

The Meaning Of Progress According To Shaykh Abdullah Fahim

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Abstract

The Malays began to gain awareness of nationalism in the early 20th century AD. The figures among Kaum Muda (Reformist Movement) are considered a precursor to the consciousness movement. Kaum Muda who are heavily influenced by the thinking of the Egyptian reformist figure, Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, aspired to expand modern thinking so that Muslims can stand as high as other races and take over the reins of government from the British colonialists. But the attitude of Kaum Muda likes to criticize Malay Sultans, and generate debate with scholars of the Kaum Tua (Traditionalist) not much progress can be achieved. At the same time, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim, one of the scholars of the Kaum Tua also had the same thought as Kaum Muda, which encourages people to develop themselves and Malays have the awareness to govern the country. This study seeks to examine the thinking of Shaykh Abdullah Fahim from his point of view on development and religion and its impact on progress. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to see the contribution of Shaykh Abdullah Fahim in inspiring intellectual awareness and the development of progress among the Malay-Muslim race. The method used in the study is qualitative based. The approach used to obtain information is by applying archival research. The results of the study found that Shaykh Abdullah Fahim still adheres to the basic principles of the Kaum Tua, namely Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaah in an effort to develop the nation and country. The three things that Shaykh Abdullah Fahim emphasized to achieve progress were the establishment of educational institutions, involvement in the production of writing materials to inspire awareness, and the development of the youth generation.

Keywords: *Shaykh Abdullah Fahim, education, progress, science, religion*

Abstrak

Orang Melayu mulai mendapatkan kesadaran nasionalisme pada awal abad 20 M. Tokoh-tokoh di kalangan Kaum Muda dianggap sebagai cikal bakal gerakan kesadaran. Kaum Muda yang banyak dipengaruhi oleh pemikiran tokoh reformis Mesir, Syekh Muhammad Abduh, bercita-cita untuk memperluas pemikiran modern agar umat Islam dapat berdiri setinggi ras lain dan mengambil alih tampuk pemerintahan dari penjajah Inggris. Namun sikap mereka yang suka mengkritisi pemerintah Melayu dan polemik dengan ulama Kaum Tua menyebabkan banyak reformasi yang tidak bisa dicapai. Pada saat yang sama, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim, salah satu ulama Kaum Tua juga memiliki kecerdasan otak yang mirip dengan Kaum Muda, yang mendorong orang Melayu mengembangkan diri dan memiliki kesadaran untuk memerintah negara. Kajian ini berusaha mengkaji pemikiran Syekh Abdullah Fahim dari sudut pandangnya terhadap pembangunan dan agama serta dampaknya terhadap kemajuan. Oleh karena itu, tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat kontribusi Syekh Abdullah Fahim dalam menginspirasi kesadaran intelektual dan perkembangan kemajuan di

kalangan ras Melayu-Muslim. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah berbasis kualitatif. Pendekatan yang digunakan untuk memperoleh informasi adalah dengan menerapkan penelitian kearsipan. Hasil kajian menemukan bahwa Syekh Abdullah Fahim masih menganut prinsip dasar Sesepuh yaitu Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaah dalam upaya mengembangkan diri dan negara. Tiga hal yang ditekankan Syekh Abdullah Fahim untuk mencapai kemajuan adalah pendirian lembaga pendidikan, keterlibatan dalam produksi bahan tulisan untuk menggugah kesadaran dan pengembangan generasi muda.

Kata kunci: Shaykh Abdullah Fahim, pendidikan, kemajuan, ilmu pengetahuan, agama

Introduction

Nationalist movement in Malaya believed to have occurred at the beginning of the 20th century AD. The movement led by the Muslim teachers and students, began to pay attention to issues related to social and economic development, especially for the Malays. Awareness to fight for such matters arose out of the desire to change society towards better development and on par with other nations that received more attention from the British colonialists at the time (Basri, Salleh, & Saad, 1991).

Among the pioneers of the nationalism movement are Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin Al-Azhari, Sayyid Ahmad Al-Hadi, Haji Abbas Mohd Taha and Shaykh Salim Al-Kilali. They are better known as Kaum Muda figures, a title that refers to new ideas in thought and reform. They aspired to develop society according to modern thought, reform higher education for Muslims, and defense of Muslims from Western influences, as well as Western attacks on Muslims. The efforts of the Kaum Muda seem to have succeeded in the Straits Settlements through the establishment of several educational institutions such as Madrasah Al-Hadi in 1913 in Melaka and Madrasah Al-Masyhoor in 1919 in Penang (Basri, Salleh, & Saad, 1991).

