

New Religious Movements and Islam

Lia Eden's and Dunuk Luxfiati's Criticism of Islam

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*To Professor Susanne Enderwitz,
whose wisdom becomes a torch to my journey ...*

Abstract In Indonesia, leaders of so-called “New Religious Movements” (NRM) pose challenges to and criticize Islamic tradition and theology. Indonesia’s dynamic majority Muslim country is an interesting case to study, in which criticism of Islam is practiced. This article discusses an NRM called the “Eden group”, founded by Lia Eden, who is said to have received divine messages from the Archangel Gabriel. This chapter describes a book by Lia’s devotee, Dunuk Luxfiati. The book contains criticism of Islam and the way the Eden group broke some Islamic taboos and norms.

Keywords Indonesia, New Religious Movements, Pluralism

Introduction

Criticism of Islamic theology in Muslim societies remains a serious challenge in today’s globalizing world. Some Muslim communities, gaining support of their governments, do not tolerate criticism leveled against the Qur’an, the Prophet Muhammad, or any other sacred symbols. There have been many recent cases of the persecution of, or mass protest against, any criticism of Islam: Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses*, writer Ayan Hirsi Ali, Pope Benedict XVI’s speech in Regensburg (Germany),

Dutchman Geert Wilder's movie, or Danish cartoons drawing the Prophet Muhammad.¹ Muslim communities are sensitive to criticism of their religion and sacred symbols, so much so that Islam seems to be the only religion in the world that cannot be criticized. In today's online world, where all countries and citizens are more connected, Muslims living in different countries are also more and more connected. In the cases above, Muslims showed solidarity and acted as a single religious community (*ummah*). Especially for Muslims in the Middle East, from Egypt to Iran, criticism of Islam means attacking the religion. They reacted to criticism with mass protests and attacks on the embassies of Western countries. They also boycotted Western products. As a result, tension between East and West rose.² Given this, it seems that the Islamic world cannot progress and that democratization has failed in the Middle East. The level of education is low in most Muslim countries and persecution against minorities is common in many Muslim countries.³ However, Indonesia, where NRMs (New Religious Movement) flourish, is perhaps exceptional. Although orthodoxy and conservatism, as in other Muslim countries, is on the rise, there is a dynamic development. In Indonesia, the NRM leaders pose challenges to and criticize Islamic tradition and theology. Even though some leaders are arrested, tried in courts, and jailed, new NRMs and prophets continue to emerge in the archipelagic nation. Some were already arrested and jailed and others will soon follow. Thus, Indonesia's dynamic majority Muslim country is an interesting case to study, in which criticism of Islam is possible. This article discusses an NRM called the Eden group, founded by the prophetess Lia Eden, who claims to have received divine messages from the Archangel Gabriel. In her divine revelation she is critical of Islam. This chapter describes a book by Lia's devotee, Dunuk Luxfiati. The book contains criticism of Islam and describes the way the Eden group broke some Islamic taboos and norms.

Despite being known as a majority Muslim country, Indonesia's history has a dynamic and complex development of religiosity due to its plural local cultures and a unique trajectory of the history of the nation, unlike other Muslim nations. Many groups question the legitimacy of the hegemony of Islam in the country. Many NRMs have emerged and challenged the attempt to use force to maintain Islamic orthodoxy under

1 Many studies show Muslim reaction and solidarity coming across the world when they feel that Islam is under attack, see Makin 2009, 2015, 2017c.

2 See Makin 2015.

3 See, for instance, Choksy 2012, 271–299; Pink 2003, 409–434; Matthiesen 2010, 179–197; Erol 2015, 59–80; Makin 2017a.

the banner of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), supported by conservative and radical groups. Salamullah or Eden group, founded by Lia Eden, is one of the NRMs which threatens the establishment of Islamic orthodoxy.⁴ This article focuses on the development of the group under the leadership of Lia Eden and her prominent devotee Dunuk Luxfiati, who wrote a book *Hukuman Musykil ala Malaikat Jibril* (“Impossible punishments from the Archangel Gabriel”). This paper is divided into the following sections: the diverse religious traditions of Indonesia; challenges to Islam; a brief biography of Lia Eden; Dunuk Luxfiati and her book. The article concludes with a discussion of Dunuk’s work and the way the book breaks some Islamic taboos and challenges Islamic claims to truth.

