

Contradiction of The Social and Political Classes at The Beginning of Islamic Emergence

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Abstract:

This study analyzes the opposition of the social, political and religious classes in Arab society at the beginning of the period of Islamic presence. This study is qualitative research whose data is obtained through books, journals and other documents and is discussed with content analysis. The result of this study proved that the early Arab society in the presence of Islam valued wealth as a measure of social strata. Hierarchically, the bourgeoisie was the Arab ruler, while the proletariat and slaves became the second class of society which for many years was always under the pressure of the employer / ruler. The presence of Muhammad Saw (d. 632 AD) by calling for the establishment of social and legal justice was able to attract the proletariat and slaves to convert to Islam and jointly carry out social status resistance. The narrations of the Qur'an also support the existence of class equality between the rich and the poor, the ruler and the people, which distinguishes them only the level of faith. This kind of millenarian movement makes Islam stronger with the spirit of humanism.

Keywords: *Pre-Islamic Arabic, Islam, Social Class*

INTRODUCTION

Islam was born through a process, which in the tradition of historians, involved the social, political, economic context and beliefs of the people who lived at that time and the previous period. The fact is that Islam was born as a response to the period introduced by Muslim historians as jahiliyah. The mention is a form of opposition from the time of Islam.

The presence of Islam became a resistance to the 7th-century culture of paganism and pre-Islamic polytheism which was closely related to the conception of jahiliyah. The Arab region at that time was known to be very hard. Arab land is always filled with inter-tribal wars and protracted revenge cycles. All forms of conflict, murder and warfare are natural. The power system that is applied is a plutocracy, where the ruler is appointed based on the wealth he owns. With wealth, a person becomes strong and has high social status. With the existence of a system like this, it caused resistance from the second class tribes by mobilizing power (coalition) along with other tribes who had the same interest to overthrow the ruling tribal regime in Arabia. For example, in the case of the Khaza'ah people who sought to gather strength against the hegemony of Qushayi bin Kilab (d. 480

AD) and their families, the tribe of Quraysh as rulers of Ka'ba and Mecca (Karim, 2002: 4-5).

In a relatively short time, there was the heroism of Muhammad. (d. 632 AD) who, in traditionalist narratives, is known as the bearer of mercy for all nature, or as an agent of social change. He offered Islam as an idea that was far different from the order of life of the Arab community. Muhammad made radical changes in the realm of divinity, humanitarian relations and political affairs. In the context of divinity, he was able to create a monotheistic society. Islamic teachings are slowly able to penetrate the joints of the life of the Arab community. The lingering tribal conflict was resolved under the spirit of *ukhuwah insaniyah* (humanity-based brotherhood) to be an egalitarian society. After being developed in Medina, Islam was not merely a body of personal religious beliefs, but entered the stage of fostering an independent society through an independent system that included government, law and institutions of the first Muslim generation. This success done by Muhammad is not because of the reason he is a messenger of God, but there are social factors which are the forces behind him; that is, he was born from the tribe of Quraysh, a humanistic character, an adequate supply of economy from his wife and friends.

Studying about Islamic civilization does have to start with the pre-Islamic Arabic civilization. Learning Islamic civilization is necessary to study the environment in which Islam was born and grow, what is the environmental reaction to the emergence of Islam, what are the major changes made by Islam in that environment. This step aims to understand the nature of the historical role of Islam in the new Arab civilization, and what Islam might do for humankind as a whole throughout the ages.

Based on the above problems, this study intends to explore and analyze the historicity of the emergence of Islam in the context of the struggle of social, political and religious classes in the early period of Islamic emergence.

DISCUSSION

Arabic Geography and Pre-Islamic Social Classes Competition

The Arab region centered on the southwestern peninsula of the Asian continent has a desert climate (a high-pressure place), which is characterized by extreme temperatures, low rainfall and nomadic patterns of life which inherit pure tribalism (Barakat, 2012: 36). In addition, there are still three regional differences; first, the Hijaz region which can be categorized as semi-desert. With climate conditions that are not as extreme as the climate in other deserts, Hijaz is mostly inhabited by urban people who have a weaker character than the Badui (Barakat, 2012: 64). Second, the plateau that extends in the Mediterranean region. The area is mostly inhabited by farmers, villagers and other minorities, who are isolated, interact communally and have tribal social organizations. Throughout history they have no access and control from the central government, which is prone to invading predators. Third, areas with river flows such as the Euphrates, Tigris and Nile rivers so that they have more fertile soil conditions and become an attractive commodity in the Arab trade traffic. With trade, over time the people of Arabia migrate to fertile areas such as Egypt, Sudan and Maghrib so as to encourage the process of Islamization (Barakat, 2012: 41).

