# FROM WAHHABI PESANTREN TO PROGRESSIVE ISLAM: The Socio-Intellectual Legacy of Moeslim Abdurrahman (1948–2012)

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**Abstract:** This study traces the socio-intellectual journey of Moeslim Abdurrahman (1948–2012), a prominent Indonesian Muslim thinker renowned for his concept of transformative Islam. Moeslim reimagined Islam not merely as a set of theological doctrines but as a vehicle for social critique and advocacy for marginalized groups. His intellectual evolution was shaped by diverse influences, including his formative Wahhabi education, active engagement in civil society organizations, and doctoral studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Despite facing criticism—particularly regarding its perceived lack of contextual fit within Indonesian Islam—Moeslim's transformative thought has gained significant traction in national Islamic discourse. He also played a pivotal role in mentoring the Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah (JIMM), established in 2003, and was instrumental in revitalizing Muhammadiyah's intellectual tradition. Alongside contemporaries such as Ahmad Syafii Maarif and M. Amin Abdullah, Moeslim stands as a key figure in advancing progressive Islamic thought in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Moeslim Abdurrahman, Transformative Islam, Intellectual History, Progressive Islam, JIMM

## Introduction

The study of Moeslim Abdurrahman and his Islamic thought is more widely understood within the framework of liberal Islam, both denotatively[1] and connotatively.[2] Liberal Islamic thought in Indonesia actually has a long history and existed before JIL was established.[3] Halid Alkaf views that liberal Islamic thought is closely related to Indonesian Islamic reforms that have emerged since the 1920s. This view implies that the Islamic modernism movement in Indonesia is one of the variants of liberal Islam.[4]

According to Charles Kurzman, Ahmad Dahlan (d. 1923), the founder of Muhammadiyah can actually be categorized as liberal muslim because he tried to understand Islam in accordance with modernity.[5] Ahmad Jainuri expressed a similar view that the religious thoughts of early generations of Muhammadiyah were considered as reformist, open, tolerant and even liberal.[6]

In contrast to the view above, according to Bachtiar, liberal Islam is one of the variants of Islamic thought that emerged in Indonesia in the second half of the 20th century. Using diachronic approach, Bachtiar argues that liberal Islam was born in Indonesia in the 1970s because of the influence of Middle Eastern liberal thinking introduced by Indonesian Islamic intellectuals, such as Harun Nasution (1919-1998) and Gus Dur (1940-2009).[7]

Greg Barton argues that liberal Islam was introduced by several Indonesian Muslim intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005), Djohan Efendi (1939-2017) Ahmad Wahib (1942-1973) and Gus Dur.[8]

Liberal Islam, in its denotative meaning, refers to the renewal of Islamic thought. Initially aimed at making religion relevant to social change, some of its supporters later pushed it toward extreme liberalism, provoking reactions from various groups.

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Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi views Liberal Islam as having similarities with the liberal Christian thought of the 19th century. Liberal Islam consistently challenges the Qur'an, promotes relativism that blurs the concept of truth, and encourages skepticism. Additionally, it is characterized by prioritizing reason over divine revelation and defending heretical sects.[9] The negative connotation of liberal Islam has led to the avoidance of this terminology and its exclusion from explanations of contemporary Islamic thought. Some Muslim intellectuals are reluctant to be categorized as liberal because the term is often associated with disregarding Islamic teachings.[10]

According to Abdullah Saeed, there are six groups of contemporary Islamic thought. Those six groups have many differences and even diametrically opposite.[11] The first one is "legalist-traditionalist". This group is marked by a religious thought which is rigidly based on Islamic law developed by pre-modern scholars. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Islamic scholar born in Egypt in 1926, is considered as one of the representations of "legalist-traditionalist" approach of Islamic thought.

Second, "political muslims". This Islamic thought is concerned with the emergence of the Islamic communities. The establishment of an Islamic state is the main goal of this approach. In addition, this Islamic thought rejects modern ideologies, such as nationalism and secularism. This approach argues that Islamic ideology and institutions are more suitable for the Islamic community than modern ideologies. Third, "secular muslims". This group tends to understand Islam as an individual affair between God and the believers. Therefore, this Islamic thought does not encourages the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of Islamic law. This group is even permitting the homosexuality as a human right. Neither religion nor the state has right to oppose it.

