

JERUSALEM AND THE JEWS: THE VIEWS OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM STUDENT ACTIVISTS

Abstract

Jerusalem is a city of controversy. This paper attempts to describe the views of Indonesian Muslim student activists, who are studying in two different categories of university, namely secular and religious-based, on Jerusalem and the Jews. The choice of students of different organizations and universities is meant to give a more comprehensive perspective, and is based on the assumption that the students from the Islamic university will have different perspectives on these issues compared to those of secular universities. Five students from each category were interviewed. The interviews were not recorded but transcribed so that the interviewees could speak freely. These interviews however do not reflect the opinions of student organizations and the universities. It reflects the students' own perspectives.

Key words: Jerusalem, Jews, Islamic perspective, Indonesian Muslim student activists, exclusivist approach, inclusive approach.

Introduction

Jerusalem is a very old and sacred city for the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The long history of this city was colored by conflicts. This city had been destroyed twice: first by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia (587 BCE) and second by Roman Emperor Titus (70 CE). These events were also recorded in the Qur'an (17: 4-8).² Jerusalem is the capital of Israel with approximately 64% of Jews.³

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2 Madjid Nurcholish, Jerusalem, http://www.republika.co.id/kolom.asp?kat_id=112 (accessed 6. 2. 2004).

3 Israel Central Bureau of Statistics 2008, Table 3- Population of Localities Numbering Above 2,000 Residents and Other Rural Population on 31/12/2008, http://www.cbs.gov.il/population/new_2009/table3.pdf (accessed 23. 2. 2010).

Muslims have different attitudes about Jerusalem. The media coverage about the city, especially in its relations to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, has invited various responses by Muslims. At this point the discussion on Jerusalem could not be separated from issues related to religion and politics. I am interested to study the attitudes of Indonesians regarding Jerusalem and the Jews for two main reasons: first, Indonesia is the biggest Muslim country in the world therefore it would be very interesting to know how they view this sacred city which no longer belongs to them. Second, from the perspective of inter-religious dialogue it would be interesting to know how Indonesian Muslims view themselves in relations to the religious "other", namely the Jews.

In this article I focus on the perspectives of Indonesian Muslim students who are active in different Muslim student associations, as they are quite vocal in uttering their opinions on this issue. I chose to interview senior undergraduate activists aged 20-24 who study at secular universities (Universitas Gadjah Mada and Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta), and a religious-based university (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga), all situated in Yogyakarta. Altogether ten students were interviewed, four women and six men. They were chosen based on their involvement at the organizations. They were interviewed separately. I hope to answer two questions: What does Jerusalem mean to a group of Indonesian Muslim student activists? What is the place of Jerusalem and the Jews in their Islamic understanding? Within that frame I raised eight questions: What is the image of Jerusalem? How did you form this image of Jerusalem? What is the history of Jerusalem? How important is Jerusalem in Islam? Is Jerusalem a sacred city for Jews and Christians? Do non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians, have the rights to pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque? Do non-Muslims have the right to live in Jerusalem? Who has the right to govern Jerusalem?

The answers however do not reflect the opinions of the student organizations and the universities to which the students belong. It reflects the students' own perspectives. The choice of students of different organizations and universities is meant to give a more comprehensive perspective, and is based on the assumption that the students from the Islamic university will have different perspectives on these issues compared to the views of the students from the secular universities.

This article has four sections. First, I describe some typical views of Indonesian Muslims on the question of Jerusalem which is often wrapped within the discussion of Judaism and the Jews. Second, I explain the place of the religious 'other' in the Islamic texts that are often consulted or referred to by some Indonesian Muslims in relations to the question of Jerusalem and the Jews. Third, I provide the questions and give a summary of the answers that describes the understanding of the Muslim student activists on Jerusalem and the Jews by. And finally, I end this article with an analysis of my findings during the interviews.

1. Indonesian Muslims' Views on Jerusalem, Judaism, and the Jews

This section does not mean to give a comprehensive view of how Indonesian Muslims think about Jerusalem and the Jews. Rather it will highlight some typical Muslim perspectives that could be easily found in popular Indonesian media including books, journals, magazines and newspapers. It is not easy to find articles or publications dedicated exclusively to Jerusalem, and it is not surprising that in many instances Muslims' perspectives on Jerusalem are often mixed with their views about the Jewish people as the majority population of the area, and about Judaism.

