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# The Role of Betawese Scholars in Multicultural Islamic Proselytism (*Dakwah*)

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**Abstract**-Betawese (a native of Jakarta) ethnic is a multicultural community which becomes valuable asset of this nation, yet at the other side, has a potential to make a social segregation moreover when political identity has increased among people. History recorded that the transmission of *Dakwah Islam* (Islamic proselytism) in Indonesia was brought in peace. One prominent factor that influenced the successful mission of *Dakwah Islam* is because of the cultural approach despite of power or military force. This paper is intended to describe the significant role of Betawese scholars in transmitting multicultural *dakwah* in Jakarta. This research applies qualitative methodology using descriptive analysis and phenomenological approach. The observation, historical documentation and interviews are taken as field study for this research. The interview was taken in Jakarta by having KH Ahmad Luthfi Fathullah and KH Saefuddin Amsir as the source. The role of multicultural *Dakwah* had been undertaken through three main factors, namely *dakwah* by tolerance, *dakwah* through dialogs, and *dakwah* through media and institution. Those matters were presented by Betawese scholars as an effort to build peace among pluralistic people.

**Key words:** Role, Betawese Scholars, Multicultural *Dakwah*

## I. INTRODUCTION.

Islam for the Betawese, the native of Jakarta ethnic, is not merely a religion, but as an ideology, identity, life view and cultural expression [1, p. 238]. Islam plays a very important role in shaping the identity and character of an open, egalitarian, humorous and religious people. Islam is used as a unifying symbol that attaches all elements of Betawese society. Tradition and culture that is expressed always based on Islamic values.

Islam in Betawese land has a long historical range and setting of heroic events. According to Ridwan Saidi the history of Islam in Betawese land begins with the presence of Islam spreaders in Karawang, namely Sheikh Hasanudin or Sheikh Quro from Campa in 1412 Saka coincide in 1491 AD [2, p. 109]. The next process of Islamic *dakwah* is when Fadhillah Khan (Fatahillah) stormed the Port of Sunda Kelapa to abolish populated Portuguese in Batavia, on June 22, 1527 AD [3, p. 29]. This event in Sunda Kelapa is marked as the birthday of Jakarta. [4]

*Dakwah* which was brought by Rasul based on multicultural concept since there were so many religions, race and cultures at that time. This also the reason why

Muhammad was sent to bring the grace for the whole nation, as it is mentioned in the Quran (QS. Al-Anbiya (21): 107). The *Risalah* that Muhammad brought should accommodate all life problems that arouse not only within that certain time but also until the life ends. (Sya'rawi, 2011: 155).

For that reasons, history has recorded that the process of transmission of Islam, was brought in peace without any violence or power force, that makes Islam gradually becomes the main religion in Indonesia. The majority of Indonesian people have Islam as their religion. Islam gave appreciation to the use of art and local tradition as the tool to spread this belief. This cultural approach despite violence and military force, brought successful for *dakwah* in Indonesia. [5, p. 481] Indonesia is a nation that consists of many ethnics, tribes, race, culture, language and religion. This diversity can be a trigger to a conflict and separatism. The systematic, integrated and continuous effort should be taken in order to keep this multicultural nation stays in unity. There multicultural *dakwah* takes a major role. [6]

Multicultural *dakwah* can respond to many *dakwah* problems among pluralism society then the change of *mad'u* (the proselytism object) based on concept and attitude of respect each other's will bring to a harmonious relationship between people with different religion. Moslems should be the pioneer in bringing the message of peaceful Islam in order to spread this *rahmatan lil alamin* (pity for the entire world) religion by providing multicultural *dakwah*. [7, p. 44] This kind of multicultural *dakwah* can keep society live in a social stability along with diversity within the society. Not only with society, this multicultural *dakwah* also keep Moslem hand in hand with government to create *kairu ummah* that is a stable society. [8, p. 34]

M. Arfah Shiddiq has elaborated that multicultural means that people should admit that there are so many different cultures, ethnics and beliefs within the society. Therefore every individual will gain respect and responsible to live harmoniously in the community. The refuse of respect towards others is the root of social problems to develop multicultural points of view. [9]

Charles and Bikhu explained that Multicultural is a paradigm that admit the pluralistic resemblance of cultural expressions, [10, p. 35] and [9, pp. 123– 126]. Multiculturalism can also be accepted as a worldview in

quality in the form of justice, equality, and prosperity for humanity worldwide. Cultural and religious diversity is a *sunatullah*—a God's determination—that cannot be changed or replaced. In other words, it is impossible to aspire to make this man a single people, a religion, and a culture. Even those fantasies are in contradiction with God's own (God's) policy which does not want to make man as a people as stated in Surah Yunus (10): 99.

Through the recognition of the agreement or common interfaith point, in the perspective of multicultural *dakwah*, as Nurcholis Madjid repeatedly said, as quoted by Komarudin and Gaus, that to invite people to Islam is not always identical with inviting people to be Muslim.[24, p. 19]

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The activities of proselytism that conducted by the two Betawese ulamas, Dr. K.H. Ahmad Lutfi Fathullah and Drs. K.H. Syaifuddin Amsir, are by oral (*dakwah bil-lisan*), by writing (*dakwah bi al kitabah*), by social action (*dakwah bil-hal*), and by organization (*dakwah bi at-tadbir*). The *dakwah* through oral is done through *majelis taklim*, mosques in Jakarta and surroundings cities, national and foreign environments. They also preaching through the media whether is electronic, which is done in TV stations such as TVRI and TV one, or through printed media (*dakwah bi al kitabah*), in the form of books or papers. The *dakwah bi al-hal and bi at-tadbir* both scholars is preaching through community organizations and their expertise respectively. The role of multicultural *dakwah* that conducted by K.H. Dr. Ahmad Lutfi Fathullah and K.H. Drs. Syaifudin Amsir are highly values differences (pluralism) as long as other parties also value Islam. The role of *dakwah* is done through the first two things, namely *dakwah* through tolerance, and *dakwah* through dialogue. This is done by Betawese scholars as an effort to build peace in a pluralist society.

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