, this relation has contaminated the pristine of Islam. Therefore, Salafi rejects both customary traditions and Western ideas and practices.

To some extent, challenging western ideas and practices does not only mean that Salafis disagree with Westerner and other non Muslim groups, but also they are opposed to Westernized Muslim groups. As a result of the impact of modernization and globalization, western ideas have intruded into the Muslim world. The process of modernization and globalization has had some secularization effects in the Muslim world. Western practices and ideas have been adopted by some Muslim groups. They are considered as liberal Muslim. They believe that the Muslim world cannot avoid the rapid change of modernization. Modernization, therefore, is not to be rejected. Muslims have to cooperate and adopt western practices and ideas in order to build a better Muslim world.

In contemporary Indonesia, Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL/Liberal Islam Network) set up in 2001 is the most prominent group of liberal Muslims. The proponents of this group believe that Western practices and ideas are very valuable for the development of progressive Islam.

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47 Wahib, “Dakwah Salafi: Dari Teologi Puritan sampai Anti Politik”.
Muslims should adopt democracy and its derived ideas such as individual freedom, justice and gender equality to make life better. This, in their view, is the best way to restore and elevate the Muslim world. JIL is also known as a Muslim group promoting secularization and rationalism. Proponents of this group believe that religion (Islam) is often used to justify political attitudes of its adherents and this decreases the sacredness of religion. Secularization, therefore, aims to keep the sacredness of Islam. Liberal Muslims also believe that rationalism plays important role in the construction of enlightening Islamic knowledge. The holy texts (al-Qur’an and hadith) are complete and perfect in providing major guidance to Muslims. However, the interpretation of the holy texts is an endless and continuous effort. Muslims should continuously revitalize their understandings of the holy texts to provide best religious knowledge. This can only be performed by utilizing rational logic and argument. Rationalism, therefore, should be taken into account in interpreting religious teachings.\(^4^9^\)

Salafis, however, are in opposition to westernized liberal Muslims. They believe that Muslims do not need to adopt Western ideas and values to gain their glory back. Muslims just need to turn back to the Islamic teachings to become the best people. They believe that Muslims will come to their glory if they consistently practice Islamic teachings. Religious practices and ideas should be based on al-Qur’an and sunnah as the main sources of Islam, and following pious ancestors (salaf al-salih) is the only way to realize it. They reject democracy and its derived practices like general election, political party, parliamentary system, and the like. Salafi, therefore, condemns the proponents of JIL and considers them as Muslim enemies who will destroy Islam from within. JIL, therefore, is more appropriate to become an abbreviation of Jaringan Iblis Laknatullah (accursed Demon Network), not Jaringan Islam Liberal.\(^5^0^\)


\(^5^0^\) Despite condemning liberal Muslims, it seems that the rejection on rationalism and on the use of logic in understanding religious texts has made Salafi condemning some other Muslim groups like Muhammadiyah and Hizbut Tahrir (HT). Salafis argue that Muhammadiyah and Hizbut Tahrir are the best examples of Muslim groups who their members utilize logic in understanding Islamic doctrines. See Abu Abdillah Luqman Baabduh, “Musuh-Musuh Dakwah Tauhid”, Aty-Syariah, vol. 22
Meanwhile, folk customs are other facet of the secular world considered by Salafis as contaminating the purity of Islam. In the context of the history of Islam in Indonesia, it has been discovered that Islam arrived to Indonesia prominently by the process of cultural assimilation. The plastic nature of Islam has made absorption of local customs in Islam easiers. The dialogical process of Islamization has made Islamic teachings to be mixed up with local tradition. Indonesian Islam, therefore, has been imbued by local customs and tradition.\(^{51}\)

In the development of contemporary Islam in Indonesia, religious practices which are imbued by folk customs and traditions are still practiced by some Indonesian Muslim groups. Nahdlatul Ulama (Resurgence of Ulama/NU), the biggest traditionalist Islamic organization in Indonesia is the most prominent Muslim group which still adopts folk customs into religious rituals. They practice yasinan and tahilalan which are considered as products of syncretism between Islam and local (Javanese) custom. The proponents of NU believe that Islam has elastic character which enable it to adapt and dialogue with other culture, including local culture. This character has made Islam to be embraced by the majority of the members of the archipelago community. Based on this notion, they include folk practices and ideas in their religious activities.

The adoption of folk customs into religious rituals practiced by NU is harshly criticized and rejected by Salafis. They believe that the amalgamation of Islamic teachings with local tradition means blending religious with un-religious things and this is forbidden by Islam. To them, the sanctity of Islam can only be maintained by purifying it from the profane and secular world. Islamic teachings should be purified from any heretic practices which come from outside. The adoption of non Islamic world into Islamic world, therefore, should be avoided.