The ideas of Kaum Muda opposition from Kaum Tua, because of Kaum Muda said to be too concerned with modernity, and tend to oppose the traditional practice, which has been deeply ingrained in the community. The Influence of Kaum Tua at that time was very strong because of the support of the Sultan. Unfortunately understanding adopted by the Kaum Tua to the community at that time had caused the Malays to be passive, as regards the world as a disgusting place. As such, efforts to raise awareness of Kaum Muda in full among the Malays were not so successful because not many among the Malays who want to change to better themselves (Basri, Salleh & Saad, 1991)

Kaum Muda was too influenced by the reform of thought brought about by Shaykh Muhammad Abduh (1849 - 1905), an Egyptian thinker who emphasized on efforts to purify Islam. In an effort to purify the religion, one of the approaches he

used was to free himself from being bound by any ideology, instead of adhering fully to the Qur'an and Hadith. On the other hand, he advocates freedom of thought (Abbas, 2014). The idea is opposed by Kaum Tua's opinion that it can confuse the Malays that has long held fast to the principle teachings of Ahl Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah according to the principles of jurisprudence, theology and mysticism compiled by scholars who have authority in the field religion.

In addition, the attitude of the Kaum Muda who are too loud to criticize is probably the main factor why the Sultan did not like their ideas. At one point, the Kaum Muda assumed that the Sultan was more inclined to support the British administration. According to them, Sultan supposed to keep the fate of the Malays and concerned about the affairs of administration in Malaya. Such a situation led to British colonial easier to take the opportunity to spread their influence and ideology in governance Malay states (Basri, Salleh & Saad, 1991).

But there are also scholars among Kaum Tua, encouraging Muslims, especially among the Malays, in order to progress in all fields. Among them are such as Shaykh Abdullah Fahim (1869 - 1961), graduate figures of Mecca, which is very popular in northern Malaya. Uniquely, he seems to support the thought reform movement among Muslims. He collaborated with other scholars regardless of background as long as it brought benefits to all Muslims. The situation caused him not to escape from being slandered that he was following the beliefs of the Kaum Muda. According to the old folks, he was once ordered out of Perak by Sultan Iskandar Shah, for allegedly abetting Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, a figure considered by the British colonialists to be the leader of the Kaum Muda, who was hostile to the British government and carried out measures to overthrow the kings. In another view, the slander is said to come from the British Resident (Petah, 1997).

Methodology

The focus of this writing is a study of the thoughts of Shaykh Abdullah Fahim, a figure from the Kaum Tua who has his own views on the renewal of thought. In order for the study to be more focused, the aim of the study was to look at his views on the meaning of progress in terms of development and religion. For research purposes, qualitative methods were used. Archival studies were selected for data collection. The data were collected from documentations related to the views of Shaykh Abdullah Fahim in the context of development and religion. The focus is on the results of research that summarizes the views of Shaykh Abdullah Fahim as a whole which ultimately gives significance to the prominence and contribution of Shaykh Abdullah Fahim in the process of intellectual development and progress of Muslims.

Discussion

Fundamentals of Thought

As a person with extensive experience in the field of education, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim sees the three most important things that need to be given attention in educational institutions are religion, nationality and patience. These three things were the basis when he founded Madrasah Dairat Al-Maarif Al-Wataniyyah in Kepala Batas after returning from Makkah in 1916. According to him, in order to develop oneself, these three things must be present in everyone. In a country that was still ruled by the British colonialists at that time, these three things need to be streamlined so that the next generation knows the responsibilities and trusts that need to be exercised to develop the country. The explanation of the three things is as follows;

1. Religion – To succeed, Muslims need to understand the true meaning of the word syahadah. Muslims need to realize that power is not driven by money, but it is the high will that moves it. Thus, the word syahadah which is understood with its true meaning refers to the determination to succeed. This is the true meaning of jihad, which is to earnestly uphold the word syahadah in any job. Only with strong faith, then comes success.
2. Nationality – Muslims, both men and women, need to have a spirit of patriotism. That way, Muslims will be more eager to advance the country and sacrifice for it in the name of religion. To develop a country, there is no other way but to equip oneself with knowledge. Therefore, all Muslims need to master knowledge in order to make positive changes in themselves and have the courage to develop themselves and the country.
3. Patience – To achieve both of the above, the most important thing is to be patient. This is because every success that comes will surely face challenges first. Patience must be present in Muslims combined with determination to overcome every challenge faced (Maliki, 1953).