From the historical relations of two constituent elements (human and geography) in Arab society, some unique phenomena emerge. One phenomenon that can be observed is the relationship between geographical conditions or habitat that contrasts with the life patterns of the population. It is not just a coincidence that the desert and semi-desert

regions are the place to live for the Badui tribe. Instead, human adjustment to the environment has formed a contrasting pattern of life (as illustrated in geographical conditions: bedouin, village and city), complete with different social organizations and value orientations. This condition also determines the pattern of relations between them. Conflict of interest often results in violence and fosters images and negative perceptions among each other (Barakat, 2012: 40). Factors such as the centrality of geography, the struggle to conquer the aridity of the region, internal conflicts and outside party invasion are what encourage competition in social status among them.

The old classification between the badu-hadar (badui-settled) group is the main identity in Arab society and culture. Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 AD), a prominent sociologist and Arabic historian, was the first person to illustrate Arab history in the oppositionist framework between badu-hadar and their struggle for power. Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 AD) stated that the differences between the two communities arose from the different patterns of their daily lives (Ibn Khaldun, 1984: 165). Consequently, it characterizes badu-hadar relations as confrontational relations caused by intrinsic conflicts of interest.

Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 AD) describes, bedouins could not accept the fact that urban people, whom they considered weak, enjoyed abundant abilities, while they (badui) constantly faced harsh desert life. Once the Badui people have the courage and strength to grow into strong soldiers, they attack urban people who they consider weak, cowardly, but rich. After mastering urban areas and establishing a dynasty, these badui people will settle and enjoy new welfare and power and almost certainly will lose their courage and solidarity. This weakness will invite from other badui groups who are trying to strengthen power. Thus, in the view of Ali al-Wardi, society will constantly be in a circle of conquest, enjoyment of power and prosperity, and destruction (Al-Wardi, 1978: 81-82).

The Quraysh tribe, which is attributed to Qushayi bin Kilab (d. 480 AD), was an urban tribe and possessed the power of charisma so that it was able to own Arabia. When Qushayi bin Kilab (d. 480 AD) took over the key of the Ka'ba, people from Badaza Khaza'ah opposed him. The Khaza'ah tribe together with the bani Bakr had known the treatment of the Quraysh tribe, together with Kinanah and Qudha'ah, against the Shuffah who were throwing aqabah during the Hajj. Qushayi bin Kilab (d. 480 AD) said to them: "We are more noble than all of them, kill them!" The two groups killed each other so many victims fell and the Quraysh tribe won the battle. With various considerations, the Khaza'ah tribe and his colleagues agreed to fight Qushayi bin Kilab (d. 480 AD) and his Quraish family, and tried to expel him from Makkah. To thwart the action of the Khaza'ah tribe, Qushayi bin Kilab (d. 480 AD) asked his brother Razah bin Rabi'ah and other brothers for help to come to Mecca.

The feud between the two camps took place repeatedly. To resolve the conflict, they were appointed. An Arab descendant, Ya'mar bin Auf bin Ka'ab, better known as al-Syaddakh (problem solver), as a judge or mediator between them. Then he decided that Qushayi was more suitable to occupy the area around the Ka'ba, while the Mecca's affair was handed over to the Kha'za'ah tribe. If the Quraysh shed the blood of the Khaza'ah people, the solution was handed over to Ya'mar. If the people of Khaza'ah and the people of Bakr shed the blood of the Quraysh and people of Kinanah, they were obliged to pay the diyat (fine) with the provisions of 510 diyat, 30 prisoners, and leave Qushayi and Ka'bah (Karim, 2002: 5). It is this hard life in an unfriendly environment that requires tribal organizations to be governed by the norms of solidarity, equality and prestige (Barakat, 2012: 66-67).

In the political structure, tribalism is a group that adheres to independence and rejects outside control and all forms of violation of their autonomy. For this reason, they created a hierarchy in their tribal customs where tribes with strong positions would always maintain their tribal dignity. Status and power hierarchy are the main characteristics of ethnic relations. One example is rarely inter-tribal marriages that have different degrees of honor. For example, the people of Rwala looked down on the people of Atieh and Huwaitat, while the last two tribes looked down on the tribe of the people 'Ugla. These tribes believe that they will lose honor if they hold marriages with tribes that have lower social status (Barakat, 2012: 69).

