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ISLAM AND PARTY POLITICS IN RURAL JAVA

Bambang Pranowo

THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN INDONESIAN AND ALGERIAN HISTORY:
A Comparative Analysis

Johan H. Meuleman

GUARDING THE FAITH OF THE *UMMAH*:
Religio-Intellectual Journey of Mohammad Rasjidi

Azyumardi Azra

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Guarding the Faith of the *Ummah*: The Religio-intellectual Journey of Mohammad Rasjidi

Abstraksi: *Profesor Mohammad Rasjidi, tidak ragu lagi, merupakan salah seorang intelektual Muslim dan tokoh nasional Indonesia yang paling terkemuka. Ia adalah orang Indonesia pertama yang memperoleh gelar sarjana muda dalam bidang filsafat dari Universitas Kairo dan gelar Doktor dalam spiritualisme Jawa dari Universitas Sorbonne, Perancis. Tak kurang pentingnya, Rasjidi adalah Menteri Agama pertama dalam sejarah Indonesia merdeka, persis ketika eksistensi Kementerian Agama dipersoalkan banyak kalangan.*

Tapi, Rasjidi yang dilahirkan dan dibesarkan di lingkungan Jawa Islam yang sinkretik itu, juga merupakan kasus menarik dari pengalaman transformasi religio-intelektual, yang agaknya tipikal di kalangan kaum Muslim Jawa. Pengembaraan pendidikan dan perkembangan religio-intelektualnya, sejak dari Kotagede —di lingkungan Muhammadiyah dan di Kairo di lingkungan kaum reformis— membentuknya menjadi tokoh terkemuka di kalangan revivalis; ia bahkan disebut fundamentalis. Kegigihannya dalam mengoreksi setiap apa yang dipandanginya sebagai tidak sesuai dengan pokok-pokok ajaran Islam membuatnya terkenal sebagai "pembela keimanan ummah" (a guardian of the faith of the ummah).

Dengan begitu, Rasjidi mempunyai tempat tersendiri dalam wacana intelektual Islam di Indonesia. Ekspresi kepeduliannya yang khas terhadap Islam, bisa jadi sulit diterima sebagian kalangan cendekiawan dan pemimpin Islam Indonesia. Tetapi ini tak akan mengurangi tempatnya dalam perkembangan kontemporer Islam di negara ini.

ملخص

لا شك ان البروفيسور محمد رشيدى هو احد المثقفين الاسلاميين وزعيم من الزعماء المرموقين ، فهو اول اندونيسى حصل على درجة ليسانس فى الفلسفة من جامعة القاهرة ودرجة دكتوراة فى القيم الروحية الجاوية من جامعة السوربون بباريس ، فرنسا . ثم انه كان اول وزير للشؤون الدينية فى دولة اندونيسيا الحرة فى الوقت الذى كان الكيان الدينى ما زال يثير تساؤلات بين الكثير من الفئات . وهو الى جانب ذلك كله كان اول من قام بدورديبلوماسى بارز فى الاقطار العربية للحصول على اعتراف رسمى لسيادة البلاد .

الا ان رشيدى الذى ولد وترعرع فى وسط الاسلام الجاوى الذى يؤمن بالتوفيق بين المعتقدات يعتبر حالة فريدة جديرة بالاهتمام عبر تجارب تحوله الدينى الثقافى وهو ما يميز المجتمع الجاوى . فرحلاته العلمية وتحوله الدينى الثقافى من قرية كوتا غيدى وسط اعضاء الجمعية المحمدية الى القاهرة وسط المجددين ، كل ذلك قد صقله لان يصبح احد القادة البارزين لدى السلفيين بل انه قد يعتبر واحدا من الاصوليين . ان انتقاداته ضد كل ما يراه مخالفا لتعاليم الاسلام الاصيلية سببت تلقيبه بالمدافع عن عقائد الامة . وهكذا فان رشيدى يحتل مكانة مميزة لدى المثقفين المسلمين الاندونيسيين . الا ان هذا لا يحط من قدر مكانته وسط تطور الاسلام المعاصر فى هذا البلد .

Biography is a social document. To put it more clearly, biographical accounts of important figures such as 'ulamâ' or intellectuals or even political leaders in many respects depict not only the intellectual and religious milieu of the figures concerned, but also the social and political developments of the time. Thus historical accounts of the characters can appropriately be called social biographies. So far as social biographies of the 'ulamâ' or intellectuals are concerned, the focus should be upon the training, career and moral imagination of the characters, viewed from their social and political contexts. In this way we can reduce the familiar notion of the "documentary method" of writing biographies to its minimal form.

The nature of this essay, Saridi or Muhammad Rasjidi, is a social document of many aspects of the course of Indonesian history. Firstly it records the journey of a Javanese Muslim in the pursuit of knowledge. But it also reflects the conflict as well as the harmony between Islamic Javanese local traditions and Islamic high traditions. At the same time, it also represents the political struggle of the young Republic of Indonesia and the role of Muslim scholars and leaders such as Rasjidi. Last but not least, his social biography is a mirror of Islamic discourse in modern and contemporary Indonesia.

Abangan and Orthodox Islam

"I am an Indonesian citizen of Javanese origin. My family is what one usually calls an "*abangan* family", meaning that they are Muslims but do not practice Islamic rituals. My father, the late Mas Atmosudigdo, lived in Kotagede, a Surakarta enclave in Yogyakarta [Central Java]. When I was a kid, I was taught to read the Qur'ân by a teacher who came to our house every morning. I studied together with my siblings. When my father felt that he was old enough, he began to pray; and when he died some of his inheritance was used to pay some body to make the *hajj* pilgrimage on his behalf".

Thus Saridi begins his story —a story vivid enough to reflect difficult spiritual journeys that are typical for many Javanese Muslims. Before we continue, let us allow Saridi to continue his story.

"I studied Islam. It was hard for me to pray five times a day. I often neglected it; often I performed several prayers at one time,

that is called "*qadâ*". The Javanese call it "*kolo*". It is only when I became old, that I was able to perform these daily rituals at their designated time."

My soul is Islam *abangan*; Islam of those who do not understand the knowledge of Islam; the Islam that my late father, Atmosudigdo, adhered to... I am able to sing (*tembang*) the Javanese *pangkur*, *mijil kinanti*, I am able to write with Javanese scripts; when I got married, I preferred to wear the *blankon* [traditional Javanese cap] and *wiron* [Javanese dress]. I am happy to listen to *gamelan*; I watched *wayang orang* and *tari serimpi*.

"My soul is orthodox Islam. I memorized the Qur'ân; I memorized the *Alfiyyah* of Imam Malik, the *Matan Rabbiiyyah* and others. I recite the Qur'ân fluently, even more fluently than those who called themselves *Kiyai Haji*. But I am also a modern Muslim. Even though I have never attended Dutch schools, I can read Dutch books. In addition, I am fluent in English and French. I am able to speak, to give speeches, to teach and to discuss in both languages".

"I have talked too much about myself. Forgive me. I do not intend to speak about myself; [what I want to do] is simply to attract the attention of my children, my younger siblings, to the fact that my father, the late *Pak* Atmosudigdo, an *abangan* Muslim in Kotagede, who until the end of his life lived the Javanese way, with long hair and dressed according to Javanese tradition, was finally able to have a Muslim child who has occupied various posts and higher positions both nationally and internationally".¹

Saridi, the man, is justifiably proud of himself. But only after a long and difficult religio-intellectual journey, did he achieve a very respected career. Not least important, it is only after his transformation, from Saridi—a typical Javanese name to Mohammad Rasjidi—a more Islamic name, did he establish himself as one of the most outstanding Muslim intellectuals, leaders and activists in contemporary Indonesia.

Saridi: a Religio-intellectual Transformation

Mohammad Rasjidi, our protagonist, was born in Kotagede on 20 May 1915 A.D. or 4 Rajab, 1333 Anno Hijrah. His given name was Saridi, which sounds very Javanese. He hailed, as he has al-

ready told us, from an abangan family who mainly earned their living from petty trade.

Saridi was raised in a very Javanese environment. Rasjidi is not ashamed of this and he does not try to hide it. We are fortunate, in this respect, since his candidness helps us to comprehend his religio-intellectual journey and transformation. He frankly tells, for instance, the religious backgrounds of his father. Furthermore, in the same manner, he gives his reminiscences of his Javanese religio-cultural surroundings, where Saridi—the young Mohammad Rasjidi—grew up.

