

ISLAM RAḤMATAN LI AL-‘ĀLAMĪN

(Study of Thought and Gait of Muhammad Shamsi Ali’s Da’wah in New York)

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ABSTRACT

This research found that Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* in Shamsi Ali’s thought is a grace or welfare for the entire universe, Moslem and non Moslem as well. The concept of Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* according to Shamsi Ali is implemented in the Muslim’s lifestyle that devoted, peaceful, moderate, dynamic, progressive, democratic, and respectful toward differences which constitutes a blessing and positive contribution to human welfare and dignity.

Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* is described in the gait of da’wah of Shamsi Ali through *bi al-Lisān* da’wah, *bi al-Qalām* da’wah, and *bi al-Ḥāl* da’wah by combining various models of da’wah which is also partly known in Christian mission: spiritual growth preaching model, educational preaching model, inclusive preaching model, and open preaching model. The last two models of preachings are unknown in the literature of Christian mission theory and at the same time will be Shamsi Ali’s contribution in the development of da’wah theory.

This research promotes some of the previous researches: First, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, who stated that the Muslim community in America has applied the Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* which characterized by building a strong vision to unify moderates, anti-violence and against extremism. Second, Mohamed Al - Hilali explains there is effectiveness of leadership that can be felt by Islam in America. Third, Julie Nava wrote that Muhammad Shamsi Ali is a figure representing Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* principles. Fourth, Muhammad Fethullah Gülen in Turkey and out side Turkey has proved himself to be an example in applying Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn*. This study refuses or does not support the research of Noor Ul Mobeen which stated that the first generation of Muslim students’ leadership in America in 2009-2012 failed in spelling out Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn*. The approach used in this research: religion, history, leadership, and communication, while the method uses grounded research.

Keywords: Islam, *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn*, New York, America, da’wah, leadership.

Introduction

America¹ is a liberal country² in which everyone has opportunity and freedom. Various religions, such as: Christian, Islam, Judaism and others exist in America. Everyone has the right to practice his or her own religion in this country. After September 11, 2001 incident in New York, there was bad impression about Islam, but gradually changed, in thought and behavior, because Islam keeps trying to show its true identity as the true religion of God.

Various leaders with all their Islamic thinking began to emerge, one of them Muhammad Shamsi Ali, who made serious effort doing thinking transformation to the people around New York, through an interfaith dialogue which declaring that Islam is not a terrorist religion but a clement religion so that Islam is acceptable to society in America entirely, especially in New York.

The transformation of the spreading of Islam is not only occurred in concept, but also in the behavior which is the "fruit" of true Islamic understanding furthermore referred as Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn*. The movement of Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* in New York is closely related to the figure or leader who spreads Islam, in this case is the figure of Imam Shamsi Ali.³ Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* can be identified with Islam

¹Richard Hofstadter, Wood Gray, and D. Steven Endsley, *Garis Besar Sejarah Amerika [Outline of American History]*, ed. Howard Cincotta, trans. Yusi A. Pareanom (Jakarta: US Department of State, 2004), 436. America is a country of immigrants. At the time of American independence declared on July 4, 1776, 40 percent of settlers were indeed descendants of England. The first US population census which conducted in 1790, revealed a population of less than four million people only, and each year the number of new settlements coming around 10 thousand people. When the United States government began taking records of arrivals of passengers in 1820, the majority of immigrants came from Northern Europe; at the end of the 19th century, they mostly came from Southern and Eastern Europe. Currently, the majority of immigrants are from Latin America and Asia. However, the reason for their arrival remains unchanged, that is opportunity and freedom.

²The Speech of Graduate School Director of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (SPs UIN) Jakarta, Prof. Dr. Masykuri Abdillah in public lecture "Islam in America - Era Donald Trump," on July 12, 2017 at SPs UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta stated that America is a secular country, but it doesn't mean a country without religion, this is reinforced by the currency which written "In God We Trust."

³Researcher will only use Shamsi Ali instead of his full name - Muhammad Shamsi Ali, because Shamsi Ali is popularly used either in America, Indonesia and other countries.

Nusantara. Islam Nusantara was born from the indigenization process and it's not Islam that anti Arabic, or anti anything, because antipathy is a form of an extremism thinking.⁴ Starting from the fact that the majority of Muslim in Indonesia, follows the teachings of Ahlussunnah Waljamaah (Aswaja) and is very simple. Aswaja is *manhajul hayat wal fikr* (life guidance and thinking method) which is based on the noble attitude taught by Islam that is: *tawassuth* (moderate), *tawāzun* (balanced), *tasāmuh* (tolerant), and *i'tidāl* (always stand with truth and justice).⁵ The great mission of Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* will be embodied in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and even in the universe.⁶ There is no contradiction between the terms of Islam *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* and Islam Nusantara because the concept and movement of Islam Nusantara are the application of Islam teaching which is peaceful, tolerant, polite and good character toward the universe.⁷

A. Indonesian Muslim in the United States

The existence life of Indonesian Muslim immigrant in America has a distinctive characteristic, which has been formed through a long process both before and after Indonesia liberty. The history of Indonesia is closely related to the process of Islamization, cultural development and the Islamic civilization.⁸ The beginning period of the Islamic dissemination had a great struggle, but in the XV century experienced a new passion and in the XVI-XVII century the sultan in Indonesia performed the process of Islamization. Shaykh Yusuf from Makasar particularly came to Banten to encourage Prophet Muhammad's followers to strive for having a qualified intellectual. Wali Songo in Java had also accelerated the process of Islamization.⁹ Various

⁴M. Isom Yusqi and friends, *Mcngenal Konsep Islam Nusantara [Knowing the Concept of Islam Nusantara]*, ed. M. Ulinuha Husnah, First Edition (Jakarta: Library STAINU, 2015), 10.

⁵M. Isom Yusqi and friends, *Knowing the Concept of Islam Nusantara*, v.

⁶M. Isom Yusqi and friends, *Knowing the Concept of Islam Nusantara*, vii

⁷M. Isom Yusqi and friends, *Knowing the Concept of Islam Nusantara*, 5.

⁸Andi M. Faisal Bakti, "Islam and Nation Formation in Indonesia," in *A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts* (Montreal: Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University, 1993), 136.

⁹Andi M. Faisal Bakti, "Islam and Nation Formation in Indonesia," in *A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts*, 137.

Islamic organizations such as Islamic Trade Unions (SDI), Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam (Persis), and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU); those organizations worked together to make a major contribution in promoting the importance of qualified development, influencing social, economic, political life and shaping the nation's culture¹⁰ in democratically.

Masykuri Abdillah explains that all Indonesian Muslim intellectuals accept the democratic system and even support it as a system that should be practiced in Islamic societies. It's because of two things: first, the values of democracy are in line with Islamic values in social life, especially the principles of deliberation (Qur'an 3:159; 42:38). Second, the democratic system is the right way to actualize the aspirations of Islam because Muslims in Indonesia are the majority, while democracy contains the meaning of majority rule/government.¹¹ Nurcholich Madjid founded the Paramadima Foundation in 1986, took a progressive approach, opened to Islamic modernism, "think globally and act locally", which were being the strength to build the nation of Indonesia.¹² The Indonesian Islam characterized by democracy, mutual cooperation was presented by Former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, thus on May 30, 2013 in New York got the World Statesman Award from the Appeal for Conscience Foundation (ACF), a foundation which cares of the multi-nations and religions in the United States. The award was given to the country of Indonesia, which Muslim is the majority of the citizens. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as President of the Republic of Indonesia that time was recognized for his contribution for battling the religious freedom and human rights. He was also considered actively took the role of opening interfaith dialogue at the

international level.¹³

The existence of Moslem in the United States is spreaded in various states. Based on data obtained from the Pew Research Center, the population of all ages by 2015 was about 3.3 million (1% of the total US population that was about 322 million by 2015).¹⁴ The report from TV One on May 20, 2016 stated that Muslim in New York was around 900,000 or 10% of the population of New York.¹⁵ It was estimated that one-third of these are Muslim immigrants from Indonesia.¹⁶ The Indonesian Muslim community in New York is united in the activities of the Al-Hikmat mosque. Al-Hikmah Mosque or Indonesian Muslim Community is located at 4801 31st Avenue Long Island. The mosque was built from self-help Indonesian Muslims in New York, donations from various businessmen and the Amal Bakti Muslim Pancasila Foundation led by the late President Soeharto. Finally, the building could be purchased, then renovated and right on the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia, on August 17, 1995, Al-Hikmah mosque was officially established.¹⁷

B. The Gait of Shamsi Ali's Da'wah

The Gait of Shamsi Ali's Da'wah is oriented towards da'wah that gives effect or benefit. He chose to remain living in New York because of his strong commitment to be a mediator between Indonesia and America, which means to correct the wrong understanding between the two countries, especially related to Islam.¹⁸

1. Muhammad Shamsi Ali as Director of Jamaica Muslim Center

Shamsi Ali as director of the Jamaica Muslim Center did a visionary leadership da'wah. Vision is the essence of leadership,¹⁹ or the heart of leadership because vision transcends political interests, designs

¹⁰Andi M. Faisal Bakti, "Islam and Nation Formation in Indonesia," in *A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts*, 142.