Indonesian faith and spirituality

The Indonesian government during the New Order (1965–1997) was under the administration of Suharto, who officially acknowledged five religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s administration (2004–2014) added one more spiritual tradition, Confucianism, to the list of the official religions. However, Islam is by far the religion of the majority. In almost all major islands, including Sumatera, Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, Islam is the dominant faith of the population. As it did in the nation’s social, educational, and political affairs, for the sake of security and order, the New Order homogenized matters of faith and religion. The government simplified the plural and diverse faith into five official religions. However, Indonesia is an archipelagic country consisting of at least 18,307 islands and at least 300 distinct languages. Religious traditions in the country are much more diverse and plural.

The plurality and diversity of the nation’s spirituality is much more complex than the government and Indonesian intellectuals have so far acknowledged.⁵ In 1953, the Ministry of Religious Affairs officially defined religion in a way that was biased toward Islam. The Ministry set up three criteria for a religion: 1. A prophet was sent by God to spread the divine message to human beings; 2. A scripture contains the message as a guide to the believers; and 3. A religion must be universally embraced by world

4 See Aminuddin 1999.

5 See, e.g., Kersten 2015; Barton 1999; Munawar-Rachman 2010.

citizens.⁶ The three criteria reflect Islamic theology, but fail to encompass other Indonesian religious traditions. In fact, there are hundreds more spiritual practices and faiths which cannot be acknowledged officially by the state due to their failure to meet the three criteria.

The first criterion fails to encompass non-Semitic tradition and other hundreds of local religions which have no prophet. Hinduism, for example, has no prophet and no particular founder. Nor do many other local indigenous traditions, such as Merapu, Kaharingan, and Masade.

The second criterion cannot be accepted in light of Indonesia's indigenous religious tradition. For example, Kaharingan in Kalimantan, like many other local religious traditions in the archipelago, has no scripture; all mantras and prayers are transferred orally from one generation to the next without written record.⁷

The third criterion also fails to cover many of Indonesia's religious traditions. Many local practices, such as Sumarah Purbo in Yogyakarta, remain local with no followers from other countries. At first, all religions are societal responses to the natural and cultural environment, which later become official traditions practiced by the community. As some islands of Indonesia are isolated from other islands, only local people preserve local practices. Today, archipelagic Indonesia is linked with online media and airplanes flying across the islands. However, it is not hard to imagine that prior to Dutch colonialism, or during the era of colonialism, the local populations on many isolated islands embraced local faiths or spiritual traditions with no significant influence from other islands. The Merapu people in East Nusa Tenggara, for instance, practiced unique rituals and traditions not found elsewhere in other neighboring islands in Flores. On the island of Sangihe, about six hours by boat from Manado, the local population embraced Masade or the Islam Tua tradition. Among its unique rituals is the performance of rituals similar to Islamic Friday prayers, but on Sunday. Like Friday prayer, the ritual consists of prayers and a sermon. Masade's place of worship has some elements of both mosque and church. The Parmalim people living around lake Toba of Sumatera, embrace the Batak traditions of Malim. On Saturday they have a sermon in the local Batak language, but some prayers and mantras are taken from the Old Testament.⁸

6 Picard 2011.

7 In October 2018, I visited the religious center of Kaharingan in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan.

8 In 2015 I went to Medan and Manado to hold interfaith workshops, in which I met some followers of indigenous religions in both cities, such as Parmalim, Islam Tua, Ugamu Bangsa Batak. I also attended a Saturday sermon of Parmalim in Batak.

