

19'TH CENTURY ISLAMIC RENEWAL

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Abstract: *This paper is about Islamic renewal in the 19th century that emerged as a response to the challenges of modernization faced by the Islamic world at that time. This renewal movement aims to restore the glory of Islam through renewal of religious thought and practice that is more in line with the demands of the times. This renewal movement was spearheaded by intellectual figures such as Jamaluddin al-afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Sayed Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Iqbal, and Rashid Ridha. Islamic thought and renewal movements in the 19th century had several important contributions in facing the challenges of modernization, namely bringing new thoughts that were more open and inclusive of socio-political and cultural changes in the Islamic world. However, this movement faced major challenges, especially in overcoming resistance and conservatism among traditional religious leaders. Therefore, it requires the support and active participation of the Islamic community to encourage the process of renewal and more open and inclusive thinking.*

Keywords: *intellectual movement, modernization, intellectual figures, new thinking, Islamic society.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic renewal in the 19th century was a movement that emerged as a response to religious and political conditions at the time. This movement was initiated by Muslim scholars and intellectuals who tried to update the understanding and practice of Islam to fit the demands of the times. The Islamic renewal movement in the 19th century was also heavily influenced by Western ideas, especially in terms of science, technology, and political organization. This movement was expected to bring positive changes in the lives of Muslims.

One of the important figures in the Islamic reform movement of the 19th century was Muhammad Abduh, an Egyptian scholar who emphasized the importance of returning to the original sources of Islam, namely the Quran and Hadith, and rejected the use of outdated interpretations and jurisprudence books. Abduh also advocated for freedom of thought and rejected dogmatic thinking that limited the interpretation of Islam.

In addition to Abduh, another figure who fought for the reform of Islam in the 19th century was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a scholar and political activist who strove to strengthen the power of Islam and ignite a sense of nationalism among Muslims. He also emphasized the importance of education and the development of knowledge within Islam.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a literature research method, which involves a series of activities related to the collection of literary data, reading, note-taking, and processing of research materials. Literature research is a type of research where the object is sought through various literary sources such as books, scientific journals, magazines, and documents. This type of research is different from other types that require observation or interviews to gather data.

In this study, the researcher's objective was to find literature related to Islamic reform in the 19th century. The researcher sought data to address the research questions by reading various relevant references. Literature research involves a thorough examination of literary data that can provide solutions or answers related to the researched problem. Through literature research, the study can yield results based on the data sources used.

Result and Discussion

1. Definition of 19th Century Islamic Renewal

Renewal in the Big Indonesian Dictionary is defined as new things, new discoveries that are different from existing things or things that have been known before from ideas, methods or tools¹. In general, renewal is modernization which contains the meaning, thought, flow, movement and efforts to change old ideas, customs, institutions and so on.

¹Peter Salim dan Yenni, Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Kontemporer, (Jakarta, modern English Press, 1991)l.376

Renewal essentially refers to the meaning of the word *tajdid*. Over time, various terms emerged that were seen as having relevance to the meaning of renewal. The word *tajdid* reflects a continuing tradition, an effort to revive Islamic faith and practice in the Muslim community². According to Harun Nasution³ Islamic renewal is a thought and movement to adapt Islamic religious ideas to new developments brought about by modern knowledge and technology. There are several things that encourage the birth of the Islamic renewal and modernization movement, including. First, the existence of a stagnant nature that has made Muslims stop thinking and trying. The progress of society will be achieved if it.

Second, unity among Muslims began to break down. Muslims will not progress if there is no unity. Therefore, the renewal movement was born, which tried to inspire Muslims to unite and fight against Western imperialism.

Third, the result of contact between the Islamic world and the West. With this contact they realized that they had regressed compared to the West. At a time when the Islamic world was in decline, the West was actually progressing and succeeded in expanding new trade areas.

2. Islamic reformers of the 19th century

a. Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905)

Muhammad Abduh is an Egyptian cleric who is famous as a figure of Islamic renewal in the 19th century, he was born in the village of Mahillah in downstream Egypt, born in 1849. His father named Abduh ibn Hasan Khairillah, genealogy with the Turks and his mother has a blood relationship with Umar Bin Khattab⁴. He fought for the understanding of Islam to be adapted to the times and not just follow the traditions of the ancestors. Abduh introduced the concept of *ijtihad* or reinterpretation of Islamic laws so that they could be applied in a modern context. Muhammad Abduh made reforms in Islamic education by integrating general science with religious science. Education for him not only aims to develop cognitive aspects (reason), but also needs to harmonize with affective (moral) and psychomotor aspects (skills). So that Muslims are spared from dullness, backwardness in thinking and excessive *taklid*. Muhammad Abduh's thinking about educational reform through the implementation of learning methods is in accordance with the needs of the industrial world and is relevant to the development of science.⁵

The condition of the Muslim community during the lifetime of Abduh in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was part of a series of historical setbacks for the Muslim ummah. The Islamic world experienced a deeply concerning decline. The Muslim world was constrained by colonizers.