¹¹Masykuri Abdillah, "Theological Responses to the Concepts of Democracy and Human Rights: The Case of Contemporary Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals," in *Studia Islamika, Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies*. Volume 3, Number 1, 1996, page 2.

¹²Andi Faisal Bakti, "Islam and Modernity: Nurcholish Madjid's Interpretation of Civil Society, Pluralism, Secularization, and Democracy." Source: *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 33, No. 3, SPECIAL FOCUS: Islam between Holism and Secularism (2005), pp. 486-505. Published by: Brill Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23654384>. Accessed: 22-06-2017 02:18 UTC.

¹³<http://selasarselusur.blogspot.co.id/2013/05/imam-islamic-center-new-york-dukung.html> Retrieved June 28, 2017.

¹⁴<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/06/a-new-estimate-of-the-u-s-muslim-population/> Retrieved 11 January 2017.

¹⁵<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NYyJy8IN6I> Accessed June 27, 2017.

¹⁶<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIC46MMYgKA> Accessed June 27, 2017.

¹⁷<http://bujangmasjid.blogspot.co.id/2011/01/masjid-komunitas-muslim-indonesia-di.html> Retrieved June 26, 2017.

¹⁸Muhammad Shamsi Ali, Imam Masjid Islamic Center New York, "Interview" on December 20, 2016 in New York.

¹⁹Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, trans. Anne Natanael, *Kepemimpinan yang Berani* (Batam: Gospel Press, 2004), 33.

new synergies and states the unspoken, opposes the unassailable, and defends the untenable.²⁰ Vision requires visionaries, those who allow their minds and hearts to wander outside the artificial boundaries set by the world. A vision requires someone who has the courage to act based on an idea.²¹ The power of a leader's vision, and his ability to convey others as clearly as possible, will be the appropriate leadership action in the organization of the 21st century.²²

Shamsi Ali as director of the Jamaica Muslim Center has demonstrated the visionary da'wah leadership, proven by fostering, building Muslims in Jamaica - New York in order to be the positive influencer.²³ This led the Mayor of New York to visit the Jamaica Muslim Center to convince the Muslim community as an integral part, which also has the rights and guarantees of being a

²⁰The vision according to Robert R. Terry, like a road map in mind or known as mental mapping, when one is planning a journey, an organized life will think of a map in mind to achieve a goal. See Robert R. Terry, *Authentic Leadership [Kepemimpinan Autentik]* (Batam: Interaksasa, 2002), 73. Compare with Samuel H. Tirtamihardja, *Leader is a Dreamer*, Print Second (Tangerang: YASKI Foundation, 2007), 26. See also, George Barna, *Turning to Vision into Action*, First Edition (Jakarta: Yayasan Media Buana Indonesia Metanoia, 1998), 45.

²¹Andy Stanley, *Bagaimana Mengubah Visi Anda menjadi Kenyataan [How to Turn Your Vision into Reality]*, Second Edition (Yogyakarta: Andi Offset, 2002), 16.

²²The vision of the leader creates motivational energy and maintains a passion for both leaders and followers. This vision must create sustained tension within followers that drags and challenges them to move from the present situation dilemma toward achieving the practical and useful details of the vision. Vision must be simple enough so that followers can describe it in their own words; that vision becomes their vision – it's not just the vision of the leader. See, Bob Wall, Robert S. Solum, Mark R. Sobol, *Strong Leader [Pemimpin yang Bervisi Kuat]*, (Batam: Interaksasa, 1999), 19. See also David T. Kyle, *The Four Powers of Leadership [Empat Kekuatan Kepemimpinan]* (Batam: Karisma Press, 2004), 148. See also George Barna, *Turning to Vision into Action*, 46.

²³Positive influence is evidenced by the changes that occur in the city of Jamaica. Before the arrival of Shamsi Ali, the city of Jamaica known as frightening city because it is inhabited by people who tend to commit crime, fights, drugs, and other negative things. But gradually after the spiritual mentoring at Jamaica Muslim Center by Shamsi Ali, Jamaica changed gradually into a pleasant city as crime rates were dwindled, business activity became lively and house or property prices became expensive. Those are related with the positive influence of Jamaica Muslim Center's Jamaica Muslim Center. Source: Muhammad Shamsi Ali, "Interview," December 4, 2016 at Jamaica Muslim Center.

New York resident.²⁴ Shamsi Ali as a visionary da'wah leader, has such a tremendous belief or foresight which is never or hasn't been thought by anyone else that there will be a time when Islam in America becomes an interested religion, so the followers will increase. That thought is difficult to be accepted by others because the movement of Islam in America is facing a serious challenge. The citizen and the American government have changed from the position of accepting to be suspicious or unimpressed toward Islam. Another thing that reinforces Shamsi Ali's optimism is the fact that the belief in Allah SWT has birthed the excellent pious people such as: Al-Khawarizmi [Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Musa al-Khawarizmi], a Muslim scientist known as the father of Mathematics,²⁵ Ibn Battuta (Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Lawati Al-Tanji) who was considered discovering the American continent before Columbus.²⁶ Such optimism reinforces the belief that America is in the process of supporting the development or progress of Islam.

Shamsi Ali as director of Jamaica Muslim Center also performs authentic leadership. Robert W. Terry explains "leadership is a part of action. But not all actions are leadership. Leadership is an authentic action, a unique and respected mode of involvement in life."²⁷ Authentic leadership can unite ideas between theory and practice, appreciates the richness and diversity of leadership theory, and opens to correction. Authentic leadership seeks to facilitate and teaches leadership programs within a community, organizational or governmental organization. Authentic leadership (real or genuine) can be identified with sincerity or moral purity; is not created in a short time, but takes a long time to be developed every day. True leadership does not only understand how to lead well, but equally important is the right implementation in the lead. Things change so fast in the world, but true leaders will not change and continue to maintain their integrity as an indispensable quality of leadership. Shamsi Ali at the Jamaica Muslim Center is a spiritual leader who helps many things (education,

²⁴<http://www.cnnindonesia.com/politik/20150906125135-32-76900/mengenai-kontroversi-shamsi-ali-imam-as-asal-sulawesi/>. Retrieved March 15, 2016.

²⁵The biography of Al-Khawarizmi can be found <http://serunaihati.blogspot.co.id/2012/08/biografi-al-khawarizmi-bapak-matematika.html> Retrieved April 27, 2017.

²⁶Ibn Battuta's biography can be found through <http://zulfaniocy.blogspot.co.id/2011/12/ibnu-battutah-perjalanan-haji-terpanjang.html> Retrieved April 27, 2017.

²⁷Terry, *Authentic Leadership*, 161.

family, work, spiritual life and community life), of course this is strongly related to his authentic integrity (trustworthy).