The uniqueness of class differences in one social organization of the tribe is actually rare compared to between groups in the social structure of the Arab community. In one physical structure, even though sheikhs, amirs and certain families enjoy popularity and well-being, the socio-economic differences are minimized by the ties of blood and symbiotic ties and the concept of communal ownership. Equality in wealth and status as well as the absence of class differences are increasingly reinforced by religious values based on egalitarianism and consensus decision-making models.

The Plutocracy and Hegemony of the Pre-Islamic Arab Bourgeois

The Arab region which was located between two great powers (the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire), which at that time was competing to dominate the world, made the Arabs an area of struggle and interference from its imperial neighbors (Kusuma, 2013: 114). Moreover, considering that Arabic is located along a critical path that is favorable for East trade traffic. That is the reason that makes Arab as a region that has high wealth, even though it is poor in natural resources. Indeed, throughout Arab history, wealth has become an important determinant in determining class position. In P. Bourdeu's view wealth as capital in class determination. Long-distance trade and mercantile society are the main characteristics of Arab life, both in Masyriq (East Arabia) and Maghrib (West Arabic), until the Arab world is integrated into one global capitalist system. Trade triggered the emergence of tujjar (merchant) groups, who later became urban elites or respected families.

Factors that led to the formation of the bourgeois group include investment, trade, industry and manufacturing. As with land ownership, the investment realm is also dominated by a small group of respected families based in Arab cities. By consolidating wealth in his grasp, this group came to power by forming alliances with large landlords, clerics and military elites. Until now, the dominance of these long-standing landlords has not suffered a slight setback (Barakat, 2012: 111).

As a result of this wealth, Arab society built its social structure hierarchically. The upper class is dominated by the bourgeoisie or the rich. They are the owners of assets with all the ease of enjoyment produced. In general they live in peace, full of entertainment, and enjoyment that has never been felt by other classes. While the second class (lower class) is filled by the poor and the slave. They live mediocre, sometimes satisfied and sometimes not satisfied (al-Tib, 1982: 119). The group Sha'alik or Khula'a (expelled) are poor youths such as Urwah bin al-Warad (d. 594 AD), Ta'bath Syarra, al-Salik bin al-Salkah and al-Syanfiri. They are all known as "lions" of Arabs, because they are known as people who get angry quickly. Yet, because of their poverty, they only want to attack rich people who are stingy, he gets his own side of glory. They are also nicknamed al-Ada'in (aggressive people) because they are famous for their persistence in opposing negative things and all forms of deprivation.

The emergence of this phenomenon of poverty is a natural gap because the positive laws in Arab society disintegrate before the advent of Islam, and also because of the centralization of wealth in the hands of certain classes in tribal societies, where they are wealthy people. Meanwhile, the majority of citizens are shackled in poverty and distress (Amin, 1981: 47). To overcome this, this group made its power as its law, war and invasion as its way, while its purpose was coercion and deprivation (Khalif, 1986: 55).

The standard used in the Arabs is ownership of assets and means of production. It was this standard that caused Qushayy bin Kilab (d. 480 AD) to become increasingly firm in the eyes of the Quraysh tribe. Although the tribe of Quraysh was divided into several clans (clans), many descendants of the clan of the Quraysh tribe left the clan and established an affiliation with the clan of Quraysh al-Abathih (inland Quraysh), where Qushayy originated (Karim, 2002: 261-262). It is clear that power and social status are built more on wealth than on the nasab.

In the discussion section on Qasamah (oath), al-Bukhari related that there was a man from the Hashimites who appointed workers from the tribe of Quraysh, but from outside the group of Hashimites, then the person was killed because he was considered neglecting his work. The case was kept secret until Abu Talib bin Abdul Muttalib (d. 661 AD), leader of the people of Hashim, found out. Then he hurried to meet the killer and said: "choose one of the three; hand over a hundred camels because you killed my brother; or fifty of your people must testify that you did not kill him; if you refuse, I will kill you." (al-Bukhari, 1422: 3845; Karim, 2002: 262; Amin, 1981: 226). People of Hashim were descended from the noblest tribe of Quraysh, who had appointed workers from other descendants. He boasted of his wealth. Moreover, the murder that he did was only to show that he was a rich man. If the standard of differentiation is certain, the people of Hasyim definitely become employers, not workers. Basically, class differences are based on wealth.

