# THE DECADENCE OF INDONESIA MUSLIM'S THINKING

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this article is to investigate the thoughts of classical and contemporary scholars in understanding the source of the teachings of Islam and the thinking decadence of Indonesian Muslim about democracy, religious harmony and demystification of Islam.*

*This article uses a literature study which investigates the idea of classical and contemporary scholars, and decadence of Indonesian Muslims' thinking about democracy, religious harmony and the Islamic demystification through inductive and deductive approach. The study aims to understand their thought comprehensively and systematically in order to build a synthetic understanding based on objective, evidence-based and authentic truth and internal coherence, in order to logically and systematically investigate the basic idea and the central topic of their thinking.*

*The result of this literature study is that Islam accepts democracy and teachs religious harmony to live together with the adherents of other Islamic sects and religions in building a universal civilization. This is in contrary with the fact that the Indonesian Muslims today have experienced the thinking decadence about democracy, religious harmony and the demystification of Islam that cause the role of the Indonesian Muslims in many aspects of live have been the only object of development.*

*Theoretically the study also could enrich and contribute to the scientific literature on democracy, religious harmony and demystification of Islam. In terms of practical thing, the study can be a guide for Muslim community in the social live and teaching that Islam is a universal and tolerant religion toward differences in sects, religions and beliefs, and can cooperate in building a universal civilization.*

**Keywords**: *democracy, religious harmony, and demystification of Islam.*

## Introduction

Epistemology and axiology of faith in God can be started from practical and cognitive realm. The practical realm is usually associated with worship (*ibadah*) issues while the cognitive one is usually related with the social interaction (*muamalah*) issues.

Many Quranic verses and Hadiths are composed with short sentences and order practical things, such as the command to pray. On the other hand, both sources also contain the Islamic philosophy, such as some commands to think about the creation of the heavens and the earth and the change of the night and day.

Thus, the practical command of worship has demanded human to be passive in receiving the teachings of the Lord, because the purpose of the creation of them is to be His servants. Therefore,

the practice of praying (*salah*) which consists of reading and movement fullly comes from God and does not provide opportunities for scholars to argue. This shows that the slave of God is to be passive. On the other hand, the *muamalah* commands that are philosophical requires people to be active in receiving God's teachings and invites people to think before executing them. This is because the purpose of the human creation apart from being a servant of God is to be a leader (Ulum & Siddiq, 2014).

In the human position as the leader on the earth, Islam has set the basic principles of leadership including *muamalah* philosophical teachings, such as the sovereignty of sharia (Yusuf [12]: 40, 4: 65, 5: 44), Shura (Ali Imran [3]: 159, 42: 38), justice (al-Nisa [4]: 58, 5: 8, 57: 25), freedom of speech and thought (al-Naml [27]: 64, 16: 125, 10: 99), equation (al-Hujurat [49]: 13), and the accountability of the leader (Ali Imran [3]: 104).

Holding on the basic principle of philosophical Islamic leadership has placed the role of Muslims in Indonesia that are accustomed to think practically at a disadvantage position. The majority of politicians who serve as regents, mayors and governor in many regions in Indonesia come from the nationalist parties. There are not many Muslim politicians from Islamic parties who served as top political leaders in Indonesia (Wikipedia.co.id).

Similarly, Muslim politician in Indonesia, which became a national leader (president) from the Old until Reform Order is only one person, namely Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), who is derived from the National Awakening Party (PKB) a party which has the Muslim basis. Wahid held the power very short, less than two years from a normal five year period.

While the nationalist politicians who served as presidents were Sukarno (1945-1967) from the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), Suharto (1967-1998) from Golkar Party, BJ Habibie (1998-1999) from Golkar Party, Megawati (2001-2004) Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014) from the Democratic Party (PD), and Joko Widodo (2014-present ) from PDI-P.

The main cause of the defeat of the Indonesian Muslims in practical politics is similar with their defeat in understanding Islam as a whole. Contemporary Muslim scholar thoughts like those from Umar Sulaiman al-Asyqar (1998) which divides Islam into three, namely *aqidah* (creed),

*sharia* (law), and *akhlak* (moral) show the low level of scholars' understanding of Quran as there is no innovation.

Such a division of the Islamic teachings can no longer answer the question of human life that is constantly evolving and getting complex. This is not in accordance with the Islamic teachings that have the role as a mercy to those who fear Allah, to all mankind, and to the whole worlds (*rahmatan li al-alamin*).

According to Kuntowijoyo (2004), although some scholars have started to advance their thinking, such as the Islamization of science and the division of *ayah*s (verses of the Qur'an) into *ayah qauliyah* (explicit verses) and *ayah kauniyah* (contextual verses), the basic set of knowledge, the way how to translate normative religion into science theory and the relationship between Islam as a science *vis a vis* reality is still quite unclear. This theme will be discussed in this article that is divided into three parts, democracy, religious harmony, and Islamic demistification.

**Methodology**

This article uses a literature study which investigates the idea of classical and contemporary scholars, and decadence of Indonesian Muslims' thinking about democracy, religious harmony and the Islamic demystification through inductive and deductive approach in order to understand their thought comprehensively and systematically in order to build a synthetic understanding based on objective, evidence-based and authentic truth, which is seen as the internal coherence, in order to know the basic idea and the central topic of their thinking in a logical and systematical manner.

**Discussion**

The role of revelation as a guide for those who fear Allah, guidance for all mankinds and a mercy to the whole worlds, theoretically and practically has to be reviewed, so that the role of the revelation could actually be proved and grounded in serving God's creatures.

**Democracy**

Adian Husaini (2004) has cited the opinion of secular Muslim intellectuals, like Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Ali Abd al-Raziq, and the opinion of moderate Muslims, such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Mawdudi. According to Zayd, the political world today faces two choices, namely democracy or theocracy. In addition, al-Raziq said that the existence of Islamic State of Medina, founded and led by the Prophet Muhammad is merely coincidence, hence there is no relationship between Islam and politics. A more moderate

argument comes from Al-Qaradawi who contends that the Islamic political system including *ijtihad* and the Koran itself do not specify the form, mechanisms and implementation of the government in the field. A more moderate and specific argument emerges from Mawdudi which argues that Islam is in between democracy and theocracy or a blend of theocracy and democracy (theodemocracy).

According to al-Maqdisi (2014), democracy is the man-made rule and not from Islam, because democracy is the rule of positive law. Al-Maqdisi calls democracy a new religion and if Muslims follow democracy they do *shirk*.

Based on above Muslim scholars' opinions, the world of politics in Indonesia based on Pancasila ideology is unique and different from any democracy in other Muslim countries that use Islam as their state ideology or Western countries that operate the liberal democracy.

As the quintessence of the religion and culture of Indonesia, Pancasila has become a unifying ideology of the Indonesian people of different ethnics, languages, cultures and religions for nearly 70 years. Indonesian nation ethnic backgrounds and different beliefs can live in harmony and co-exist in resolving the problems of live and society and nation and state under the guidance of the rules that have been agreed in the form of Pancasila.

Pancasila is a pluralist ideology. Therefore, Pancasila is not anti-Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and other religions, as Pancasila also is not allergic to ethnic and racial differences. Pancasila formulated, born and led by Committee of Nine or Dokuritsu Zyunbi Tyoosakai with different ideological backgrounds. The committee of nine comprised Soekarno, M. Hatta, M. Yamin and Achmad Soebarjo from Nationalist background; Wachid Hashim, Abdul Kahar Moezakir, Agus Salim and Abikoesno Tjoktosoejoso from Islamist background; and A. A. Maramis from Christian background. Surely, these nine people took into consideration the interests and integrity of their own ideologies in determining the state foundation (Husaini, 2002).

The journey of Pancasila ideology until becoming the foundation for Indonesia nation required a very long time. Therefore, to understand Pancasila as a whole, Kaelan (2004: 20) proposes three meanings of Pancasila etymologically, historically and terminology. Etymologically, Pancasila is derived from Sanskrit language of the Brahmin caste of

India. Citing the opinion of M. Yamin, Kaelan calls Pancasila derived from two words, namely 'panca' meaning five, and 'syila' meaning the regulation for good, important and indicent conduct; or 'syiila' means the rules of good behavior, which is important or indecent. Hence, Pancasila means five basics governing behavior.

In the Buddhist teachings in the Book of Tri Pitaka namely Sutha Pitaka, Abhidama Pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka, there are five moral teachings in the form of prohibition to kill, steal, commit adultery, lie and drink. According to Kaelan (2004), the influence of these moral teachings go to the Java community that is known as *mateni* (kill), *maling* (steal), *madon* (adultery), *mabok* (drinking), and *main* (gambling).

Historically, the term 'nation foundation' firstly appeared at session of the Body of Efforts Investigation for Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI) delivered by dr. Radjiman Widyodiningrat. On May 29, 1945, M. Yamin's speech proposed five State foundations for Indonesia, namely the Peri Kebangsaan (nation), Peri Kemanusiaan (humanity), Peri Ketuhanan (godhead), Peri Kerakyatan (democracy) and Kesejahteraan Rakyat (Social Welfare). Having finished his speech, he delivered a written proposal about five nation foundations, namely the Onnes of God, Nation and Indonesian Unity, Sense of Just and Civilized humanity, Populist Led by Wisdom in Consultative Representatives, and Social Justice for All Indonesian People.