Shamsi Ali as a da'wah leader implements authentic leadership, which is characterized by his ability to adapt to the environment. For example Arab followers or rulers always wear cloaked clothes, but Shamsi Ali as an Islamic figure in America is not always robed, this is because the clothes worn in America and in Indonesia are generally not robe.²⁸ This shows that Shamsi Ali is an authentic da'wah leader. The authentic leadership of Shamsi Ali's da'wah mission was also seen when he preached at Eid al-Fitr celebration in 2016 at New York, he delivered several things: first, the importance of communicating with government, political, economic, religious leaders to build a good judicial system so there will be no more manipulation . Secondly, Muslims make terrorists as enemies and even enemies with others (Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus), because terrorists are evil. Third, Muslims become mobilizer, who are at the forefront to build partnership relation against terrorists. Fourth, Muslims should not be weak, passive or pessimistic facing the terrorists.²⁹

Shamsi Ali at the Jamaica Muslim Center merges with people especially with colleagues and Muslims from Bangladeshi immigrants, Indonesian immigrants and Americans. To meet those needs Shamsi Ali as director of the Jamaica Muslim Center conducts effective da'wah leadership. Effective leaders equip followers even if they have to sacrifice a lot and may not receive thankfulness statement, but still leaders do their job. Shamsi Ali's da'wah effective leadership is demonstrated by giving a chance for Bangladeshi priests to become Imams at the Jamaica Mosque Mosque Center, a form of leadership that seeks to make others effective as Imams. Bangladeshi Muslims who are members of Jamaica Muslim Center have their own culture which still needs to get special attention from Shamsi Ali. That's why Shamsi Ali still provides time for family counseling services, for young adolescents facing morally, educational, religious and family issues that need to be handled

²⁸Muhammad Shamsi Ali, Director of Jamaica Islamic Center, "Interview" on December 20, 2016, in New York.

²⁹Khutbah Shamsi Ali is broadcast by itvusa.tv in "Jamaica Muslim Center Director & Imam Shamsi Ali Delivered Important Eid Khutba 2016," published July 7, 2016 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9DC7tSfr6g> Accessed April 21st 2017.

properly.³⁰ This is applied by Shamsi Ali because of the principle to demonstrate da'wah leadership that maintains effective leadership (both for oneself and for others).

At Jamaica Muslim Center every pilgrim can develop himself and strive. Shamsi Ali states that a priest in America not only leads prayer, but must be "all round" so he must also be a counselor, have the business, and help the community by directing them in the presidential candidate's election. Jamaica Muslim Center runs a public education from Kindergarten to High School, a special school to memorize Al-Quran to educate future generations because after memorizing Al-Quran, they become smart then can be accepted in the best schools in America.³¹ Shamsi Ali also conducts and encourages priests in America not to be complacent if they only have spiritual potential but are also required to equip themselves to have skills or expertise in other fields such as business, politics, education. The motivation for possessing a variety of non-spiritual skills is to make themselves effective as da'wah leaders. Shamsi Ali in his capacity as director of Jamaica Muslim Center in his da'wah has applied visionary leadership, authentic leadership, and effective leadership.

2. Muhammad Shamsi Ali as Imam of Islamic Center, New York

The presence of immigrants in New York City has increased significantly from year to year so that by itself will experience the process of cultural acculturation with the local community. This acculturational process can lead to two implications, positive or negative. A positive acculturational process is demonstrated through the acceptance of the presence of immigrants who are being a part of American society. But on the negative side, this acculturational process rises to suspicion, prejudice of the motive of the presence of immigrants in America.

The culmination of this negative acculturational process is the 9 September 2001 terrorist attacks against the twin towers of the WTC and the Pentagon. The effect of this event is the emergence of mutual suspicion over the role played by immigrants, who are predominantly Muslim. However, the American community's suspicion of

³⁰Muhammad Shamsi Ali, Director of Jamaica Muslim Center, "Interview" on December 4, 2016 in New York.

³¹Muhammad Shamsi Ali, Director of the Islamic Center of New York, "Interview," December 20, 2016 in New York.

the role of immigrants behind terrorist attacks was denied by the Islamic Center of New York priest (Sheik Muhammad Gemeaha),³² who claimed that Jewish citizens residing in America were responsible for the terrorist attacks. The statement by the Islamic Center of New York priest led to reaction in a demonstration from Jewish citizens that caused a chaotic atmosphere in New York City and demanded that the priest be deported from New York City.³³

Shamsi Ali as Imam at Islamic Center of New York runs three main programs : first, building communication with local government. This is done because there are friends who come to America with the minds that American government is a pagan government, finally having trouble, because the relationship with the government is not good so they need to make good relations with the government. Second, building communication with other religious communities, including Christians and Jews which is highly appreciated. Third, making the introduction of scary Islam because since 9/11 many consider it as an inspiration for terror. According to the analysis of many people the conflicts or terror that occurred in the world is as if it was done by Muslims. Faced the stigmatization and precedent (bad events) associated with the existence of Muslims, according to Shamsi Ali this condition should be clarified so that the stigmatization and bad precedents do not have negative implications for the sustainability of American Muslims.³⁴

Shamsi Ali's duties at the Islamic Center of New York are not easy, because he must be successful da'wah leaders, demanding efforts to build communication with government, interfaith society, and introducing non-scary Islam, (non-terrorist). Shamsi Ali's participation in escorting President George W. Bush to visit Ground Zero after the September 11, 2001 tragedy that represents Muslims who are being accused related with the tragedy is not easy. But Shamsi Ali remains strong and tries to appear calm. Shamsi

Ali's participation to appear reciting Qur'anic verses in Pray For America event attended by President Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, Christian Pastors, and Jewish Priests. Attending church and synagogue invitations, all are efforts to build communication with government, interfaith leaders and communities, as well as to introduce that Islam is not terrorist or the source of the unrest.

The success of those efforts necessarily require sincere sacrifice. A number of awards achieved by Shamsi Ali is a form of appreciation for his success in building and fostering relationships among religious communities in the United States. Because of his success, in 2002, Shamsi Ali was appointed as Ambassador of Peace by the International Religious Federation. In 2009, he was also appointed as one of 100 receivers the Medal of Honor Award. This award is the highest non-military award given to immigrants who make a major contribution to American society and the world community. On the other hand, Shamsi Ali is considered successful in building bridges between communities.³⁵

Shamsi Ali has succeeded in presenting an Islam image that is good, polite, friendly, intellectual and friendly with anyone. On September 2006 he received an award from Asian American Coalition USA Inc.³⁶ Hall of Fame in a ceremony at the Temple of Hinduism at Flushing, New York. This award is given to seven prominent people representing the Asian community in America. Shamsi Ali is da'wah leader who is constantly and never stop to do the da'wah because there is always hope for "great progress."

Shamsi Ali da'wah leadership which successful is also seen through the converts. The development of converts in America. The development of converts in the United States has increased significantly from year to year. This is because of their curiosity towards Islam through the study and analysis of the Koran. A condition seen after the events of September 11, 2001, is certainly an extraordinary work of Allah. Three years after the events of September 11, 2001, precisely on September 23, 2004 there was prayers and contemplation of the tragedy of 11 September 2001, which was attended by about 50,000 people. Some religious leaders, such as: Protestant, Catholic, Sikh, Hindu, Islam and other religions support the activity. Even that grand

³²Muhammad Shamsi Ali, "Interview," dated July 12, 2017 at the Graduate School of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta.

³³Shamsi Ali's lecture recording in Makassar on April 1, 2013, "published April 1, 2013 at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fli_Z9LiCZc&t=726s Accessed April 21, 2017.

³⁴Muhammad Shamsi Ali, "Dialogue," on NET News Television on "Indonesia Morning Show," was published on December 2, 2013 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSw9q4PhPVI> Accessed April 14, 2017.

³⁵<http://indegous.blogspot.co.id/2013/03/imam-mesjid-besar-di-new-york.html> Retrieved April 28, 2017.

³⁶<http://indegous.blogspot.co.id/2013/03/imam-mesjid-besar-di-new-york.html> Retrieved April 28, 2017.

meeting was also attended by George W. Bush (US President), Hillary Clinton (American Senator), Rudolph Giuliani (New York Mayor), Robert Pataki (New York Governor), Oprah Winfrey (artist), and a number of other world celebrities. The grand meeting was held at a baseball stadium, Yankee Stadium, The Bronx, New York. On that occasion, Shamsi Ali recited QS. 49:13 and also described the content of QS 5: 8. The positive impact of reading the Koran in the American Yankee stage, a woman named Sintia Roland became Islam after witnessing the broadcast on CNN; a woman named Amanda began to pay attention, 8 months later Amanda became interested in Islam. After another 2 months Amanda sent an email for her willingness to convert to Islam and finally uttered two sentences shahadat in tears. Amanda's friends who are about 15 other Jews also crying.³⁷ Shamsi Ali often responds positively to others who are negative to him. This is a good start, because by respecting others, the communication will be well established, and the opportunity to spread Islam in more open.