One example of a typical Muslim perspective can be found in the writings published at *Hidayatullah.com*⁴: "the building of illegal housing complex in West Bank and in Jerusalem's occupied areas was a proof of the Jews' stubbornness. Even though the Israeli government issued a regulation to stop the housing development, some 3,000 new units were going to be built in the area."⁵ A similar opinion published at *Eramuslim.com*⁶: "It is our responsibility as Muslims to help the Palestinians to fight against the Israelis. If we do not help them we are not part of the Islamic community. I regret that we Muslims were only able to pray, cry, or send some donations and medicines but were not able to actively take part in joining the Hamas and Palestinians in order to fight against the Israelis."⁷

In a similar tone, M. Natsir⁸ argues that:

"Immigration of the Jewish people which has taken place since the end of the 19th century without taking into account of many protests and objections from the Arab Palestinians until the establishment of Israel in 1948 had deprived Palestinian land and had forced them to migrate to many other countries. This has become the seed of continuous Arab-Israeli conflict and had largely influenced peace stability in the Middle East and in the world."⁹

Media Dakwah, a magazine published by Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Preaching Council/ DDII), is very active in publishing views about Jerusalem, Judaism, and the Jews. DDII is the oldest Muslim organi-

4 *Hidayatullah.com* is an online media associated with exclusivist Muslim group which was published in 1996 under the Hidayatullah Media Group. It offers various news including national and international interviews, cover story, feature, and health issues.

5 Tipu Muslihat Israel: Pemukiman Ilegal Terus Dibangun, <http://www.hidayatullah.com/berita/viva-palestina/10770-tipu-muslihat-israel-pemukiman-ilegal-terus-dibangun> (accessed 20. 4. 2010).

6 *Eramuslim.com* claims itself to be the first online news on Islam that was launched on 1 August 2000. It is also associated with exclusivist Muslim group.

7 Tandjung Ihsan, Palestina dan Skenario Akhir Zaman, <http://www.erauslim.com/suara-langit/penetrasi-ideologi/palestina-dan-skenario-akhir-zaman.htm> (accessed 20. 4. 2010).

8 M. Natsir was the most influential leader within the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Preaching Council), an organization associated with the Indonesian exclusivist group.

9 Natsir M., *Masalah Palestina Sejak Tahun 1977 sampai Sekarang*, Balitbang Departemen Luar Negeri, Jakarta, 1986, p. 191.

sation to give priority to the question of Muslim–Christian relations and was established on 26 February 1967 partly to respond to the problems of Muslim–Christian relations. In “The Conspiracy of Jews: The Quest of Anti-Semitism in *Media Dakwah*” Burhanuddin argues that the magazine “has contributed to the creation and dissemination of Jewish conspiracy theories in the aftermath of September 11th.”¹⁰

One example of writings published in this magazine is Didin Hafidhuddin’s “Yahudi dalam Sorotan Al-Qur’an” (The Jews in the Qur’anic Perspective).¹¹ Hafidhuddin maintains that the Jews, who were mentioned with the Christians in the Qur’an as People of the Book, are the most frequent group of people mentioned by the Qur’an because of their nasty behaviour in disrespecting Islamic teachings. They were referred to by the Qur’an as “*al-maghdub*”, or those who are blamed. Hafidhuddin claims that the Jews are the followers of materialism, looking wealth, power, position, and seeking to dominate the world. They would use whatever means available to achieve that goal including cheating, colonizing, and even killing. Referring to the Qur’an 2:96, he underlines that the Jews wanted to live forever to achieve their goals and that whoever obstructed their efforts would be totally destroyed.¹²