"From my childhood, I lived in Javanese Islamic surroundings. My family's house was in the form of *joglo* [typical Javanese architecture]... On Thursday evening, and more particularly on Friday *Kliwon* and Tuesday *Kliwon*,² my mother always put some flowers close to the doors".³ This practice is common among many Javanese, since they believe that it will help them to obtain divine blessing and protect them from evil spirits. It is one of the very practices condemned by some reformist Muslims. They call such practices *khurafât* (superstitions), as running contrary to the foundation of the Islamic creed (*tawhîd*).

Rasjidi continues to tell us of other typical Javanese religio-spiritual practices performed when he was a child. His accounts of these indicate perfectly what some observers call the syncretic nature of Islam in Central Java.⁴

Despite such syncretic surroundings, it is clear that Saridi was educated Islamically by his father. We already know that his father invited a teacher to teach him the Qur'ân. Later, he was sent to a Javanese vernacular school called "*Ongko Loro* school." But, probably at his father's request, he continued his education at a Muhammadiyah elementary school. At these times, the Muhammadiyah, established in 1912 in Yogyakarta, was gaining momentum. This reformist movement not only appealed for a "more pristine" brand of Islam, but also founded various new institutions such as schools, hospitals and orphanages. In addition, for Saridi, Muhammadiyah schools were better, as students were not only taught "secular" subjects but also religious ones.

Why did his abangan father wish him to be Islamically educated? This was undoubtedly a result of far-reaching socio-religious developments in Kotagede and its wider surroundings. Kotagede was

one of the few small towns which was enthusiastically welcomed the Muhammadiyah. Also, two local reformist organizations were founded in the early 1910s: the first was called Syarekat al Muftadi (the association for beginners) and the second was the Krida Mataram which, despite its Javanese name was very Islamically-oriented. The main aim of these organizations was to advance the basic religious education of the Kotagede Muslim population by adopting modern methods. Furthermore, most Kotagede people were sympathetic to Sarekat Islam, the precursor of the socio-political Muslim organization founded in 1911. At the same time the middle class, mainly traders, was growing steadily. They were also responsible for stimulating the growth of Islamic reformism in Kotagede.⁵ All this development seems to have not failed to influence Rasjidi's father; he realized that he was an *abangan* Muslim, but he did not wish his son, Rasjidi, religiously to be like him. Given the pervasive growth and influence of reformist organizations in Kotagede, it was socially and religiously unacceptable to pass the *abangan* religious tradition on younger generation.

Having completed his education at a Muhammadiyah elementary school, Saridi continued his study to the *Kweekschool*, a Dutch-modeled teacher training school, also run by Muhammadiyah. Even though the curriculum of this school was comprehensive enough, Saridi felt dissatisfied. He was particularly dissatisfied with the way most teachers taught religious subjects; their methods of teaching were no better than that usually used in the *langgar*, a small building devoted to instruction of the recitation of the Qur'ân. They simply trained students to recite texts, rather than to understand them.

Saridi's dissatisfaction was the start of his intellectual and spiritual journey. He was not content with what he had gained from his schools. Therefore, when he was able to read, he also read the newspapers to which his father subscribed, including the *Swara Oemoem* (Public Voice) and *Kedjawan* (in this context meaning "Javaneness"). It was through newspapers that he learned that Ahmad Syurkati, the chief leader of al-Irsyâd, a reformist movement, had founded a religious school in Lawang, East Java. It is worth mentioning that Syurkati, a Sudanese, was invited to teach at the schools of the Jâmi'at Khayr, an organization that comprised

mainly of Arab immigrants. Conflicts among members over the question of "sayyids" and "non-sayyids" finally led to the breaking-up of the Jami'ah Khayr, and to the formation of al Irsyad, mainly a non-sayyid Arabic organization.

The young Saridi was strongly attracted by the personality of Ahmad Syurkati whom he read about in the newspapers. He therefore wished to learn from him and sent a letter asking Syurkati to accept him as a student at the Irsyâd school. As one may expect, Saridi was gladly accepted, and this took him to Lawang, leaving his family for the first time.

At first, Saridi found what he had long searched for; a religious instruction that was more oriented towards understanding rather than simply reading. But again he felt unsatisfied, for what he learned at the Irsyâd school was merely a repetition of what he had studied at the Muhammadiyah school. Once again, he thought of searching for a better school. However, before he left the Irsyad school, he was blessed by Syurkati with a new name—a more Islamic one, Rasjidi. He happily changed his name at that time but only after performing hajj pilgrimage several years later did he "officially" change his name, complete with an honorable addition of "Muhammad". The changing of names among Javanese Muslims until this time, officiated during the pilgrimage, is generally regarded as a "spiritual transformation". It is expected that the holder of the new names will become more religious, both outwardly and inwardly.

Despite his dissatisfaction with both Muhammadiyah and Irsyad schools, there is little doubt that Rasjidi owes tremendous spiritual and intellectual debts to these two reformist organizations. It is during his years in the Muhammadiyah and Irsyad environments that the reformist spirit was deeply planted into his soul. This reformist spirit has been carried by Rasjidi throughout his life, establishing his position as one of the leading proponents of Islamic reformism in contemporary Indonesia, as we will describe later.

The seeds of Rasjidi's reformism reflowered in Cairo, when he continued his studies there. In 1931 he travelled by ship to Cairo with one of his best friends, Tahir Ibrahim. Like many other Indonesian students at that time, Rasjidi first enrolled at the *Qism `âm*—general preparatory school to the Azhar University. Again Rasjidi felt unsatisfied with that school. Even Soebagijo points out that

Rasjidi was in fact dissatisfied with the Azhar itself. In Rasjidi's view, the educational system of the Azhar was no better than that of *pesantren*, Islamic traditional boarding schools in Java. Instruction was still carried out in a traditional way not a modern way.⁶ Rasjidi's criticism to the Azhar indicates that this, the oldest university in the world, was still firmly clinging to traditionalism, despite the fact that outstanding modernists such as Muhammad 'Abduh had proposed the reform of the Azhar system almost four decades earlier in 1894, precisely when Abduh was appointed as a member of the Supreme Board (*Majlis al-A`lâ*).

It is apparent that the Azhar traditionalism prevented Rasjidi from enrolling at this university as he later chose the *Dâr al `Ulûm* (University of Cairo) instead. It is reported that Kahar Muzakkir, one of his best friends from Kotagede who was in Cairo, deeply influenced his decision to enter the University of Cairo. Muzakkir advised him not only in academic matters, but also introduced him to the well-known Sayyid Qutb, later to become the most outspoken leader of the reformist al-Ikhwân al-Muslimûn, who gave him private lessons on Islam.⁷ Muzakkir, who had personal contacts with Egyptian reformism, was one of six students from Kotagede who were pursuing Islamic learning in Cairo at the time. Muzakkir himself was studying at the University of Cairo, which had a better and more systematized curriculum compared with Azhar University.

It is further worth mentioning that Muzakkir was one of the leading reformist leaders after his return from Cairo to Indonesia. He was involved in some high position in the Muhammadiyah, the Partai Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Party), and the Masjumi (Majlis Sjura Muslimin Indonesia —Supreme Board of Indonesian Muslims). He was also one of the seven Indonesian leaders assembled to draw up the document known as the "Jakarta Charter", an official preamble to the 1945 Indonesian Constitution. Not least important, Muzakkir was a founder of the Sekolah Tinggi Islam (Islamic University) founded in Jakarta but later (1947) was moved to Yogyakarta.⁸

At the Cairo University, Rasjidi enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy, and studied with, among others, Shaykh Mustapha 'Abd al-Râziq, a student of Muhammad 'Abduh, who later became the

Rector of Azhar University. That Rasjidi chose to study philosophy may seem strange. Philosophy was in general still regarded by the majority of Sunni Muslims as an unrecommended (*makrûh*) as a subject for study. The unpopularity of philosophy was indicated by a very low enrollment level at that Faculty. In addition to Rasjidi, only six other students studied there, and he was the only Indonesian. It appears that he was the first Indonesian to formally study philosophy and gain a B.A. degree in this subject at Cairo University.

Rasjidi's education in philosophy contributed much to his leaning towards philosophical matters. Later in his life, he translated some books on Western philosophy into Indonesian. No less important than his formal training was his socio-academic surroundings. While he was in Cairo he was active in off-campus student organizations. He was a member of the Indonesian-Malaysian student organization called *Jâmi`ah Khairiyyah al-Jâwiyyah* under the leadership of Djanan Taib, the first Indonesian who gained an academic degree from the Azhar University. Later on, when the *Jâmi`ah Khairiyyah al-Jâwiyyah* was transformed into *Perpindom* (*Persatuan Pemuda Indonesia Malaya — Association of Indonesian and Malayan Youth*), Rasjidi was appointed as one of its vice chairmen.⁹

Both Roff and Abaza have convincingly shown us that Indonesian students in Cairo during this time generally ascribed to Islamic modernism, which may be more appropriately typologized as "neo-Salafism" or even "Islamic Revivalism" as preached by such eminent figures as *Jamâl al-Dîn al-Afghânî* (or *al-Asâbâdî*), *Muhammad `Abduh* and *Rashîd Ridâ*. The central themes of neo-Salafism are the return to the *Qur'ân* and *Hadîth* or to "pure" Islam as practiced by the *Salafs* —successors of the Prophet Muhammad— and the refusal of the *bid'ah* (unwarranted religious innovation) and *khurafât* (superstitions). This is the religious ideology that all Muslim revivalists adhered to. Thus, modernism of this group lies more in its approach and methodology than on religious ideology; they proposed the adoption of a modern approach and methodology of Islam such as modern organization, modern schooling system and so forth.

All this is true in Rasjidi's case. His intellectual milieu in Cairo contributed much to his revivalist or even fundamentalist spirit evi-

dent throughout his discourses on Indonesian Islam. This is the background that led to the formation of one of his most distinctive personal characteristics earning him the honorific title "guardian of the faith" from many quarters, as we will discuss later.

Rasjidi's education and intellectual milieu in Cairo completed his religio-intellectual journey. He was now an "orthodox" Muslim. But at same time he remained Javanese. Being a Javanese Muslim is not that easy. The Javanese generally have been long regarded by many other Indonesian and foreign observers alike as more Javanese than Muslim. Like Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of the Muhammadiyah, who had a similar Javanese backgrounds, Rasjidi tried very hard to erase that stigma through his revivalism or at least to harmonize his Javaneseness with Islam.

This is evident by his insistence of not excluding the *abangan* Javanese or even adherents of Javanese mysticism (Aliran Kepercayaan) from the mainstream or *santri* (strict) Muslim group. "They are Muslims, who do not understand Islam properly. It is our duty to teach and explicate Islam to them", he writes. This may seem a bit strange, considering his reformism or even fundamentalism. Unlike other reformists or fundamentalists, such as al Mawdudi of Pakistan or Sayyid Qutb of Egypt —both friends of Rasjidi's— often point their fingers accusing at other Muslims as *kâfir* (unbelievers) for their un-Islamic ideas and practices, Rasjidi has never condemned or accused against non-Islamic Muslims who are known in Indonesia as "*abangan*". Thus, Rasjidi is tolerant of those who neglected Islam because of their ignorance, but is harsh towards Muslim intellectuals who propagate ideas that he considers run contrary to the established pristine Sunni doctrines.

The First Minister of Religious Affairs: the Political Journey

In 1938, after having been in Cairo for seven years, Rasjidi returned to Indonesia. Returning to his hometown, he married in the same year. It may be somewhat surprising that, despite his revivalist spirit, he wore a Javanese traditional wedding outfit for his wedding ceremony, rather than Arabic or even Western dress as worn by many of his colleagues in Muhammadiyah for instance. This shows that Rasjidi could not completely disregard his cult-

ural background. Thus, his Islamic revivalism is oriented more towards Javanese religious and spiritual realms rather than to Javanese material culture.

With his familial burden, Rasjidi had been expected by his father-in-law to run a small business. But having felt that he did not have business trait, he chose to dedicate himself to a scholarly career instead. Rasjidi began his scholarly career in teaching; firstly at the Madrasah Ma'had al-Islâmî in Kotagede. Later, in 1939, when some concerned Muslim leaders, foremost among them Dr. Satiman Wirjosandjojo, took the initiative to establish the "Pesantren Luhur" in Solo, Rasjidi was invited to teach about Islam and Arabic. This pesantren at the university level, it is important to note, was an attempt to "modernize" pesantren in accordance with new developments in the educational system in Indonesia. The Pesantren Luhur experiment, however, ended at the time of the invasion of the Japanese in 1941.

In addition to his teaching activities, Rasjidi involved himself in national movements aimed at attaining Indonesian independence. He enlisted himself as a member of the newly-established Partai Islam Indonesia (PII — Indonesian Islamic Party). At the first national congress of the PII held in Yogyakarta in 1940, Rasjidi was elected as a member of the National Committee of the party. He was also involved in the Islam Studie Club, in which Islam was discussed in the light of modern trends. Rasjidi was of course a member of the Muhammadiyah. Later, during the Japanese occupation, Rasjidi became a leader of the Masjumi (Majlis Sjura Muslimin Indonesia), a leading Muslim party.

The relatively short Japanese occupation was a catalyst for the Indonesian struggle for independence. The Japanese had ended the long and bloody Dutch rule of Indonesia within a matter of days. This stimulated Indonesians to believe that Western colonial powers, especially the Dutch, were not invincible. Therefore, most Indonesian leaders, nationalists and Muslims alike, warmly welcomed Japanese overtures to cooperate. The Japanese persuaded Muslim leaders who greatly influenced the Indonesian masses to support them in their attempts to form what they called the "Greater Asia Co-Prosperity". Rasjidi was no exception; when the Japanese offered him to occupy the post of chief of the Perpustakaan Islam (Islamic Library) in Jakarta, he accepted it. The Perpustakaan

kaan Islam was more than simply a library. It was in fact a meeting point for many Indonesian Muslim leaders from many parts of the country, some of whom came to Jakarta for military training. Rasjidi himself was busy, not only with his job as chief of the library, but also with translating news into Arabic to be aired by the Japanese-operated radio.

The early Japanese policy which tended to be favor the Muslims, was reversed toward the end of the occupation. The Japanese then recruited nationalist leaders to play a prominent role in the Indonesian political scene. It is not surprising, therefore, that they dominated the discussion within the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence which was responsible for formulating the constitution and for the ideological foundation of the future independent Indonesia. As a result, Muslim leaders who were involved in the Committee, despite their insistence on making Islam the foundation of the state, finally compromised by accepting Pancasila (five principles).

Apart from disappointment among Muslims in general, the attainment of independence on 17 August, 1945 also brought them many expectations. After having been subjugated and repressed for centuries, Muslims generally felt that it was time for them to implement the teachings of Islam in their daily lives.

The Sjahrir Cabinet I, formed on November 14, 1945, appeared to realize this. Therefore, the post of Ministry of State responsible for religious matters was created and Rasjidi was selected as the Minister of this Ministry. The creation of this Ministry was apparently a result of the proposal put to the parliament by some Muslim leaders on 11 November, 1945. This Ministry was the embryo of the Ministry (now the Department) of Religious Affairs (*Kementerian Agama*) which was officially instituted two months later, on 3 January 1946. Rasjidi was again trusted to lead the Ministry. He thus became the first Minister of Religious Affairs in independent Indonesia. He was individually selected, not on behalf of any Muslim party or group.

The creation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs aroused some controversy among many quarters. Muslims generally viewed the Ministry as simply a historical necessity; it was a continuation of the similar office called *Het Kantoor voor Inlandsche Zaken* (the

Office for Native [Islamic] Affairs) during the Dutch administration and the *Shumubu* (the Office of Religious Affairs) during the Japanese occupation. Some observers argue that the establishment of the Ministry was simply a part of Sjahrir's political strategy to win the support of Muslims to his administration. Anwar maintains that this was based on Sjahrir's conviction that Muslims constituted the majority of the Indonesian population who naturally needed a special Ministry to administer their religious matters.¹⁰

On the other hand, some Indonesian leaders, mainly non-Muslims and nationalists, considered the Ministry to be too much of a concession to Muslims by the inchoate Republic. They feared that the Ministry which would be dominated by Muslims and was a significant step toward the creation of an Islamic state in Indonesia in the future, after the Preparatory Committee for Independence's failure to convince nationalist leaders to accept Islam as the state ideological foundation.

One typical resistance toward the Ministry among non-Muslim was that by J.W.M. Bakker, a leading Roman Catholic figure living in Indonesia. As cited by Boland, Bakker asserted that right from the beginning the Ministry was "a bulwark of Islam and an outpost for an Islamic state". He further alleged that in early developments the Ministry was on the defensive, but when it became stronger and aware of its power, it began to develop [Islamic] propaganda beyond that predicted by Sjahrir himself; the propaganda service of the Ministry of Religion became as powerful as that of the state.¹¹

These accusations were of course responded to by Muslim leaders. Wahid Hasyim, a leading Nahdatul 'Ulama (NU) leader who was the Minister of Religious Affairs in 1950-52, points out that it was appropriate for the Ministry to pay more attention to Islamic matters, since the number of Muslims was far greater than that of non-Muslims. Therefore, he argues that the tasks of administering Muslims could not be on the same scale as that of non-Muslims. Thus, this was not based on religious discrimination.¹²

In the delicate political situation of the young Republic, Rasjidi found the task of nurturing the Minister of Religious Affairs to be a very difficult one. The hardest aspect was convincing all those who opposed the Ministry that it was not a stepping-stone for the creation of an Islamic state at the expense of the national state of

Indonesia. He pointed out that the establishment of the Ministry should not be interpreted that way; it was simply a historical necessity for Muslims who had been discriminated against by colonial powers, especially the Dutch. The other task was to reconcile the various religious groups which had divided not only because of political reasons, but more importantly because of differences of doctrinal interpretations within any particular religion and also between religions. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why Rasjidi, in his ministerial position, emphasized the spirit of tolerance (*tasammub*) among different religious groups.¹³

However, Rasjidi held this post for a relatively short period. Strong opposition to the Sjahrir Cabinet II led to the resignation of Prime Minister Sjahrir on 2 October, 1946. When Sjahrir was once again trusted by President Soekarno to form a new cabinet, Rasjidi was excluded. He was replaced by Kiyai Haji Fathurrahman, a leading scholar of the NU and Rasjidi returned to his hometown. However just one week after his return, he was appointed as Secretary General of the same Ministry.

The Indonesian revolution, however, called Rasjidi for another important task. The Dutch, who attempted to re-colonialize Indonesia by force faced strong resistance from Indonesians. But the young Republic needed not only a military struggle but also a diplomatic one at the international level in order to gain recognition for the independence of the country. Therefore a decision was made to send a delegation to the Middle East. Rasjidi was appointed as the secretary of the diplomatic mission to some Arab countries under the leadership of the "grand old man", H. Agus Salim. In addition to these two men, the mission consisted of Mr. Nazir Pamuntjak, Abdul Kadir and Abdul Rahman Baswedan. They left Indonesia on 17 March, 1947, firstly going to Bombay to attend the Conference of Inter Asian Relations. The conference, as one may expect fully supported Indonesia's national revolution.

A more tiring diplomatic mission was undertaken in the Arab countries. The focal point of the mission was Cairo, where they won wholehearted support not only from King Farouk but from Egyptians as a whole. On 2 June, 1947, Egypt formally recognized Indonesia's independence, and 8 days later Agus Salim signed an agreement of friendship with the Egyptian government. The mis-

ion continued to other countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. Since Salim was asked to carry out another diplomatic mission to the United Nations, Rasjidi was appointed as the Indonesian representative in Egypt, responsible for the success of the mission in the Middle East. For this purpose Rasjidi travelled to Saudi Arabia, where he won the Saudi's recognition of Indonesian independence.¹⁴

After the Round Table Conference of 1949, held in The Hague, Rasjidi was assigned by Vice President Mohammad Hatta, to take over the former Dutch Embassy and Consulate in Jeddah and Mecca respectively. In addition, he was formally appointed as the Indonesian ambassador to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, posted in Cairo. In 1953 he was moved to Teheran, before returning to Jakarta eleven months later, where he was assigned to insignificant administrative posts. This led him to leave the Ministry, at least temporarily, in order to pursue his unfinished scholarly journey.

From Sorbonne to Montreal: the Making of an Image

Rasjidi is a man full of intellectual ethos. Although he was occupied with his diplomatic mission at the time of the Indonesian revolution, he could not disengage himself from pursuing scholarly ends. Thus, while he was on the diplomatic mission he snatched the time to visit the University of Paris at Sorbonne to meet Louis Massignon, with whom he had been acquainted when he was studying in Cairo. Massignon, a leading scholar of mystical Islam (Sufism) was, in Rasjidi's view, one among the small number of orientalist who were sympathetic to Islam. With Massignon's moral support—and Rockefeller's financial help—Rasjidi was able to pursue his advanced studies at Sorbonne. On 23 March, 1956, Rasjidi defended his doctoral dissertation entitled "L'evolution de l'Islam en Indonesie ou consideration critique du livre T'jentini". Passing the defense with *cum laude*, Rasjidi became the first Indonesian to receive a *Docteur* degree from a French University.

The dissertation was later published under the title *Documents pour servir a l'histoire de l'Islam a Java* (Paris: 1977). The first part of it deals with a discussion on the Serat Centhini which contains some Javanese spiritual and mystical teachings. Rasjidi argues that these teachings in fact had their origins in Islamic Sufism, which

tends to emphasize travels in the mystical path (esoterism) rather than in the legal path of the *shari`ah* (exoterism). Again, Rasjidi does not accuse such Javanese mystical teachings of going astray. Rather, he simply considers them irrelevant to the life of Muslims in the modern world. The second part of the dissertation discusses the rise and developments of various Muslim organizations and their role in society up to the period of Japanese occupation.

However, Rasjidi's scholarly career, was interrupted by a brief interlude. He was again appointed as an ambassador, this time to Pakistan. After less than two years in Karachi, as a result of the PRRI/Permesta rebellion in Sumatra and Sulawesi, Rasjidi was torn between the two opposing sides, on one side were the people of the PRRI (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia), led mainly by some ex-Masjumi leaders, such as Mohammad Natsir and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara who asked him to join them, while on the other side the central government in Jakarta wished Rasjidi to remain loyal to them.

Rasjidi was fortunate in that, at least formally, he did not have to choose between the two sides. Instead he accepted a teaching appointment at the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies in Montreal, Canada, which at that time was directed by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Professor of Comparative Religion. Starting in the fall semester of 1958 Rasjidi taught some courses on Islamic history and Islamic law.

In retrospect, Rasjidi's sojourn for five years at McGill was a period of intense intellectual exchanges. He not only taught but also enrolled himself in some courses, in particular on Christianity. Furthermore, the Institute of Islamic Studies was one of a limited number of prominent centers for Islamic studies in North America. In addition to its leading professors such as W.C. Smith, Izutsu, and Niyazi Berkes, the Institute often invited other prominent scholars to give special lectures.

One of the guest professor who came to McGill was J. Schacht, an expert in Islamic law, teaching at the time at Columbia University, New York. Schacht is of course well-known, especially among Muslim scholars, for his controversial opinions on the origins of Islamic law. This was also evident, at least to Rasjidi when Schacht gave his lecture at the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies.

The main argument presented by Schacht in his lecture was that the Prophet Muhammad had no legislative and judicial powers; he possessed only religious authority. He maintains that Muhammad did not establish a complete political entity; he simply founded the Muslim *ummah*, that is a religious community founded in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Since Muhammad had no legislative and judicial authority, he had to settle legal cases by way of arbitration, which he had adopted from the pre-Islamic Arab tradition. During this period, an arbiter was, as a rule, a wise man, sage or even a philosopher. Thus he possessed wisdom rather than legal expertise and authority. That is why, according to Schacht, the Arabic term used in the Qur'ân is *hâkim*, meaning "arbiter", "umpire" or even "referee", instead of *qâdî*, meaning "judge" or "magistrate" who had judicial authority to settle legal cases or even to legislate law.

Schacht's argument was not accepted by Rasjidi, the only person among the audience who questioned its validity. According to Rasjidi, Schacht's argument was based on his misunderstanding of both terms as well of the Qur'ân as a whole. Rasjidi argues that both terms are used in the Qur'ân synonymously. Only in one place or verse does the Qur'ân use the term *hakama* as understood by Schacht.

