

## Islamic *Thaqofah* (Culture) as the Main Fuel for Shaping Successful Social Change

This year's Ramadan comes amidst the pressures of life, crises and the increasingly dense darkness of the world. Muslims are increasingly affected by the destruction of society, due to the tyranny and corruption of those in power who implement the jahiliyah system of capitalism.

The ignorance and stagnation of thoughts also color the people which results in cold shoulder and even rejection of Dawah. This condition often makes da'wah activists tend to be pessimistic in their da'wah. Some of them often act as playing victim, blame others and are depressed by the situation.

This syndrome occurs in da'wah activists when they allow 'reality' to define their struggle. Forgetting that there are **two forces that are essential for da'wah, namely the faith and the power of Islamic *thaqofah* (culture).**

**First, the power of faith** demands that they should not despair of Allah's Mercy, as the word of Allah Ta'ala **﴿قُلْ يُعِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾** **"Say, 'O Prophet, that Allah says,' 'O My servants who have exceeded the limits against their souls! Do not lose hope in Allah's mercy, for Allah certainly forgives all sins.<sup>1</sup> He is indeed the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful."** [Az-Zumar: 53].

This verse contains the message that believers should not be easily pessimistic, especially if they are da'wah activists. Allah's mercy is very broad and belief in Allah's help should be the centre of awareness of activist. This is the power of faith, the most basic power that must always be activated so that the preacher is not easily affected by the heavy and dark realities of life. The society stagnancy should make them keep optimist that they will meet the pearls among the people who are more ready to engage in dawah, even though it is not easy, because they believe that in every difficulty there will always be two eases. As Allah said: **﴿فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا﴾** **"So, surely with hardship comes ease."** [Ash-Sharh: 5].

Faith must always be present in deeds - it must not be lost or absent. The rules of deeds taught by Islam are that an act should be based on a certain thought and purpose. That thought must be accompanied by action. And thought and action should be carried out to achieve a certain purpose, then it must also be based on faith, so that a person continues to walk in an atmosphere of faith continuously. It is not permissible to separate action from thought, or with a certain purpose, or even with faith.

**Second, is the power of Islamic *Thaqafah*.** *Thaqafah* is not ordinary knowledge, it is special knowledge because the reason for the discussion is the unique Islamic creed. The treasures of Islamic *thaqafah* have an extraordinary ability to form a mindset and noble mentality in every human being who seriously studies it. Especially because of the ability of *thaqafah* in honing and forming a person's personality which is called the coaching process (at-Tathqiif). While knowledge only could provide information and insight to someone which is often called the *ta'lim* process.

*Thaqafah* can even function as a problem-solving force, therefore someone who aspires to change society and revitalize the ummah must be able to make their *thaqafah* alive and connected to real problem. So that it does not just become a pile of knowledge as if a walking library. How to make *thaqafah* alive and soulful?

**Method of Studying *Thaqafah*.** Islam outlines methods in studying its *thaqafah*, namely (1) in-depth discussion (talaqqiyan fikriyan), (2) believing in the *thaqafah* as something that must be fought for, (3) and taking it practically to apply it in the arena of life.

It is even said that those who study Islamic *thaqafah* are like people who have passionate potential who kindle fire to burn away corruption and ignite light to illuminate the path of goodness. With the right method, Islamic *thaqafah* will encourage its students -with full longing and enthusiasm- to practice these thoughts. Thus, this *thaqafah* has a very big influence in the soul, because it can move feelings towards the facts that exist in thought.

**Thaqafah Development Cycle.** Thaqafah must be developed and maintained. There are 2 (two) ways to improve thaqafah, namely: (1) *muthala'ah* (studying the main books) in a circle that has a mission to influence a community in a certain location; (2) *muraja'ah*, namely referring to supporting books while also referring to the reality of the real challenges of da'wah

The development of thaqafah is improved to: (1) Solve real problems - not just satisfy intellectual imagination (2) Get as much experience as possible which is assisted by the tradition of discussion, field observation and writing.

For example, da'wah activists who live in urban areas will certainly encounter many challenges from issues of modernity, development, and social fragmentation. So they will focus their studies on the thaqafah of Islamic economics and the Islamic Society system from trusted reference books. While da'wah activists who live on the frontier will encounter challenges from issues of smuggling, defense and security, so they will study how the thaqafah of ribaat and jihad as a solution to border problems. As a result, the development of thaqafah also demands literacy and observation. Reading books and reading reality at the same time. There are many commands from the Quran for us to observe the real problems of the Ummah that occur in the field of da'wah, as the word of Allah Ta'ala: **﴿قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُشْرِكِينَ﴾** ***“Say, ‘O Prophet,’ ‘Travel throughout the land and see what was the end of those ‘destroyed’ before ‘you’—most of them were polytheists.”*** [Ar-Rum: 42].

So it is acceptable for thaqafah to be developed merely for intellectual satisfaction and something hallucinatory outside the reality of the field of da'wah. It is absurd if the bearer of da'wah is busy with a study on how to fast during Ramadan on the planet Mars, for example. Apart from not being able to find the facts in the field of da'wah, it is also completely irrelevant.

### **Changes in Society**

The nature of the development of Islamic da'wah necessitates the existence of a cultural movement, as Islam is a message that must be studied, discussed, and read. Additionally, the essence of this message requires it to be understood, and its adherents must study everything that contributes to improving life. Consequently, many of the conquerors were scholars, readers, and writers. They were accompanied by these individuals with the aim of teaching Islam in the conquered lands.

They will continue to focus on social change efforts, building and shaping their society with Islam. For example, through continuous global opinion on Palestine, at the same time they will continue to try to touch on local issues by correcting Muslim society in their area, for example by correcting the materialistic and consumerist lifestyle rooted in hubbud dunya which is very contrasting with the lifestyle of the struggle of Palestinian Muslims who are already oriented towards jihad. Don't forget to also advocate for sharia-based policies that are relevant to problems in his field of da'wah, as well as continuing to campaign for awareness of the importance of the Khilafah (Caliphate) State.

Therefore, the thaqafah movement has always been synonymous with the rise of civilization and an increase in the level of thinking of the people. In its relevance to changes in society, Islamic thaqafah will be able to make its students have independent thinking in solving problems in the field of da'wah.

This movement will continue to struggle for ideas from Islamic thaqafah in every battle of ideas and events that befall the people. They will also stand before the oppressive policies of the rulers, advocating Islamic sharia as the Solution to life. As a result, Islamic thought is always alive, superior, animated and burns away damage and illuminates the path of life. As the Prophet (saw) said: **«الإسلام يعطو ولا يعطى عليه»** ***“Islam is high and there is nothing that matches it.”*** (Narrated by Ad-Daru Quthni and Al-Baihaqi).

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by**

**Dr. Fika Komara**

**Member of Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir**