

Building Resilience of the Ummah in the Face of Affliction

News:

The holy month of Ramadan in 2020 is fast approaching, and Indonesia's Vice President, Ma'ruf Amin, urged people to maintain stamina and endurance while fasting in the midst of the Pandemic Coronavirus (COVID-19). Ma'ruf said that all Indonesian people are to remain vigilant by not traveling and avoiding crowds. He also called people to use the moment of Ramadan to help each other, including helping those who are directly impacted by COVID-19.

Comment:

The month of Ramadan is the springtime of the believers. It is like a noble guest to be joyfully welcomed by those who are longing for it. Indeed, this Ramadan is like no other Ramadan we have experienced before, because it is coming in the shadow of the Pandemic Coronavirus (COVID-19). But for Muslims, the essence of Ramadan remains the same; it is to increase *taqwa*. Allah (swt) says: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ **“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.”** [TMQ. Al Baqara: 183]

What Ma'ruf Amin conveyed as a Muslim leader is a call for simply physical endurance for the Ummah in Indonesia facing Ramadan during crisis. However, a leader's call should also include intrinsic dimension, which are mental and spiritual endurance for people to increase their *taqwa* in this holy month.

Islam teaches us that besides physical strength, there are also mental and spiritual (*ruhiyah*) strength. These two forces are the most powerful fuels for this Ummah who have gone through crisis one after another. For the believers, trials and ordeals are an opportunity to gain greater rewards. It is such as any physical and financial limitations will certainly make it more difficult for one to do fasting in Ramadan, but that is the test of faith for the believer.

It cannot be denied, the resilience of the Muslim Ummah today – when there is no *junnah* (shield) to protect them – is only fueled by mental and spiritual forces based on Islamic political thought. The noble political thought of Islam teaches us about a great position that must be taken up by Muslims; that is the role of شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ or “the Witnesses to Humankind” (for His Deen), which is to challenge and expose the Kufur as well as present Islam as a Way of Life.

As Muslims, we must remember that our duty is not only to secure and keep our rights in society in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak. Our true duty is to carry and spread the message of Islam to those around us, especially when the capitalist states

are nowhere in securing the fulfillment of basic needs of their people in the midst of this pandemic crisis.

Our role in the midst of financial hardship and physical limitations is to carry out the "**mobilization of thought and spirituality**" among the people. According to Dr. Hamdan Fahmi, this mobilization means **to elevate the level of Ummah in terms of thought and spirituality with Islam, its beliefs and laws, to be strong facing any disasters and challenges; to be brave dealing with any danger without fear of death; to be able to endure hunger and heat without turning to the pleasures of life in the world; even remain focused on seeking the pleasure of his Rabb, remain patient, and do not stop hoping, in dealing with all these obstacles.**

This means that despite the physical distancing, we have to maintain high connectivity with any poor relatives, and the vulnerable, also marginalized people. The centrality of the activity of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil) among the community must be maintained, because this role will actually contributing to the building of community and society resilience; which is in stark contrast to today's relatively individualist secular society. This will strengthen the Islamic *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) between communities, with the global solidarity of the Ummah of Muhammad (saw).

By optimizing the role as a *Shuhada 'alaa an-Naas*, it means that Muslims are ready to welcome the new chapter of world civilization lies ahead. Any stance and decision taken by Muslims at this critical time will be crucial. Thus, be prepared for the world future that is in the hands of Islam, and depend only to Allah (swt) alone! Allah (swt) says: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِأَلْعُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا﴾ **"Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent."** [TMQ. At Talaq: 3]

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