Besides its indigenous traditions, Indonesia is a place where global religions, such as Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism, come and mix with local cultures. The practices of Islam in Indonesia are different from Islam in the Middle East. Likewise, Christianity in Indonesia makes it different from its counterparts in Europe or South America. Hinduism in Bali is different from Hinduism in India.⁹ Global religions in the country became unique as they incorporated local traditions, customs, and cultures.¹⁰ However, the focus of this chapter is limited to the Eden group's criticism of Islam, and particularly the way the group breaks some Islamic taboos.

Challenges to Islam

The growth of Islamization in Indonesia has been rapid, particularly after 1965. This year was critical in the country's post-colonial history, when Sukarno's administration was replaced by Suharto's ascendance to power.¹¹ The political and social change was marked by the 30 September tragedy, when Communist groups allegedly planned a failed coup. The army under the leadership of Suharto wiped out all elements of the coup and of Communism in the country. Communism, added with Islamic sentiment, becomes a common enemy tactically employed by Suharto to extinguish all opposition. Irreligious, or simply un-Islamic, attitudes, associated with atheism and communism, became impossible for Indonesians. After the Reform era, beginning with Suharto's fall from power in 1997, Communism remained an effective weapon with which to discredit political rivals. The famous 212 mass demonstration against governor Basuki Cahya Purnama (Ahok) is one example. In 2017, Ahok was defeated in Jakarta's gubernatorial election and charged with blasphemy and jailed¹². Opponents of Ahok accused many of Ahok's sympathizers of being communists and therefore a dangerous political enemy who would threaten religious Indonesians. In short, after Suharto's fall, Islam remains, if not increasingly, an effective force in political life.

During Suharto's thirty-year reign, two vital pillars—ABRI (Indonesian army) and Islamic sentiment—supported the New Order's political stability. The first pillar was manifested in the dual functions (*dwi-fungsi*) of the army,

9 McDaniel 2010.

10 Makin 2016c.

11 Hunter 2007; Roosa 2006.

12 Fenton 2016.

including social as well as security functions.¹³ High officials in the Army filled many important political positions. Anyone who opposed the government was simply accused of being anti-Islamic and anti-patriotic. The combination worked. Islamization penetrated all elements of Indonesian society. It is true that behind the scene, Suharto was careful to prevent religion and faith from interfering in politics. But Islamization was also advantageous for him, particularly nearing the end of his rule. Before stepping down, he encouraged factions among Muslims. Islamic orthodoxy and radicalism grew rapidly. Islamic sentiment is now an effective tool for manipulating voters in Indonesia's political arena. Islamization and radicalism are often combined with the process of homogenizing Islam.¹⁴ Indonesian Islam has been marked with diversity, due to the mixture of local traditions with Islam. The religion has featured diverse and unique religious practices throughout the archipelago. Since Suharto's reign, the religious and political landscape in the country has changed.

The growth of orthodoxy during the Reform era aimed to homogenize Muslims by calling upon them to adhere to a strict form of Islam, as do their counterparts in the Middle East. The call to return to Islamic norms, based on the Quran and Sunnah, has been louder during the last two decades in Indonesia. Many conservative groups, such as FPI (Islamic Front Defenders), FUI (Islamic Community Forum), and HTI (Indonesian Islamic Liberation Party) have emerged in public. They held demonstrations demanding stricter norms of Islam and by intimidating people whom they accuse of committing un-Islamic practices. Since the administration of SBY, these radicals have become influential in the political process. During Jokowi's administration, they affiliated with opposition parties led by Prabowo Subianto, PKS (Prosperous Justice Party), PAN (National Trustee Party), and others. Ironically, during the Reform period, Indonesian politics went through a process of democratization and decentralization with direct local elections. At the same time, Islamism was getting stronger. Islamic sentiment was employed by Islamist politicians to attract voters. Sharia bylaws emerged in many districts and provinces. The province of Aceh is among the leading examples, where strict sharia laws are applied,¹⁵ including canning to punish adultery and alcohol consumption. According to the local sharia law in the province, women cannot stay outside at night and the veil (*jilbab*) is obligatory. Acehnese politicians inspire politicians in other provinces to employ sharia sentiment to attract voters.¹⁶