On June 1, 1945, Sukarno made a speech proposing Pancasila as a state ideology, namely Nationalism or Nation of Indonesia, Internationalism or Humanity, Consensus or Democracy, Social Welfare and the Lordship that have Cultures. According to Sukarno, Pancasila can be squeezed into a Tri Sila, namely Socio National that is Nationalism and Internationalism, Socio Democracy that is Democracy and Social Welfare and the Onnes of Lordship. Furthermore, the Tri Sila can be squeezed again to be Eka Sila, namely Mutual Cooperation. In 1947, the Sukarno's speech was published and named as the Birth of Pancasila.

On June 22, 1945, after discussing the proposals of country foundations, the Committee of Nine have agreed on a formula of Pancasila that includes the Jakarta Charter, that is the Godhead with the obligation to run Islamic Shari'a (law) for its adherents, Just and Civilized Humanity, the Unity of Indonesia, the Populist Led by Wisdom in the

Consultative Representatives, and Social Justice for all Indonesian people. In the final seconds of the Declaration of Independence, the non-Muslims of East Indonesia, gave an ultimatum to the Jakarta Charter to be amended. If not changed, they opted to get out of the Indonesian State. Thus, with the maturity of Muslims attitude, Jakarta Charter was removed and replaced with article 29 paragraph (1) and (2) of Indonesian Constitution 1945 (Husaini, 2004).

The history of democracy in Indonesia as explained above has described that political Islam and Islamic political parties have suffered from defeat. However, such a defeat is not used as a lesson by Social Justice Party (PKS), Development Unity Party (PPP), the Crescent Star Party (PBB), which have the Islamic platform, and the National Awakening Party (PKB) and the National Mandate Party (PAN) who have the basis of Muslim people.

The overall impact of not comprehending the histroy is that the role of Islamic parties and Islamic mass-based party run alone and has led the politicians from the other party to be the subject of development. Meanwhile, Muslim politicians have to settle for being the object of development. Even thare had

been a dualism of leadership in the House of Representatives (DPR) in the period from 2014 to 2019, although it ended peacefully (Republika.co.id).

In addition, the views of Muslims towards practical politics in Indonesia today are still looking at the democratic system only from one angle that is the theological issue. They ignore the fact that the democracy system of Pancasila in Indonesia refers to the wisdom of words of God, in contrast to democracy in other countries (Bakry, 2008).

**Harmony among people of religion**

Religious harmony in the history of Islam can be traced back at the time when the Prophet Muhammad with his companions migrated from Mecca to Medina. In Medina, Muhammad built civil society that governs the relationship among religious communities. At that time, there are three religions in Medina, namely Islam, Christians and Jews. These different religions lived in harmony and peace (Ulum & Siddiq, 2014).

The recognition of Islam to other religions is based on the reason that religious differences should not be a trigger factor of conflict. In principle, the difference of religion is a God's will. God said: "And if thy Lord willed, all the people on the earth would have believed.

So will you (want to) force people so that they become people who believe"(Yunus [10]: 99).

According to Muthahari (1995), such teachings of Islam is because Islam recognizes the life of a pluralistic society, which is bound by a tradition, belief and religion, which coexist, cooperate and regulate their live based on mutual agreement and is built on the basis of the division of tasks. The ideas of the human community is born from the value of unity and oneness that refers to the system of collective life that bring people together through social interaction of individuals in accordance with their respective experiences.

To create religious harmony, Indonesian Government's has imposed the Indonesian Consititution 1945 Article 29 paragraph 2 regarding the freedom guarantees for the people to embrace religion and to worship; Law No. 1/PNPS/1965 on the prohibition and prevention of desecration and blasphemy to the religions; Joint Decree of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Religious Affairs, No. 01/BER/Mdn/1969 concerning the task of the government officials to ensure the order and the smooth of implementation and development of religions by its adherents; the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs No. 01/1979, concerning the procedures for the implementation of the religion preaching and foreign aid for private religious institutions in Indonesia; and the Minister of Religious Affairs Circular No. MA/432.1981 about the implementation of rememberance of religious holidays (Aminudidin, 2005).

In Indonesia, inter-religious harmony is imbued with national identity. According to Bakry (2008), national identity is an identity that is attached to a large group, which is bound by the physical similarities such as culture, religion, and language, or bound by non-physical similarities such as desires, ideals, and goals.

