

**The Trepidation of the Name:
“Allah” as the polemical space among Indonesian Christians**

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Abstract

This study is an exploration of polemical discourse of the Sacred Name Movement and Hebraic Root Movement among Indonesian Christians, against other Christian communities in Indonesia. The former is attempting to retrace the Judaic root of Christianity and incorporate some of the presumed Judaic traditions into its religious system. One distinct feature of it is the enthusiasm to revive the ancient name of Biblical God, the Tetragrammaton, and claimed it as the truest name of Christian God. The preference of the name is going hand in hand with the groups' antagonistic attitude toward the more traditional usage of name of God, “Allah,” notably as appears in the standard Indonesian Bible translation. This position obviously put the group at odds with larger Christian community. The study is meant to understand the politics of identity through the polemic of the name of God, especially in connection with the complicated interaction between Indonesian Christians and Muslims.

Keywords: Name of God, Sacred Name Movement, Hebraic Root Movement, Tetragrammaton, Intra-religious interaction, Inter-religious interaction, Indonesian Christianity

*For whatever mediates on the unsayable,
it is an instructive observation
that what one cannot speak of,
language can nevertheless perfectly name*
(Giorgio Agamben, “The Idea of the Name”)

Introduction

Around the end of 1990s and early 2000, some circles of Indonesian Christianity preoccupied with the emergence of polemical discourse on the usage of the name of “Allah” as a traditional name of God in Indonesia, notably as appeared in the standard Indonesian Bible, published by the Indonesian Bible Society (heretofore LAI – *Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia*). “Allah” is a common designator for divine being that generally accepted by most religious adherents in Indonesia. With slightly different pronunciation from the Muslims, Indonesian Christians took the

name to identify the generic name of the divinity within the framework of monotheism.

The polemics was incited after the circulation of a tractate entitled “*Siapakah yang bernama Allah itu?*” (“Who is Allah?”), in which it claimed that “Allah” is the deity of the Muslims (Arabic: Allāh) and it rooted in the pagan pre-Islamic divinity. Obviously, according to the tractate, “Allah” is ideologically incompatible with Christian faith and thus need to be debunked altogether from Christianity. It endorsed, however, the usage of “Elohīm” as the direct substitution of “Allah,” and promoted “Yahweh” as the sacred name of the biblical God and the truest God of the Christians.

The tractate was produced and circulated by Christian Center Nehemia (CCH). Established in 1980s by Suradi, who also known as Abraham ben Eliezer, a retired medical doctor that once served in the Indonesian Air Force. He was a Christian convert from Islam. CCH provided training for its adherents and sympathizers to outreach the Muslims. What set apart this group from other Christian’s groups is the integration of Judaic (Jewish) sub-culture and theology. Among religious practices the members of the group endorsed were observation of Sabbath and other Jewish holidays, and dietary law. Meanwhile at the same time the group challenged the traditional doctrine of Trinity and refrained from celebrating Christmas. Moreover, they no more address Jesus Christ, the central figure of Christianity as such. The Hebrew name of Jesus, Yeshua Hamashiah became the new familiarity of the figure. All this is based on the belief that these are the real name of God-sent Messiah and original practice of the earliest Christians as stated in the Bible (Herlianto, 2005, pp. x–xii, 2009, pp. x–xi; Hindarto, 2014a, pp. 48–49).

As it might be expected, the challenge stirred controversy among Indonesian Christians and even so, put the group at odds with some elements of the Muslim communities. For the mainstream Christians, the challenge of the name is not merely a matter of theological polemic, difference and opinion. It is the problem of inter-religious interaction, as the group and its activities complicated the relationship between the Christians and other non-Christians, notably the Muslims (cf. Herlianto, 2009, pp. 168–169).

Beyond the above intra-communities polemic, Suradi and his group outraged some Muslim groups immediately after the tractate circulation. Obviously it was the effect of his inflammatory remarks on “Allah” as a pre-Islamic pagan’s pantheon of Arabia. In 2001, Suradi has been given a death *fatwā* (Islamic religious instruction) by some Islamic leaders as the price of his opinion and activities; the first death *fatwā* ever for Christian preacher in Indonesian history (Mohammad, Karni, Syafi’i, & Panggabean, 2001; Tantan & Syafi’i, 2002). The pressure so great for him after one of his lieutenants was indicted and locked up with religious defamation, while he saved his skin only by fleeing to the United States. Suradi stayed there ever since until he passed away in the early 2013.¹

While the controversy is died out the discourse of the name of God on the other hand is burgeoning. Many Christian individuals and churches accepted Suradi’s arguments and were developing the discourse among their circles. Numerous seminars on the name of God are held, in which the outcomes were either strengthen the mainstream Christians on keeping “Allah” within Christianity or recruiting new followers for the new movement.

Besides the polemic of the name, new enthusiasm to the Judaic sub-culture was ensued and some Hebrew terms found its way into the Indonesian Christian’s lingos. The Judaic sub-culture was considered by some Christians as the closest to the earliest Christianity, as against the present Indonesian Christianity that considered “Westernized” or on the other end, “too culturally contextualized.”²

Hence, there were two religious discourses conflated in this landscape, and both were in different degrees of influences connected to the American religious movements that were called Sacred Name and Hebraic Roots movements (heretofore SNM and HRM respectively). The discourse of sacred name of God was the center

¹ Suradi Eliezer ben Abraham passed away in 2 February 2013. In his burial ceremony in the United States farewell speech conducted by (assumably) a Messianic Jewish adherent. Lukas Sutrisno, a strong follower of Suradi who has his own legacy called Suradi as “Hero of Faith” in his tribute (*Upacara penguburan bapak Suradi Eliezer ben Abraham 1/3, 2013*)

² The usage of “Allah” as the name of God is not firstly contested by the Sacred Namers but another Christian group known as the Jehovah’s Witness. Besides numerous differences in doctrinal issues with the mainstream Christianity, Jehovah’s Witness endorsed the usage of “Jehovah” as the truest name of biblical God but it is not specifically challenged the “Allah” usage among Indonesian Christians (Aritonang, 1999, pp. 316–317). Recently the group produced Indonesian translation of the official New World Translation (published 1961, 1984), Alkitab Terjemahan Baru (published 1999), and as anticipated uses Jehovah in the place of “Tuhan.”

issue of SNM by promoting Yahweh as the true God, while HRM concerned on the recovering Judaic sub-culture in Christian lives.

Suradi's group was in no way the instigator of the entire affair, but his controversy setting up the later SNM and HRM dynamic. Many important proponents of these movements, in one or the other way learnt and influenced by Suradi and his group (Hindarto, 2014a, p. 49).