Fourth, "theological puritans". This group pays more attention to the issue of Islamic doctrine as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad. This group encourages Muslims to have "the right belief", not practice any acts of *shirk* and to avoid any innovations in religion *(bid'ah)*. The main figures of this thought were Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792), and others. Fifth, "militant extremists". This group tends to use violence to deal with the so-called 'enemies of Islam', both Muslims and non-Muslims. The violence is driven by the view that Muslims are treated unfairly by the West and its allies, giving rise to anti-Westernism. Saeed called Usama bin Laden as the main representation of this extreme view. Sixth, "progressive ijtihadis". This last one seeks to reinterpret religious teachings in line with the times. The adherents of this approach do not abandon religion altogether, but adopted the substance of religion in order to answer the problems of Muslims today.[12] Progressive Islam is the practice of Islam and the implementation of Islamic fundamental values on the basis of the ideas of *tajdid* (renewal) and *islah* (reformation).[13]

Within the last aforementioned Islamic thought trend, Moeslim's transformative Islamic theology is understood. More than just a frame of thought, Moeslim and his thoughts are placed as an intellectual historical entity that develops and influences Indonesian Islamic intellectuals, especially JIMM (Muhammadiyah Young Intellectual Network).

Unlike most scholars who view Moeslim as part of the liberal group, Wahyudi Akmaliah portrays him as a figure who initiated the idea of Transformative Islam by reinterpreting Marxist perspectives through an Islamic lens. This was done in response to the socio-economic inequalities that emerged as a result of the New Order regime's developmentalist ideology.[14] Akmaliah's study intersects with our article, as both discuss

Moeslim's concept of transformative Islam. However, our study goes further by examining the formation of Moeslim's intellectual journey, from his struggles at Pesantren Ar Roudlotul Ilmiyah YTP Kertosono, Nganjuk, East Java, to the development of his transformative Islam ideas. This differs from Akmaliah's study, which focuses solely on transformative Islam and its socio-political context.

## Methodology

This study employs the historical research method. It is categorized as an intellectual history study, which reconstructs the dissemination of thought within a society and identifies the interconnections between different ideas.[15] Furthermore, traveling theory is employed in this study, as it provides a robust framework for understanding the complex dynamics of ideas traversing diverse contexts, disciplines, and historical periods Moeslim's intellectual journey. In general, the theory introduced by Edward W. Said asserts that ideas, concepts, and thoughts can undergo a journey of movement, much like individuals and institutions. The movement of thought can occur from person to person, from one situation to another, and over time.[16]

## Results dan Discussions
### Moeslim Abdurrahman and Wahhabi *Pesantren*

Born into a farming family in Solokuro, Lamongan, after completing Sekolah Rakyat (SR), Moeslim continued his education at a pesantren in 1962. His parents had high hopes that he would become a village kiai. Geographically, Solokuro is adjacent to Paciran, one of the centers of the Muhammadiyah movement on the northern coast of Lamongan. As a Muhammadiyah family, the pesantren chosen was, of course, either a Muhammadiyah pesantren or one affiliated with Muhammadiyah. At that time,

Muhammadiyah members in northern Lamongan were familiar with several pesantren aligned with Muhammadiyah, such as Pesantren Persatuan Islam (Persis) in Bangil, Pasuruan; Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor in Ponorogo; and Pesantren Ar Roudlotul Ilmiyah YTP in Kertosono, Nganjuk. It was at the last pesantren that Moeslim decided to study from 1962 to 1970 under the guidance of KH. Salim Achyar, an alumnus of Pesantren Tebuireng Jombang, which was led by Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama.[17]

Moeslim mentions that Ar-Raudlatul Ilmiyah Islamic Boarding School is Wahhabi *Pesantren*.[18] Muhammadiyah itself is often associated with Wahhabi religious movements and thoughts.[19] For this reason, the choice of pesantren made by Moeslim's parents is understandable. Ar-Raudlatul Ilmiyah Islamic Boarding School Kertosono is actually not affiliated with any particular Islamic movement and religious thought. This pesantren which was founded in 1949 even teaches several *kitab kuning* (lit. means "yellow book"), indicating traditional Islamic textbook which are usually taught in pesantren affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, such as *Riyad al-Salihin*, *Bulugh al-Maram*, *Mabadi Awwaliyah fi al-Usul al-Fiqh wa al -Qawaid al-Fiqhiyyah* and others. In addition, "yellow books" which are usually taught in modern *pesantren* are also taught here, such as *al-Nahw al-Wadih* and *Bidayah al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid* by Ibn Rushd.[20]