²Moch. Sya'roni hasan jurnal "Upaya Pembaruan Oleh Para Modernis Islam Dalam Bidang Agama, Pendidikan, Politik, Dan Ekonomi" .2

³Harun Nasution, *Pembaharuan Dalam Islam, Sejarah Pemikiran Dan Gerakan*, (Jakarta-Bulan bintang,1994) 11-12

⁴Ali Mufrodi, *Islam di Kawasan kebudayaan arab*, Jakarta:Logos,1997. 69

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Islamic territories that were previously under the protection of the Ottoman Caliphate became targets of European colonization. Britain occupied Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (India). France occupied Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. Italy obtained Libya. In addition to political and military defeats, Muslims also experienced a stagnation of intellectual thought. The situation was vastly different compared to the progress of Europe, which was experiencing the Renaissance. The rise of Europe was accompanied by their expansion into various Muslim territories. Moreover, the rise of Europe also resulted in the division of the Muslim ummah into two groups.

Firstly, there was a conservative group represented by the prominent scholars of Al-Azhar. They strongly opposed any form of change. Their perspective was solely focused on the glory of classical Islam. Their reference point always turned back to a classical era. They viewed that era with a cult-like or fanatical spirit, without allowing any room for renewal. Secondly, there was a group of reformists or educated individuals who were exposed to modern methods from the West. They believed that looking at the glorious history of Islam with a cult-like enthusiasm was a foolish endeavor that only restricted freedom of thought. In short, this second group's mindset was unlikely to lead to progress. Abduh aimed to intelligently reconcile the isolated condition of the Muslim community during this period. He positioned himself as a bridge between the two opposing perspectives. Gradually, he began to break the barriers that constrained the conservative thinking, while at the same time, he was cautious not to blindly imitate Western progress, emphasizing that Islamic progress should not be an absolute imitation of Western progress.

From here, Abduh's path of reform began. He not only addressed pragmatic matters but delved deeper into matters of jurisprudence (fiqh) and beliefs (tauhid), infusing them with new perspectives. During this period (the colonial era of European countries in Asia and Africa), the idea of reform was not limited to Egypt, represented by Abduh alone. In Saudi Arabia, for example, a follower of Ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1787 CE), initiated the movement of reform that later developed into the Wahhabi doctrine. However, there was a difference. Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab's reform efforts revolved around purifying and purging Islamic teachings from superstitions and innovations, and he had a skeptical attitude towards accepting the progress of European nations. On the other hand, Abduh's challenge in Egypt went further. It was about how the Muslim community could unite to expel colonialism from their homeland and revive the spirit of progress, embracing what was beneficial from the West while rejecting what contradicted Islamic principles.

b. Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (1838-1897)

Jamaluddin Al-Afghani was a cleric and political activist who was also an Islamic reformer in the 19th century. He fought for equal rights and free thought in the Islamic world, and criticized the weaknesses of the political and social systems in Muslim regions. Al-Afghani was also known for his anti-colonialism stance. Afghani's renewal concepts are; *First*, the main enemy is Western colonialism which is a continuation of the crusades; *Second*, Muslims must oppose colonialism anywhere and anytime; *Third*, to achieve this goal, Muslims must be united or Pan-Islamism. Pan-Islamism is al-Afghani's renewal idea in the political field. This idea teaches that all Muslims around the world should unite, to free them from foreign slavery. Unity does not mean the dissolution of Islamic kingdoms into one, but they must have one outlook on life. In the broadest sense, Pan-Islamism means solidarity between all Muslims internationally. The theme of the struggle that al-Afghani continued to foment on any occasion was the spirit of fighting colonialism by adhering to the themes of Islamic teachings as a stimulant. In addition, he also stirred up the spirit to return to the theology of *sunnatullah* with rational, philosophical and scientific thinking in order to catch up with the West.⁶

One of the intellectual reforms advocated by Jamaluddin al-Afghani was the absence of separation between religion and politics. This was because Afghani identified political reasons for the decline, such as divisions among the Muslim community, absolute governance, entrusting leadership to untrustworthy individuals, neglecting military defense, assigning administration to incompetent people, and foreign interventions. All of these had to be changed and guided by religious values.