Furthermore, Shamsi Ali's activities in his da'wah at the Islamic Center of New York apply transformative leadership too.³⁸ The transformative leader is responsible for ensuring that the service or work continues eventhough he has to "pay the price (sacrifice)." Shamsi Ali as imam of the Islamic Center of New York is a transformer or transformative leader. Transformational leadership can be viewed in two

³⁷Recording by Bahrudin Malik, Edited by Sugeng Riyadi [Bralink TV]. Copyright 2012 Indonesian Family Forum, in the "Islamic Studies at Black Gold Hall Jinnan Recreation Club, Dukhan - Qatar," was published on April 9, 2013 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsTCFFI9bJk> Accessed April 19 2017.

³⁸According to Niko Notorahardjo and Iman Santoso, the term transformation comes from two basic words, trans and form. Trans means one side to the other side (across), or beyond. Form itself means form/shape. So transformation implies a change of form that goes beyond or exceeds what it is. Transformation will not happen before a transformer occurred. Transformational leadership is needed to change the behavior and skills of a number of people. This sometimes causes instability in feelings toward others. Transformational leaders as agents of change must have the capacity to take over responsibility that moves others or things to the true changes as expected. There are three distinctive features of changing leaders compared to other leaders: first, having a very strong determination to measure important outcomes, rather than simply overseeing unfocused and unclear activities. Secondly, having a willingness to take risks and walking "close enough" to the target of firing. Third, requires individual accountability, as well as shared accountability. See, Niko Notorahardjo and Iman Santoso, Transformation Journey, Printing First (Yogyakarta: Andi Offset, 2007), 2.

sides, macro and micro. In terms of macro, transformational leadership affects interpersonal, while in term of micro, it mobilizes the power to change social systems and institutional reformation,³⁹ which was strived to work well.

The co-operation of young Muslim Americans with federal and local government gives an important meaning to thwart a special attack that disrupts American security. The depiction of Muslim terrorism actions grew out from the extreme instigation of the ulama, which led to adolescents becoming radicals creating dangerous and threatening Islamic portraits.⁴⁰ That is why transformation is needed. The "bad" Islamic face can be changed through transformational leadership.

The visualization of Shamsi Ali's transformational leadership in Friday's Sermon (Khutbah) on November 6, 2009 at the Islamic Cultural Center Mosque 96th Street East New York, in the assessment of Azyumardi Azra who also attended the occasion, stated that Shamsi Ali was a preacher who would not speculate, showing *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*, eloquent (elegant), washatyyah caller (the best, ideal, in the middle), conducting tawazun (balanced), and continuing to show the boasted face of Islam. It also means that Shamsi Ali has sought to become a transformative dakwah leader because he is able to influence Muslims to choose to think and behave better (positive).

Transformational leadership is also demonstrated by Shamsi Ali, by enlightening the thinking (transformation in thinking) to Muslims in New York, various states in America, Indonesia and other countries, especially related to the figure of America's future leaders either Hillary Clinton who representing Democrats or Donald J. Trump who representing the Republican Party, elected in November 2016.⁴¹ Shamsi Ali's explanation shows that Hillary Clinton is better than Trump, so the prediction 2016 election winner is Hillary Clinton,⁴²

³⁹A. Komariah, C. Tratna, Visionary Leadership: Toward Effective School, Third Edition (Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara, 2008), 80.

⁴⁰Jessica Stern, "Muslims in America," Journal The National Interest, No. 113, 2011, 38-46.

⁴¹Observations of the transformative da'wah leadership of Muhammad Shamsi Ali were observed by the author before the election of the President of the United States on November 8, 2016.

⁴²<https://www.facebook.com/ImamShamsiAliOfficial/posts/804220053056407>. Retrieved March 16, 2016. March 2nd, 2016 in New York Muhammad Shamsi Ali writes: Of course, the most important of all is the Hillary figure who can unite the divided factions, especially ethnic frictions, as a result of

although election results finally proved that Hillary Clinton was defeated.

Shamsi Ali's duties and responsibilities at the Islamic Center of New York are more to Public Relation (representing Islam in the vanguard or forefront protector to present Islam with the desired face in the media, government, and other religions) which he does professionally. Therefore Shamsi Ali's role as public relation should be really shown professionally. Shamsi Ali in his dakwah has proved himself to be a competent (professional) Public Relation, respecting others, creating rapport or good communication and showing high creativity. Shamsi Ali's professional attitude was also shown when he was asked to comment about the New York Police Department (NYPD) which was accused doing discrimination against a particular group, not featuring either party, instead of uniting the two parties together, because both the NYPD and the New York Muslim community are a unity, which must be built to create good communication.

Shamsi Ali has evidently shown himself as a successful leader because of his success in entwining good public relation to introduce Islam. Therefore, it is clear that Shamsi Ali as imam at Islamic Center of New York in his dakwah has applied successful leadership, transformational leadership, and professional leadership.

3. Muhammad Shamsi Ali as President of Nusantara Foundation

Da'wah leadership of Shamsi Ali as President of Nusantara Foundation is demonstrated by the ability of democratic leadership. Democratic leadership is a based on democracy which implementation is called participatory leadership, in which the power of leadership lies in the active

Donald Trump's campaign of hatred and division. Hillary remains the favorite choice of women, all minorities, as well as those of the Democrats. So even if no Republican voters cross over vote Hillary, Hillary still math will win this fight. Moreover, the reality says that many also Republicans who do not like Donald J. Trump. So they may be changed options, or at least do not participate in choosing alias golput. That does not mean that Hillary is the best choice. Hillary also has blood in her hands that needs to be cleaned. Especially in the case of Bengazi in Libya. Hillary is also known for the Wall Street people who are known to often buy politicians. But whatever it is, Hillary is the best choice of the "least evil" aspect of Trump. This Republican candidate is a major threat, not just into the country with social divisions. But also external threats with the world's isolation of America. So Americans are naturally prepared to welcome a new history. That is for the first time a country that always voiced concern for women will be led by a woman; Hillary Clinton. Wallahu a'lam.

participation of every person or group. Shamsi Ali's democratic leadership was seen through his response when confronted to the decision of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Washington DC instructing to "temporarily" can not perform prayer activities at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Washington DC. The decision of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Washington DC led by Dino Patti Djalal emerged as a result of the terrorist attacks (mass shootings, suicide bombings and hostages) in Paris on 13 November 2015, so it is necessary to sterilize the security of the Embassy. But it is misunderstood that Patti Djalal forbade or did not allow prayers at the embassy in Washington DC.⁴³ Shamsi Ali points out that he is a democratic person, concerned about the needs of Indonesian immigrants, especially Muslims in Washington DC America. But he also does not position Djalal as the guilty party for its policy (as contained in the Embassy's decree), so it must be opposed. That's why as a solution IMAAM Center mosque in Silver Spring, Maryland is used as a place to perform prayers and other activities by Indonesian immigrants in order to maintain security at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Washington DC.

Democratic leaders are leaders who put forward bureaucracy, think ahead, act on the right rules as defined by the organization. Imam Shamsi Ali in his da'wah spreading democratic Islam, opposing extremism,⁴⁴ actively promoting religious affairs to councilors and the Federal Bureau of Invertigation (FBI) in America. Shamsi Ali became an advisor at the Indonesian Muslim Society in America and Indonesian Muslim Intellectual in

⁴³False interpretation of Patti Djalal's policies was further strengthened after discovering of the suicide bomber named Ismael Omar Mostefai was a member of ISIS. In this incident, ISIS is claimed to be responsible for the incident of that terror, it's not Indonesia Islam residing in America, another thing is also because before Djalal policy was applied, there was no threat or terror that made Indonesia as target, so Djalal's policy was considered unnecessary.