For Moeslim, studying at a *pesantren* is a process of seeking religious knowledge that strengthens faith and spirituality. In the process of seeking authentic faith, there is not much space to accommodate religious thoughts. That's why in an interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla August 7, 2003, Moeslim admitted that while studying at the *pesantren*, his Islam was more influenced by the *kitab kuning* than social science.[21]

In addition to studying at Islamic boarding schools, Moeslim studied in a higher education college located in Kediri, 20 km driving from Kertosono, Nganjuk. There were two universities in the Kediri area at that time, namely IAI Tribakti (Tribakti Institute of Islamic Studies) Lirboyo Kediri and STITM (Muhammadiyah College of Islamic Education) Kediri. With his Muhammadiyah family background, Moeslim chose to study at STITM Kediri. For two years (1968-1970) Moeslim was a student until he obtained a BA (Bachelor of Art) degree in 1970. After that, Moeslim continued his higher education at the Muhammadiyah University of Solo from 1970 to 1974. On this campus, Moeslim is active in HMI (Islamic Student Association).

The transformation of diversity from normative to empirical occurred when Moeslim attended a social science research training in 1975. The training made Moeslim understand that religion is not only normative, but also empirical, based on social sciences. Therefore, Moeslim criticized the normative-orthodox approach of Muhammadiyah in relation to social services and cultural *da'wah*. Strictly speaking, Moeslim criticized Muhammadiyah's concern for emphasizing normative-orthodox rather than ideological-emancipatory.[22]

Continuing his education in the field of anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States (1994-2000), Moeslim was actually interested in the poverty he was struggling with in NGOs, but his professor directed him to study the role of the middle class who was seen as an agent of change. Moeslim's dissertation, "On Hajj Tourism: In Search of Piety and Identity in The New Order Indonesia (2000)" emphasized that religious awareness and class identity always coincide. According to him, the Islamic identity of middle class Muslims prioritizes piety, modernity, and lifestyle.[23]

Moeslim is involved in various jobs and professions. Moeslim was listed as a researcher at the Research and Development Center of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (1977-1989); Assistant Chief Editor of Pelita Daily (1989-1991), and Head of Research and Development of The Jakarta Post (1999-2001). Moeslim leads the P3M (Islamic Boarding School and Community Development Association), Muhammadiyah Labor, Farmer and Fisherman Empowerment Institute (2000-2005), and the Al-Maun Institute. Moeslim also sit as the Executive Director of Ma'aarif Institute for Culture and Humanity and a member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). In addition, Moeslim is the founding father and intellectual mentor of JIMM. Regarding his involvement in the Muhammadiyah structure, Moeslim called himself a Muhammadiyah convert. A few years before his death, Moeslim founded *Sekolah Sumbu Panguripan* as a transformative social science laboratory in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta.[24]

In the construction of "traveling theory", the journey of thought has four stages.[25] The first is "point of origin". Thoughts arise in the discourse space. In this context, transformative Islam is a crystallization of the struggle of religious thought, intellectuals and the activism of Moeslim in various NGOs in Indonesia. Understanding the origin of thought is important so that a thought can be understood in the context of its emergence. In a joint study with Parsudi Suparlan in Indramayu, Moeslim introduced "*Kalibokong* theology". In an interview with Sayed Mahdi, Moeslim explicitly stated that:

> "This theology emerged in my consciousness from the fact that I saw how the poor people are physically close to houses of worship, but from a social and economic perspective they are far away. That's what causes them to stay away from the houses of worship. The social reality in the area really influenced my awareness to find a reflection model on the importance

of transformative theology or transformative Islam. Because, if then we only talk about heresy, superstition, and that does not solve the problem. Or if we talk about modernization or traditional Islam, those issues are also not so down to earth. Transformative Islam shows that there are sufferings of the *mustad'afin*, there are those who are designated as *muzakki* (donors) and so on."[26]

The second is "transversed distance". Thought travels from a previous point to a different place and time. Moeslim's transformative Islamic thought has undergone a 'journey' as well as dissemination not only within Muhammadiyah, but also outside Muhammadiyah. Along the way, transformative Islamic thought has been widely studied, including what has been discussed in the dozens of pages of Carol Kersten's dissertation.[27]