Ball and chain remains until today as the discourse of the name of God is evolving and breeding into groups, variations and ideological leanings. A number of churches, Christian groups, and individuals embraced this position, thanks to the internet and social media that marshalled this discourse even more public and propelled a new steam of polemical discourse. Several Yahweh-centric new bible translations were published as the replacement of LAI's Bible. It helps to establish the group position and visibility. Notwithstanding the energetic discourse it may, it remains a subversive movement: the mainstream churches and Christian institutions were unaware or never took this movement seriously.

This paper is about this religious phenomenon, i.e. the polemic of the name of God among Indonesian Christians. It focused in the development of the discourse among the SNM/HRM. Hence, regardless the differences between SNM and HRM, to smooth out the discussion both movements will be confused into the SNM. The proponents of this discourse self-identifying variously: Yahweh Worshipers (*Pengagung Nama Yahweh*), Messianic Christianity, Community of Judeo-Christianity (*Mazhab Yudeo-Kristiani*), Yahweh restoration movement (*Gerakan pemulihan nama Yahweh*), and others. However, since there is a strong tie with SNM/HRM hence SNM and its adherents, the "Sacred Namers" will be the umbrella identifications throughout this paper.³ Keeping in mind that *not all* Sacred Namers however, are keen to adopt Judaic sub-culture except some superficial articulations, and *not all* HRM members are interested in promoting Yahweh-centered discourse.

³ The term "Sacred Namers" was suggested by one of my informers, Teguh Hindarto (heretofore TH) in an interview conducted in May 27, 2014. From other informer I found the unconfirmed group name of the Essene (Eseni??).

Based on the research conducted between January and July 2014,⁴ some concerns and questions are dealing in this paper: What is the nature of the Sacred Namers? What makes the name of God the site of theological contestation? What is the meaning of this religious rhetoric? What can be said about the current politics of identity that marked by the debate of the name of God? How this politics affected to the inter-religious relationship in Indonesia?

Anyhow, this engagement is not an exhausted study as the discourse is still evolving beyond my observation and there are many issues are waiting for further exploration. I cannot make a claim of the comprehensive understanding of the entire hues of the spectrum of religious expressions. Instead, the result of this study would be nuts and bolts of a larger project of religious transformation, notably in Indonesia. An imagined model that is not begin with the claim of universalism of human experience, but by being attentive to the specific group and individual social imagination. Hence, more than just an intellectual exercise, it is imagining a better model of intra- and interfaith interaction grounded in Indonesian context.

In this paper the phenomenon of Sacred Namers is observed as more than just religious dissenter that disturbing the establishment. Sacred Namers arguably is the outcome of complex interplay of Indonesian Islamic cultural milieu, transnational discourse, unsettling inter-religious tension, which constantly demanding new resolutions, and of pervasiveness of information technology.

The position taken by Sacred Namers against the mainstream Christian communities and Muslim dominant culture arguably is an attempt to reinforce Christian position as minority against the dominant religion through the “reinstatement” Christian-specific culture via restoration of the name of God. At this juncture Hebrew God’s name and Judaic sub-culture played an immense role.

⁴ The seed of the topic however, has been planted some years ago when I met two members of this movement in two separate occasions in 2006 and 2010. The research methods are interviews (structured and unstructured), literary reviews, semi-focus group discussion (FGD), social media and internet observation, and field observation. The interviewees are ten people that lived scattered in the City of Yogyakarta, Kebumen, Magelang, and Wonosari (District of Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta Province). In addition to that, one observation was conducted in Tomohon, North Sulawesi as part of separate research project. To this I am grateful to Rev. Angie Olivia Wuysang, MA, and Professor of Theology in the Universitas Kristen Tomohon (UKIT) for sharing her observation. Out of ten interviewees, four are the leaders of their respective groups. All of them are male.

As the movement is growing significantly, I further argue that the future of inter-religious and interfaith conversation must consider the presence of this group, as part of managing social integration and expecting social transformation in which all societal elements could productively participating.

What's in a name?

“What is in a Name?” entreated Juliet, “that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.” In the same breath, Faust complained, “the name is just Noise and Smoke.” But, in culture and even more in religion name is as important as the sweet of rose itself. Despite insubstantial and insignificant the name may be, Romeo and Juliet must die simply because both bearing a discordant name of their families, Montague and Capulet. Hence, the discourse of name has to be necessitated before exploring Sacred Namers.

In order to smooth out the subsequent discussion, a theoretical framework on the name (onomastics) will be discussed. To start with, we will listen to the opinion of the prominent onomastician, W.F.H. Nicolaisen,

Though names and words share many characteristics, they differ in one major respect which has fundamental consequences: their semantic properties. If words are to be used competently, they must have meaning on the lexical level; otherwise they fail to serve the purpose of linguistic communication. ... This basic prerequisite is not expected of names which function perfectly well without any lexical meaning ... (Nicolaisen, 2001, p. XVI: 10860).

To make it simply, a name in fact, in its larger usage in the society does not entirely depending upon lexical meaning; its “essence” is thus arbitrary. It is different from a word that demands and depending upon lexical meaning if it to be a communicative vehicle. Without certain “essence,” regardless its “essence” is socially constructed, a word could not be used for describing a world. It is pragmatic as it meant to smooth out inter-subjectivity relationship. Consequently, the creation of a name is to make a self being functional in society and the world at large (cf. Nicolaisen, 2001, p. XVI: 10862).

In daily lives name is just ordinary and lack of specificity. It is routinized within the regular activities and invoking it is just an activation of social communication. But, there is a *moment* when name “a matter,” viz. when it became a frontier of interaction. It became a frontier because there is a dramatization of difference; difference not on “essence” but on the effect, significance, and power certain name bearing (van Woude, 1997, p. III: 1672). Name however, gives a sense of inclusion. It has a power to exclude and include subjectivity and agency (Hagström, 2012, pp. 83–84). In this circumstance a name exists not only for social communication, but its existence is also within network of power relations.

Furthermore, most of the religious practices communicate with a deity through its name. The effect of that communication is knowledge that through this a spiritual power can be rendered. Hence, knowing the name of deity may imply to religious understanding but also to supernatural aspects (Denny, 2005, p. IX: 6406).

Combining the above arguments and to make it more useful for the present engagement, the name of God, in this regard “Yahweh” and “Allah” should be taken as a social/cultural code. It is firstly, an inherent demand for spiritual renewal that any religious tradition endures from it. But secondly, it is also a lingo, a special term for particular group that is established as a social marker, boundary line, and the foothold for power exercise over the others. Through these codes and coding a social interaction might be decoded and excavated.