Based on the size of this wealth, tribes also force weaker tribes to pay benefits (protection money). In a similar case, hilf al-fudhul (privileged agreement) is carried out as a form of agreement to give mutual assistance in life. This is a project to provide balance, guarantee of security and guarantee of life. This step is in response to the existence of people who let go of tradition, namely the tradition of sharing wealth that is in favor of the rich. They were mostly slaves who escaped from their employers. They used their employer to find money and booty. In protest, they fled to Jabal Tihamah (Mount Tihamah) and gathered there, making a fortress and looting everyone who passed by. This habit lasted until Muhammad. (d. 632 AD) came to eradicate it.

Conditions like this are quite long-lasting, even in the days when Islam began to develop. As a group that had been expelled from its own territory and their wealth and family were abandoned, the Mecca Muhajirun with the help of the Muslim population of Medina finally waged wars to regain their wealth which had been seized by the residents of Quraish Mecca. Every victory in battle always remains the spoils. The fact of defeat in the Uhud war as a result of hurrying to take the spoils of war only reinforced that the war carried out was loaded with a search for wealth.

Islamic Resistance to the Bourgeois and Arab Tribalism

Islam was born as religion (al-din), civilization (al-Hadlarah), culture (al-Tsaqafah) and power (al-Daulah). In the sense that Islam exists as a belief system that is present from the encounter of civilization in the Middle East in certain political conditions, while at the same time making a revolution so as to bring forth a new culture, new civilization and a

new political system. Since its birth, the first thing that Islam has done is to eliminate racism and tribalism which are considered as social disease. In the tradition of hijrah, Islam exclaims the people of the badui to abandon tribal sentiment and merge into the Islamic community. Existing tribal boundaries are the construct of the community itself, so it needs a new social construct that is more humanist. For this reason, Islam seeks to unite the various tribes in conflict and establish the ummah (community of believers) (Engineer, 1999: 126). As a concrete step, the idea of collective brotherhood is presented to remove tribal motives and be carried out based on truth and social cooperation under faith in God. QS. al-Hujurat verse 10 is presented for the legitimacy of that interest:

"Surely the believers are brothers, then reconcile your two brothers and fear Allah so that you will be blessed"

The previous discussion explains that the main factor driving Arab racism and tribalism is competition for life, where wealth is the most decisive. Then the actual resistance faced by Muhammad Saw. (d. 632 AD) and his followers from the economist-aristocratic circles in Arab society (before Islam came) were a social class struggle within the structure of Arab society. In social history, cases like this are always present in the midst of oppressed and squeezed societies, thus encouraging a hope for the presence of a revolutionary figure. This millenarian-style revolution is always under the leadership of a 'Prophet', and if traced it turns out that over the years it has been haunted by the shadow of revelation, then called upon the poor / oppressed as potential followers in the midst of social upheaval (Chon, 1984: 51). Thus, as illustrated by the Qur'an, that the enemies of the Prophets are those who are wealthy (al-Mala '), while their followers are oppressed (al-Mustadh'afin) again insulted (al- Aradzil) (Karim, 2002: 272).

The class of oppressed people, such as slaves, poor people, Sa'alik Makkah and those who were insulted by the leaders of Quraysh, had a sense of sensitivity towards the invitation of the Prophet. With their natural instinctive nature, they learned that the prophet Muhammad called for 'social justice' and 'equality' among people who were equipped with unity and spirituality. There is no difference between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the lord and servant, because all of them are for the full dedication of God. With this invitation, it actually blocked the steps of arrogant dignitaries and Arabs to enslave both men and women, where the slaves were initially their production machines and living weapons that could be governed. The bourgeoisie rejects the rule of law with the proletariat which has assets below it or which have lower social status than it (Karim, 2002: 335-336).

These principles of justice can be seen in the case of slaves who fled to Mount Tihamah. After Muhammad made political reconciliation on the hilf al-fudhul (special agreement) by making laws that the State prohibited looting, guaranteed security and guaranteed help in life, they were also subject to the law, but still used the principles of social justice to bring itself to prosperity (Karim, 2002: 264-265).

While with brotherhood between the Muhajirun and the Ansar, Muhammad Saw has utilized one of the social traditions of the Arab community with the defense of allied agreements to create a united people. Muhammad's success in uniting these people not only astonished the Arabs, such as Abu Sufyan (d. 652 AD), but the positive impact of the equality found in Islamic teachings encouraged everyone to place more importance on his brother in property ownership. Historians say that the agreement of the Muhajirin and Ansar fraternity also included joint rights in the ownership of inheritance between them.