Rasjidi considered that Schacht's argument was more than simply a misunderstanding of Islamic religious terms. To him Schacht's argument was a menace to the Prophecy of Muhammad himself, for it leads to a theory that he was simply a religious figure, not a political leader who was committed to establishing an Islamic state. This means reducing Islam to being merely concerned with religious matters, not with socio-political ones. A further implication of Schacht's argument is that all legal precepts which had been formulated using the Hadîth in particular had no connection with the Prophet himself, since the Hadîth were simply fabrications by early Muslims.¹⁵

The counter-argument presented by Rasjidi created a furor at the Institute. Schacht himself responded angrily by accusing Rasjidi of not having comprehended the issue. Moreover, Niyazi Berkes, known as a typical secular Turk scholar, carried out a smear campaign against Rasjidi. He accused Rasjidi of being "very orthodox" and, for that reason, should not be accommodated at McGill.

Smith, the Director of the Institute, cancelled all regular lectures and held a special session to discuss the issue. Rasjidi was firstly asked to elaborate his opinion but he felt that what had happened at the discussion was a form of tribunal against him. He narrowly escaped from this very difficult situation when Izutsu supported him, stating that Rasjidi's argument was correct.¹⁶ This is the first recorded polemics undertaken by Rasjidi.

In his reminiscences of his five year sojourn at McGill as described to Soebagijo, Rasjidi reminds us of the risk one faces of criticizing such leading orientalists as Schacht. Not only could he be accused of being "orthodox" or even "fundamentalist", but he also put himself in danger of losing his job. It is wrong, however, to conclude that Rasjidi opposes all orientalists. He clearly holds respect for Massignon. He even defends Snouck Hurgronje by arguing that this Dutch leading orientalist was a friend of Indonesian Muslims who has contributed to the advancement of Islam in the country. Rasjidi's defense of Snouck Hurgronje stimulated long and bitter debates in the Indonesian media several years ago.

Despite his controversial defense of Snouck Hurgronje, Rasjidi's stony encounter with Schacht gave him a meaningful experience of polemics against arguments and opinions that he considered un-Islamic or not in accordance with the Qur'ân. This explains the main concern of Rasjidi, that is, to protect not only the purity of Islamic doctrines but also the faith of the Muslim ummah. In Montreal he began to establish himself as the most prolific polemical scholar in contemporary Indonesian Islam. He appeared to carry the baggage of polemics wherever he went.

Rasjidi was not overawed by such big names as Schacht. He also showed this during his tenure as the Executive Director of the Islamic Center in Washington D.C. which he occupied in 1963. On behalf of the Center, he attended a Conference on "Islam and Peace" held at the University of North Carolina. One of the speakers was Madjid Khadduri, an expert on the subject of Islam and peace. At the Conference, Khadduri argued that Islam (or more appropriately, *Dâr al-Islâm*) views the world as being in the perpetual state of war against the *Dâr al-Harb* (the realm of the unbelievers); the only way to end this situation is through violence and war. Khadduri's argument is not really new. It is simply a

restatement of the more elaborate arguments put forward in his book, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: 1955).

Rasjidi, without hesitation, soon makes clear his objection to Khadduri's theory. According to Rasjidi, it is correct that if unbelievers (*kâfir*) wish to live in peace they can convert to Islam or pay *jizyah* (poll-tax in return for protection given by Islamic states). As long as they do not provoke Muslims by hostilities which threaten the stability and peace of the Muslim state, there is no reason for Muslims to wage war (*jihâd*) against them. The Qur'ân does not allow Muslims to fight unbelievers for the purpose of converting them to Islam.

Again, Rasjidi's counter argument to Khadduri is not new either. Since the early development of Islamic law, a great number of Muslim scholars have elaborately formulated the law of peace and war in Islam. What Rasjidi put forward was in essence similar to that which had been established by earlier Muslim jurists and scholars.¹⁷

Being a polemicist is often not easy. It can draw a clear line between the opposing sides. It can give the polemicist a turbulent life, particularly when his adversaries avenge in whatever way they are able. Rasjidi was no exception. His daring to speak out invited opposition from certain personnel of the Washington Islamic Center which had been severely torn by conflicts and power struggles among its functionaries even before Rasjidi arrived. He was finally expelled from the Center in quite a subtle way.

Return to Indonesia: Guarding the Faith of the *Ummah*

As turbulent as Rasjidi's life was the political situation in Indonesia. Returning to Jakarta early in 1965, he found that Indonesia had been dominated by the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI — the Communist Party of Indonesia). With the exception of the leaders of the NU who had chosen to collaborate in the alliance between the nationalists and communists within the platform of Soekarno's Nasakom (nasionalisme, agama, dan komunisme or nationalism, religion and communism), all other Muslim figures were pushed into predicament. Most leading non-NU figures were either put into jail or forced into silence.

There is no doubt that Rasjidi is one of the strongest adversaries of communism in Indonesia. He even devoted a book, entitled

Islam menentang Komunisme [Islam against Communism], explicating the wickedness of communism both conceptually and praxically. However, considering his outspokenness, it may seem strange that he did not openly voice his opposition to the PKI. The fact that the power of Soekarno and the PKI was so strong appears to have forced Rasjidi into silence. The communist repression of Islam and Muslim leaders caused Rasjidi to travel abroad, to Saudi Arabia, where he was elected as a member of the Rabitah al-`Alam al-Islâmî (the League of the Islamic World). Later on he was appointed as the Director of the Rabitah office in Jakarta, a position he occupies to date.

Thus, when the PKI launched their abortive coup d'etat on September 30, 1965, Rasjidi was in Saudi Arabia, meeting such top figures as King Faisal himself. Responding to a question from King Faisal concerning the chaotic political situation at the time, Rasjidi pointed out: "It is Soekarno's failure to control the communists that leads Indonesia to political and economic troubles".

Back in Indonesia, Rasjidi was without any regular job. Before too long however, in September 1966, he was appointed as professor of Islamic law at the Faculty of Law, University of Indonesia in Jakarta. And on 20 April 1968, he was promoted to the position of professor of Islamic law and institutions. On this occasion Rasjidi gave his oration, entitled "Islam and Indonesia in the Modern Times". It is unfortunate that he offered no systematic discussion of this important subject. He began with criticism of many Indonesian Muslims who do not have sufficient knowledge of Islam. Although they believe in the validity of the sharî`ah, they transgress its precepts in their daily lives. But he soon finds an apologia: "This is the level of Indonesian religiosity in general, including that of Christians".¹⁸

Then he goes on to criticism of Christian missionaries and ethnographers who were quick to find the weakness of Muslim religiosity, while forgetting the negative role that Christianity played in the history of Europe. Here he eloquently quotes Snouck Hurgronje who points out that despite the long history of Christianity in Europe many Europeans still bow down to statues. Moreover, they have never read the Bible; they were ignorant and superstitious. As a consequence, Christians had no moral right to con-

vert other people to their religion. This is one of Rasjidi's reasons for believing that Snouck Hurgronje was an ardent defender of Islam and Muslims from the continued attempts by Christian missionaries to convert Muslims to Christianity.

Guarding the faith of the Muslim ummah from converting to Christianity is indeed one of the most distinctive themes of Rasjidi's discourses. Towards the end of the 1960's the relationship between Muslims and Christians was greatly unsettled. In 1967 a church in Ujungpandang was destroyed by Muslims because a Christian leader had allegedly denigrated the Prophet Muhammad; then Muslims in Aceh opposed the use of a new church as there was no single Christian adherent in the area. Considering these events the government once again attempted to set down fair-play rules for missionary activities through a meeting of all the different religious leaders, including Rasjidi. It was proposed that proselytizing activities should not be carried out in an area in which the population adhered to any one religion. The meeting ended in a fiasco because of the refusal of Christian leaders to accept the proposal.

It is clear that Christian proselytizing activities was one of Rasjidi's main concerns. He spent a lot of energy unravelling not just the corruption of Christian doctrines throughout European history, but also missionaries' tricks to convert Muslims to Christianity. It is no surprise that he has written a substantial books and articles on this subject, among others, *Mengapa Saya Tetap Memeluk Islam* [Why I still an Adherent of Islam]; *Sikap Ummat Islam terhadap Ekspansi Kristen* [The Muslim Ummah Response to the Expansion of Christianity]; *Kasus RUU Perkawinan dalam Hubungan Islam dan Kristen* [The Case of the Indonesian Marriage Bill with respect to Islam-Christianity Relations], which was banned by the authorities; *Sidang Raya Dewan Gereja sedunia di Jakarta 1975: Artinya bagi Dunia Islam* [The World Church Assembly in Jakarta 1975; Its Meaning for the Islamic World]; *Dari Rasjidi dan Maududi kepada Paus Paulus VI* [From Rasjidi and Mawdudi to Pope Paul VI].