As the research on the Sacred Namers is focused on the polemical on the name of God, it is important to recognize more subtle interaction within the discourse of polemics – and apologetics as well. Polemics and apologetics is never a simple defensive and self-referential expression in expanding and defending one’s faith. Therefore, it is one way of religious communication and sharing a species of religious experience, yet it often appeared in highly intellectual and sophisticated enterprise. It thus allowing a more dynamic intellectual, philosophical and theological exercise, and “acts as a membrane for the exchange of ideas” (Bernabeo, 2005, p. I: 426). Historically speaking however, polemics and apologetics brought division within a religious tradition, or conflict in the inter-religious context. Therefore, initiatives to manage this conflicting situation are always demanded.

How this name is “matter” is interesting to attest the above argument. Dealing with this there were constant déjà vu throughout history of inter-religious interaction. So that, despite the audacity of the debate of the name of God in Indonesia, the historical dynamic of this is more complex and demonstrated the condition of the aforementioned frontier in which negotiation, porosity, radicalization, and transformation are the regular features of intra-/inter-religious interaction.⁵ However, the space does not allow me to present comprehensive historical precedence except gives some hints.

To usher to further investigation, first of all is the explanation of the status of the name of God in the *Tanakh* (Jewish/Hebrew Scripture).⁶ Regardless the unambiguity the discourse of name of God (“Yahweh,” “Elohim,” and “Allah”) among Sacred Namers, from historical perspective it is remain inconclusive and very complex. The debate of the origin of the name of God and His nature is still ongoing without reaching consensus (Lee, 2004, p. 38). “Elohīm” and “Yahweh” in this regard are presumably referred to the two biblical deity names in Hebrew Scripture (or “Old Testament” in the Christianity) that are *'elohīm* and YHWH (or YHVH) subsequently. Since the latter is consisted of four consonants, it is also known as Tetragrammaton. It was an academic consensus based on the historical reconstruction of ancient texts and Hebrew morphological study that the YHWH is most likely pronounced “Yahweh” (Knauf, 2006).

YHWH has been for centuries never pronounced by the Jews because it is sacred and because they maintained strict submission to the stipulation, “You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD [YHWH] your God” (Exodus

⁵ See the discussion of YHWH in Driver (1885); Freedman and O'Connor (1986); Thompson (1992); Gnuse (1997); de Moor (1997); Jenni (1997); van der Toorn (1999); Smith (2002); Knauf (2006); Brueggemann (2009). See the most critical response to this “academic myths” in Hindarto (2014a, p. 188ff.). On the discussion of Allāh see Gardet (1986); Anawati (2005); Cornell (2005); Böwering (2006); Pakatchi, Heravi, and Khodaverdian (2008).

⁶ Tanakh (תנ"ך) is a Hebrew acronym for Jewish/Hebrew Scripture that in Christianity is called the Old Testament. Some Messianic Jewish and Christian scholars preferred the name First Testament (see Steussy, 2013, pp. 9–10). The term “Tanakh” composed of the initial letters of the classification of the content: *Tōrah* (“Pentateuch,” the Law), *Nevi'im* (“Prophets”) and *Ketuvim* (“Hagiographa”). Torah is also known as *hummash* or *miqra'* among the Jews. There are minor differences and arrangement between Tanakh and the Old Testament, but both shared almost identical content.

20:7).⁷ In general, every time a devout Jew encounters YHWH in the Hebrew Scripture, s/he substitutes it with *'adonay* (Lord) or *ha-shem* (the Name), or in some restricted case, *'elohim* (God). The observant Jews established complex system to prevent to profanation of the name of God (cf. Carroll, 2002, p. 55; Meyers, 2005, pp. 57–59).

In history, “Allah” and YHWH were both are contested religious landscape, as the polemic of the name in Indonesia and Malaysia.⁸ However, on the other hand there was also a relaxed moment when Allah and YHWH can interchangeably be used, especially among Christians and Jews under Islamic rulers in medieval period.⁹ Furthermore, as may be expected, the name of biblical God, YHWH remained a source of spiritual inspiration for Jewish mystics for example. They were so captivated to employ and meditate Tetragrammaton in pursuing their spiritual end.¹⁰

⁷ It was highly elaborated in the Second Temple Period in which the pronouncement of the name attached to the institution of Priest (see e.g. *Mishnah Sotah* 7:6, in which the pronouncement the name was only valid within the compound of the Temple). In another passage: “[H]e that pronounces God's name according to its consonants has no share in the world to come” (*Avot de Rabbi Nathan*, chapter 36, in the name of Rabbi Yokhanan ben Nuri; *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:1, in the name of Abba Saul).

⁸ In Rabbinical Judaism, *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 7:5 recorded the ruling when a Christian Jews caught pronounced the Tetragrammaton. Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (ca. 482-565) laid the new Roman laws: *Codex Iustinianus* (renowned as Justinian Code) and *Novellae Constitutiones* (“New Constitutions”) in which he gave legal sanction for the Jews to read *kurios* for the YHWH (Krueger, Mommsen, Schoell, & Kroll, 1900, Code no. 146, “De Hebraeis”).

⁹ In medieval Islam, Jews as minority along with Christians adopted Arab culture in the cultural frame of what Hodgson called “Islamicate civilization.” So for instance, Jewish name *'Ovadyah* (lit. “servant of Yah/Lord”) could easily interchangeable with Arabic name *'Abd Allāh* (lit. “servant of Allāh/God”), as in the case of Jewish Sufi, Rabbi *'Ovadyah ben Abraham ben ha-Rambam*, in which his Arabic name was *'Abd Allāh ibn Ibrahīm ibn Mūsā ibn Maymūn*. In a Karaite work by Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī, *Kitāb al-anwār wa 'l-marāqib* (“Book of Lights and Watchtowers”) written in Judeo-Arabic the traditional abbreviation of Tetragrammaton, triple *yod* (י) is appeared as Allāh in another identical manuscript written in Arabic. The Judeo-Arabic text employed the Hebrew expression אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (‘‘I am YHWH your God’’). The Arabic transliteration in the Ms. 2579 (British Museum): انوحي الله لوهاخا. Observed the underlined words that represented Tetragrammaton and Allāh (see Blau, 1981, pp. 243–244).

¹⁰ Meditation of the name of God is a prominent feature in Jewish mysticism that is the early period and later in Kabbalah. It is also in this tradition that the spiritual power of (hidden) name of God, the Tetragrammaton is expounded, some of them through *gematria*, Jewish numerology (Schäfer, 1992, pp. 97ff., 107ff.; Wolfson, 2006, pp. 74–80, 89). Abraham Abulafia (1240-ca. 1291) developed meditative discipline in which breathing technique, *dhikr*, concentration, and of our interest, word permutation to provoke mystical vision. The latter is including the meditation of the name of God through the permutation of Hebrew letter of the Tetragrammaton and *'elohim* (Scholem, 1924, pp. 130–131; Vajda, 1966, p. 37).

Turned to our topic, to understand the nature of the Indonesian polemic of the name, we begin with how the name of God represented in Christian Bible. There are several biblical deity names in the Bible. In the Old Testament there are “God” (*'elohīm*) and “Lord” (YHWH), while in the New Testament there are “Jesus” (Greek: *iesous*), “God” (Greek: *theos*), and “Lord” (Greek: *kyrios*). The most widely used Indonesian bible translation is the bible published by LAI, which is called *Alkitab Terjemahan Baru* (New Translation Bible, heretofore TB-LAI). This bible was published for the first time in 1974. TB-LAI is a cross-confessional translation that generally accepted by the Protestants, Catholics, and other Christian denominations. The bible translated those deity’s names subsequently “Allah” and “TUHAN,” “Yesus,” and “Tuhan.”

Many Christian theologians emphasizes on the human limitation in recognizing the God’s unamendable ineffability. This position brings the consequence of attempts to adjust the cultural-specific name the God and recognizes the plurality of divine names. Hence, any theology of translation is rest on the context imposition (Lee, 2004; Light, 2004). Most Christian translators in the world continued the tendency to contextualize biblical messages, in particular to translate traditional biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek) into vernacular languages. This activity has implicated to the translation of the biblical God’s names to the local affinity.

That is also the main argument of LAI to translate *'elohīm* and YHWH into “Allah” and “Tuhan.” Through the context the biblical and contemporary world is connected and hence, the message of God can reach as many as people in Indonesia. The continuity of the usage of “Allah” since the earliest translation of the Bible into Malays about four hundred years ago, and the sharing of the using of it with Southeast Asian Muslims is another argument that LAI persisted in using “Allah.”¹¹

Nevertheless, Hebrew terms and acquaintances were never disappeared in the Christian traditions. Javanese and Bataks translation of the Bible preserved Hebrew

¹¹ As expounded by Anwar Tjen, then a consultant of LAI and now the Chief of the Department of Translation of LAI, in a debate between him and Yakub Sulistyono the proponent of Sacred Namers, organized by Yehuda Gospel Ministry, November 27, 2013 (*Diskusi Nama Tuhan dengan Konsultan Penerjemah Yayasan LAI*, 2013). Anwar Tjen is trained in the Department of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University and a pastor in a Batak Church.

acquaintances. For example, Gospel of John, *Injil Yohanes* in Indonesian translation, in Javanese translation of the Bible is Yokanan (Hebrew: Yokhanan). Moreover, the acquaintance of Yahweh is preserved in those translations up until today – Javanese, “Yehuwah” (cf. Sugiyarto, 2010, p. 42), while formerly Bataks translation of “Yahoba” is replaced by “Debata,” exactly equal to “Allah” translation.

However, to those translating paradigm is the critique of Sacred Namers directed. Along with it, the movement was highly critical to regular Christians, of being submissive to the dominant religion, viz. Islam through the usage of “Allah.” It is a mistake for Indonesian Christianity and an offense for the biblical message. It simply barred it from the proclamation of the true God to the non-Christians and furthermore, invited an “alien” deity into the bible and Christianity; a direct abuse to the Ten Commandments that stated: “you shall have no other gods before me (YHWH)” (Exodus 20:3). Sacred Namers therefore considered itself bearing the torch of the true biblical religion.

Indonesian Sacred Namers

Exploring the detail of the above issue is an interesting engagement, but the main focus of this paper is the polemical posture of this movement. Hence the detail of Sacred Namers creeds will not be the primary concern and discussed only at the most relevant points.¹² An overview of the nature of Sacred Namers in Indonesia however, will help to get the sense of complexity and plurality of this movement.

Sacred Namers and HRM initially are emerged in the American religious landscape around 1930s. It has a theological cousin with Messianic Jewish movement: a Jewish movement that preserved Jewish tradition but belief in Jesus as a Jewish Messiah (Melton, 2003, p. 122; Melton & Baumann, 2002, p. I: 88).¹³ In

¹² There are numerous resources for this movement in printed and online versions. I suggest two important sources to begin with organized by two of my informers Teguh Hindarto (TH) and Lukas Sutrisno (heretofore LS) in their respective weblinks: <http://teguhhindarto.blogspot.com/> and <http://www.alfa-omega.or.id/> (Alfa Omega Messianic Centre /Qehilat Alef Taw Magelang). Two comprehensive work of TH that mainly a collection of his writings in his blog (Hindarto, 2014a, 2014b). Other important sources are Iskandar (2009), Sugiyarto (2010, 2012), Herlianto (2005, 2009), and Noorsena (2005).

¹³ This term is not applied to Jews who accepted Roman Catholicism. According to Ariel, in Israel they organized under the name “Hebrew Christians” (Ariel, 2006, p. 195).

Indonesia, following a prominent figure of this group, Teguh Hindarto's (heretofore TH) observation, there were four waves of Sacred Namers entering: 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (2014a, pp. 47–53). Prior 1990s, the movement was more sporadic and personal-pragmatic in its approach. It is in the period of 1990s that Sacred Namers getting more active, including the aforementioned Suradi's activities. The later period of 2000s and up until the present day is the most flourishing period.

TH furthermore provided a map of the religious propensities among the Sacred Namers. Based on my research I made some modification and necessary addition to this map:

- **Yahweh Only group:** this is Sacred Namers who promoted the usage of Yahweh in the Bible and any Christian activities, alongside the rejection of “Allah” in the Christian public sphere. However, according to TH, these communities less interested in the advanced theological inquiry, ethical and liturgical elaboration. While all groups maintain various degree of polemical tone, I found that this group is among the strongest polemical tendency against anyone outside its group.¹⁴
- **Back to Hebraic Root group:** this is Indonesian Christians who strongly concerned with reclaiming Judaic elements of the early Christianity. Nevertheless, this group is divided into several aspirations:
 - **Imported discourse of Hebraic Root:** proponents of this group are simply importing the discourse from outside, notably from Messianic Judaism. They adopted almost in entirety all Jewish expressions into their ritual structure. There are variations of this groups:
 - They who like any observant Jews, retreating from pronouncing “Yahweh” and substituted it with “Adonay” and/or “Ha-Shem.” This is prominent among the members of *Komunitas Nasrani Indonesia* (Indonesian Nazarene Community).
 - They who substitutes Adonay and Ha-Shem with Yahweh.
 - They who use Yeshua as the original Hebrew name of Jesus.