Hafidhuddin also argues that in their relations with the Muslims, the Jews have long preserved their hatred towards the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. The Jews killed Prophets Zakaria and Yahya and many other Muslims. He further adds that their act of killing would continue to take place using various means as this reflects their hatred towards Muslims as underlined in the Qur’an 3:186. In addition, Hafidhuddin believes that the Jews are trying very hard to force Muslims to leave their religion using various means such as movies, books, articles, and education. The hope was that Muslim youth would gradually doubt their religion and then follow Judaism. However, he argues that there is a minority group of Jews who could think clearly and honestly and are trying to read the Qur’an seriously, those were blessed by Allah. He gives some names as examples from the Prophet time, including Abdullah bin Salam, Tsa’labah bin Sai’yah, Asih bin Sa’iyyah, Asad bin Ubaid, and Tsa’labah bin Salam.¹³

Another article published in *Media Dakwah* was about Nurcholish Madjid’s thought on the renewal of Islamic teachings which were perceived as resembling those of Annie Beasant’s. The late Nurcholish Madjid was a leading Indonesian Muslim scholar and Annie Beasant was a leading figure of Theosophische

10 Burhanuddin, *The Conspiracy of Jews: The Quest of Anti-Semitism in Media Dakwah*, *Graduate Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Auckland, 2007, p. 53.

11 Hafidhuddin Didin, *Yahudi dalam Sorotan Al-Qur’an* (The Jews in the Qur’anic Perspective), *Media Dakwah*, Jakarta, December 1992, pp. 30–31. Hafidhuddin is one of important contributors to the journal, which is owned by the Indonesian Islamic Preaching Council. He was also the member of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera.

12 Hafidhuddin Didin, *Yahudi dalam Sorotan Al-Qur’an*, pp. 30.

13 Hafidhuddin Didin, *Yahudi dalam Sorotan Al-Qur’an*, pp. 30–31.

Vereeniging (Theosophical Society) which was established in 1912 in Indonesia. In one article the research team of the magazine opined that the Theosophical Society was a branch of British Freemasonry and part of International Jewish networks. The research team severely criticized Nurcholish Madjid's argument, which stated that the heart of Islamic teaching is submission and that all religions are the same. This was considered contradicted the Qur'an 4:3: "We have to be careful with whatever Nurcholish Madjid said because he could amazingly dodge the questions, which is the prominent character of the Jews."¹⁴

There are published books which are similarly very critical to the Israelis and against Jews. One example is M. Ilham Marzuq's *Islam Yahudi?*¹⁵ This book discusses the danger of male-female relationships and free sex, which are seen as not only growing in the West but also developing in other parts of the world. Marzuq argues that these phenomena are the result of Western culture which praises materialism and secularism. He further underlines that there is a Western conspiracy to demoralize Islam through various media including films, such as *Schindler's List*, *True Lies*, and *Exodus*. In these films, Islam was portrayed as a violent and militant religion. He maintains that these films were produced by the United States under the dictation of the Jews, who are trying to propagate anti-Islamic sentiments.¹⁶

2. The Religious "Other" in Islamic Texts¹⁷

As seen above, Muslim perspectives on Jerusalem are mixed with their views about the Jewish people and Judaism. It is clear that some Indonesian Muslims have clear and strong sentiments against Jews but less clear views about Jerusalem and that they are more preoccupied with forming opinions about Jews rather than Jerusalem. At this point the issue of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially the Jews, becomes significant.

The Qur'an repeatedly confirms previous revelations, in particular the Torah and *Injil* (Gospel). However, some Muslims have found it difficult to accept the Old and New Testaments because several key issues that are mentioned in the Qur'an contradict these Jewish and Christian Holy Books. Muslims' doubt towards the validity of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures is supported by several Qur'anic verses that explicitly or implicitly accuse the *ahl al-kitab* of concealing some parts of their Scriptures such as in the Qur'an 4:44.

In discussing this, classical theological Islamic texts generally argued that

14 Nurcholish Madjid dan Annie Beasant, *Media Dakwah*, Jakarta, December 1992, pp. 46-47.

15 Marzuq Ilham, *Islam Yahudi?* Mashun Publisher, Sidoarjo, East Java, 2008.

16 Marzuq Ilham, *Islam Yahudi?* p. 54.

17 This part is mainly taken from the author's book, *Muslim-Christian Relationship in the New Order Indonesia: The Exclusivist and Inclusivist Muslims' Perspectives*, Mizan, Bandung, 2005.

both Scriptures were corrupted. Different theologians placed different emphases on the reason for this charge, but most centred on two main issues: the alleged alterations and changes in the Torah and *Injil*, and the concept of the Trinity. However in line with the theme of this paper only the first issue will be discussed here.