13 See Mietzner 1999.

14 Makin 2009; Makin 2017c; Makin 2015.

15 Makin 2016, 1–36.

16 Ansor 2014, 59–83; Bustamam-Ahmad 2007, 135–180; Danial 2012, 71–92.

However, Islamization does not come without opposition and challenges. Since the colonial period and soon afterwards, opposition to alien powers—such as Dutch colonialism, Christianization, and Islamization—have been the subject of writings and indigenous movements. During the Colonial period, many books such as *Serat Gantoloco* voiced a nostalgic yearning for a return to pre-Islamic days, when the Hindu-Buddhist traditions dominated Indonesia, particularly on Java. The *Serat* also criticizes the Javanese Muslims for neglecting their own traditions and choosing the new religion of Islam. Although the architecture of many traditional mosques, and the practices of Islam, reflected the pre-Islamic Hindu-Buddhist influences, *santri* (a term to describe Islamic group) is often criticized for embracing Arabization.¹⁷ The Second World War ended colonial rule, Japan surrendered to the Allies, and Indonesia declared its independence. The Dutch then returned to Indonesia to reclaim their former colony. However, Indonesians fought to defend their independence. Some indigenous prophets established religious groups that attracted thousands of followers. Their groups can be categorized as NRM. Many NRMs offer a spirituality different from that of the mainstream global religions—such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism. These NRMs are known as *aliran kebatinan* (mystical sects). From the New Order to the Reform period, the members of these *alirans* were discriminated against. The followers of *alirans* had to choose one of the five religions officially acknowledged by the government of Indonesia. In their ID they put one of the six religions, although they did not believe in any of them. Finally, in 2006, they were allowed to leave the religion section in the ID card blank. In 2007 they were also allowed to hold their birth, wedding, and death rituals according to their own beliefs.¹⁸ In 2017, the Constitutional Court of Indonesia pronounced a law that the government of Indonesia should acknowledge the basic rights of the followers of *aliran* and treat them as equals in social and economic life, and with access to education.

Nonetheless, the prophets and NRMs voiced criticism of the domination of Islam. Some recalled older spirituality in the country. Lia Eden is one of the prophets who established the NRMs who voiced criticism of Islam, particularly her critical stance toward Muslims who supported the Ulama Council. During the Reform period, Jakarta alone produced at least eight claimants to prophethood. The political crisis during the era triggered social and economic crises. This situation became a pretext for the emergence of

17 Ricklefs 2007; Achmad 2011; Hardiyanto 2006; Kresna and Parjiati 2012.

18 Makin 2016.

new prophets across the archipelago, who claimed to have received divine messages and had a mission to salvage Indonesians from crisis.

What is more, after 9/11, which led to the global 'war on terror,' criticism of Islam as a religion that gives birth to radicalism and extremism emerged around the world. Indonesia, where the majority population embraced Islam, was no exception. The country also became a target of several extremist actions, including bombings in Bali, Jakarta, and other places. Threats to churches, mosques of minority Muslims like Ahmadiyah, and other places of worship created headlines in the Indonesian media. Indonesia, formerly known for its practices of syncretism, was labeled as intolerant of religious differences. Given this, many prophets who founded NRMs in the country also voiced this critical stance toward Islam. In many divine revelations from Gabriel, Lia Eden also criticized Islamic theology, orthodoxy, conservatism and Muslims.

