

KOMUNIKASI/COMMUNICATION

AN ISLAMIC APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE ARQAM WAY - A Note on Khoo Khay Jin's Review

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I am grateful to Khoo Khay Jin for reviewing and commenting on my book, *An Islamic Approach to Rural Development: The Arqam Way* (Kajian Malaysia, Vol. X, No. 2, December 1992, pp. 91-97). He has made an invaluable appraisal of the book and raised many interesting questions. I would like to just make three clarifications arising from his review.

Firstly, Khoo has rightly observed that there are some statistical confusions in Tables 4.4 and 4.7. These have occurred absolutely due to printing errors rather than to statistical mistake: the title of Table 4.4 is actually the title of Table 4.7 and vice-versa. If these are corrected, the statistics in all the Tables mentioned would tally with each other.

Secondly, the authentic, indigenous Malay values and way of life Darul Arqam endeavours to reconstruct are actually the values and way of life based on Malay religion, Islam rather than on Malay race. As Islam is a multi-ethnic religion, so is Darul Arqam: a multi-ethnic movement. The Sheikhul-Arqaam Imam Ashaari Muhammad At-Tamimi, apart from having followers and sympathizers amongst the Malays, Chinese and Indians in Malaysia, has considerable numbers of followers and sympathizers amongst the Indonesian races in Indonesia, Thais in Thailand, Moros and other Filipino races in the Philippines, Chinese in China, Arabs in the Middle East, Uzbeks and Tajiks in Central Asia, English in Britain and Australia, and French and Germans in Europe.

Thirdly, I must apologize to Khoo and probably also to other readers for tantalizing them with hanging questions on several intriguing issues in the Postscript. As I have mentioned earlier in the Chapter, a detailed discussion on the issues is impossible unless a rigorous study is undertaken. The purpose of the Postscript was only to highlight some of the issues which would be very interesting to dwell on more deeply. I myself am very interested in investigating questions such as to what extent the intensified Malaysian authority pressure on Darul Arqam actually sparked by theological reasons rather than political? As far as the authorities are concerned, does the Aurad Muhammadiyah really deviate from Islam and is this factor more important

than the Darul Arqam's ability in mobilizing the masses and in establishing a different system independently with extraordinary commitment and full-obedience to their leadership? Such a question now becomes more intriguing especially with the clear shift of allegations against Darul Arqam. Darul Arqam is now accused of having-power interests, and even regarded as "militant" and "more dangerous than the Communists". These questions could be addressed in another rigorous study which perhaps could be entitled *Beyond Aurad Muhammadiyah - A Critical Analysis of Darul Arqam Issues in Malaysia*.