Two notable Muslim theologians of the classical period who wrote important treatises on the subject were Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Ibn Hazm (d. 1064). Ibn Taymiyya wrote his *Al-Jawab al-Sahih li man Baddala Din al-Masih* (The Correct Reply to Those Who Have Altered the Religion of Christ) in response to some books which contained, among others, arguments that the Prophet Muhammad was not sent to the Christians but to those who were ignorant amongst the Arabs, that Christians were monotheists, and that the doctrine of the Trinity was consistent with reason and religious principles.¹⁸ The Syrian and Egyptian milieu within which Ibn Taymiyya lived was characterised by religious pluralism. Muslims, Christians and Jews lived together and their relationships were often marked with enmity. It was within such a milieu that his work was written.¹⁹

Ibn Taymiyya maintained that the Torah and *Injil* had undergone some changes to their meanings (*tahrif*) and some alterations to their wordings (*tabdil*) before the time of Prophet Muhammad. For Ibn Taymiyya, the Torah and *Injil* had come down to their followers by non-valid transmission. He further stated that the *Injil* was not written by Isa (*lam yaktubuhu al-masih 'alaihi al-salam*); instead it was composed by his two disciples Matthew and John. For him, the claim that Mark and Luke also transmitted the *Injil* to the community was not valid as these two persons did not meet Prophet Isa (or Jesus in Christian understanding).²⁰

In a similar line, Ibn Hazm severely criticised the Gospels. In his *Al-Fisal fi al-Milal wa-al-Ahwa' wa-al-Nihal*, Ibn Hazm examined the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and different concepts of prophecy in Judaism and Christianity. He argued that the Torah and *Injil* contained contradictions (*munaqadat*) and untruths (*akadhib*) because some of their verses were in contradiction to Islamic belief as stated in the Qur'an. Ibn Hazm then listed some forty examples of these contradictions in the Torah including the wrong account of the length of stay of *Bani Isra'il* in Egypt, the statements that Adam was a deity (*al-ilah*), and that the Prophet Lot was accused of sleeping with his daughter.²¹

Within the classical Islamic law the position of non-Muslim as protected mi-

18 Ibn Taymiyya Taqi al-Din Abi al-'Abbas Ahmad, *Al-Jawab al-Sahih li man Baddala Din al-Masih*, ed. Majdi Qasim, Vol. 1, Maktabat al-Balad al-Amin, Jeddah, 1993, pp. 21-22.

19 Roberts Nancy, Reopening the Muslim-Christian Dialogue of the 13-14th Centuries: Critical Reflections on Ibn Taymiyyah's Response to Christianity in *Al-Jawab al-Sahih li man Baddala Din al-Masih*, *Muslim World*, Vol. 86, Nos. 3-4, Hartford, July-October 1996, pp. 343-345.

20 Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Jawab al-Sahih*, Vol. 1, p. 387 and p. 393.

21 Ibn Hazm Abi Muhammad 'Ali ibn Ahmad al-Ma'ruf, *Al-Fisal fi al-Milal wa-al-Ahwa' wa-al-Nihal*, Vol. 1, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Bayrut, 1996, pp. 144-159.

norities (*ahl al-dhimma* or *dhimmis*) was clear in that the law had positioned Muslims above them in several key areas.²² There were obligations and rights for the *dhimmis* as outlined by the *‘ulama’*. Al-Mawardi (d. 1058) listed six compulsory obligations for the *dhimmis*: they must respect the Qur’an; they must respect God’s prophets; they must not talk about Islam in insulting language; they must not commit adultery or marry Muslim women; they must not preach their religions to Muslims or assault Islam; and they must not help enemies of Islam. These points were included in a protection agreement between Muslim rulers and the *dhimmis*, who had to observe these requirements.²³

In addition, Al-Mawardi noted six desirable conditions that were expected from the *dhimmis*, even though these were not included in the protection agreement. The six points were: they should distinguish their appearance from Muslims by wearing different clothes; they should not build higher buildings than those of Muslims; they should not recite their Scripture or ring their church bells in such a tone that would be heard by Muslims; they should not display their drinking, crosses or pigs in front of Muslims; they should bury their dead discreetly; and they should not ride horses but could ride mules or donkeys.²⁴