Lia Eden

Lia was born in 1947 in Surabaya and did not finish High School. However, she later became a successful artist who arranged dried flowers.¹⁹ In the 1990s she often appeared on Indonesian TV. Her flower arrangements were sent to many exhibitions abroad. She also developed close connections with Suharto's limited circle. She knows Tutut (Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana), Suharto's daughter and many other high officials, such as Singgih, an attorney general during the New Order. Lia married Aminuddin Day, a member of the air force who chose to become a lecturer at the University of Indonesia. However, due to her spiritual devotion to the Archangel Gabriel, she divorced him.²⁰

According to the prophetic signs she received, she felt that a spiritual being called Habib al-Huda spoke to her. She later believed this was the Archangel Gabriel. Under Gabriel's guidance, she composed poems and books, and performed rituals.²¹ She also found herself having the ability to heal patients suffering from many illnesses. She then founded an Islamic sect called Salamullah, holding meetings regularly in her house, Jalan Mahoni in Senen, Jakarta. Her patients came to the house with physical and spiritual complain. Many high officials and artists visited the house and became her clients. They then developed into a more closed group with a decreasing

19 Aminuddin 1991.

20 Makin 2010, 187–206; Makin 2016.

21 Aminuddin 1998a; Aminuddin 1998b.

number of members. In 2000, her spirituality increased, she claimed that she became the Mahdi, Messiah, and God's messenger. Her status among her followers grew as she was more determined to become a spiritual leader. She declared that she married Gabriel after she divorced her husband. The group was later called Eden, and she took a new name Lia Eden.

Some Indonesian Muslim traditions feature a patriarchal tendency. In social and ritual life, males dominate the more important roles. For instance, imams in mosques, like priests in Catholicism, are commonly males, who preach and lead prayers. Males also perform the calls for prayers. In communal prayers (*jamaah*), females stand on the left side or in the back rows. However, Indonesian traditions also include a few matrilineal systems such as in Klaten, Central Java and Minangkabau in Sumatera.²² In both societies, the right to inheritance is given to females not males. In Klaten, females serve as the breadwinners in families. In Minangkabau society, the bloodline is based on females. However, most of the ethnic societies in the archipelago are dominated by patrilineal society. During the Reform era, these patriarchal tendency increased along with the wave of orthodoxy and conservatism. When Islamic orthodoxy is combined with a wave of radicalism and conservatism, maleness is shown in public. The leaders of radical and conservative organizations, such as the FPI exercised aggressive male power and often used violence. Many conservative groups, like *salafi* and *tarbiyah* (Islamist circle), introduced tighter headscarves for women. They also promoted polygamy in public. After the Reform period, the male chauvinism promoted by conservative and radical Muslim groups replaced the balanced gender perspective offered by progressive and liberal groups.

It is interesting that Salamullah /Eden emerged as a critique of Islamic orthodoxy, conservatism, and radicalism. From the beginning, the group Salamullah was established by a woman, and supported by many important women in leadership and management. Many other women besides Lia played vital roles in the groups. One of the early devotees of Eden was Murdiningsih, a writer and the founder of *Asri* magazine, which is focused on home decoration and gardens. She became prominent in the group when her daughter Lala and son Andito and their families joined. However, eventually all the family members left the group. Lala served by playing piano and singing in the group's sermons. Lia Eden led all sermons and male and females members were led under her guidance. All members obeyed her commands, based on messages from the Archangel Gabriel. Lia has delivered divine messages every day since 2000. Her devotees who live with her

22 Benda-Beckmann 1984.

in the Eden house, Jalan Mahoni Jakarta, wrote the messages and compiled them into books. Members are asked to disseminate the books and letters to government officials, schools, media, journalists, and foreign ambassadors in Jakarta. The devotees are also commanded to come to sacred places to pray and challenge the spirits believed to be the guardians of the places. Before claiming prophethood, Lia Eden was a strict modernist Muslim who believed in *tawhid* (oneness of God) and fought *shirk* (associating God with others' power). Thus, early in her career of spirituality, she went to beaches and sacred tombs to fight *shirk* practices. However, later she changed and accommodated local beliefs and traditions into her teachings.

In 2012, when I visited the Eden house in Jalan Mahoni, I met around twenty devotees who lived in the house. They all served her Majesty Queen Lia Eden. She had just been released from prison. She had previously been brought to court and charged with breaking the 1965 blasphemy law. She was jailed for two and a half years. During her absence from the Eden house, a devotee female Marike Sukayanti led many prayers.