It is now easy to understand why, without hesitation, Rasjidi brought the case of the expansion of Christianity in Indonesia to an interreligions seminar held in Tokyo on 28 October 1968. At that Seminar, Rasjidi first cited a long ethical code for proselytizing activities written by Daniel J. Fleming, Professor at the Union

Theological Seminary, New York. This code states that, among other matters, conversion should not be undertaken in an uncivilized manners, by denigrating the personalities and beliefs of other people. Furthermore, conversion should not involve the use of physical threats or political, material, medical and educational inducements. Finally, conversion should not be carried out among minors or by causing splits among families and clans.

After having quoted these, Rasjidi went on to tell of Christian missionary activities in Indonesia. In his observations, churches in Indonesia had exploited the poverty of the people. Missionaries distributed rice, clothing and money among poor peasants or unemployed laborers on condition that they send their children to missionary schools. Christians built churches or schools within Muslim villages. For this purpose they acquired plots for two or three times their real price. Sometime they bought land by using other people who had no connection with the churches but later sold the land to the churches. Or they bought shops or houses which were later illegally transformed into churches. Furthermore, Christian youths, both male and female, were intentionally spread out in order to entice Muslim members of the opposite sex. Lastly, Christian missionaries went, without invitation, to Muslim houses and insisted that their explanations about their religion should be listened to.¹⁹

Rasjidi points out that Christian missionaries often made use of the principle of "religious tolerance" for their own purposes. They insisted that Muslims, as the majority of the Indonesian population should be tolerant to Christians as a minority religious group. Similarly they employ human rights issue to legitimate their proselytizing activities. They even identified Christianity with modernity and other religions, particularly Islam, with traditionalism and backwardness.

Finally, Rasjidi reminded the audience at the Seminar that the national development plan, launched by General Soeharto after the New Order consolidated its power, would end in failure if the religious problems that resulted from missionary activities are not resolved. Any nation or state that was torn by religious conflicts would not be able to develop its economy. And if Indonesian deve-

lopment fails, this would provide a golden opportunity to the communists to return. "At times we cry when see this", Rasjidi says.

What was the reaction to Rasjidi from Indonesian Christian leaders? It is hard to tell, since materials about this are difficult to obtain. Ihromi, a Protestant leader who was present at some international seminars on interreligions relations together with Rasjidi, prevented himself from openly criticizing Rasjidi. In his article included in the *Feestchrift* for Rasjidi, he simply pointed out that he, like Rasjidi, also disliked the way that some Christian missionaries convert people to Christianity. "It is disgraceful to Christianize people by way of rice, medication, schooling and [socio-political] positions".²⁰

Rasjidi's candidness in putting this very sensitive issue on the table may surprise some. He is an intellectual who gained a PhD degree from a Western university with all its liberalism; this should have made him intellectually and religiously liberal. Why did Rasjidi not inherit the Western tradition of religious and intellectual liberalism or even the Javanese tradition of religious harmony and syncretism?

This seems be more connected with the religious and intellectual milieu that Rasjidi gained during his days in Cairo rather than with his religio-cultural roots in Central Java. He appears to have followed in the footsteps of Sayyid Qutb, his acquaintance and a modern Muslim who had grown up in the Egyptian Westernized educational system but was well-known for his polemics against Western traditions, including Christianity. Qutb together with al-Mawdudi, with whom Rasjidi wrote an appeal to Pope Paul VI, are of course known as the most prominent "fundamentalist" thinkers and activists in contemporary Islam. Similarly, Rasjidi has also been labelled by some as a "fundamentalist". He has no objection to being called this. He even viewed the label as an honorific title, as he does indeed devote his life to guarding the fundamentals of Islamic faith. He is a "guardian of the faith".²¹ Even though Rasjidi is so polemical towards Christianity, he recognizes the religious pluralism of the modern world. Therefore, he strongly supports the idea of religious tolerance, without necessarily considering all religions to be the same. To him Islam is the truest religion, which will lead its adherents to progress in the modern world as long as they understand and practice Islam properly.

Islam, Modernization and Secularization: a Critique of *Gerakan Pembaharuan*

Indonesia in the 1970s was a time of transition. The New Order government, as mentioned above, began to launch national development as an attempt to modernize Indonesian society. The issue of modernization was one of the topics hotly debated among Indonesian intellectuals, especially regarding the role of religion. What is the essence of modernization? What is the appropriate response of religion in order to play a positive role in modernization? There are no easy answers to these questions but they had stimulated long and bitter debates among Muslim intellectuals, in which Rasjidi was one of the key players.

The issue of modernization became a cause-célébrè among Muslim intellectuals when Nurcholish Madjid, the General Chairman of the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (the Association of Muslim University Students) for two consecutive terms from 1966 to 1972, published a short treatise entitled *Modernisasi ialah Rasionalisasi bukan Westernisasi* [Modernization is Rationalization, not Westernization]²² This essay, one of a number of writings discussing the matter, attempted to comprehensively discuss the many aspects of modernization.²³

According to Madjid, a simplified definition of modernization is that which is identical, or almost identical, with rationalization. It involves a process of overhauling outmoded thought and action patterns which are not rational, and replacing them with new ones which are rational for the achievement of maximum utility and efficiency. This process is based on the application of the latest findings and discoveries in the sciences. Scientific knowledge is the result of human understanding of objective laws governing nature; its application to life will render the latter more rational and therefore modern. To be modern is to be scientific, dynamic and progressive for the process of man's discovery of objective universal truths usually threatens the *status-quo*. By citing the Qur'ân (16:3, 27:28, 7:54, 25:2, 32:7, 40:3, 10: 101, 35:13, 2:70), Madjid argues, that to a Muslim modernization is imperative.²⁴

Madjid, as will be disclosed shortly, developed his ideas further and these were bitterly criticized by Rasjidi. It seems strange, how-

ever, that nowhere did Rasjidi respond to Madjid's ideas of modernization. Rasjidi did, however, discuss the issue of "modern" and "modernism" in an article which mainly deals with the expansion of Christianity in Indonesia. He wrote:

The missionaries then said: "Oh we really came to Indonesia in order to modernize the Indonesian people who are lagging behind in education and various other spheres of life". The Dutch colonial government replied: "In order to become modern one does not have to be Christian". Such were the words of Snouck Hurgronje. In fact it is not only in Indonesia that Islam is compatible with modernism; everywhere else it is not only not incompatible with, but in itself contains the principles of modernism... Among the terms they [Christian missionaries] propagated were 'modernism' and 'toleration'... Just now we heard that word [modernism] mentioned by Dr. Tambunan as a Christian mission. This gives impression that which is un-Christian is not modern... In short, the Christian mission represented progress, implying that what is non-Christian is unprogressive... But the word "modern" is used by Christians mainly as a means of enticing people to discard Islamic qualities. When we are about to enter the month of fasting, there are people who say that fasting impedes progress and the efficiency of labor, let us be "modern" and forget fasting.²⁵

The bitter controversies between Madjid and Rasjidi exploded when the former introduced a more refined elaboration of ideas on Islam within the framework of the so-called "*Gerakan Pembaharuan*" (Renewal Movement) which emerged between 1970-1972. Madjid's renewal ideas had clearly been closely related to those of modernization. The main thesis of the *Gerakan Pembaharuan* is that the Muslim ummah had been trapped in stagnation (*jumûd*) for they were clinging to Islamic traditional interpretations that would not stimulate the growth of a mentality constructive to national modernization. Madjid maintains that renewal is now an urgent task, for such renewal and reformist organizations as the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, and Persis had failed. "We have to admit that they have all stopped being reformists. They have stagnated and have not been able to grasp the very essence of the ideas of renewal, that is dynamism and progressivism". In Madjid's view, this could not be solved by a political approach either, since Islamic political parties have not been attractive and have failed to build a positive image. Thus, renewal should involve the idea which Madjid calls "Islam, yes, Islamic Parties, no",²⁶

According to Madjid, in order to relieve the ummah from stagnation, the renewal should start by liberating the ummah from

traditional values in favor of future-oriented values. This liberalization process entails the adoption of "secularization", the promotion of intellectual freedom, the pursuit of the idea of "progress" and the cultivation of open attitudes.