On the question of social life, the issue of greetings between Muslims and non-Muslims needs to be highlighted. Greeting non-Muslims, which at first glance seem irrelevant for the discussion on Jerusalem, is in fact quite significant as this also becomes the concern of certain Indonesian Muslims preachers and writers which in turn are referred to by some Muslim student activists. The greeting *assalamu ‘alaykum* (May God bless your happiness and prosperity) in Islam was different from a mere greeting as it had religious connotation. Therefore, the issue of greetings was discussed within some Islamic law texts and concerned Muslim jurists, as it was important to decide whether Muslims were permitted or not permitted (*haram*) to greet non-Muslims, especially the Jews and Christians.

Al-San‘ani quoted a hadith from Abu Hurayra stating *‘la tabda’u al-yahuda wa al-nasara bi al-salam’* (Do not be first in greeting the Jews and the Christians). The hadith continued that if a Muslim met a Jew or Christian on the street, the Muslim should obstruct their way. Al-San‘ani, however, also reported that Ibn Abbas stated that it was permissible for Muslims to greet Jews and Christians, and that was also the opinion of some Shafiite *‘ulama’*. They based their argument on the Qur’anic verse: *‘wa qulu li al-nasi husnan’* (and you shall speak unto

22 Saeed Abdullah, Rethinking Citizenship Rights of Non-Muslims in an Islamic State: Rashid al-Ghannushi’s Contribution to the Evolving Debate, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Birmingham, 1999, p. 307.

23 Al-Mawardi ‘Ali ibn Muhammad, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya wa al-Wilayat al-Diniyya*, Matba‘ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Auladah, Cairo, 1973, p. 145.

24 Al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*, p. 145.

all people in a kindly way), and other hadiths that permitted such a greeting.²⁵ Nevertheless, al-Sanʿani also stated that some *ʿulamaʿ* argued that the permissibility of greeting Jews and Christians was only valid provided they were walking together with Muslims. If, however, they were not walking with Muslims, Jews and Christians were not allowed to be greeted. Al-Sanʿani also narrated that another hadith stated that if Muslims were greeted first by the *ahl al-kitab* they could respond with the expression *wa ʿalaykum* (and upon you too) and not *wa ʿalaykum salam* (may happiness and prosperity be blessed upon you too). However, Muslims could not initiate the greeting towards Jews and Christians.²⁶

In a similar line, Ibn Taymiyya stated that if a Jew or Christian greeted a Muslim, the latter should reply 'and upon you' without mentioning the word 'peace'. This would countervail any intended curse that Jews and Christian might possess in their minds when they greeted Muslims.²⁷ In addition, Imam Malik reported a hadith that the Prophet said *'innal yahuda idha sallamu ʿalaykum yaqulu ahaduhum as-samu ʿalaykum faqulu wa ʿalayk'* (When a Jew greets you and says, 'Poison to you', say, 'And to you').²⁸

It is not easy to make a claim that the above views have directly affected the views of the present day Indonesian Muslims. However, it is safe to argue that the perspectives of some Indonesian Muslims on the religious "other" are to a significant extent related to the perceptions developed in some classical Islamic theology and legal texts cited above. This could be seen below.

3. Muslim Student Activists' Understanding of Jerusalem and the Jews

This section consists of two parts. The first part will describe the views of Muslim student activists from the two secular universities in Yogyakarta, namely Universitas Gadjah Mada and Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. The views of Muslim student activists from a religious-based (an Islamic) university, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, will be described in the second part.

Jerusalem Seen by Students Attending Secular University

Five Muslim student activists of three men and two women, from the secular universities mentioned above, were interviewed. They were asked about their understanding of Jerusalem and the Jews. A topic guide I initially prepared was focussing more on theological aspects of the theme. However, as a lot of the answers given were connecting these theological notions to politics, some ques-

25 Al-Sanʿani, *Subul al-Salam: Sharh Bulugh al-Maram min Jamīʿ Adillat al-Ahkam*, Vol. 4, Dar al-Jil, Bayrut, 1982, p. 1377.