To develop the country, Muslims need to master the field of knowledge, whether in the field of religion or social knowledge. To that end, Muslims should have the ambition to establish more schools and produce books that can enhance thinking. This point has been emphasized in a poem compiled by Shaykh Abdullah Fahim as follows,

*By setting up a school, composing books Containing the miracle of unknown knowledge
(Ghani, Talib, Zain, & Jamsari, 2006: 43)*

To achieve that goal, Muslims must work together, and agree to do good. In that way, only then will Muslims get God's help and be honored and endowed with all goodness,

*Work together in unity, my people
So that your dignity is high in the end*

*May Allah help you
And lead you to goodness (Ghani, Talib, Zain, & Jamsari, 2006)*

True understanding

Shaykh Abdullah Fahim is an open educator. He did not sideline material progress. For example, he called on Muslims at that time to read a work entitled *Suluh Kemajuan* written by Shaykh Abdul Karim bin Shaykh Uthman Sarawak, a religious figure from Sungkai, Perak. He saw the writing has many benefits and can generate courtesy among Muslims especially the Malays to be involved in the company. Examples of the spirit of awareness raised by Shaykh Abdul Karim are as follows,

Is to love the homeland, is to improve the condition of the homeland by working diligently on preserving him. So the people who truly love the homeland are those who are willing to die because they want to live and free their homeland from the clutches of the colonialists, and work hard so that their people are comfortable and independent (Sarawak, 1952).

While examples of the desire to develop enterprises have been touched by Shaykh Abdul Karim in his statement as below;

So we Malay people really need to great-great companies that belong to our nation, when the factories that make fabrics, yarn, sugar, dishes, cups and others. And also the fabrics that make bicycles, cars, and engines. The same goes for big business. If the companies were large, and engines that are big and so forth so that the Malays could achieve independence economy. And also free from the humiliation of depending on foreigners (Sarawak, 1952).

The importance of the Muslims especially the Malays progress in the company, because it is also considered a religious matter. According to Shaykh Abdullah Fahim, when Muslims are involved in enterprise, then the needs and welfare of all Muslims will be preserved and can be met (Sarawak, 1952). On the other hand, Muslims will be strong and respected by other nations.

With the dominance of the Malays in the company, only then comes the confidence to manage bigger things, such as state government affairs. This is because the condition for ruling a country is that the nation must be mentally and physically prepared. Mental preparation is like obeying the teachings of religion while physical preparation is mastering the industry, as stated by Shaykh Abdul Karim,

So let each of us strive diligently to develop the nation, so that we can have success with

our own government. So the principles that qualify us to have the success of perfect independence is that we must follow the following conditions: First, every one of us must obey the religion of Islam by following its true teachings as the previous Muslims. The second is that we must be united. The third must have a lot of money to be able to buy a lot of all the tools, modern tools equivalent to industrial tools or war (Sarawak, 1952).

To get a true understanding of the teachings of Islam, Muslims, especially the Malays in Malaya must adhere to the principle of Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah which has become the practice of the people of Islam in the Malay world for centuries. According to Shaykh Abdullah Fahim, the essence of the principles of Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah is based on the laws contained in the Qur'an and Hadith, then broken down by field to be easily followed by the public such as;

1. Fiqh according to the views of Imam Shafi'i (767-820 AD) and scholars who support his opinion
2. Usuluddin according to the views of Imam Al-Asya'ari (873-936 AD) and scholars who support his opinion
3. Tasawwuf according to the views of Imam Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 AD) and scholars who support his opinion (Awang, 1977).

In addition, Muslims need to strengthen their spirituality so that the soul becomes strong in upholding the sovereignty of religion, race and country. One of the practices that can strengthen spirituality is to make Hizib Al-Bahr a routine in life. This practice has been conferred by Shaykh Abdullah Fahim to Muslims who are interested in practicing it as contained in the Risalah Haji composed by Shaykh Muhammad Isa bin Ibrahim (Ibrahim, 1956).

Among the advantages of this hizib as cited by most of the scholars who have practiced with it are as follows;

- a. Get the protection of Allah SWT from the enemy.
- b. Get benefits and protect yourself from harm, especially when the sun rises.
- c. Endowed with wealth and does not need the help of creatures if read every time after the 5 hour prayer.
- d. The application is granted if it is read 70 times and surah Yasin 10 times after the Subuh prayer.
 - 1) Endowed with the feeling of love of the creature towards the reader if the hizib is recited in the early hours of Friday morning on holy water, then the water is rubbed on the face.
 - 2) If the hizib is written and brought together, then the person who brought it will be kept away from all disasters and destruction at every movement of his grin and silence.