⁴⁴Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf also invites moderate Muslims to combat extremism, he states the following [in accordance with the written translation]: This has happened in the last 30-50 years due to the rise of Islamic militants especially after the Mujahideen and attacks on Uni Soviet. Islam is used for political purposes. It still feels its effect to the whole world. This is not the war of Islam and the West or Islam and Christianity, but between moderates and extremists (Source: Metro TV, "Interview," with Feisal Abdul Rauf, Imam Masjid Al Farah in New York during his visit to Indonesia published July 5, 2012 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eT6TUoKqals> Retrieved April 20, 2017).

America. Shamsi Ali teaches Islam that is peaceful, moderate, friendly, and contra hatred.⁴⁵ Shamsi Ali's democratic leadership is seen in the da'wah or the spreading of Islam that featuring democratic values and also firmly condemns each terror committed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The existence of Yayasan Nusantara as an institution aims to help integrating the Muslim community into American society.⁴⁶ Reaching every non-Muslim to understand Islam and being a friend, doing the relevance of cultural and religious diversity, doing education and charitable deeds,⁴⁷ becoming non-Muslim co-workers in doing social activities as part of service to society, providing Islamic education, opening language classes, providing food kitchens, receiving wearable clothing to distribute it and health care. To actualize those things, Shamsi Ali implements team leadership because he can not do the service by himself, instead of doing it together with brethren in faith.

Shamsi Ali in his dakwah displays team leadership, can be seen through a movement called Telling Islam to the World, an effort that connects Jakarta and New York⁴⁸ in the breath of Islam that

⁴⁵<http://www.cnnindonesia.com/politik/20150906125135-32-76900/mengenal-kontroversi-shamsi-ali-imam-asal-sulawesi/>. Retrieved March 15, 2016.

⁴⁶The idea of establishing Yayasan Nusantara is to become an alternative Islamic center in the US and the Western World in general. Through the Foundation it is expected to introduce Islam as a universal religion; not as a religion of the Middle East or South Asians, as still believed by many Americans. This foundation will bridge the cooperation and understanding between Indonesia and the Western World more deeply. Source: Julie Nava, Imam Muhammad Shamsi Ali: Spreading Peace on Earth West, peny. Laura Ariestiyanty (Jakarta: Noura Books, 2013), 299-300.

⁴⁷Charitable deeds can be demonstrated by giving zakat and alms which is certainly done by every Muslim, not to support terrorist activities. Source: Amy Singer, "Giving Practices in Islamic Societies," source: Social Research, Vol. 80, No. 2, Giving: Caring for the Needs of Strangers (SUMMER 2013), pp. 341-358. Published by: The New School. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24385604>. Accessed: 22-02-2017 14:10 UTC

⁴⁸Connectivity between New York and Jakarta is described by Shamsi Ali: New York is the center of the world city (Wall Street is a term used for influential financial interests in America), there are UN offices, world businesses, and the heart of capitalism) while Jakarta is the center of the city of Indonesia which has the largest Muslim population in the world, also has a distinctive Islam as desired. So any small thing done in New York affects other places, even the whole world. Muhammad Shamsi Ali, President of the Nusantara Foundation, "Interview", on December 20, 2016 in New York.

rahmatan li al-'ālamīn, it is desired in the world, and will spread from the global community's heart, New York. Shamsi Ali chose New York as a world city for the commencement of da'wah activities because it is a gathering place for the world community, also it's because of the existence of United Nations headquarters, but it became the target for anti-civilization attacks. Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia, reflecting Indonesia which has the largest Muslim population in the world. Indonesia Islam is Islam *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* which spreads peace, has friendly character, puts forward harmony and do good cooperation among religious fellows. Shamsi Ali's consciousness to spreads Islam *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* teachings to the West, starting from New York even to the whole world can not be done alone, that's why a solid team or togetherness is necessary so that that hope will become reality.

Shamsi Ali in doing da'wah involves teamwork. This is seen vividly in his ability to build cooperation with non-Muslims to take care of homeless, where Jewish and Muslim communities buy groceries, then taken them to a Presbyterian church in New York that has a public kitchen to cook, then distributes to homeless.⁴⁹ Shamsi Ali has a strong sensitivity to help others, proven to drive Muslims and non-Muslims to give sandwiches at night for homeless, as well as handing out blankets in winter in New York.⁵⁰

Team leadership is tested by issues that has potential to cause divisions, therefore a skillful leader who can help colleagues to stay together is needed. Team leader should be able to diagnose the ongoing situation, modify the leadership styles, and provide resources to meet various demands. John C. Maxwell explained that all coaches dreamed of having a team, but most of the leaders did not succeed in making it happened.⁵¹ A strong team in leadership is built through a long process and has to be proved through time. Having a binding spirit must be created through conversation, the love that always gives positive encouragement, has an open attitude and devoted to God.

Shamsi Ali's da'wah that appreciates multicultural is expected creating *ukhuwah Islāmiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), *ukhuwah waṭāniyāh* (national brotherhood), and *ukhuwah basyariyāh*

⁴⁹Muhammad Shamsi Ali, President of the Nusantara Foundation, "Interview", on December 20, 2016, in New York.

⁵⁰Muhammad Shamsi Ali, President of the Nusantara Foundation, "Interview", on December 20, 2016, in New York.

⁵¹John C. Maxwell, *Mengembangkan Kepemimpinan di Sekeliling Anda [Developing Leadership around you]*, Printing First (Jakarta: Professional Books, 1997), 248.

(brotherhood of humanity). This is reinforced through the content of each da'wah presented either through printed media or electronic media and verbal (face to face) dakwah. Shamsi Ali through Nusantara Foundation also brings students from Indonesia to America to be educated to become da'i by attending the appointed training. One of Shamsi Ali's dreams or wishes for Nusantara Foundation is to build or have a Nusantara Center that will be the da'i and Mubaliq⁵² cadre center with *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* perspective.⁵³

Shamsi Ali's da'wah leadership at Nusantara Foundation is not only democratic, teamwork but also applied delegation leadership which means Shamsi Ali delegates to other leaders to preach well. He also equips the converts in America well, so when they are sent to convey da'wah, they can do the responsibilities properly and productively. This will certainly make the population of converts increased, then America will be packed by moderate Islamic community. Another Shamsi Ali's efforts were to bring two young Imams (Azizul Hakim Mansyur and Baharuddin) on 21 May 2016 from Indonesia to become priests at Masjid Islamic Center New York.⁵⁴ In addition, Shamsi Ali as a da'wah delegator has also managed to build good relationships with prospective preachers, one of them is by facilitating Indonesian students to America, in which on February - March 2017 there are 10 people sent from Indonesia. Their daily routine are as follows: three days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) at school, one day (Thursday) with Shamsi Ali and Friday to be volunteer at mosque and join youth program, attending a class for converts and have free time on Sunday. Those students are also obliged to join the interfaith dialogue program by Shamsi Ali.⁵⁵ Shamsi Ali has a

great hope that after those students⁵⁶ are equipped with the science of da'wah, they can accept the duty to carry out the da'wah well.

C. Muhammad Shamsi Ali's Contribution to Interreligious Life in New York

Shamsi Ali's opportunity to contribute in New York is wide opened because he has proximity to the New York head police, Raymond Kelly. This proximity serves as a bridge of communication between the Muslim community and the government. Shamsi's relationship with New York Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, has created opportunities for interfaith dialogue and even getting the support to build a mosque near Ground Zero, New York. The mosque is a place to explore Islam, which is also a continuity of the Islamic Studies discipline that has become an important concern in America for the past four decades.⁵⁷ This Islamic Studies is important because it seeks institutional buffers to protect academic freedom from politicization demands. An attempt to secure the future of Islamic Studies that will solidify with intellectuals in an authentic interdisciplinary field. Islamic Studies makes a significant contribution to meet the humanitarian and social sciences needs of

⁵²Mubaliq is the person who delivered the da'wah, while Tabligh is the delivery in da'wah. The words tabligh and mubaliq are more derived from the Hadith of the Prophet: بلغوا عني ولو آية (convey what is from me - or about me - albeit a line), See, Deliar Noer, *Islam and Politics [Islam dan Politik]*. First Printing. (Jakarta: Yayasan Risalah, 2003), 198.