26 Al-Sanʿani, *Subul al-Salam*, Vol. 4, p. 1378.

27 Ye'or Bat, *The Dhimmī: Jews and Christians under Islam*, Fairleigh Dickinson, New Jersey, 1985, p. 197.

28 Malik ibn Anas, *Al-Muwattaʿ*, 404.

tions related to politics were also raised. In this section I first repeat the questions, then give a summary of the answers.

Q: What is the image of Jerusalem?

A: The respondents gave a mix answers for this question. Some argued that it is a sacred place; a place for continuous conflicts; a place where violations against human rights take place; it is a horror place to live. Other respondents gave a longer explanation: Jerusalem is a place where many innocent people were being killed, including women and children.

Q: How did you form this image of Jerusalem?

A: The image of Jerusalem was explained through pengajian (religious gathering) in the campus mosque; from television, and internet such as eraMuslim.com; from reading books on Jerusalem such as *Palestina*, *Emang Gue Pikirin*; and from *Hidayatullah* and *Sabili* magazines.

Q: What is the history of Jerusalem?

A: Some respondents explained that Jerusalem is a holy city because Prophet Muhammad had done his *isra'* (ascension) there and because it was the first *kiblah* (direction for prayer) for Muslims. Yet others mentioned that they did not know exactly about its history. One respondent explained the history at length: "the Jews had a palace there but was destroyed by the Babylonians. The behaviour of the Jews is never changing: they are cruel, cunning, and snob. The land was inhabited by the Palestinians, who made it prosperous and this was also destroyed by the Jews."

Q: How important is Jerusalem in Islam?

A: In general the interviewees argued that it is a very important place in Islam as mentioned in the Qur'an and hadith. Others said that because the place is very important according to Islam therefore the religion as well as Muslims in Jerusalem need to be protected. One respondent said that Jerusalem is not as important as Mecca and Madina but still very important because it used to be the first *kiblah*.

Q: Is Jerusalem a sacred city for Jews and Christians?

A: All five respondents said that the Jews and Christians do not have the right to claim Jerusalem as their sacred city because it belongs to Muslims. Most of them argued that this was because both religious groups had deviated from the teachings of their prophets. Another respondent claimed that the Jews cannot claim Jerusalem as a sacred place because they once wanted to bomb al-Aqsa mosque.

Q: Do non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians, have the right to pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque?

A: All interviewees argued that Jews and Christians do not have the right to pray there but gave different reasons for that. Some said that al-Aqsa is a mosque therefore non-Muslims could not pray there. Some reasoned that if non-Muslims were allowed to pray in the mosque they would only cause de-

struction to the mosque as mentioned clearly in the Qur'an. Others argued that because Israel will monopolize the whole city of Jerusalem it would be too risky to allow the Jewish people to pray in the al-Aqsa mosque.

Q: Do non-Muslims have the right to live in Jerusalem?

A: Almost all respondents said that non-Muslims do not have the right to live in Jerusalem, and only one said that they could live there as long as they do not bother the Muslims. They gave various reasons for this. Some respondents argued that non-Muslims would only fuel the potential conflict that already exists. Another thought that there are many other prosperous places outside Jerusalem and that non-Muslims, especially the Jews, could not colonize Jerusalem.

Q: Who has the right to govern Jerusalem?

A: The respondents were divided into two different but actually very similar answers. Some said that Islamic countries or Islam has the right, without specifying who they mean by this. Some said that Palestinians have the right. The reasons given were quite diverse. One respondent gave a quite lengthy explanation to his argument: "Historically speaking it was true that Jerusalem belonged to the Jews and the Christian. However, it was the Muslims who rebuilt and developed the city, whereas the Jews and Christians have immoral behaviour and hated Islam. Their heart was locked." The argument was based on the Qur'an, Surah al-Baqoroh 2: 18: "Deaf, dumb and blind – so they will not return [to the right path]." Some argued that because the Palestinians were guided by the light of Islam therefore it was they who have the right.