- 3) If the hizib is read on the ship, then the reading will bring a good wind.
- 4) If the hizib is written on the city fence or in the house, the city or house will surely be saved from destruction or entered by thieves.
- 5) If the hizib is written and hung in a place then the place will be maintained with the permission of Allah SWT
- 6) A person who habitually recites Hizib Al-Bahr during the day and night then he will be saved from drowning, burning, being killed and being blinded by all the eyes of jinn and evil humans
- 7) Get protection if read in war
- 8) Fulfilled all wishes for readers who read Hizib Al-Bahr 3 times with Surah Al-Fatihah 7 times or Hizib Al-Bahr 3 times with Surah Al-Fatihah 7 times and Surah Al-Quraisy 21 times (Al-Maliki, 2009).

Shaykh Abdullah Fahim received the degree of Hizb Al-Bahr from his teacher, Sayyid Muhammad Amin bin Sayyid Ahmad Al-Madani who reached out to its author, Sayyid Abi Al-Hasan Ali bin Abdullah Al-Syazuli (571-656 H). The complete sanad is as follows;

Shaykh Abdullah Fahim received it from Sayyid Muhammad Amin bin Sayyid Ahmad, who received it from Abdul Ghani Al-Naqsyabandi, who received it from Muhammad Abid Al-Naqsyabandi, who received it from Salih Al-Umari Al-Fulani, who received it from Muhammad bin Sunnah, who received it from Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Wulati, who received it from Abi Uthman Said Qaddurah, who received it from Said ibn Ahmad Al-Muqri, who received it from Abdul Rahman ibn Ali Al-Sittin, who received it from Al-Burhan Al-Qalqashandi, who received it from Abi Al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr Al-Wasiti, who received it from Al-Khatib Sadruddin Abi Al-Fath Muhammad Al-Maydumi, who received it from Abi Al-Abbas Al-Mursi, who received it from its author Abi Al-Hasan Ali bin Abdullah bin Abdul Jabbar Al-Syazuli Al-Syarif Al-Hasani (Fahim, 1956).

From a psychological point of view, the practice of sanad gives a very strong influence on confidence and motivation because sanad is closely related to the grace and blessings of Allah SWT in a meaningful and spiritual form. In the context of education, sanad shows the continuity of the discipline of science authentically and up to its original source. With that, the science can be believed to be true (Soroni, 2020).

Love for the homeland

The spirit of patriotism is very important in the context of the development of a country because by embodying the values of patriotism then only individuals and society can contribute to drive progress. The values of patriotism will form a clear direction of the achievement to be achieved. Thus, individuals and society will be

more motivated to achieve success in the field they are involved in and determined to serve the country. As a result, the economy and productivity of the country will increase (Samsu & Nor, 2011).

One of the most effective mediums or agents to evoke the spirit of patriotism is through education. Patriotism is a unique field because it does not exist naturally in the individual, instead it needs to be sown, nurtured and taught. Thus, education is the best medium because it has the necessary characteristics to develop the values of patriotism into the individual. There are three main elements needed to keep these values evolving namely inputs, dependencies and outputs. Input refers to the application of a value; dependency refers to the repetition of value application; and output refers to the response to national development (Samsu & Nor, 2011).

The school became the main platform for Shaykh Abdullah Fahim to instill the spirit of patriotism in the students. There are three approaches used by Shaykh Abdullah Fahim in an effort to inject national spirit into his students,

1. Nasyid

Through nasyid, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim channeled the ideas of the rise of the nation to his students. Enthusiastic nasyid chants are able to raise morale and the spirit of jihad in them. One of his famous nasyid compositions is entitled Al-Watan. This nasyid composed in Arabic has always been sung by the students of Madrasah Dairat Al-Maarif Al-Wataniyyah a long time ago. Among the lines of nasyid that really capture the heart and soul are as follows;

*My heart is in love with you, O Malaya
Why not while your majesty is true
History has been a witness for a long time
How good it is and you are the best of the homeland
Long Live Malay
Our Independence Homeland (Ghani Talib, Zain, and Jamsari, 2006)*

2. Writing and Translation

While being the mudir at Madrasah Idrisiah, Kuala Kangsar, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim gave freedom to his students to express their views to inspire the national spirit. One of the mediums used is through the Panduan Magazine published by the institution. The magazine was first published on 20 November 1934, is the earliest school magazine, which began debate on the progress of the Malays. Its content is full of reflections, and allusions to the Malays, to immediately improve. Among them are the following;

The foreigners who come to trade here of various nations are happier living than our people, and more in agreement than us, don't we also want to realize ourselves? Let

us think together (1934).