¹⁴ See for example the harsh-polemical tone in the Social Media discussion (Facebook) by HT, MK, and SBA. Sample was taken on January 30, March 22, March 28, April 25, May 11,

- They who use Yahshua as against Yeshua, as the real and correct name of biblical Messiah. Interestingly, I believe this is an independent discourse to each other that in the fifteenth century, Christian Kabbalah in Europe came to the same conclusion with the Jesus' name Yahshuah. It is called the five-letter (*Pentagrammaton*) as the Hebrew characters of Jesus' name implied (Dan, 1996, pp. 9, 13).¹⁵
- **Contextualization of Hebraic Root:** proponents of this group are expanding the theological, ethical, ritual landscape beyond the issue of the name of Yahweh. This is the position taken by TH who established the Community of Judeo-Christianity (*Mazhab Yudeo-Kristianitas*). The distinct of this group against the other Sacred Namers is the dedication to the exploration of Hebrew roots for the basis to reconstruct Christian ritual (*ibadah, Avodah*), theology (*aqidah, Elohut*), and ethics (*akhlak, Halakah*) (Hindarto, 2014a, p. 62).¹⁶ In lesser degrees there are some churches that also incorporate “Judaic” ritual into their services.¹⁷
- **Miscellaneous:** I found at least one group that even though it belongs to Sacred Namers but the members of this group do not entirely rejected “Allah” and they remain using the LAI Bible. They made a small alteration from “Allah” into “Allaha” since it is argued that the latter is an Aramaic origin and it has been used by Aramaic speaking Christians long before the emergence of Islam. By taking this position they feel comfortable with the existing scripture. In addition to that, they often times employ the term “MarYah,” an Aramaic for “Master Yah” to address Yahweh or God.¹⁸

To respond to the above categorization historically speaking the discourse of the return to Hebraic/Judaic root is not novelty. It has been an issue since the

¹⁵ A Yahshua proponent, MK admitted that the name does not have historical precedent, but he firmly believe that Yahweh and Jesus are sharing identity then the correct pronunciation is YAHShua, “Yahweh who saves” (Facebook wall, September 27, 2014).

¹⁶ Also in an interview with Hindarto May 27, 2014.

¹⁷ E.g. GAIN church (assumably followed also by its branches and affiliated congregations), GPT-BH church in Tomohon, North Sulawesi. The latter separated male and female congregants like in the Orthodox Judaism. There are plenty other congregations that followed this model.

¹⁸ As the group maintained by JJ who organized about 70 adherents. JJ is not proclaiming himself as Pastor, only “administrator.”

beginning of Christianity in the first millennium when the tension occurred among Jewish, gentile, and the gentile Christians who adopted Jewish practices – it is called “Judaizers.”¹⁹ In the subsequent centuries there were numerous Christian movements that adopted various degrees of Judaic sub-culture, such as Subbotniki (Sabbath observers) in Russia, and the Seventh-Day Adventist church in the United States. However, space does not allow me to elaborate this issue further.

American was not only the Mecca for this group, since the Judaic sub-culture among Indonesian Sacred Namers also induced by some of the leaders of the movements who spent sometimes to make pilgrimages to Israel.²⁰ After the signature of the Oslo Peace Treaty in 1993 between Israel and Palestine, at least there were four thousand Indonesians visited Israel and the trend continues up until the present day (Yegar, 2006, pp. 151–152). However, other Sacred Namers is simply emulating the American Zionism rhetoric of the primacy of Israel for the Christian eschatological agenda. In this point the social markers “Israel,” “Jews,” and “Zionism” are confused without critical assessment of the different meaning of those markers.

Demographic figure of Sacred Namers in Indonesia is still an uncharted territory as the movement remained fractured and there is no umbrella organization to keep the entire spectrum of aspirations intact. The direction of the movement is “getting indeterminate (*makin tidak jelas*),” lamented TH. The explanation of this he argued is because the movement lack of theologians. Moreover, in his observation the majority of the Sacred Namers are coming from Charismatic and Pentecostal backgrounds. Both denominations are apparently having little interest on inter-

¹⁹ In the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, there were two passages (Revelation 2:9 and 3:9) that rhetorically called “Synagogue of Satan” (*synagōgē tou satana*). These passages for centuries were taken by the Church as the critique of Christianity toward Judaism. This attitude has been responsible to the persistent antisemitic overtone throughout Christian history. However, a closer to the passages in question by taking the Book of Revelation as the product of the first century CE Jewish Christianity, it probably gave a different outlook. From the perspective of Jewish Christianity, the critique probably directed at non-Jewish Christians who became Jewish wannabe or taking Jewish practices. Henceforth these passages were an anti-Judaizers rhetoric (Frankfurter, 2011, pp. 464, 469). See further study on numerous Judaizers in the early Christianity such as Ebionites (*'evyōnīm*)/Symmachians, Elkesaites, and Nazarenes (Daniélou, 1964, p. 55ff.; Simon, 1979, pp. 102–103, 1986, p. 366ff; Pritz, 1988; Lüdemann, 1989; Wilken, 2005, p. IV: 2596).

²⁰ Interview with LS (March 16, 2014) and JJ (May 29, 2014).

organizational matters.²¹ The “indeterminateness” of the movement is apparent with the internal disputes on diverse issues from the debate on whether Jesus name is supposed to be called Yeshua or Yahshua, the way Sacred Namers responses to the mainstream Christianity, up until the debate of the degree of Jewish practices accepted in the Christian system. In what considered nitty-gritty problems for them turned out to be a divisive force that prevented them transforming it into a solid movement.

The figure of Sacred Namers is complicated since there is no statistic about the number of adherents. Contrast to it however, Sacred Namers presence are ubiquitous: Sacred Namers appears in the established structures of certain churches and denominations, and also diverge among non-Sacred Namers churches,²² though as earlier stated, mainstream Christianity ignored or unaffected by this movement.²³ In addition, there are numerous independent individuals that are not associated formally to certain Sacred Namers organized groups. They maintain the Sacred Namers discourse mainly through the social media and internet.²⁴ It is important to note as well that the pervasive digital technology make it possible for the movement to create virtual community as the extension of the offline group.²⁵

To realize its own ideal, Sacred Namers later on produced its own bible. First of all was *Kitab Suci Torat dan Injil* (The Bible of Pentateuch and Gospel) in 2000 produced by Suradi’s group. The content of this bible is almost identical to that of TB-LAI, except it substituted “Allah” and “Tuhan” to “Elohīm” and “Yahweh.” In the New Testament, Jesus is substituted to “Yeshua,” and in accordance to it, “Yeshua Hamashiah” as the substitute of the traditional “Yesus Kristus” (“Jesus Christ”).

²¹ He lamented that there is no serious initiative to create an umbrella organization or consultative body for this movement (interview May 27 and July 31, 2014).

²² Interview with EM, a Makassar-based anti-Sacred Namers proponent via Facebook Messenger, January 15, 2014. Some has been stigmatized by their church. An informer WN from the Church of Javanese was called as *wargo mbalelo* (deviant member) (interview January 16, 2014).

²³ E-mail correspondence with a senior staff of Indonesian Bible Society (LAI) who chose to remain anonymous (discussion in email September 30, 2014).