The event of the division of *ganimah* (booty) after the war of people of Nadir is the best example of the attitude of *itsar* (prioritizing others) practiced by the Ansar.

Furthermore, Islam advocates alms and requires zakat for the rich. A very fundamental goal of both is to build economic balance and justice in society. Giving alms or zakat requires a fair distribution by its managers, with the hope that the distribution can generate the power of production and consumption of people who live in poor conditions. According to Munir Mulkhan, the main purpose of the determination of zakat is the occurrence of justice distribution of property ownership and loss of people who suffer from hunger and for those who are closed to social access (Mulkhan, 2002: 269-270). In addition, both charity and alms can actually eliminate social inequality between the rich and the poor. The poor will feel that their economic well-being is fulfilled so that it hinders seizure of property.

The Failure of Islam in the Arab Revolution

After the death of the prophet Muhammad with the initiation of Islamic dynasty, it actually influenced the formation of a new institution in Islam. Since the beginning, Islam has displayed the evolutionary potential and the principles of equality for all its adherents, conquest and expansion of Islam has strengthened or revived the privileges of certain status or class groups. Starting from the second caliph, Umar bin Khattab (d. 638 AD), who applied a formula for the distribution of wealth and well-being based on *nasab* (ties of kinship with the prophet and virtue (based on the length of time someone embraced Islam), but instead of eliminating inequality this new institution actually perpetuates the old stratification system, even as if contributing to the emergence of new status and class groups (Barakat, 2012: 101).

Zuhair Hatab, a Lebanese sociologist, stated that once Muslims began to be classified in a class, the people of Hasyim (the tribe of the Prophet) also began to enjoy prosperity and noble honor (power and ownership). Most of the tribe members comfort themselves in luxury, build palaces, parks and have many concubines (*jawari*). Furthermore, these aristocratic descendants slowly see fields and land as valuable so they try to continually expand them. Thus, the people of Hasyim changed from the *Nasab*-based aristocracy pattern to become an aristocratic urban landowner (Hattab, 1976: 109, 130-131), and this became the forerunner to expand the expansion of the Islamic territory.

As mentioned earlier, there are clear differences between the population in cities, tribes and villages. Urban areas function as centers of economic, political, religious and cultural activities. Arabic language for the city (*Medina*) has the connotation of the center of political and economic power or the place of the throne of the ruler or the judge who has the authority to pass a verdict (*fund*) on another person. Likewise *din* (religion) has the same root word so that it has the same connotation. Some definitions, both classical and contemporary, state that cities, with actors of urban society, are central to power or control and the center of economic, religious and cultural activities.

Seeing the similarity of city and religious connotations, religion has automatically been used as a means of legitimacy and perpetuating the desired order. As Durkheim's ideas, religion serves to preserve the integrity of the community. If viewed from a political point of view, religion is used by the authorities as a mechanism to perpetuate social order that can give them luxury and glory even though they sacrifice the dominated society and class. Thus, the presence of Islam in addition to succeeding in uniting tribes in the Arab

region under the shadow of egalitarianism and social justice, on the other hand actually strengthened Quraisy's hegemony as a ruling tribe.

CONCLUSION

The dominant factor driving Arab racism and tribalism is competition for life, where wealth is the most decisive variable. A person's power and strength are more determined by his wealth than on the nasab (descendant). From that, Arab society was hierarchically classified, the upper class consisted of aristocrats so that they had the right to become Arab rulers, and the second class consisted of small traders, unskilled laborers and slaves whose lives were under pressure from employers. Arab urban areas are inhabited by tribes that have more wealth so that they are strong in social structures and become Arab rulers. While the tribes of the suburbs lived nomads and hung their lives from hunting and robbing caravans that crossed it. Urban life as the center of culture, economy and government became an attraction for peripheral tribes to possess it with various resistance, murder and war as an effort to defend their lives.

The real resistance faced by the prophet Muhammad and his followers from the aristocrats of economic politicians in Arab society is the struggle of social class within the structure of society. The oppressed and marginal classes, such as slaves, the poor, and people who are humiliated become people who have a sense of sensitivity to the invitation of Islam. With their natural instincts, they learned that the prophet Muhammad called for social justice, equality and humanity among tawhid-based people. There is no difference between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, and the lord and servant, because everything is for devotion to God. Through this mission, it has provided an opportunity for the proletariat to obtain the right to life. Since then class differences have been abolished replaced by the principle of *ukhuwah insaniyah*, which has a side of social justice and economic justice.

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