Finally the Muslim student activists from the secular universities were asked to comment on who was responsible in this seemingly unceaseable conflict in Jerusalem. All of them agreed that Israel was the one responsible. The United States, United Nations, The United Kingdom, and France were also deemed responsible because they were seen as taking sides with Israel.

Jerusalem Seen by Students Attending the Islamic University

The five students of three men and two women from the Islamic university, were asked about their understanding of Jerusalem and the Jews. The same questions asked to the first group of students were asked to these students. In this section I first repeat the questions, then give a summary of the answers.

Q: What is the image of Jerusalem?

A: The answers given are also quite mixed. Some stated that Jerusalem is a city of three religions. Others said that it is a city of continuous conflict, especially between Muslims and Jews, as mentioned in the Qur'an. Another respondent gave a longer explanation arguing that the word "Jerusalem" connotes a complex image: politics, religion, and violence.

Q: How did you form this image of Jerusalem?

A: Most of them answered that they gained this image from the internet,

television, magazine, and books without being able to specify the names of the magazines and books. Another respondent said that the image was constructed from his lecturer at the university.

Q: What is the history of Jerusalem?

A: Various answers were given. Jerusalem is the land of the prophets, and therefore it is a sacred city. Prophets David, Solomon, and Moses had reigned in this land. The sacred al-Aqsa Mosque exists there also. Yet others mentioned that they were not sure about its history because they could not remember what the Qur'an said about this.

Q: How important is Jerusalem in Islam?

A: Some respondents said that it was only a historical city and not a religious city. It had its importance in the past but not as important as Mecca and Madina. It is not a safe place for praying anymore because it is a place of hatred. A female respondent gave a different perspective by arguing that Jerusalem is important because it is an example of a real *jihad* for Muslims who fight against their enemies.

Q: Is Jerusalem a sacred city for Jews and Christians?

A: Jerusalem is a sacred city of the three religions as written within the three Holy Books of Christians, Jews and Muslims. The historic sites in Jerusalem reflected the history of the three religions and the three religions shared the same historical roots. Two respondents said that it is no longer a sacred city for the Jews and Christians because Christianity and Judaism were corrected by Islam.

Q: Do non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians, have the right to pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque?

A: The general tones of the respondents were positive by arguing that Jews and Christians have the right to pray there because they shared a religious history in that place. However, two of them were worried that if non-Muslims were given the right to pray in the mosque they would cause harm to Muslims. Therefore, they argued that non-Muslims should not be given permission to pray there. "Moreover, they (non-Muslims) have left the right path (Islam) and are following the wrong path, so they could not pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque."

Q: Do non-Muslims have the right to live in Jerusalem?

A: Most respondents argued that non-Muslims have the right to live there provided they meet certain requirements. "Non-Muslims have the right to live in Jerusalem only if they meet the juridical regulations and administrative requirements," they said. "Non-Muslims have the right to live in Jerusalem without disturbing and spying on the Islamic community." Or: "They are allowed to live there insofar as they do not destroy historical sites." Only one respondent firmly held that non-Muslims should not be given the right to live there: "I learned from the Christians who lived in my remote village in Yogyakarta. They were allowed to live there but then they proselytized the Muslims. So, non-Muslims should not be given the right to live in a Muslim community because they will

cause harm to the Muslims.”

Q: Who has the right to govern Jerusalem?

A: The respondents seemed to be undecided. “I could not say who has the right because I do not know its exact history. I think it is Palestinians who have the right but it has nothing to do with religion. This is very much related to the issue of sovereignty,” one respondent said. “If we are talking about ‘right’ I am not sure, but what is happening in Jerusalem at the moment is not intended by the civil societies of Palestine nor Israel. It is only a very few politicians, eager to gain power, who have caused the terrible situation in Jerusalem at the moment.” Another respondent said that it is the Palestinians who have the right to govern Jerusalem because they are the native inhabitants over there.”

Finally the Muslim student activists from the Islamic university were asked to comment on who was responsible in this seemingly unceaseable conflict in Jerusalem. It is quite interesting to note that only one respondent directly pointed at Israel because it does not obey international law. The rest of them said, because both Israeli and Palestinian communities are divided in their opinions, one could not blame any of those parties. They argued that only those who supported violence are the ones to be blamed. Some noted though that the Palestinians are in a worse condition because of the imbalance of power compared to the Israelis.