The most controversial among all these is of course the idea about the adoption of "secularization" (*sekularisasi*). Madjid is aware of Muslim aversion towards both the word and the concept of secularization. Therefore he cautiously explicates that the word "secularization" does not involve the adoption of "secularism", for the latter is the name for an ideology, a new closed world view which functions very much like a new religion. The nature of secularism is admittedly alien to the Islamic world view. Secularization means instead a process of temporalizing values which are indeed temporal, but which the ummah has a tendency to regard as otherworldly (*ukhrawi*). The term also means the "desacralization" of everything other than that which is truly transcendental. The desacralization process has to be applied to all "this-worldly objects", moral as well as material. Values are part of earthly categories and are therefore subject to the desacralization process. "Thus, secularization is not meant to be the application of secularism and the conversion of Muslims to be secularists".²⁷

For the purpose of this essay, it is not necessary to dwell on the detailed exposition of Madjid's renewal ideas. What is important is that, they aroused strong opposition among some scholars, among of whom Rasjidi is the most outstanding. For that end, Rasjidi note a special book called *Koreksi terhadap Drs. Nurcholis[h] Madjid tentang Sekularisasi* [Correction to Drs. Nurcholish Madjid on Secularization], in which he criticized almost every detail of Madjid's ideas.²⁸ The book is, in many respects, a mirror of Rasjidi's expertise in many fields. He eloquently put forward religious, philosophical, sociological and historical arguments, both Islamic and Western, in order to defeat Madjid's ideas.

According to Rasjidi, Madjid has arbitrarily used the words "secularization" and "secularism" by separating the meaning of the two which are closely related. Secularization in Rasjidi's view, is identical with the adoption of secularism, which means the separation of the religious and the mundane. Here Rasjidi, like Madjid, believes that secularism runs contrary to Islam or to any other

religion. To show the danger of secularism, Rasjidi refers to the development of secularism in European history. According to Rasjidi, secularism began to gain momentum in medieval times, when the secular spheres of life started to be separated from religion, or more precisely from the Catholic church. With the rise of reformist churches like the Protestant church, the separation of the two became increasingly wider and wider. This is one of the main origins of atheism.²⁹

Thus, Rasjidi argues, that in 1851 the word secularism was defined by G.S. Holyoake (1817-1906) as a name for an ethical and philosophical system which is aimed at providing an interpretation and a way of life without belief in God, the Holy Scriptures and life in the hereafter. Again Rasjidi quotes another Western scholar, Alan Richardson, to support his argument. According to Richardson, in English language usage today the word "secularism" commonly denotes the widespread practical tendency to ignore God and all religious questions and observances through preoccupation with this worldly (secular) concerns: keeping up with everyone else, "getting on" in the world, the rat-race which leaves one too exhilarated or too exhausted to sit down and think about ultimate things.³⁰

With these quotations, Rasjidi concludes that Madjid's ideas are threats to the Indonesian Muslim ummat. He considers Madjid confused on several religious issues, for he is not mature enough and was, therefore, not qualified to touch on serious matters concerning religion. His theories were shallow and nobody would accept them.³¹

Some scholars have questioned why Rasjidi was so harsh to Madjid. The latter, in his article included in *Feastchrift* for Rasjidi in retrospect shows no hard-feelings towards him for he fully understood the position of Rasjidi as a "guardian of the Islamic faith"; Rasjidi has played his intellectual role with a sense of responsibility".³²

Madjid may disagree with many points of Rasjidi's criticism of him, but on one point they are in accord. Together with his criticism, Rasjidi reminds Muslim scholars not to use terms that could create confusion among the ummah. Similarly, Madjid admits that such terms as "secular", "secularization", and "secularism" are understood in different ways by different scholars. "Since these

terms are so controversial, it is wise to avoid them and employ other technical terms instead" he writes in conclusion.³³ Even though Madjid has not altered his main argument to date, his admission indicates that Rasjidi has in one way or another, succeeded in guiding Islamic discourse in contemporary Indonesia.

Rasjidi has consistently sustained his image as the firmest guardian of the Islamic faith. He shows this in his criticism of the following figures: Harun Nasution, Rector of the Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN — the State Institute for Islamic Studies) in Jakarta; A.M.W. Pranarka, Chairman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS — a largely Catholic dominated research institute in Jakarta); the late Ahmad Wahib, a HMI member whose diary was published posthumously. Lastly in 1984, he wrote a special book on Shi'ah in which he not only exposed the teachings of this Muslim group but also refuted them in favor of Sunni orthodoxy.³⁴

Saiful Muzani has discussed in detail the debates between Rasjidi and Nasution; therefore there is no need to repeat these here.³⁵ It is sufficient to say that the core of Rasjidi's criticism of Nasution, who was enrolled by Rasjidi himself at the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies, lies in Nasution's insistence on preaching a liberal Islamic spirit which is not only compatible with the ideas proposed by Madjid mentioned but also with the program of modernization launched by the Indonesian New Order government. Rasjidi was not only eloquent in criticizing almost every aspect of Nasution's thought but also in accusing him of being an "agent" of Orientalists and a reviver of the Mu'tazilah rational doctrines. Branding Nasution with these labels, Rasjidi views Nasution's ideas as endangering Islam and Muslims in Indonesia.³⁶

A menace to Islam is also seen by Rasjidi in Ahmad Wahib's diary which was given the provocative title of *Pergolakan Pemikiran Islam* [The Restlessness of Islamic Thought] by its editors, Djohan Effendi and Ismet Natsir.³⁷ In covering various aspects of cultural, religious and political life, the diary becomes a public debate particularly for the writer's rejection of Islamic establishment, both doctrinally and ideologically. Unlike his earlier criticism which was mainly directed towards the substance of his opponents' ideas, Rasjidi's criticism of the publication of Wahib's

diary is very short. He simply concludes that the diary is a tragedy of Islamic life in the New Order Indonesia. He deeply regrets that Mukti Ali, one of his successors as Minister of Religious Affairs, gives an introduction to the diary. In passing he recalls that Mukti Ali, according to Rasjidi, almost wholly accepted the secular Marriage Bill of 1974 and the admission of Javanese spiritualism (*Aliran Kebatinan*) into the Department of Religious Affairs which puts them on the same footing as established religions.³⁸ Djohan Effendi, one of the editors, who was mentioned in passing by Rasjidi as an adherent of the Lahore Ahmadiyyah, maintains in his reply to Rasjidi's criticisms that the response is typical from those who are inflicted by a kind of syndrome of feeling threatened which finally results in a defensive and reactionary mental attitude.³⁹

The last polemic seems worth mentioning here was between Rasjidi and Pranarka concerning two major issues: nationalism and religions, particularly Islam, and cultural strategy in relation to national education. The debates began with the publication of an interview of Pranarka's in the daily *Suara Karya* (14 April, 1978). The central theme of Pranarka's views was the cultural origins of Indonesian nationalism and its relationship with religions, particularly Islam. Pranarka argues that Indonesian nationalism had been in existence continuously since pre-history, Hinduism and Islam, colonialism and independence. Nationalism has been the innermost dynamic of Indonesian society throughout its long history. In contemporary times however, the main problem of Indonesian nationalism is the strain in its relations with religions, or more precisely with Islam. Pranarka restates much of these arguments in his short book entitled *Strategi Kebudayaan* [Cultural Strategy] published shortly after the above interview. The substantive addition is about the Indonesian cultural strategy or humanization strategy which would largely be achieved through national education.⁴⁰

Once again Rasjidi shows his impressive intellectual erudition on the subject of the history and philosophy of nationalism and their relationship with religions. Since Pranarka quotes Hegel as a starting point in his discussion of nationalism as the innermost dynamic factor in Indonesian history, Rasjidi provides a long analysis of Hegelian philosophy to prove that Pranarka has mis-

understood his philosopher. Then, citing the foremost authority on nationalism, Hans Kohn, Rasjidi points out that it was simply absurd to assume that nationalism had existed in Indonesia in the pre-historic period. Kohn, for instance, believes that only in the eighteenth century did nationalism begin to gain its stronghold in Europe. Rasjidi argues that, in the Indonesian experience, there is no associative distinction among Muslims between nationalism and Islam. Islam is one of the most important factors in Indonesian nationalism; it is Islam that unites the Acehnese with the Ambonese, Sumbawanese, Kalimantanese and so forth. In this respect, Rasjidi refutes Pranarka's arguments that Pancasila as the national ideology of the nation-state of Indonesia has no connection with the doctrines of any particular religion. He does so by quoting Mohammad Yamin who explains that, for instance, the first principle of Pancasila, i.e. "belief in One God", should be interpreted in the light of the teachings of monotheistic religion.⁴¹

Rasjidi's attitude to the question of the relationship between Islam and Pancasila, once again indicates his political stance. He is indeed a loyal nationalist, who has never contradicted his belief with the ideology of the Republic of Indonesia. Although he sometimes criticizes some policies of the government that he views could threaten the interests of Islam and Muslims, he rarely shows signs of disloyalty to the Republic.