²⁴ As the case of one of my informers, TS. He maintains the Sacred Namers discourse surrounded the familial rituals and internet communication.

²⁵ As the case of Hindarto. He managed three other communities from his Kebumen base: Cilacap, Purwokerto, and Yogyakarta. But he managed also numerous adherents scattered in Java Island and outside Java through social media and communication means.

At this point, a controversy exploded when some Sacred Namers filed a legal action against LAI in 2008 (Herlianto, 2009, p. xi)²⁶ in the case of using non-biblical name of God in all its biblical translations – Indonesian and local translations.²⁷ As the requital, for the sake of protecting its copyright, LAI threatened to take a legal action against *Alkitab 2000*, for its crude adoption of TB-LAI version. Afterward some Sacred Namers produced the bibles that more or less independently from LAI translation, such as: *Kitab Suci Umat Perjanjian Tuhan* (God’s Covenantal People Scripture), three editions of *Kitab Suci Indonesian Literal Translations* (ILT), and other.

Some of Sacred Namers displayed the continuity of schismatic discourse between Protestantism and Catholicism. The group indulgence anti-Catholic rhetoric, such as accusing the Latin rite it endorsed a demonic ritual. This attitude very much in line with the popular culture mythmaking in challenging the authority of Vatican, as demonstrated in Dan Brown’s novels and movies, etc.²⁸

Regardless its pro-Zionistic tone and philosemitic, some of Sacred Namers, paradoxically viewed the Jews within the antisemitic framework by employing the old rhetoric of conspiratorial theory on the establishment of the Third Temple, the role of Illuminati, Kabbalah as a secret and devilish teaching of the Jews, and so on. All of that rhetoric just to rationalize the reasons why the Jews refused to believe in Jesus Christ.²⁹ This condition may recall Zygmunt Bauman remark on the affinity between antisemitism and philosemitism, in which he called *allosemitism*. Both are coming from the same logic of viewing the referent “Jew” as something beyond history, and as the representation of the ultimate Other (Bauman, 1998, pp. 143–156; cf. Altfelix, 2000, pp. 41–56).

²⁶ Interview with LS March 13, 2014.

²⁷ Besides translating the Bible into several versions of Indonesians, excluding TB-LAI, to date LAI has been translated more than 140 local languages throughout Indonesia. Indonesia is the home for 300 ethnic groups and 721 local languages.

²⁸ See in particular the sermon series by LS that available in http://www.alfa-omega.or.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=2. LS displayed the strong interest toward supernatural issues hence he is invested so much attention to the mystical dimensions of “Kabbalah,” conspiratorial theory; in which unconsciously put him in paradox positions to his pro-Zionist rhetoric.

²⁹ This appeared in the LS sermon series videotaped and available in http://www.alfa-omega.or.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=2.

The plurality of Sacred Namers as explained above elicited a question whether the antagonism toward “Allah” is the bond of this movement? It seems there is more elaborated explanation for the divisions in the Sacred Namers, but indeed “Allah” became the binding factor, hence it needs a further scrutiny.

“Allah” became the factor that unites almost all Sacred Namers. In this very point they are offering resistance toward the religious establishment, mainly toward Islam, and after that to the mainstream Christianity, and to a lesser degree to Catholicism, as mentioned before.³⁰ Some of the Sacred Namers have Muslim backgrounds and this sporadically accentuated the dispute against Islam. However, some others do not take it as a point of dispute, instead it smoothed out them to adopt Judaic sub-culture, in which in many points have a significant affinity to Islamic tradition rather than Christianity.³¹

Employing new identification “Yahweh,” “Yeshua,” “Yahshua” is apparently confirming the sense of belonging and affirming in-group boundary against the Islamic cultural framework in Indonesia. Observing some Youtube’s video and Facebook walls on discussing this issue, clearly the usage of those identifications has been cheered by the convinced party, especially in separating the Christian against the other. Hence, it is more than just exhibiting proofs and evidences; it is about confirming the sacred narrative.

Apart from it Sacred Namers displayed variety of attitude and rationalizations in dealing with “Allah.” Here, “Allah” is a landscape of interaction through polemical discourse. The following summary is the list of Sacred Namers attitudes in which “Allah” is the focal point of disaffection. The summary could not be seen exhaustive however, and in many points there are overlapping attitudes.

³⁰ Polemical discourse is shaped through different social space such as calendar, social media, internet blogs, books, tractate, newspaper, and others. LS from a church in Magelang published a 2014 calendar. Calendar then became the site of contestation and polemical device. GAIN’s 2014 calendar has interesting features: Hebrew (Jewish) name of the months accompanied Indonesian names. Hebrew (Jewish) name of the days in a week accompanied Indonesian names. Moreover, against the common Christian holidays such as Ascension of Jesus Christ and Christmas, the church provides additional information that informs the user that those holidays were not commissioned in the Bible and (for Christmas) is an adoption of pagan festival.

³¹ Interviews to TH (May 27, 2014), JJ (May 29, 2014). I met WA around 2010, a convert from Islam who displayed his repugnance toward Allah, his “former” God. He believed this name rendered evil spirit.

1. Detachment from Allah is a spiritual and supernatural gesture to transform someone to the true communion with the true God (Yahweh). It complies with the rhetoric of “restoring” or “recovering” the Name (*pemulihan Nama*). In order to agree with Christian message, the argument goes, someone needs to change allegiance. It cannot be done by remain stay with the former/false God (Allah). In some Sacred Namers circles the changing allegiance is marked by baptism. Through baptism someone is exorcised from the name of “Allah” and reclaim it to “Yahweh.”³²
2. Restoring the Name of Yahweh as an appreciation the inter-religious interaction. Some Sacred Namers strongly emphasis this point that Christian-Muslim interaction would be harmonious if each community defines clear boundary to each other, including to the deity each party worshipping. “*Masing-masing berjalan dalam relnya sendiri-sendiri*” (to each its own path), as stated by one prominent Sacred Namers, Rev. Yakub Sulistyو (heretofore YS) in his circulation.³³ He further asserted that by detaching from Allah, “I am not defaming Islam, I respect to Islam because we [Christians] do not use [Allah]”.³⁴ YS claimed that what he done is only to repatriate “Allah” back to the bosom of Muslims. In connection to this, YS advanced his position by openly supporting Malaysian banning of the Allah usage among Malaysian Christians (Manado Post, 2009).

³² As per experience of WN, a former member of Church of Javanese who was re-baptizing after joining Sacred Namers. In my observation on baptism of a girl in a public swimming pool in Magelang, March 17, 2014, I found the gesture of conducting baptism is the same with general Charismatic, Pentecostal, and Baptist churches ritual: immersing the new Christian in water. Other Churches are usually only splashing water on the head of new believer. The difference is the formula of baptism the pastor used. General Christian formula of baptism is “in the name of Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” This group is used: “in the name of Father Yahweh, Lord Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit.” The baptism is proceeded by a prayer in which the pastor is saying, which repeated by the new believer as a personal supplication. Part of the prayer is goes like this: “today, I officially end a relationship with the deity that is called Allah ... in the name of Lord Yeshua I break up with Allah ... I only believe in Father Yahweh in Yeshua Hamashiah, and the Holy Spirit as my Lord ...”