I also met two important male leaders of the Eden group: Abdul Rachman and Arif Rosyad. Before joining the group, Rachman had been a student of philosophy at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Jakarta. He met Lia Eden when he taught the prophetess Arabic and became her loyal disciple. Rachman was jailed with Lia and was also charged with committing blasphemy against Islam.²³ According to Gabriel's divine revelation, Rachman is the Mahdi and the reincarnation of the Prophet Muhammad. In 2018, he was expelled from the Eden house for a month. He then returned to the group. According to the Eden rule, those who commit sins should be expelled from the house as a punishment. The second important leader was Arif Rosyad, a student of the Qur'an at the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic Institute in Yogyakarta. During my visit to the Eden house, he told me about why he joined the group and that he had met his wife there. The next section will pay particular attention to Dunuk Luxfiati, a female devotee and her book.

Dunuk and her book

In the Eden hierarchy, Lia is at the top. She is the prophetess, to whom Gabriel gave divine messages. She wore the title of her Majesty Queen Lia Eden (*Baginda Yang Mulia*), and the house in Jalan Mahoni is called the

23 Rachman 2006.

Eden Kingdom. The house is also believed to be a paradise on earth, where all devotees serve Gabriel and God. As the prophetess, Gabriel's mouthpiece, and Queen, Lia holds absolute power. All the devotees living with her in the Eden house obey her. She can punish anyone who makes mistakes or commits sins. Usually, those who make mistakes confess before her and other devotees and are then burnt with alcohol. The Queen rules the kingdom, often sitting on a white throne and holding a decorated staff during sermons and other rituals. The devotees sit on the floor and are prepared to listen to the Queen who delivers Gabriel's messages in a heavy baritone voice. Arif Rosyad and Andito were the secretaries who recorded all Lia's sayings. Before leaving the group in 2011, Lala sang divine songs.²⁴ However, as the devotees of the Eden come and go, the tasks of secretary and singer also come and go. Andito left the group in 2014.²⁵

The second rank in the Eden kingdom is held by Rachman, the Messiah (Mahdi) and reincarnation of the Prophet Muhammad, whose duty it is to lead and guide Indonesian Muslims to enlightenment. The third rank belonged to Dunuk Luxfiati, before she passed away in 2016 from cancer.²⁶ She had wanted to pursue further study for a Master's degree in the Netherlands, but instead she joined the group and gave up her dream. Her main task in the Eden house was to welcome guests. She accompanied me and answered all my questions during most of my visits. Having been a member from its early years, she told me a lot about Eden/Salamullah. She joined the group in late the 1990s with her husband Danarto, a writer and poet. When her husband decided to leave the group, Dunuk divorced Danarto who then remarried someone outside the Eden group. Danarto died in 2018. Dunuk's family belongs to the second largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah. Her father contributed to the establishment of the Muhammadiyah hospital in Yogyakarta. Her brother is a medical doctor in the hospital.

Dunuk was passionate and enthusiastic when telling me about Lia's spiritual miracles and the history of the group. She taught me some important

24 Andito went to the Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) but did not finish his studies, instead he joined the Eden group, where his mother and sister had already been members. Andito played an important role in the group, such as recording Lia Eden's sayings. In a Jakarta court trial in 2009, Andito was charged with blasphemy against Islam under the 1965 law and sentenced to jail for two years. But Andito left the Eden in 2014. His sister Lala had left the group earlier in 2011. She used to sing songs in many Eden rituals.