⁵³Muhammad Shamsi Ali, President of the Nusantara Foundation, "Interview", on December 20, 2016, in New York.

⁵⁴<http://sulselku.com/dua-imam-muda-sulsel-tiba-di-new-york/> Retrieved January 16, 2017. Hans Finzel explains that the leader does not delegate tasks due to fear of losing authority, fearing the task is done poorly, fearing the task is done better, not setting aside time for it, the fear of being dependent on others, lack of training and positive experience. See, Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1994), 99.

⁵⁵Muhammad Shamsi Ali, President of the Nusantara Foundation, "Interview", on December 20, 2016, in New York.

⁵⁶The intended student is a group of participants from Batch 2 Global Leadership Program (GLP), from Insan Cendekia Madani (ICM) School, Serpong. Muzayyin Arif as head of the entourage stated "As for us [on February 3, 2017], the entourage of GLP ICM School was specifically introduced by the mosque administrator [Darul Qur'an of Long Island New York], by being asked to stand and greet the jama'ah who existed in the mosque. It's even not a small amount of jama'ah who came to meet more closely came from Egypt, Bangladesh, Pakistan and so forth (Source: <http://www.suaramuhammadiyah.id/> 2017/02/07 / message-jumat-imam-shamsi-post-policy-president-trump / published February 7, 2017, accessed on April 22, 2017).

⁵⁷Richard C. Martin, "Islamic Studies in the American Academy: A Personal Reflection", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 78, No. 4 Desember 2010), 896-920. The intended student is a group of participants from Batch 2 Global Leadership Program (GLP), from Insan Cendekia Madani (ICM) School, Serpong. Muzayyin Arif as head of the entourage stated "As for us [on February 3, 2017], the entourage of GLP ICM School was specifically introduced by the mosque administrator [Darul Qur'an of Long Island New York], by being asked to stand and greet the jama'ah who existed in the mosque. It's even not a small amount of jama'ah who came to meet more closely came from Egypt, Bangladesh, Pakistan and so forth (Source: <http://www.suaramuhammadiyah.id/> 2017/02/07 / message-jumat-imam-shamsi-post-policy-president-trump / published February 7, 2017, accessed on April 22, 2017).

the American academy.⁵⁸

The incorrect depiction of Islam lifestyle in Arab is expressed through caricatures as follows. There are people wearing long-dressed clothes, live in the desert (left behind and poor), raise a sword (violence or terrorist). Those comprehension was corrected through the media so that the depiction of Islam in America was no longer equated with terrorists, not undemocratic and not oppressive, but less successful because of the 11 September 2001 attacks that led to the rise of Islamophobia. This is reinforced by the existence of radical Islamic movements outside America, which are seen as a threat to America's resilience. Muslims in America are also considered have potential become a source that endangers America's security values.⁵⁹

The negative effects of the terror attacks on September 11, 2001 still hold deep wounds, even nine years later, the American and America's government have not fully recovered due to this event. The most afflicted groups are Arabs and Americans Muslims, who are identified with terrorists. Even if they haven't had status (illegal), they will be interrogated, monitored, discriminated and deported. They will be the target of the Homeland Security Department, a very sad fate.⁶⁰ Jen'nan Ghazal Read explained that the result of a poll after seven years of terrorist attacks in New York, showed that Islam is so cornered that American society is afraid and anxious about the presence of Islam. A national poll found that four out of ten stated that Islam is not profitable, five out of ten say Islam is more likely to cause violence than other religions and six out of ten say Islam is very different from other religions, seven out of ten claim to know a little about Islam.⁶¹

Deal with with the above empiric reality, Shamsi Ali strives to change the image of that bad Islam, so that religious people in New York no longer think that Muslims are the backward, hard, and terrorist. The prohibition of terror is the command of the Prophet Muhammad, because

terror causes others to be disturbed, while Islam greatly emphasizes *rahmatan li al-'alamīn*, as stated in QS. 21: 107-112.

Shamsi Ali's sermon to the Muslim community in New York taught to think positively that there are still Christians and Jews that has sympathy to Muslims in New York, so the possibility to build good communication and cooperation is open. Proactive action to do good, keeping the peace must continually be demonstrated by Muslims in New York and other humanitarian efforts, because New York government also supports it. Shamsi Ali's contribution to Muslims in New York in this regard is strengthening the Muslims' hearts or faiths to not be afraid, encouraging to open up themselves for the sake of building harmonious relationships, and striving to maintain security.

Shamsi Ali's contribution to Muslims if viewed from the above quote is to justify or convince interfaith people that Muslims are an integral part of New York, which continues to provide support for building New York City,⁶² a history that can not be forgotten.

Islam is not sourced on race, ethnicity, or nation. Islam is a universal religion or belief, or life guidance that is not limited by the boundaries of humanity such as race. Islam is "colorful" depending on interpretations influenced by the environment, therefore Islam does not mean Arabic. Islam is not an Arabic teaching but a universal God teaching. Islam actually has a good basic character and anti-violence. So if there are violent action using the name of Islam, it's not true Islam but a political activity, because the poor depiction of Islam is a mistake.

Shamsi Ali also leads the Muslim Day Parade in New York⁶³ on September 25, 2016 to unite Muslims in New York. He also pointed out that Muslim society in the United States is an important part of the nation and erodes Islamophobia so that Americans can get to know Islam better and can live side by side. The way that can be done to eradicate Islamophobia is to fix the negative impacts in the private and public fields caused by the issues of

⁵⁸Charles Kurzman dan Carl W. Ernst, "Islamic Studies in U.S. Universities", *Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2012, 24-46.

⁵⁹Peter Mandaville, "Islam and Exceptionalism in American Political Discourse", *Journal Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 2. April, 2013), 235-239.

⁶⁰Mucahit Bilici, "Being Targeted, Being Recognized: The Impact of 9/11 on Arab and Muslim Americans." *Journal Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 40, No. 2. March 2011, 133-137.

⁶¹Jen'nan Ghazal Read, "Muslims in America," *Journal Contexts*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2008, 39-43.

⁶²Patsy Widakuswara, VOA reporter, "Interview," with Shamsi Ali in VOA October 2011 news coverage, was published on October 31, 2011 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zn-9zABomqI> Retrieved April 20, 2017.

⁶³Information from Farhat Ambadar as Chairman of the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI) Los Angeles, Vice President Community Outreach of the Indonesia Muslim Foundation Los Angeles, and Director of Housekeeping at Hotel Le Parc West Hollywood in Los Angeles dated 19 January 2017.

Islamophobia and encourage Muslims in America to become American citizens.⁶⁴ This parade was attended by thousands of New Yorkers, conducted as long as 12 block at the main street of Madison Avenue, Manhattan, New York. Along the way were also presented halal food sales. This parade was attended by Russell Simmons, one of the Hip Hop music producers, Khizr Khan representing the Democratic Party as well as other important figures. The presence of those figures gives support to the public in America, especially in New York both non Muslims and Muslims can coexist harmoniously.⁶⁵

D. Muhammad Shamsi Ali's contribution to the Islam Paradigm

Shamsi Ali's capacity to be a contributor to the Islam paradigm has been prepared starting from a study at Muhammadiyah Islamic boarding school Darul-Arqam Makassar and then continuing the study to Islamabad International Islamic University of Pakistan. Shamsi Ali works as a faculty lecturing staff at the Islamic Red Crescent Society Islamic School, teaching at The Islamic Education Foundation, Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). Shamsi Ali also gave a lecture at the Indonesian Consulate General in Jeddah, had excellent linguistic skill in Indonesia, English, Arabic, and Urdu as a provision to be a contributor to the Islamic paradigm internationally. Shamsi Ali in 1997 moved to New York⁶⁶ on a G1 visa (visa for diplomat) for working at Indonesian representative for the United Nations (UN) in New York.⁶⁷ Visa G1 is changed to R1 (religious worker), and three months later he got Green Card so that he can get freedom to speak.⁶⁸

⁶⁴Yaser Ali, "Shariah and Citizenship: How Islamophobia Is Creating a Second-Class Citizenry in America", *Journal California Law Review*, Vol. 100, No. 4. August 2012, 1027-1068.