³³ Written statement entitled by YS, a leader of one of the largest Sacred Namers churches, “The Proof of Mistakes of the Translation by Indonesian Bible Society: Adding, Discounting and Altering the Word of God” (*Bukti Kesalahan Terjemahan Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia: Menambah, Mengurangi dan Mengganti Firman Tuhan*) sent to my e-mail June 28, 2014. It seems it is a formal circulation from this group to the public at large that stated its position. YS is the twin brother of LS.

³⁴ Statement in the open debate with LAI consultant, Dr. Anwar Tjen, November 27, 2013, organized by Yehuda Gospel Ministry (*Diskusi Nama Tuhan dengan Konsultan Penerjemah Yayasan LAI*, 2013)

3. Restoring the name and realigning with Hebraic Roots/Judaic sub-culture is a gesture to restore the pristine Christianity and as a counterbalance to the strong Arabic flavor of Islam.³⁵ The prominent example of this is the Community of Judeo-Christianity. “Yahweh” in this regard thence a threshold of religious reformation, in which “Allah” is the trigger and Islam is the alter ego in the sense of *frères ennemi* (enemy brother) in Girardian mimetic reading. In this regard, Indonesian Muslim environment has become a paradigmatic model for the Sacred Namers. Moreover, it is also a *milieu* in which members of the society sharing similar mentality and tendency.
4. Some of Yahweh-Only Sacred Namers shared the above contention toward the usage of “Allah” among the Christians, but at the same time the restoration of “Yahweh” is giving new muscle for its project of missionizing the Muslims.³⁶
5. One important feature of Sacred Namers who taking Judaic sub-culture as the new religious reference is the reinstatement of praying orientation (*kiblat*), just like Judaism and Islam. The praying orientation in Biblical times and Judaism is directed to the Temple of Jerusalem. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the Jews remained to take it as the point of reference in their daily prayer. Most Messianic Jews and Sacred Namers conform to this tradition. In Indonesian case, direction to Jerusalem would be relatively in the same direction with Muslim orientation to Ka’abah in Mecca, i.e. westward. While most of Sacred Namers that belong to HRM carry this out, the community I observed, is taking opposite direction, praying eastward. The rationalization for this is simply because the site of Temple of Jerusalem has been profaned (by the Muslims) and because there is a believe that Adonai Yeshua (*Tuhan Yesus*) will come from the East. Praying to the eastward thus means to welcome the Second Coming of Jesus.³⁷

³⁵ TH asserted, “Islam does not lose its Arabic character/identity, in the way of thinking, (Scriptural) interpretation, (and) ritual. This is what I want to appertain to Christianity ... that came prior to Islam. We [Christianity] are appeared too Westernized up to the present. I am longing to reconstruct [Christianity] in [the field of] *aqidah* (religious principles), *ibadah* (ritual), and *akhlaq* (ethics)” (interview May 27, 2014).

³⁶ Interview with CS March 19, 2014. His group provides evangelizing materials that formally used “God” in its English original but in Indonesian translation “Yahweh” and “Elohim” appeared as the substitutes.

³⁷ Interview with JJ and others May 29, 2014.

Beyond the Polemics

The discussion of the name of God to a degree is a serious matter for many Indonesians, not only to Sacred Namers. Besides “Allah,” a generic term for God “Tuhan” is also another contested term, though it is not as problematic as “Allah.” Apparently, many Indonesian Muslims feel uncomfortable to use the generic and common usage of “Tuhan,” especially in its use as “Tuhan Yang Maha Esa” (Oneness of God). They consider it as against the *'aqīda* (religious principle/belief) that rooted to al-Qur’ān and *al-sunna*. Moreover, it is considered alien to Islam and oftentimes “Tuhan” employed by the spiritualists (Kebatinan) to which they reserve detestation as disturber of *'aqīda* (Noer, 2005, pp. 211–212). In connection with this attitude, there are plenty of Indonesian Christians who feel uncomfortable as well with the usage of impersonal and distanced divinity “Tuhan Yang Maha Esa” in religious setting.

Regarding the mood of using “Tuhan,” history has its own precedent in this matter. Before Indonesian independence, August 17, 1945, a committee was setup by Japanese occupier to prepare the independence. In the proposals of the foundation of the new state, Pancasila, there is a minor tension on the usage of “Allah” as the first principle, as it connotes to Islamic precept. The representation from Bali, the largest and the most important Hindu enclave in Indonesia, I Goesti Ketoet Poedja proposed the Malay word “Tuhan” rather than “Allah.” In the end it was accepted that the first principle of Pancasila is “belief in the One and Only God” (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) (Boland, 1982, p. 37; Picard, 2011, p. 483n3).

Zooming out from the above context, several important shifts and trends in Indonesian society need to be considered to understand the Sacred Namers development. Moreover, transnational and global religious trends weaving in to make a milieu in which the above movement can be seen as the outcome of it. In the highly globalized world in the present day, human interaction is not only implying the openness/flow but also closure, as obviously appeared in the religious boundary making (cf. Meyer & Geschiere, 1999). In Malaysia, the name of “Allah” is a red button issue that concurred to that observation. The recent Malaysia’s Supreme Court decision that prevents the Malaysian Christianity, specifically Catholic Church to

employ “Allah” in its religious usage, signals a larger and more complex issue at work (e.g. Agence France-Presse, 2013; Manado Post, 2009).

While it is not apparent, the polemics of the name of God is influenced as well by the inter-religious landscape shaped after September 11 (9/11) terror in the United States. It is somewhat appeared in the post-9/11 anti-Islam polemics such as *Islamic Invasion* by Robert Morey, which has been translated into Indonesian.³⁸

After thirty years of dictatorship, the New Order regime crumbled under its own weight in 1998, triggered by the Asian monetary crisis in the second semester of 1997, and later by the efforts of students and people’s power. Social unrest and series of inter-communal conflicts ensued, the demand for larger regional autonomy pursued, and religious “fundamentalism” emerged from the basement and attempted to seize the portion of public sphere. All the suppressed voices took advantage to this momentum and competing to transpire their voices. And after the longtime of depolitization, new euphoria of political participation brought about multi-parties arrangement. People called this new era as *Era Reformasi* (Reformation Era). The above Suradi’s controversy gained prominence in this historical moment.