Conclusion

Rasjidi's social biography tells us a great deal about many things in the course of Islam both during Dutch colonialism and in contemporary independent Indonesia. Rasjidi's life history is thus a text that not only gives a vivid description of his religious, intellectual, social and political surroundings, but can also be interpreted and even subjected to criticism.

The life experience of Rasjidi as a social text has guided many Indonesian Muslims on how to perceive Islam. Thus, the text has contributed significantly in a unique way to the dynamic discourses of Indonesian Islam. It should be admitted that many Indonesian Muslims still need literal texts such as those presented by Rasjidi. However the text has not been genuinely outspoken

enough in itself. Rather it is occupied with commenting on and debating other texts, or with translating texts that Rasjidi considers are in line with his own religious and intellectual spirit, notably texts from Marcel A. Boisard, Maurice Bucaille and Roger Garaudy.

All in all, the text itself has not yet been written completely. Thus a reassessment of it may be needed in the future. Although Rasjidi has not been too healthy in the last few years, he is still around to guard the ummah from going astray. ❦

Endnotes:

1. The complete biography of Rasjidi has not yet been written. He himself has written some sketches of his early life. See his short autobiographical sketches, as introductory notes to his *Mengapa Saya Tetap Memeluk Islam* [Why I still adhere to Islam], (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1968), pp. 13; *Islam dan Kebatinan* [Islam and Javanese Mysticism] (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1967), pp. 1-5. There is a concise biography of Rasjidi written by Soebagijo I.N., "Dari Saridi ke Rasjidi" [From Saridi to Rasjidi], in Endang Basri Ananda (ed.), *70 Tahun Prof. DR. Rasjidi* [Seventieth Birthday of Professor Doctor Rasjidi] (Jakarta: Pelita, 1985), pp.3-92.
2. *Kliwon* is one of the terms assigned by the Javanese to their calendar. For many Muslims Friday is associated with a sacred aura. For the Javanese, a particular day that is *Kliwon* is even more sacred. See, Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 285-6, 313.
3. Rasjidi, *Islam dan Kebatinan*, p. 1.
4. For further accounts of Javanese socio-religious customs in Kotagede see M. Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 14-44.
5. See *ibid*, pp. 45-64.
6. Soebagijo, "Dari Saridi", p. 12.
7. *Ibid*, p. 14.
8. For further biography of Muzakkir see M. Nakamura, "Professor Kahar Muzakkir and the Development of the Muslim Reformist Movement in Indonesia", in *Religion and Social Ethos in Indonesia* (Clayton: Monash University, 1977), pp. 1-20.
9. For further accounts of Indonesian student activism in Cairo during this period see W.R. Roff, "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s", *Indonesia* 9 (1970), pp. 73-87; Mona Abaza, "Changing Images of Three Generations of Azharites in Indonesia" (Singapore: ISEAS, Occasional Paper No 16, 1993), esp. pp. 4-11.
10. See, Rosihan Anwar, "Prof. Dr. H.M. Rasjidi: Pengungkap Gamblang Hubungan Antar Agama di Indonesia" [Rasjidi: The Clear Expositor of Inter-religions Relationship in Indonesia], in Ananda (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 154.

11. See B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), pp. 106-7.
12. See Deliar Noer, *Partai Islam di Pentas Nasional* (Jakarta: Grafiti Pers, 1987), h. 347; For further debates on the existence of the Ministry of Religious Affairs see Deliar Noer, *Administrasi Islam di Indonesia*, [Administration of Islam in Indonesia] (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1983), esp. pp. 13-46; Boland, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-12.
13. Soebagijo, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
14. For detailed accounts of Rasjidi's role in the diplomatic mission see M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi Indonesia di Luar Negeri* [The Diplomacy of the Indonesian Revolution Abroad] (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1980), esp. pp. 161-272.
15. Schacht elaborates his argument in *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), and *Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), esp. p. 34. His argument has also been convincingly contested by Fazlur Rahman and M.M. Azami. See, Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, Second Edition, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), esp. pp. 43-60; M.M. Azami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis: Islamic Teaching Center, 1977).
16. Soebagijo, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-4.
17. See, for instance, R. Peters, *Jihad in Medieval and Modern Islam* (Leiden: Mouton, 1977); *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History* (The Hague: E.J. Brill, 1979); Azyumardi Azra, "Jihad dan Terorisme: Konsep dan Perkembangan Historis" ["Jihad and Terrorism: Concepts and Historical Developments"], *Islamika* 4 (1994), pp. 76-86.
18. A shorter version of this oration is provided in Ananda (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 86-92.
19. For further accounts of this see Anwar, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-61.
20. Ihromi, "Hubungan Antaragama" ["Interreligion Relationships"], in Ananda *op. cit.*, pp. 167-71.
21. See Anwar, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-5.
22. First published in Bandung by Mimbar Demokrasi, 1968. Later it was included in Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Kemoderenan dan Keindonesiaan* [Islam, Modernity and Indonesianness] (Bandung: Mizan, 1987), pp. 171-203.
23. A good documentation and analysis of various essays on modernization is provided by Muhammad Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to "New Order" Modernization in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982).
24. See Madjid, "Modernisasi", pp. 172-4.
25. Rasjidi, "Usaha Mengkristenkan Indonesia dan Dunia" [Efforts to Christianize Indonesia and the World], *Suara Muhammadiyah*, 1-2 (January 1968), p. 3ff., cited in Hassan, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-9.
26. See "Keharusan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam dan Masalah Integrasi Umat" [The Necessity of Renewing Islamic Thought and the Question of the Ummah Integration] (paper read on 2 January, 1970); repr. in Madjid, *Islam, Kemoderenan*, pp. 204-5, 211-2.

27. Madjid, "Keharusan Pembaharuan", pp. 207-8.
28. This book was first published in 1972 and was reprinted in 1977.
29. See Rasjidi, *Koreksi*, pp. 14-6.
30. *Ibid*, p. 17.
31. *Ibid*, pp. 56, 85.
32. Nurcholish Madjid, "Sekitar Usaha Membangkitkan Etos Intelektualisme Islam di Indonesia" [On the Efforts to Revive the Islamic Intellectual Ethos in Indonesia] in Ananda (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 215.
33. Madjid, "Sekularisasi Ditinjau Kembali" [Secularization reexamined] in his, *Islam, Kemoderenan*, p. 260.
34. See, Rasjidi, *Apa itu Syi'ah* [What is Shi'ah] (Jakarta: 1984).
35. See Saiful Muzani, "Mu'tazilah Theology and the Modernization of the Indonesian Muslim Community: Intellectual Portrait of Harun Nasution", *Studia Islamika* 1 (1) (1994), esp, pp. 106-13.
36. See Rasjidi, *Koreksi terhadap Dr. Harun Nasution tentang "Islam ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya* [Correction to Dr. Harun Nasution on [his book] Islam viewed from Its various Aspects] (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1977), pp. 11-2, 107; cf. Muzani, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-7.
37. This diary was published in Jakarta by LP3ES in 1981.
38. See Rasjidi, "Pergolakan Pemikiran Islam: Suatu Tragedi" [The Restlessness of Islamic Thought: A Tragedy], *Panji Masyarakat* 346 (1 January, 1982), pp. 42-3.
39. See Djohan Effendi, "Pergolakan Pemikiran Islam: Sebuah Shock Therapy" [The Restlessness of Islamic Thought: A Shock Therapy], *Panji Masyarakat* 348 (21 January, 1982), p. 43. For further analysis of Wahib's diary see A.H. Johns, "An Islamic System or Islamic Values? Nucleus of a Debate in Contemporary Indonesia", in W.R. Roff (ed.), *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 254-79.
40. See the complete texts reprinted in Rasjidi, *Strategi Kebudayaan dan Pembaharuan Pendidikan Nasional* [Cultural Strategy and the Renewal of National Education] (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1980).
41. See *ibid*, esp. pp. 8-23, 27, 35, 37-8, and 100-3.

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