The Salafis’ rejection of *ahlilan, yasinan* (reciting *sūra yāsin*), and celebrating Prophet’s birthday that are very popular among traditionalist Muslims shows that they reformulate Islamic world based on their values

which are contradictory to traditional ones. The ideology of Islamic Puritanism pushes Salafi to reject non Islamic practices and values which have come into Islam. This ideology contradicts other Muslim groups which adopt Islamic syncretism – something which is commonly popular among traditionalist Muslims. The rejection of non-Islamic practices and values, therefore, indicates that Salafi challenges the traditional world which has been considered to be religious by traditionalist Muslims.

In the context of religious movement, the rejection of traditional world vividly appears in revivalist movement. As an attempt to revive the original form of religion, the development of contemporary traditional world, even religious world, has been influenced by non sacred elements and features. These profane components have made religion far from its origin. In this case, revivalism come to revise traditional world and to call back to the origin.

In the case of Salafi in Indonesia, the formulation of a new religious world is strengthened by creating new symbolic physical identities which are considered as an indication of religious piety. They let their beard grow while traditionalists commonly cut their beard. They prefer to wear white turban to cover their heads while other Indonesian Muslims (including traditionalists) commonly wear black songkok or peci (national skull cap). They dress jubah (cloak) and trousers above ankles (isbāl) while traditionalists wear koko shirt and sarong or casual trousers. To some extent, women wear veil and purdah which cover their faces in front of public, while traditionalist women Muslims wear veil but letting their faces exposed to public. These indicate that in the formation of their religious world, Salafis challenge both the secular and traditional world respectively. This is a typical character of revivalism which takes religious symbols as an important part of religiousness and challenging modernization becomes its nature. As a response to the process of secularization, religious revivalist groups create religious subcultures designed to keep out the influence of other community. In this case, physical identities play decisive role as a border between their world and secular one.

Despite excluding them from profane world, challenging secular as

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well as traditional world by Salafi is aimed at strengthening the bounding
twen salafists themselves. They need to make a strict and tough
boundary to crystallize the values of Islamic Puritanism by tightening their
identities. These identities become a clear border separating them from
other groups. In Turner’s words, acts of piety of Salafis create intimacy
and distance respectively. Acts of piety creates strong unification among
Salafis while, at the same time, the acts widen the gap between Salafi and
its opposing groups or other groups of Muslims.

**G. Concluding Remarks**

Salafi has colored the development of Islamic movement in
Indonesia. It promotes the doctrines of Wahhabism that insist on
purifying Islam from any deviation. Purification has to be done because
Indonesian Muslims practices deviated form of religious activities.
Local customs and Western ideas are two ideas which are considered
to be the sources of religious deviation and they have been harshly
rejected and criticized by Salafis. Islamic purification, to some extents,
can be considered as a process of making good and better Muslim by
following the deeds of the prophet and the pious ancestors (al-salaf al-
sālih). Muslims who practice Islamic teachings in accordance to this is
considered to be a good Muslim and vice versa.

The process of making a good Muslim among Salafis manifests in
various forms of everyday activities. In order to purify Islam from local
customs, Salafis reject yasinan, tahlilan, and celebrating prophet’s birth
(mawlid al-rasūl). They believe that these rituals are forms of bid’a which
are harshly forbidden by the religion. At the same time, in order to purify
Islam from Western ideas, they reject democracy and its derived practices
and ideas. Therefore, they refuse political party and general election,
secularization, gender equality, religious freedom and rationalism.

In denying folk customs and Western values, in the making of
good Muslims, Salafis urge Muslims to keep their deeds in accordance
with Islamic teachings by creating religious physical identities. Salafis pay
a serious attention to mode of fashion or dress code as a part of pious
deeds. It manifests, among others, in the form of jalabiyya and trousers
right to ankles (izbal) for men. They also let their beards grow. At the same
time, women wear enveloping veil to cover their heads and their faces
when they are in public places. Language also plays an important role in this process in the form of naming people with Arabic names which also includes changing name from Javanese to Arabic and calling people with kunya, the way the Arabs call people. Salafis call people who have kids by words like *abu* (male) or *ummu* (female) followed by their kids’ name or *Ibn* (male) and *bintu* (female) followed by their fathers’ name for those who are still singles. Salafis also use Arabic personal pronouns to call people. *Ana* (I), *anta* (you, singular), and *antum* (you, plural) are among other personal pronouns commonly used by them in their everyday life.

The process of pietization in the form of rejecting folk customs and western practices and ideas, as well as creating new physical identities has made Salafis stand at the opposite side of some Muslim groups, liberal and traditional ones alike. This indicates that Salafis challenge both the secular and traditional worlds respectively. This is done primarily with the aim of creating intimacy among their members, but, at the same time, it is observed that this has distance them from other Muslims in the society.
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