Along with the surging of transnational phenomenon, the ramification of the Reformation Era, among others is the pietization of public sphere, the growing polarization of society, and the emergence sectarian aspirations. By pietization of public sphere I associate with the increasing presentation of religious-specific culture as the marker of piety in public sphere.

Three important indicators are relevant to frame the development of this movement in which those revolved to what I called *Semitophilia*: a discourse of Semitism as religious reference and landscape of religious mobilization that often times became a part of cultural barricade against other party. Important to note however that Islam since very beginning maintain Arabic character, indeed with some degrees of contextualization. Hence, *Semitophilia* should be seen as the re-emphasis and expansion of this character.

The first one is the phenomenon of *Ibranisasi* (Hebraicization) among the Indonesian Christians, i.e. the growing usage of Hebrew terms such as “Shalom” (as greeting, from Hebrew *shalōm*, comparable to Muslim’s greetings *as-salamu*

³⁸ *Islamic Invasion* book appeared in the interview with WN and LS.

alaykum) that has become a Christian-identification salute in the public sphere, the appearance of Hebrew songs in the Christian songs, and so on (cf. Setio & Tridarmanto, 2011). This is indeed not a new phenomenon and has been devised probably since the early 1970s among the Pentecostal churches, and later on in the late 1980s by some parachurches. However, Reformation Era gave a further stimulus on this aspiration. Not all Christians are happy with development as an opinion asserted in responding to this phenomenon “[w]e hope we are not marching back to Judaism.”³⁹

While the previous issue mostly confine within Indonesian Christian community, the second phenomenon is more profound in the Indonesian public sphere since it is develop among the Indonesian Muslims. Lately, Indonesians testifies the ever popularity of a more visible Islamic discourse in public (cf. Hasan, 2009). Some indicators may help to see the dynamic, mainly as observed by Joel Kuipers et al. (2013): the popularity of veiling (*hijāb*, *jilbāb*) among Indonesian women (Smith-Hefner, 2007), the increasing of Arabic literacy, stronger religious awareness among the Muslim families, the growing number of new mosque constructions, the popularity of Arabic names among new Muslim generation, the higher number of new modern Islamic schools, the emergence of pious youngsters, the rearrangement of symbolic sphere (e.g. from the term “Sunday” to “Ahad,” endorsement of Muslim’s Sabbath [Friday]), and the growing Islamic-specific social and territorial space through the establishment new residence area in urban setting, notably in Java Island.⁴⁰

The third phenomenon is the emergence of the Jewish-leaning religious groups that is not entirely connected to Sacred Namers and HRM, such as the extension of Jews for Allah movement in Indonesia, distilled by the establishment of Surabaya-based The Yeshiva Institute, which organizing the Muslim Jewish

³⁹ This is the opinion of a senior staff of Indonesian Bible Society (LAI) who chose to remain anonymous (discussion in email October 1, 2014).

⁴⁰ I heard the similar idea also endorsed among the Christians to have totally Christian residential area in the urban setting but I am not sure about the realization of this idea. My hometown, Yogyakarta was once to be claimed as *Serambi Medinah* (Veranda of Medina) by some Islamic aspirants to say the least it is an Islamic city. The aspiration was failed (Wicoyo, 2011).

Community.⁴¹ Though these groups are beyond the observation for the present concern, it is part of the polemic as the group maintains the identification of Yahweh and Allah.

As we shall see below, long tension between Indonesian Muslim and Christian communities became a cultural memory that both are prone to the mutual suspicions and feeling threatened to each other (Mujiburrahman, 2006). The Muslims are suspicious to the *Kristenisasi* (Christianization) project of the Christians toward Muslim communities, while on the other hand, the Christians are afraid of “radical Islamist” that would end religious freedom enjoyed by the Christians and other religious minorities.

Lastly, the propagation of Internet, social media, and communication technology in public space fertilized the Internet-driven religious discourse such as Sacred Namers, for instance in the creation of virtual community. Internet also gives the sense of “reconnection” with the past “truth” through the availability of online classical texts, scientific reports – often in popular style, and “pseudo”-scientific elaboration that on the whole help Sacred Namers to recreate semiotic world of the past to fit into their aspiration. It may usher relatively costless, with greater immediacy, emotional investment to the pristine past. Furthermore, it creates the sense of instant knowledge proliferation and expertise. To this Internet surmounts the obstacle of academic knowledge production and bureaucratic rigidity.

Conclusion

Human experience, let alone religious experience are fluid, flowing, continuous, and irreducible. Human categorization, identity making, and boundary drawing, those are made this flow of experience discrete and compartmentalized. Hence, from the above observation Sacred Namers movement is an attempt to challenge the easy flow of divine category distilled in the name of God. It challenges the translatability of the divine name and its multiplication dynamic. Nonetheless,

⁴¹ Jews for Allah movement perhaps drew inspiration from the Messianic Judaism group, the Jews for Jesus. As the latter attempts to bring Jews to believe Jesus as Jewish Messiah, the former attempts to bring Jews to Islam. The website catchphrase is “Ethnically Jewish, Religiously Muslim, Jews for Allah” (<http://jews-for-allah.org>). See the Indonesian group website at <http://moslem-jewish.blogspot.com> and its catchphrase is “Jews for Allah, Moslem for HaShem, Al-Qur’an and Torah is One Message.”

through this enterprise, it is in itself inventing new tradition by forging a new connection to what perceived as the real name of biblical God. In the larger discussion, it is not only the Christian Sacred Namers that inventing a new mode of religiosity, other religious groups did the same thing when the past is transformed into the source of inspiration. It may be well observed that many religious revolutionaries considered the past as fertile territory of inspiration, adventurous, and has a strong correlation with the formation of piety.

The name of God has been used and “abused” for any purposes, even to the point of contradictory objective. The problems are rest on the obsessive engagement and inflexibility that in some cases close to the “mental ghettoism,” a highly compartmentalized analytical worldview and the structuralized fear of ambiguity. The polemical discourse of the name of God is no more a password to spiritual realm but in Sacred Namers cases prone to fall into the *onomolatriy*, a “worship” and fetishizing of a name, especially by the most stringent Sacred Namers.

Compulsive objectification (sometimes reification) of semantic play and historical “fact,” especially for the purpose of ridiculing other parties oftentimes comes to the point of what Freud called “narcissism of small differences”: a feud between communities that sharing some common denominators by exploiting small details of differences. At the present juncture, the discourse of Sacred Namers is harmful for inter- and intra-religious interaction.

After all, Sacred Namers demonstrated the dynamic of inter-religious discourse that hybridity and constant searching of new religious speciation is the rule of thumb. And as the movement is growing and hopefully come to the stabilized form and the controversy dissipated, a new intra-/inter-religious dialogue initiative need to be considered. The initiative is meant to manage social integration and to expect social transformation in which all societal elements, including the dissident groups could productively participate.

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