25 Makin 2017b, 104.

26 Makin 2016, 43.

teachings of Eden and told stories of people joining and leaving the group. Her book, *Hukuman Musykil ala Malaikat Jibril* ("Impossible punishments from the Archangel Gabriel"), describes punishments imposed upon the Eden devotees who did not do what they were supposed to. She gives detailed accounts. The book describes: the development of the Eden group, its devotees and other members, their roles, and how Queen Lia treated them based on Gabriel's revelations. Lia acts as Gabriel most of the time, whom all Eden devotees obey. The book also contains criticism of Islam; the veil is no longer obligatory for Eden members; sharia is eventually abandoned; having dogs is allowed in the Eden house; violence in the name of Islam is condemned. These requirements are different from the demands of many Muslim organizations, including NU (Nahdlatul Ulama), the first and largest group in the country, and Muhammadiyah.

The Eden group eventually declared they were leaving Islam and the members perform rituals different from Islamic teachings. This story, for example, is told in Dunuk's book. Fadli, a member of the group, noticed that Queen Lia did not practice daily prayers any longer, whereas other members still did. Following the prophetess' footsteps, Fadli did not go to Friday prayers, either. When the Queen saw this she asked Fadli to perform the prayers. However, the command was only enforced for one week. After that, all members of the Eden group abandoned all Islamic prayers.²⁷

Under the guidance of Gabriel, one of the rituals performed is purification, when parts of the bodies of those who confess sins are burnt. This ritual is often performed in the Eden house to welcome new members and can be repeated at any time. The members who confessed to sins are asked to burn the part of their body believed to be responsible for the sin be it mouth, face, hand, feet, or anything else. One of the members, Alfita, admitted that she had love affairs with her office worker. Gabriel ordered her to burn her hand and face.²⁸ In the sermon, the confessions were stated loudly before the Queen and the rest of the members. Repentance has to be both stated and written. On behalf of Gabriel, the Queen asks the sinners to use alcohol. Syaefuddin Simon, a member of Eden, also confessed to the sin of committing adultery. The Queen asked him to burn his penis. But he refused to do it.

In Islam, pigs and dogs are considered unclean (*najs*). These animals cannot become house pets. Many Indonesian Muslims avoid touching these

27 Luxfiati 2007, 188–189.

28 Luxfiati 2007, 182.

animals. When they do, they have to wash themselves seven times with water and soap. The Eden broke this taboo. The group has dogs in Jalan Mahoni and in Coblóng (a place in hills of Bogor where the Eden group performed seclusion rituals). Ietje Ridwan, a member of the Eden, had the duty of taking care of two dogs in her house. The Mahoni house is too small to have too many dogs. Ietje was not used to having dog, because she was Muslim. For her, the dog was unclean and touching the animal is prohibited. She also complained, because she could not live with the animal's barking. Hearing this, the Queen replaced the two dogs with two horses. The horses made more trouble with their demands for food and their production of waste. When Ietje complained again, the Queen threatened to make her take care of pigs. Ietje submitted to Gabriel's order and accepted that a dog is a good pet and clean to touch.²⁹

Aminuddin, the Queen's former husband, also believed in her prophethood, although she divorced him to marry Gabriel. He was loyal to Gabriel's divine revelations. The Queen asked Aminuddin to take care of two dogs. Like Ietje, he complained, as the two dogs chewed sandals and shoes and were noisy. Luckily, his neighbor asked for one of the dogs. He then took care of only one dog. He fed it well and it grew quickly. But the Queen knew that he had given one dog away and she was not happy. She then threatened to replace the dog with a pig. Aminuddin chose the dog instead. From this we see clearly that at the Eden both dogs and pigs are clean. Having them as pets was allowed.³⁰

Lia Eden taught the Eden devotees about the reincarnation of spirits. According to her, the spirits of the deceased are transferred to the living. Lia said that some spirits of famous people, such as some kings of Majapahit, the Indonesian presidents Suharto and Sukarno, Joan of Arc, and Kartini (an Indonesian heroine), were transferred to her disciples in Eden house. Lia had the spirits of the Virgin Mary, Kunti (a heroine in the Indian epic Mahabharata), Kartini, and Joan of Arc, among others. The spirit of Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, was transferred to her disciple Yanthi Sulistiono, who suffered from cancer. According to Lia, Yanthi's illness is a punishment for the sins committed by Cleopatra in the past, as the queen committed adultery. However, Lia also changed her mind on this, stating that Cleopatra's spirit also belonged to Ivuk Umar, another devotee of Eden. On the other hand, Ivuk's husband, Umar Iskandar, had the spirit of Julius Cesar.³¹ Dunuk had the spirit of Kwan Im, a Chinese