The third is "a set of conditions". In this stage, thoughts meet other thoughts, they are contested with each other. As a thought, transformative Islam is not necessarily accepted. Criticism of this thought emerged from various Indonesian Muslim intellectuals. One of them is Kuntowijoyo (1943-2005). Although in substance he can accept Moeslim's transformative Islamic thought, Kuntowijoyo does not agree with his epistemological building. According to Kuntowijoyo, social transformation in Indonesia can occur through objective tools rather than normative-theological ones. In addition, the nomenclature of transformative theology is confusing because there are no theological issues in favor of *mustad'afin*.[28] However, according to Moeslim (2003), in order to describe the power relations contained in the hegemony of development, we require a symbolic language which could reflect theology. Therefore, the nomenclature of transformative theology is used.[29]

The fourth is "the now fully (or partly) accommodated (or incorporated) idea". Transformative Islamic thought has been

accepted as part of Indonesian Islamic discourse with various criticisms and resistances. Even transformative theology may not be seen as a liberalization of religious thought, but a liberation of e social emancipatory.

Transformative Islamic ideas do not appear in an empty space. The vortex of modern capitalistic life and the ideology of the development of *Orde Baru*, in Moeslim's view, made religion produce three patterns of religious thought. First, rational theology which seeks to attract the relevance of modern developments with religion. This way of thinking refers to the intellectual interests of some religious thinkers. Second, the theology of parallelism that justifies the technocratic program. This theology gives legitimacy to programs that are oriented towards economic growth, not targeting the values of human dignity itself. Third, eschatological theology that is considered as "escapist". This theology is widely believed by *mustad'afin* (the under-privileged) because of their exclusion in modern life. They give up to accept the socio-political situation that throws them into low human dignity.[30]

Those three religious ideas are not based on social problems. Therefore, a religious thought needs to adjust with social reality so that religion is not utopian. In this context, Moeslim offers and elaborates religious thought which is called transformative theology or transformative Islam. Transformative Islam is not just a religious thought, but a religious practice that views the origin of socio-economic inequality due to an unfair social structure.[31]

Moeslim made a sharp critique of the intellectual process in religious thought. First, the debate on religious thought is indeed "exciting", but it does not create a new awareness that inspires collectively to make changes. Second, the idea of religious reform does not bring up the idea of transformation. According

to Moeslim, religious thought is not enlightening if it is does not emerge from transformative-ideological criticism.[32] Moeslim imagines the emergence of religious thought that grows in a dialectical process between the Qur'an, social reality and new awareness.[33]

In its development, Moeslim also uses a social science approach as a tool of analysis. Moeslim explicitly mentions the theoretical framework of Antonio Gramsci's hegemony (1891-1937) as well as Paulo Freire's (1921-1997) awareness of the oppressed and theology of liberation perspective.[34] By quoting those thinkers, it indicates that Moeslim's thinking is heavily influenced by social scientists with a Marxian perspective.[35]

## Progressive Islam: Moeslim's Perspective

In general, Moeslim's intellectual works are related to the search for how Islam, which is the basis of one's own faith and rituals, can radiate a critical ideology (Abdurrahman, 2003). Some of the books that record his intellectual footprint include: *Menafsirkan Islam dalam Tradisi dan Persoalan Umat* (1990), *Kang Thowil dan Siti Marjinal* (1995), *Islam Transformatif* (1995), *Semarak Islam Semarak Demokrasi* (1997), *On Hajj Tourism: In Search of Piety and Identity in The New Order Indonesia* (2000) translated into *Bersujud di Baitullah: Ibadah Haji, Mencari Kesalehan Hidup* (2009), *Islam Sebagai Kritik Sosial* (2003), dan *Islam yang Memihak* (2005), dan *Suara Tuhan, Suara Pemerdekaan* (2009).

Moeslim's books articulate two core themes, *islah* (reform) and *tajdid* (renewal). These two keywords are intimately associated with progressive Islam. In general, Moeslim's intellectual work "relates to the search for how Islam, as the foundation of faith and personal rituals, can radiate an ideology of critique."[36] However, the book does not carry an intellectual pretension that positions

Islam as an ideological solution.