Editor of the Panduan magazine also urged the Malays to avoid wasting time and unite regardless of wealth or rank of developing countries,

The Malays like a statue that has no soul, sad but this is the result at the expense of the Malays who take no interest in the use of time and energy but just like its laurels as one who is in ill health, did not even have a sense at all. This is because the acts of the Malays do not want a united, goal, and mind; for most of the Malay rich and the chief prefer to be proud of their rank, that is, the rich with his wealth, the chief with his rank, but the poor with poverty. Thus the hearts of the Malays yet filled with a sense of national significance (1934).

Women also got the attention of the Guide editorial board. This is because the role of women in the development of the country is no exception in the effort to form a generation of skilled backers. For example,

Do not treat women Malay was adequate with his duties as queen royal household only. This is because it is required that the mothers have excessive knowledge, and it is not enough to just learn how to cook rice and sew, and vice versa. But the mothers must be stuck with some of that knowledge in life both in this world and the hereafter, in order to be safe in the association of life, in order to be worthy of receiving the title of mother and caregiver, even the educator of the nation (1935).

At Madrasah Dairat Al-Maarif Al-Wataniyyah, Kepala Batas, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim encouraged his students to expand their reading to issues themed on philosophical comparison. In addition, efforts to translate foreign books are also actively carried out. Among them is the book *Philosophy of Islamic Politics* written by Indian thinker, Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979) was translated by a student of Shaykh Abdullah Fahim and published by Madrasah Dairat Al-Maarif Al-Wataniyyah through its publishing company, Pustaka Dairat A-Maarif Al-Wataniyyah (Haji Abdullah Fahim: Ketokohan dan Sumbangannya, 2004).

3. Form a New Generation

Shaykh Abdullah Fahim is very concerned in youth development matters which are seen to have the potential to become a national leader. In the local area of Seberang Perai, he became an adviser to the Malay Youth Movement. Due to his vast experience in the development of youth and Islamic movements, he was invited to attend the World Islamic Congress held in Karachi, Pakistan on 18 and 19 February 1949 (Malay Asked to World Islamic Meet, 1949: 3).

Shaykh Abdullah had faith in the abilities of his students when he gave them a full mandate to administer the educational institution he founded,

Madrasah Dairat Al-Maarif Al-Wataniyyah when he was the Mufti of Penang. His son who is also his student, Ustaz Ahmad Badawi has been appointed Mudir, Ustaz Abdul Halim Al-Hadi has been appointed Headmaster, Ustaz Ahmad Maliki has been appointed Superintendent of Education and Ustaz Muhammad Saghir has been appointed special teacher for teacher training and women's education (Haji Abdullah Fahim: Ketokohan dan Sumbangannya, 2004).

Conclusion

Although Shaykh Abdullah Fahim is said to belong to the group of Kaum Tua scholars, he did not close the door on reform, but rather encouraged Muslims to achieve progress by mastering the fields of industry and administration. According to him, a true understanding of religion should make Muslims to work hard in the work they are engaged in, instead of being passive or wasting time. True understanding according to Shaykh Abdullah Fahim must be within the Ahl Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaah whether in terms of work, worship and spiritual practice.

He added that Islam emphasizes the excellence of the world and the hereafter. In other words, the success of Muslims in fact refers to the balance of practices in this world and the hereafter. Therefore, Muslims need to invest in the world in order to get results in the hereafter. To invest, Muslims need to have the ambition to build educational institutions because that is where more scholars can be born. Mastery in knowledge is very important if Muslims aspire to master enterprise and administration. If Muslims want to rule, then Muslims need to work together and be united. Success cannot be achieved alone because a lot of capital, energy and time has to be expended. To be successful, Muslims must not practice selfishness. Success should be seen in a collective form where an enterprise venture not only gives a huge return, but more importantly a charitable value that benefits everyone.

To awaken the Malays to always eager to improve themselves, Shaykh Abdullah makes writing and nasyid as a medium for growing motivation in the beginning of his disciples. Meanwhile, to realize the efforts to develop industrial and administrative affairs, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim focused on the development of the young generation who have the potential to be centered as community leaders. In summary, Shaykh Abdullah Fahim's framework of thinking on progress can be seen in the table below;

Table 1. Stages of potential development

Level of Mastery	Filling	Medium
Level 1	Science of knowledge	Learning Class
Level 2	Patriotism	Writing and Nasyid
Level 3	Administration and Economy	Association

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