Politics should be based on morality. Morality also needs to be grounded in the teachings of monotheism (tauhid). Therefore, politics should be politics rooted in the teachings of monotheism. The politics we should implement are politics bound by religious values. That is why Islam rejects secularism and secularization, as they contradict Islam. Secularism undermines religious values and views religion as a past entity that no longer has a role in public life. Religion is only deemed necessary in personal life.

Politics should also be practiced with the characteristics and rules of preaching. For example, it should not involve coercion or violence, should not mislead or distort facts, should not use psychological tricks to deceive the public. Instead, it should be characterized by openness, honesty, responsibility, and the courage to proclaim what is true and what is false. This will contribute to the creation of a healthy political environment, although all politics tend to incline towards secularism.

Jamaluddin al-Afghani was a prominent Islamic reformist with creative ideas to revive the fighting spirit of the Muslim community,

⁶Nasbi, I. (2019). Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (Pan-Islamisme Dan Ide Lainnya). *Jurnal Diskursus Islam*, 7(1), 70-79.

particularly in opposing Western colonialism and eradicating blind imitation among the people, which had stifled their rational thinking.

Jamaluddin al-Afghani was more recognized as a Muslim politician than as a revolutionary figure of a specific country. His most significant political activities took place in Egypt for approximately eight years (1871-1876 CE), making him known as the father of Egyptian nationalism. Throughout his political journey, he always grounded himself in the verses of the Quran, which earned him respect from his friends but also garnered him hatred from his enemies and political partners, as experienced in each country he resided in: Afghanistan, India, Egypt, Persia, Turkey, and modern European countries.

c. Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898)

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was an Indian cleric known as one of the leaders of Islamic reform in India in the 19th century. He championed modern and critical education, and promoted social and economic welfare for Indian Muslims. Sayyid Ahmad Khan also led the movement to modernize the Urdu language and literature. Many of Ahmad Khan's reserves and thoughts were used by British colonizers so as to improve India's relations with Britain, especially Muslims. For his services, the British Empire conferred the title of Sir on him. His relationship with the British became good and this he used for the benefit of Indian Muslims.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was of the opinion that the improvement of the position of Indian Muslims could be realized only by cooperating with the British. The British were already the strongest rulers in India and opposing them would not do any good to Indian Muslims. It would keep them backward and eventually leave them far behind Hindu India.

In his thought, Sayyid Ahmad Khan also championed universal values such as humanity, equality, and he opposed the caste system and discrimination, and fought for social welfare and rights for all people. Overall, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's thought was progressive and inclusive, and championed reform and renewal in the Islamic world. He believed that Islam should be adopted and practiced in a contextually relevant manner, and championed unity and prosperity.

Ahmad Khan's other ideas included his rejection of certain Islamic laws that he deemed no longer relevant, such as the law of amputation for thieves, slavery, and some Islamic traditions like polygamy. The main purpose of prayer, according to him, was to experience the presence of God rather than asking for something from Him. Through his magazine, *Tahzi al-Akhlaq*, which was written in Urdu, he disseminated informative ideas regarding religious and societal issues. Additionally, he successfully compiled a seven-volume *Tafsir* (interpretation) of the Quran, in which he provided rational explanations of religious doctrines.⁷

⁷ Nasution, Harun.1991. *Pembaharuan Dalam Islam*. Jakarta : Bulan Bintang. 171

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was one of the greatest Islamic thinkers in India, bridging the intellectual gap between the medieval and modern periods. He was a key figure in the 19th-century Islamic revival in the Muslim world. His role was vital in the revival of Indian Muslims, introducing Western liberalism and rational thinking to them.

d. Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938)

Muhammad Iqbal was a famous philosopher, poet, and politician in Pakistan and India. He was one of the Islamic reformers who championed the renewal of Islamic thought to face the challenges of modernity and capitalism. Iqbal also fought for the establishment of modern and democratic Islamic states. Muhammad Iqbal's Thought and Its Influence on Islamic Law Reform. Muhammad Iqbal's ideas, especially on the renewal of Islamic law in India, were much influenced by the social dynamics that occurred in European society. Iqbal felt that *ijtihad* was a very urgent need in developing Islamic law that refers to the interests of the people and general progress. According to Iqbal, the understanding of the Quran and Hadith as the source of ethics must be able to adopt the dynamics of the times. For this reason, Muslims must be able to understand the content of the texts of *Shara'* (Quran and Hadith) fully and deeply in order to find solutions to social problems that continue to grow and complex. Iqbal also saw the importance of transferring the power of individual *ijtihad* to collective *ijtihad* (*ijma*).

As a child of a colonized nation, Muhammad Iqbal's thoughts and responses to various Western ideologies developed during his lifetime, when India was struggling against British imperialism. Muhammad Iqbal strongly supported Indian nationalism, which aimed to unite Muslims and Hindus in an independent nation. Through his poems such as "Himalaya," "Naya," "Syiwala," and "Taranah-i Hini," Muhammad Iqbal portrayed himself as an enthusiastic nationalist.

However, a change occurred when Muhammad Iqbal pursued higher education in England and Germany. In these two European countries, he witnessed firsthand how nationalism played a role in the expansion of Western imperialism towards the Islamic world (the East). According to Muhammad Iqbal, nationalism was a dangerous Western product for human civilization. He saw that Western nationalism led to the idolization of European races and the denigration of other races.

In reality, in the early 20th century, Western nationalism intensively sought to fulfill their imperialist ambitions. Muhammad Iqbal personally witnessed how Western leaders made political decisions that tended to destroy humanity. The militarization and colonization of European nations for their own glory posed great dangers to world peace. Muhammad Iqbal also observed how European powers had divided the Islamic world, especially the Middle East and North Africa.

Muhammad Iqbal made significant contributions to India-Pakistan, both in terms of thought and movement. He was a witness of his time, where his own nation was in the depths of darkness, while other Islamic nations were colonized, impoverished, ignorant, and backward. Iqbal utilized his intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence bestowed upon him by Allah SWT to actively engage in writing and thinking. He dedicated his time and energy to these pursuits, even writing in Urdu, English, and Persian.

e. Rashid Rida (1865-1935)

Muhammad Rashid Ridho was born in 1865 M in Alqolamun a village in Lebanon His educational background began from the traditional madrasah in Al-Qolamun. Then he continued his studies at the Islamic national school (madrasah Al-Wathoniyah Al-Islamiyah) in Tripoli⁸. At this school, in addition to religious knowledge and Arabic, modern knowledge and French and Turkish were also taught.

Rashid Rida was a student of Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, and it was Rashid Rida who continued the work of interpretation, which began from Surah An-Nisa verse 126, because Muhammad Abduh until his death only. managed to interpret the Quran up to verse 125 of Surah An-Nisa. Rashid Rida, a Lebanese reformer, died in August 1935. The ideas of reform that Rasyid Rida promoted, not much with the ideas of his teacher.

Muhamad Abduh and Jamaludin Al-Afghani, they also argued that Muslims were lost because they no longer adhered to the true teachings of Islam. Muslims' understanding of religious teachings was wrong and their actions had deviated from the true teachings of Islam. Many innovations have been introduced into Islam that are detrimental to the development and progress of the ummah. Among these heresies is the opinion that Islam teaches that there is an inner power that enables the possessor to obtain whatever he wants, while happiness in the hereafter and in the world is obtained through the natural laws created by God, according to Rashid Rida. Rashid Rida, like Muhamad Abduh, values human reason. Even though his appreciation of reason is not as high as the appreciation given by his teacher. According to him, reason can be used for teachings about social life, but not for worship, ijtiḥad is needed only for matters of worship, no more⁹. The specialness of reason depends on the intrinsic specialness of knowledge, meaning that because it is intrinsically something special, everything that facilitates the development of knowledge is also special¹⁰.

Muhammad Rashid Rida, as a scholar who constantly sought knowledge and tirelessly struggled throughout his life, closed the chapter

⁸Ali Mufrodi, islam di Kawasan kebudayaan arab, 162

⁹journal.uinbanten.ac.id/

¹⁰Hasan Asari, Nukilan Pemikiran Islam Klasik Gagasan Pendidikan Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, (Medan: IAIN PRESS, 2012), p.84

of his life on the 23rd of Jumadil 'Ula 1354 H, corresponding to the 22nd of August 1935 CE. He passed away with a bright countenance and a smile on his face.

CONCLUSION

The Islamic renewal movement of the 19th century was a concern for Muslims at the time. Reform thinkers and activists championed reforms in the Islamic world and the introduction of modern and secular education for Muslims. The Islamic renewal movement of the 19th century was aimed at responding to the challenges faced by Muslims at the time, especially in relation to the lag in technology, education, and social progress compared to Hindus and Western nations.

Through the thoughts of reformers such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who was tolerant and adaptive to religion and strengthened the unity of Muslims and universal values. This Islamic renewal movement has had a significant impact on the development and modernization of Islam today. Therefore, we need to continue to appreciate and study the thoughts of the reformers to inspire the renewal movement and the development of Muslims today.

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