4. Analysis

As mentioned above, the interviews conducted for this paper do not reflect the opinions of student organizations and the universities. The choice of students from various student organizations and universities is meant to give a wide picture of how a Muslim student thinks about Jerusalem and the Jews, and is based on the assumption that the students from the Islamic university will have different perspectives on these issues compared to those of secular universities. Therefore, I need to briefly explain these different perspectives. I realize I am making some generalization here, but I want to give a general picture of their different characters.

There is a general assumption that in relations to non-Muslims, Muslim students of secular universities in Indonesia have the tendency of being more exclusivist compared to the students of Islamic universities. What I mean by exclusivist is those who have the tendency of applying a literal approach in understanding Qur'an and hadith, and are past-oriented. These people would also hold the view that salvation can only be achieved through the religion of Islam. For them Islam is the final religion, which came to correct other religions. On the other hand, Muslim students of the Islamic universities tend to be more inclusive by perceiving Islam as an evolving religion and applying a contextual reading to the Qur'an and hadith. They also hold that salvation is also possible

outside Islam, and therefore tend to be more tolerant of the faith of the 'other.'

The above assumption could be explained by, among others, understanding the methods of teaching Islam in those universities. In Islamic universities, especially at State Islamic University Yogyakarta, Islam is taught using historical approach. This allows the students to critically discuss Islam and Islamic teachings. In contrast, the teaching of Islam at secular universities applies the normative approach which sets the limits to critically discussing the religion. At this point, it is important to note that even though the opinions of the Muslim students interviewed here are not representing the views of their institutions, there might be a strong connection between the students' views and their respective universities' visions or ways of teaching

Drawing from the above explanation about different characters of the universities, one might assume that students of secular universities would tend to be more exclusive in their views about Jerusalem, especially in its relations to the religious other. This is generally true. The interviews showed that these students were very firm in arguing that Jerusalem belongs to the Muslims and that non-Muslims have no rights to govern the city. Most of the respondents also stated their negative image about the Jews, who were seen as those who have deviated from the teachings of their prophet.

In contrast, one might assume that students of the Islamic university would have a more positive thought of Jerusalem and the Jews. However, this is not totally true. As could be seen from the above interviews, while it is true that some students from the Islamic university gave a more academic explanation about Jerusalem and offered a more balanced view about the city, some of them became quite harsh in uttering their criticism of the Jews. As shown above some of the respondents from this university argued that Judaism was no longer valid because it was corrected by Islam, and doubted the good will of the Jews when they were given access to pray in the al-Aqsa Mosque.

To conclude, Jerusalem means different things for Indonesian Muslim student activists. While some of them gave a more academic view about the city, many of them gave an ideological explanation by arguing that it is a place where violations against human rights take place, and that it is a place where many innocent people were being killed, including women and children. The same case is true in regards to the question of the religious 'other,' namely the Jews. Certain muslim student activists who often been labeled as inclusivists were in fact quite exclusivists. It needs a futher study to explain why this happens.

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ЈЕРУСАЛИМ И ЈЕВРЕЈИ: ПОГЛЕД ИНДОНЕЖАНСКИХ МУСЛИМАНСКИХ СТУДЕНТСКИХ АКТИВИСТА

Резиме

Јерусалим је град контроверзи. Овај рад настоји да опише погледе на Јерусалим и Јевреје индонежанских муслиманских студентских активиста који студирају у две различите категорије универзитета – у световној и религиозној. Избор студената из различитих организација и универзитета имао је за циљ да пружи свеобухватнију перспективу и заснован је на претпоставци да ће студенти са исламског универзитета имати другачију перспективу о овим питањима од оних са секуларног универзитета. Интервјуисано је по петоро студената из сваке категорије. Интервјуи нису снимани већ записивани, тако да су испитаници могли да говоре слободно. Ови интервјуи, у сваком случају, не одражавају мишљења студентских организација и универзитета. Они одражавају сопствене погледе студената.

Кључне речи: Јерусалим, Јевреји, исламска перспектива, индонежански муслимански студентски активисти, ексклузивистички приступ, инклузивни приступ.

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