As described above, Moeslim's long intellectual journey significantly influenced his thoughts on religion and Islamic law. Studying at *pesantren* made Moeslim understand religion at the normative level. However, by studying in a university and attending social science training, Moeslim has transformed himself from normative to empirical-transformative.

Broadly speaking, according to Moeslim, the purest meaning of Islam does not lie in the theological formulation, but appears in the daily struggles of its followers to uphold the ideals of justice. Islam is the truest human spirit that guides civilization, especially in freedom and liberation, both for individual awareness and collectively, to realize ethics (*amar bi al ma'ruf*) and civilization that revives the ideals of humanity which is full of freedom, independence and respect (*nahy munkar*). Thus, Islam should be a moving historical idea, not just enriching intellectual treasures that float, not aligning to one side and acting as a deterrent to the process of dehumanization and social marginalization.[37]

Every religion gives meaning and demands for the morality of life for its adherents. However, humans do not know how to have a true religion because of the limitations of absolute truth. Armed with religious doctrines, humans translate their beliefs into everyday life.[38] In other words, religion is imagination, ideas and thoughts to implement religious doctrine in the struggle of human history. Moeslim made a strong critique of the type of religious belief which he called "sensitive to the Shari'ah, forgetting the essence of religion".[39] As a result, religion is trapped in a ritual routine which is accompanied by an understanding of religion in a black-and-white perspective.

According to Moeslim, Islam is a religion that favors justice and truth.[40] Moeslim clearly states about his idea:

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"Religion, as the transcendent force of every person, every social group and society, is certainly the capital of morality and at the same time the source and flame of ideas that should not die. Moreover, if then religion becomes sublimation and catharsis that does not generate resistance to social evil, then religion will lose its critical function to provide hope. A hope of change that as long as there is religion, the ideals of justice will continue to be maintained as the ideals of humanity.[41]

But, instead of favors justice and truth, religion is unable to explain why poverty occurs and persists. Religion is also incapable of being a spiritual and moral force that defends *mustad'afin* (the uner-privileged). In addition, religious institutions such as religious organizations and *majelis ta'lim* (religious forum) are not concerned about discussing the fate of the poor.[42] All this is due to the fading of religious idealism and not due to the invasion of secularism. Religious idealism fades because religion is placed in a ritual framework with individual piety dimensions, without giving birth to social responsibility. For its adherents, religion is more lived as individual salvation than social benefit.[43]

Therefore, in the perspective of transformative Islam, religion has an urgency that lies in its presence

"religion should provide encouragement and direction so that there is a collective resistance force, so that the unfair history we experience in the current industrial capitalist era can change through continuous resistance, because there is a religious moral control that is critical of the process of human degradation. Therefore, the most basic concern of transformative Islam is the establishment of the power of 'counter hegemony' which is the articulated from the diversity of the *mustad'afin,* not based on single anti-hegomonic awareness of various power relations in each places".[44]

Moeslim uses religious terminology as the basis of his religious movements and thoughts which are ideological-transformative. Muhammadiyah itself ordains itself as a da'wah movement for *amar makruf nahi munkar*. Because the implementation of *amar makruf nahi munkar* in the socio-political realm is sometimes a dilemma, the firmness of Muhammadiyah is questioned.[45] In contrast to Muhammadiyah's type of *amar makruf nahi munkar* which is considered just normative-caricative, for Moeslim, *amar makruf* means a struggle for emancipatory ideology and *nahi munkar* refers to a struggle against dehumanization.[46]

Moeslim's thought has a tendency of progressive Islamic thought due to two things. First, the thought that puts human values as the substance of Islam. Moeslim's transformative Islamic thought confirms that human values are positioned as the highest in his ideas and movements. More than that, religion must take sides and liberate people from oppression. This belief is based on Moeslim's conviction that Islam emerged as a corrective stance against humanity's deviation from fundamental human values. According to Moeslim, such deviations are referred to in the Qur'an as the process of shirk (associating partners with God). For Moeslim, shirk is not only understood as polytheism but also as oppression and dehumanization. Therefore, as a religion of values, Islam is a faith that upholds humanity—not merely a matter of rituals or spirituality.