⁶⁵<http://icmi.or.id/blog/2016/09/shamsi-ali-pimpin-muslim-day-parade-di-new-york> Accessed on January 20, 2017.

⁶⁶The arrival of Muhammad Shamsi Ali to New York because of the help or invitation of the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations (UN) Nugroho Wisnumurti, Muhammad Shamsi Ali was asked to become a priest in New York. The late Achmad D. Padang is one of the Advisory Board at New York's Al-Hikmah Mosque as well as a prominent Indonesian public figure in New York, also an important person who has supported Shamsi Ali to become a mosque imam in New York.

⁶⁷<https://beritagar.id/artikel/berita/mengenal-shamsi-imam-masjid-new-york-asal-indonesia> Accessed January 14, 2017.

⁶⁸Muhammad Shamsi Ali, President of the Nusantara Foundation, "Interview", on December 20, 2016, in New York.

Shamsi Ali's contribution to the Islam world, especially America, is to introduce the biggest Islam occurred in Indonesia. The effort is not easy, of course there are difficulties encountered. The importance to introduce the largest Muslim followers in Indonesia is so crucial because Indonesia is a democratic country. The residents are friendly, courteous and amicable. This will certainly make the population and the American government no longer think about identifying Islam with the Middle East that lacks respect for human rights, tends to conflicts, and extreme. That is why the consciousness of both American and Muslim American governments to unite to guard and not injure democracy must be rights, tend to conflict and extremes. The positive impact of Shamsi Ali's effort to introduce Indonesian Islam in America is quite good, because America no longer just thinks that Islam is identical with the Middle East.⁶⁹ Shamsi Ali as the leader of the Nusantara Foundation also conducted interfaith dialogue with Jewish religious leaders and even wrote a book together to mediate (resolve) the conflict between Islam and Judaism.⁷⁰ Shamsi Ali contributes political thought to the Muslim world that American which are deeply appreciative to democracy; be democratic to all Muslims, including Islam in Iraq and other countries. Although democracy can not be forced but it must be realized to become a necessity for Muslims, especially for those who live in America.⁷¹ Therefore the awareness either from America government, or American Muslims to unite for keeping and are not injured the democracy must be continuously grown.

Shamsi Ali who really loves Indonesia has also contributed to the Islamic paradigm through the provision of financial aid for victims of natural disasters (earthquakes) in Yogyakarta, and Aceh.⁷² Shamsi Ali's contribution to the Islamic paradigm can also be known through lectures or interfaith dialogues, when he travels to Indonesia, usually he

⁶⁹Muhammad Shamsi Ali "Dialog" NET News Television on "Indonesia Morning Show," was published on December 2, 2013 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSw9q4PhPVI> Accessed April 14, 2017.

⁷⁰Muhammad Shamsi Ali "Dialog" NET News Television on "Indonesia Morning Show," was published on December 2, 2013 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSw9q4PhPVI> Accessed April 14, 2017.

⁷¹Patsy Widakuswara, VOA reporter, "Interview," with Shamsi Ali in VOA October 2011 news coverage, was published on October 31, 2011 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zn-9zABomqI> Retrieved on April 20, 2017.

⁷²Muhammad Shamsi Ali, President of the New York Islamic Center, "Interview," December 20, 2016, in New York.

gives lectures at mosques, public lectures at various universities in Indonesia; while in America he also gives lectures at mosques, churches and synagogues.

Shamsi Ali's and Marc Schneier's togetherness either both in Indonesia (Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bali), Singapore or even in America in order to carry out religious activities and peace mission becomes an important contribution to the Islam world. Cooperation of those two religious leaders,⁷³ indicates that issues of hostility and extremism can be overcome, even converted into friendship. Therefore there is a necessity of encouragement or enthusiasm to make it happened. Religious leaders should give example, in Indonesia exemplified by the late KH. Achmad Hasyim Muzadi (General Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Board [PBNU] for the period 1999-2009) and Din Syamsuddin, Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Executive from 2005-2015).⁷⁴

Shamsi Ali often appeared on television in America to give speeches or da'wah of Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* which can be forwarded to Saudi Arabia, Iraq and various other countries. He stated "During the fall of 2012, I delivered a series of lectures at various universities in Indonesia, Qatar and Dubai."⁷⁵ Shamsi Ali encourages to be grateful which is the main emphasis of his da'wah in Qatar, because there is no reason for Muslims to don't give thanks to Allah SWT. Gratitude is not only shown by saying alhamdulillah, but also the willingness to live right (don't corrupt), because it is a worship that pleases Allah SWT. Gratitude towards God must also be declared even under pressure or persecution, because it will strengthen

faith or devotion to Allah SWT.⁷⁶ The principle of life to don't revenge evil with evil and continue to love others from Prophet Muhammad SAW followers should be seen in daily life.

Shamsi Ali contributed toward the Islamic world, especially Europe by providing support and even insistence on Muslims and Jews to unite to oppose European government's policies that are contrary to Islam and Jewish law. Specifically related with circumcision obligations and the slaughtering and cutting animals' right method. He declared that Islam and Judaism can live peacefully, because Islam is not a religion that teaches extremism that causes disharmony in America. Islam is a democratic religion that is in line with the America government's principles, which is why fear of Islam (Islamophobia) should not exist.

In 2016, Shamsi Ali gave a lecture at the Indonesian Embassy in Mexico City in an atmosphere of breaking fast with Indonesian Muslims. There were about 80 people attended the event. Yusra Khan as Indonesia Ambassador to Mexico City attended the event and gave a speech stating "Shamsi Ali's presence is expected to broaden the mutual comprehension of Islamic greatness. The cultivation of Imam Shamsi Ali's knowledge while waiting for the breaking of the fast will be strengthening: *ukhuwah*, unity of citizens, intrafaith fellows and interfaith people."⁷⁷ Shamsi Ali gave a lecture that Islam teaches people to love each other, reconcile with all people, work together with others, friendly and amiable. A *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* appearance is highly emphasized. That is why Muslims must first grasp Islam comprehensively, then display a good lifestyle, and would be received in fellowship to anyone,⁷⁸ thereby changing the Western view or whosoever thinks badly about Islam.

Shamsi Ali focuses himself on discourses, interfaith dialogues, and lectures in various countries with purpose to enlighten about Islam, hoping that every undertaken activity can be disseminated

⁷³Shamsi Ali as Mubalig and Marc Schneier The Jewish Rabbi has built interfaith (Islamic and Jewish) cooperation in the form of productive products. This is a rare collaboration. Shamsi Ali and Marc Schneier even socialize their writing through lectures together, so the two spiritual leaders influence each other and build a good religious life.

⁷⁴Vincent Leebong, host of Kabari News TV, "Interview," with Shamsi Ali in the theme of "Imam Shamsi Ali: Moderate Islam - Kabari TV," published on January 19, 2015 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCQbcSC9LBY> Retrieved on April 20, 2017.

⁷⁵Rabbi Marc Schneier, Imam Muhammad Shamsi Ali. *Sons of Abraham, A Candid Conversation about the Issues That Divide and Unite Jews and Muslims [Anak-anak Abraham: Dialog Terbuka Mengenai Isu-isu yang Memisahkan dan Menyatukann Muslim – Yahudi]*. (Bandung: PT. Mizan Publika, 2014), 291.

⁷⁶Recording by Bahrudin_Malik, Edited by Sugeng Riyadi [Bralink TV]. Copyright 2012 Indonesian Family Forum, in the "Islamic Studies at Black Gold Hall Jinnan Recreation Club, Dukhan - Qatar," was published on April 9, 2013 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsTCFFI9bJk> Accessed April 19 2017.

⁷⁷<http://www.msn.com/id-id/berita/other/imam-masjid-new-york-buka-bersama-med-in-mexico/ar-AAhuLBU> published in 2016, accessed on April 22, 2017.