29 Luxfiati 2007, 205–207.

30 Luxfiati 2007, 209–209.

31 Luxfiati 2007, 220–223.

goddess of fortune. Dunuk was later claimed to have married the angel Michael.

Whereas Dunuk was asked to take off her veil and cut her hair short, Marike Sukayanti chose to shave her head completely.³² Marike is an Eden devotee who led some prayers and other rituals when the Queen was in prison. She was later expelled from the Eden. The story of Dunuk and Marike is part of Eden criticism of Islam, when cloth, particularly the veil, becomes a symbol of public piety in Indonesia. Lia Eden taught her devotees to take off the veil and eventually she told all males and females to shave their hair. Lia also asked her followers to be as humble and modest as possible by wearing only plain white clothes.

In the beginning, shaving their heads was a form of punishment. For example, Andito, Rachman and Dunuk were asked to deliver a letter to a private TV station by giving the letter directly to the director of the station. However, as the director was absent they gave it to a receptionist instead. The receptionist promised to deliver the letter to the director later. For Lia, the three had failed to do their duty, because they did not do exactly what Lia commanded. They were punished by shaving their hair.³³ Another story is about when the same punishment was imposed upon Lala and Murdi, who participated in the general election. Lia prohibited all devotees from voting in national elections. Lia stressed that all the Eden devotees stay 'neutral' in politics. As a punishment, Lia commanded Lala and Murdi to shave their heads.³⁴

As with praying five times a day, fasting for a month in Ramadan is obligatory for Muslims. The Eden group, however, should not fast, according to Gabriel's revelation. Lia fasted in her own way. During the Queen's days in prison, Gabriel spoke to her and ordered her followers to fast by eating once in twenty-four hours for seven days. The story goes that when the Eden devotees, Dunuk, Fadly, Rachman, Tri, Aar, Lala, Yanthi, Nur, Cici, and Yusuf Amin visited the Queen in the prison, Gabriel ordered Lia to fast for seven days. During the seventh day, the Queen made a mistake when she shared fruit among the inmates, but did not give them equal portions. According to the Queen, God appointed her to be a just queen, but she failed to perform this simple act justly. As a punishment, God added one more twenty-four hours of fasting.³⁵

32 Luxfiati 2007, 145–146.

33 Luxfiati 2007, 160–161.

34 Luxfiati 2007, 183.

35 Luxfiati 2007, 272–275.

Conclusion

The emergence of NRMs in Indonesian Islam provides dynamic to the Muslim world and Islamic theology because their leaders dare to criticize Islam from within. When outsiders—such as Danish cartoonists depicting the Prophet Muhammad, or Geert Wilders’ movie—criticize the Islamic sacred symbols, negative reactions came from across the Muslim world. Muslims feel that their religion is under attack. Islam needs criticism from within Muslim society. No matter how severely some Indonesian Muslim groups, with the support of the government, criticize Indonesian indigenous prophets who establish NRMs, arresting and jailing them does not stop them from emerging and flourishing. Dunuk Luxfiati’s book offers public criticism of Islam and an alternative spirituality. Muslim moderate organizations in Indonesia, such as NU or Muhammadiyah, do not dare to adopt such a critical attitude. Despite guarding the moderation of Islam in the country, the two Muslim groups remain apologetic and defensive of their religion. On the other hand, these NRM leaders are bold and clear when publicly criticizing Islam. Indonesia is perhaps the only Muslim country in the world where plain criticism of Islam is possible. There is a dynamic in Indonesian Muslim communities.

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