"Islam is, in essence, a religion whose principles are not solely based on ritual or speculative spirituality. Fundamentally, it is about ensuring that human values are not manipulated or morally distorted by history. Indeed, if Islam's message is understood in this way, there is no reason for Islam to be exclusive in the process of humanization."[47]

Second, the idea that rejects the establishment of an Islamic state. The substantive perspective places Islam as a humanitarian

law that emphasizes the idea of God in emancipation and humanization rather than the interests of identification, who we are, and who they are. Therefore, Moeslim does not agree with the application of Islamic law in the public sphere which is more political than substantive. The discourse on the application of Islamic law in the form of regional regulations and Islamic state did emerge after the fall of *Orde Baru*. Islamism seems to get a democratic opportunity to implement Islamic law. There are three groups of people who are affected by the application of Islamic law in the form of regional regulations and others, they are: women, non-Muslim minority groups who will be placed as second class citizens and the *mustad'afin*.[48] In the context of rejecting the application of Islamic law, Moeslim is diametrically opposed to Islamism and the bearers of Islamic formalism. In contrast to other intellectuals who reject the application of Islamic law, Moeslim includes the variable of defending the poor.[49]

## Moeslim and JIMM (Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah)

The name Moeslim in Muhammadiyah may be less popular than M. Amien Rais, Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, M. Amin Abdullah, and Abdul Munir Mulkhan. Moeslim, who referred to himself as a *muallaf* of Muhammadiyah, once held a structural position as the Chairman of the Institute for the Empowerment of Workers, Farmers, and Fishermen (LPBTN) of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah (2000-2005). According to Burhani, Moeslim left two legacies for Muhammadiyah: the development of cultural *da'wah* and social advocacy.[50] Muhammadiyah introduced the concept of cultural *da'wah* during the Tanwir Meeting in Denpasar in January 2002. Under the coordination of Ahmad Watik Pratiknya (1948–2016) and Haedar Natsir (b. 1958), the concept of Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah was officially established during the Tanwir Meeting in Makassar in July 2003.[51]

Moeslim believes that culture is very influential on a person's religiosity. There is no diversity that is not shaped by cultural backgrounds. Moeslim emphasized that religion is a cultural expression towards God.[52]  In the context of Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wa, Moeslim made a sharp criticism of the concept because it was placed in the frame of religious orthodoxy. It makes every expression of religious culture being understood as a heresy that was difficult to accept. Muhammadiyah's cultural attitude is based on the orientation of maintaining religious orthodoxy.[53] Pure Islamic values based on Qur'an and hadith are contained in Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah although on the other hand Muhammadiyah realizes the urgency of redefining TBC (*tahayyul, bid'ah,* and *churafat*) which means superstition, heresy and myths) and against the development of new cultures such as individual cults, nepotism and others.[54]

According to Moeslim, Muhammadiyah's cultural *da'wah* should be developed as social humanization and appreciation of cultural creativity. Muhammadiyah's cultural *da'wah* will be a failure if it is accompanied by pure Islamic theological assumptions and strategic and tactical motives of Muhammadiyah's *da'wah* to Islamize culture. The fault of the Islamic purification movement, including Muhammadiyah, lies in annihilating and prejudicing local cultures.[55]

Another influence of Moeslim on Muhammadiyah is the social advocacy. Moslem is a Muhammadiyah intellectual who revitalized the theology of al-Maun initiated by Ahmad Dahlan. Moeslim's deep reflection resulted in the concepts of "social sin", "social evil", and "social orphan".[56]  As an inclusive figure, Moeslim has great influence in advocating the discrimination of minority groups in Muhammadiyah.[57]

In addition, Moeslim is an intellectual mentor for Muhammadiyah

youth who are members of the JIMM (Muhammadiyah Young Intellectual Network). Thanks to his upbringing and guidance, several Muhammadiyah youths took masters and doctoral degrees abroad. Moeslim played a major role in Muhammadiyah's reintellectualism, especially among Muhammadiyah youth.

JIMM itself was founded in 2003, but the date and month of JIMM's establishment is unknown because there was no formal declaration. The Maarif Institute, of which Moeslim is the executive director, helped to consolidate the emergence of JIMM. Various workshops were held to gather Muhammadiyah youth under JIMM. The first workshop was held in Bogor, 9-10 October 2003 which was attended by around 70 Muhammadiyah youths from various regions. After that, the second workshop was held in Kaliurang Yogyakarta, 13-16 November 2003, which was attended by 50 Muhammadiyah youths. The largest workshop with the theme, "Islamic Thoughts: Returning to the Qur'an, Interpreting the Ages" was held in Malang, 28-30 November 2003. This third workshop marked the birth of JIMM in the discourse of Indonesian Islam.[58]

Apart from establishing a network, Moeslim contributed to the formation of the three pillars of JIMM's Islamic thought that were relevant to transformative Islamic thought.[59] First, hermeneutics. In Moeslim's view, hermeneutics is presented as a tool of analysis in the context of reproduction of new meanings based on the Qur'an. Moeslim imagined the emergence of social praxis with an emancipatory character by using hermeneutical analysis tools. In addition, according to Moeslim, Muhammadiyah which tends to be scriptural, requires hermeneutics so that scripturalism is not dominant within Muhammadiyah.[60] Moeslim explained hermeneutics through the process of reading the Qur'an in the perspective of social processes and understanding it to find constructs that describe the ongoing social hegemony.[61]

Moeslim called the two processes of hermeneutics as "double hermeneutics". With this process, the Qur'an is understood not only to make progress, but also upholding justice and human liberation.

To a certain extent, this view has a meeting point with the hermeneutics of liberation developed by several contemporary Muslim intellectuals, including Hasan Hanafi (1935-2021) and Farid Esack (b. 1959). Liberation hermeneutics is not concerned with thoughts, ideas and understanding, but rather a social praxis that liberates humans.[62] The use of hermeneutics in understanding the Qur'an is actually not something relatively new in the history of *tafsir* (exegesis). The names of Muhammad Abduh and Riffat Hasan as pioneers of the hermeneutics of the Qur'an.[63] Even so, the validity of hermeneutics is questioned in understanding the Qur'an. Hermeneutics is rejected because it does not have the rules of interpretation as contained in the science of interpretation which has been established since the 3rd century H. Moreover, hermeneutics is considered a despicable method in understanding God's words because it relies on the principle of freedom of reason and sociological historical rules.[64]

Through hermeneutics, Moeslim encourages an understanding of the scriptures that are in harmony with human liberation from all oppression.[65] By using the interpretation model of religion according to Binder, Moeslim's hermeneutics includes progressive interpretation because religious texts are interpreted contextually and relevant to the times.[66]

Second, the approach of the social sciences.[67] Referring to Muslim intellectuals such as Fazlur Rahman, Hasan Hanafi, and Mohammed Arkoun who encouraged the use of social science, Moeslim called for Muslim thinkers to formulate the problems of muslims using social science approach. Moeslim defines *mustad'afin* as a marginalized social group who is politically

underpriviledged and has weak human dignity. Their existence is due to capitalistic modernization.[68]

Third, the new social movement.[69] Transformative Islam is not realized through theological thinking assisted by social science alone, but through social movements. In this realm, Moeslim, who has been an activist in various NGOs, believes in the existence of social movements as part of civil society. Moeslim envisions the growth of social movements that have transformative, dynamic characteristics, as well as from, by and for the community. In its development, the social movement transformed values, individual behavior, and the structure of society's collective life.[70]

## Conclusion

Alongside Kuntowijoyo's concept of transformative social science, Moeslim is recognized as a prominent Muhammadiyah Muslim intellectual consistently advocating for transformative Islam. Furthermore, Moeslim's transformative Islam is categorized as progressive ijtihadis, as conceptualized by Abdullah Saeed. The adherents of this approach do not abandon religion altogether, but adopted the substance of religion in order to answer the problems of Muslims today.

Moeslim's progressive Islam emphasizes religious thought not to be merely intellectual activity and far away from the Qur'an. The spirit of the slogan *al-ruju' ila al-Qur'an wa al-hadis* is clearly seen in transformative Islam, although it does not fall into apologies and places Islam as an ideological solution. In addition, transformative Islam indicates that ideally religious thought is not alienated from human thoughts, interests, and spirituality.

However, Moeslim underwent a transformation from normative-orthodox after experiencing an intellectual journey that emphasized the use of social science as an analytical tool. Using the terminology of religion, critical social science, and his struggles in NGOs,

Moeslim introduces transformative Islamic thought which has ideological-emancipatory characteristics. This thought is the result of theological reflection on socio-economic inequality which is marked by the emergence of the *mustad'afin* (the under-privileged people).

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