⁷⁸<http://www.msn.com/id-id/berita/other/imam-masjid-new-york-buka-bersama-med-in-mexico/ar-AAhuLBU> published in 2016, accessed on April 22, 2017.

through existing social technology networks. One impression of Shamsi Ali's preaching in Las Vegas was favored because he began his preaching performance with a smile, the propagation material strengthens the relationship between religious people, did not degrade others, smart, adaptable and accepted by interfaith fellows."⁷⁹

Shamsi Ali continually put on effort to build a good Islam image in America, one of the most prominent is being the coordinator of Time Square New York City, which was also attended by Catholic church leaders, Cardinal Dolan; New York Jews Rabbis Assembly, Rabbi Joseph Potasnik; The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding President, Rabi March Schneier, and The Interfaith Center of New York Director - Rev. Chloe Breyer. The rally's background was mentioned by Shamsi Ali in a television interview on "Watching the Hawks" episode at Times Square New York City themed "Today, I am a Muslim Too." Shamsi Ali's statement is so clear that he is not a person who supports Islamophobia' enhancement. He isn't anti-immigrants who hate minority communities in America, but makes friends with Christian and Rabbinic ministers, so they are encouraged to do something to defend the Islam community, especially for those in New York. The Christian and Jewish leaders who became Shamsi Ali's close friends united to organize a demonstration, an activity showing the sympathy of non-Muslim communities to Muslims with a theme "Today, I am a Muslim Too".⁸⁰ Shamsi Ali stated that Islamic issues are a common issue in America, it's not an Islamophobic issue or Islamic community issue, because Islamic issues disturb others, a loss felt by Americans.

Bill de Blasio as New York Mayor in that rally gave speech that no matter whatever the class, the faith, and wherever a person was born, New York was a city for anyone living in the city. Proudly, Blasio declared himself also a "Muslim." New York is a dwelling place for people from various backgrounds, and from generation to

generation.⁸¹ Blasio expressed his commitment to protect everyone in New York and reminded that everyone has the power in his dream to actualize a democratic America. The presence of Shamsi Ali who stood exactly next to Blasio when he gave the oration gave a message that Shamsi Ali was so enthusiastic to strive for getting Muslims in New York and the rest of the world to have confidence in having protection, being able to live side by side with each other, and have a strong ability to actualize a democratic life wherever located.

In January 2017 there were seven Islam countries (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia) whose citizens were banned to enter America by President Donald Trump.⁸² The Trump ban enacted for the sake of America's safety reason toward the threatening attacks.⁸³ Shamsi Ali with non-Muslim friends showed his attitude as a response

⁸¹<https://www.facebook.com/MotivatorIppho/videos/1453097331399131/> published on February 20, 2017, accessed on April 27, 2017.

⁸²Muhammad Shamsi Ali, "Interviews," on July 12, 2017 at Graduate School Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University at Jakarta affirms that although Donald J. Trump is anti-Islam and racist, it remains optimistic that America implements a very strong democracy and its institutions is solid as well, so that when Trump signed an executive order containing a temporary ban to 7 countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen) into the United States, there was ubiquitous demonstrations against the policy including Muslims in America and colleagues on February 19, 2017 at Time Square New York in a rally with the theme Today I am Muslim Too means that I (everyone who is in the rally) will defend Muslims if disturbed, hurt or treated unfairly. This proves that Islam is not a guest in America, but an integral part of America.

⁸³Trump's attitude should be more focused on dealing with and combating Islamic radical groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Iraq and not every Muslim, because there is an Islamic community *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* that has been rooted in America as taught by Shamsi Ali. Azyumardi Azra listed radical extremist groups. In the Sunnis, for example, there are extremist groups in the form of organizations such as Tanzhim al-Jihad (Tatanan Jihad), Hizb al-Tahrir (Liberation Party), al-Najun min al-Nar (Hellenized People of Hell) al-Jamaah al-Islamiyah, al-Tafkir wa al-Hijrah, Jama'ah al-Muslimin li al-Tafkir - all in Egypt; Harakah al-Mujahidin (Combat Forces of the Mujahideen) - both in Syria; Harakah al-Tawhid (Movement of Tawheed), in Lebanon; al-Jihad al-Islami, Harakah al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyah (Hamas), both in Palestine; al-Jabhah al-Islamiyah lil al-Inqaz (FIS), Algeria; etc. Then, among Shi'ites there are Hizb Allah (Party of Allah), al-Jihad al-Islami (Islamic Jihad), al-Amal al-Islamiyah, in Iraq and Gulf countries; Munazhzhamah al-Tsawrah al-Islamiyah fi Shubh al-Jazirah al-'Arabiyah (Islamic Revolutionary Organization in the Arabian Peninsula), and so on. See, Azyumardi Azra, Konteks Berteologi di Indonesia: Pengalaman Islam [Context of Theology in Indonesia: Islamic Experience], First Edition (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), 95.

⁷⁹ Fatma and Desi, Ladies Halaqa recitation board for Indonesian Muslim community women in Las Vegas, "Interviews," January 21, 2017.

⁸⁰Sean Stone, "Interview," with Shamsi Ali. Title on Youtube "Today I am Muslim Too" w / Imam Shamsi Ali. Published February 27, 2017 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mIsiPESmDo>. Retrieved on April 13, 2017.

towards Trump's decision through a rally that was considered as a manifestation of responsibility to help fellow human beings in order to actualize the life of a plural society. Shamsi Ali's hard work in spreading Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn*, should get the support from every Muslim wherever located. That is why Shamsi Ali gives a warning or encouragement to Muslims either in America or Indonesia to strive showing Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* and not vice versa.⁸⁴

Conclusion

Based on the previous description, it can be concluded as follows. First, Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* in Shamsi Ali's thoughts is described as a grace or welfare for the entire universe including Muslims and non-Muslims; implemented in a pious Muslim lifestyle, peaceful, friendly, moderate, dynamic, progressive, democratic and respectful of differences then be a blessing and make a positive contribution to human welfare and dignity. If it is parsed and arranged in sequence, then the concept of Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* has seven characters. (1) A Muslim who thinks *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* always thinks for the society's contribution or benefit. (2) Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* is seen through good deeds and availability to build cooperation with others both Muslims and non Muslims. (3) Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* is seen through life that respects Human Rights as practiced by Islam in Indonesia (Nusantara). (4) Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* thinks positively or optimistically, always expect God's help at all times and show a godly or Islamic life. (5) Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* contributes to the world through the attitude of justice and prosperous. (6) Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* means teaches others to accept God's guidance, by becoming a Muslim or a convert, but should not be imposed. (7) Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* appreciates pluralism, and opens the space for interfaith dialogues.

Secondly, Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn* is described in the da'wah gait of Shamsi Ali through bi al-Lisan da'wah, bi al-Qalam da'wah, bi al-Hal da'wah by combining various models of da'wah, some of which are also known in Christian mission, such as : spiritual growth preaching model,

educational preaching model, inclusive preaching model, and open preaching model. The last two da'wah models are unknown in the Christian mission literature theory, but are Shamsi Ali's contribution in the development of da'wah theory. Spiritual growth preaching model is a model of propagation to increase or grow spirituality and strengthen the believed faith. Educational preaching model is a da'wah model that is educational, and educate people with various knowledge. Inclusive preaching model is preaching Islam together with Christian and Jewish preachers. Open preaching model means to open Islam as da'wah material, as an open material to be discussed by the object of da'wah, both Muslim and non Muslim.

Third, Shamsi's contribution in Islamic da'wah is concluded on two levels. First, on the conceptual level of Islam *rahmatan li al-'alamīn*, Shamsi Ali has contributed in extending the emphasis on aspects of Islam teaching which is pro-humanity universally. Secondly, at the level of Da'wah's propagation method Shamsi Ali has developed two models of da'wah that are not commonly known in the environment of the perpetrators of Islamic da'wah and Christian missionaries, such as : inclusive preaching model, and open preaching model. The development of these two da'wah preaching models is considered appropriate by Shamsi Ali to be applied in New York society, the United States as a very pluralist society and the Islamic community as a minority community. To the extent of how these two new Islamic propaganda models developed by Shamsi Ali can be applied in other societies required another separate study.

⁸⁴Muhammad Shamsi Ali, "Interview," with NET News Television on "Indonesia Morning Show," was published on December 2, 2013 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSw9q4PhPVI> Accessed on April 14, 2017.

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