Theological and juridical cornerstone has not been understood well by the majority of Indonesian people. Religious sentiment from religious adherents has still been a trigger factor of conflict. Racial issues, such as the revision of the worship houses regulation, deletion Ministry of Religious Affairs, emptying the religion column in the ID card, the abolition of blasphemy law, and the revision of the rule to pray in public schools have become a trigger inter-religious adherents into inharmony (Republika.co.id ).

## Demistification of Islam

To answer the universalism of Islam, as the case of democracy and religious harmony in Indonesia, Sayid Sabiq (1997) has divided the verses of God into two, namely the detailed *ayah*s and general *ayah*s. However, for these general *ayah*s, Muslim scientists in Indonesia, especially those who work in public colleges do not understand and master the methodology of Islamic studies, while some scientists Muslims in Islamic colleges still justify science with revelation. Consequently, demystifying the general *ayat* according to Muslim scientists from both types of universities is still unclear.

Although there is a thinking product of Muslim scholars about the general ayat, such as Veithzal Rivai Zainal which offers the concept of Islamic education management, it still has some weaknesses because it does not depart from the source of Islamic teachings and is not supported by a clear methodology. In fact, if we will manage Islamic education, the first step that must be mastered is distinguishing revelation with human thought. Thus, Islamic education management offered by Veithzal can be called as a conventional management for Islamic education.

According to Ibn Abbas in *Tanwirul Miqyas min Tafsir Ibni Abas*, Ibn Kathir in *Tafsir al-Quranil Azhim* and Sayyid Qutb in *Fi zhilalil Quran*, the purpose of the word of God, "And search the happiness of the Hereafter with what God has given you and do not forget your share of worldly pleasures" (al-Qasas [28]: 77), is the balance of meeting the needs of the world and the hereafter. However, Zainal interprets this verse as human physical needs (Zainal, 2013). This Islamic educational theory built by Zainal is very weak.

To avoid misinterpretation to the word of God such in the case of al-Qasas [28]: 77, classical scholars have established Ulum al-Quran (the science of al-Qur'an) to be a methodology to understand the revelation. Fundamental understanding of religious teaching is extrimely necessary for a scientist. When he/she can not understand the methodology correctly, he/she is very likely to produce the misinterpretation of the God's verses. Conversely, if the methodology he/she uses is correct she will produce a correct, tollerance and good quality interpretation. All humans have the potential to go wrong and true.

According to Kuntowijoyo (2004), the most basic principle in understanding the principles of Islam is the demystification of the general *ayah*s until

reaching to the fact that such *ayah*s can be associated with the live. The mystic that should be demistified is the one that is related to metaphysical, social, ethical, reasoning, and reality. Therefore, this demystification effort will be appropriate and in accordance with the words of the Prophet Muhammad as cited in Al-Nadwi: "Verily Allah sent to this *ummah* for every hundred years a reformer who renew their religion" (Al-Nadwi, 1990).

Unfortunately, today Muslims in Indonesia undergo the decadence of thinking. The Case of *fatwa* (decisions regarding the religious matters from the religious authority) about democracy that is seen only from one angle that is theological issue has benefited others to become leaders in Indonesia. When a Muslim politician in the live of Indonesian democracy manages to be a mayor, regent and governor sometimes led to inter-religious inharmony as happened in Poso Central Sulawesi. Such a case could happen because there is a suspicion from others regarding the *fatwa* that democracy is forbidden (*haram*) in Islam (Kompas.com).

In essence, the interpretation of democracy and religious harmony happening to Muslims in Indonesia is not only limited to the purpose to solve the interpretation of the democracy, but also to realize a realistic Islamic teaching. We need to know the essence of democracy in the view of Islamic teaching. According to Sayyid Qutb cited in Madkur (2002), such a teaching is called "tsabat" or "valid", which means the valid movement in the frame and axle of Islam. Prophet Muhammad said: "There will come in my *ummah* an epoch, which is nothing left of Islam except its name, and not left out of the Quran except its writing. They crowd mosque but devoid the guidance. Their scholars are as bad-ugly man under the heaven. From them the libel goes out and to them the libel gets back".

The phenomenon described by the prophet in the above hadith, can be known from textual understanding of Muslims against their holy book. They stated that the decline of Muslims is caused by not returning to the Quran. In fact, as explained earlier, the Quran is composed of detailed and general *ayah*s.

Therefore, inharmony among adherents of Islam can be well explained from the view that it happens due to the interpretation debate of the *ayah*s that is not corelated with the teachings of Islam that accepts the reality of life. The Impact of such thinking decadence is allegedly to have raised suspicions from other parties

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such as the case occurred in Poso. In fact, when we read the history of the Islamic sect, differences in interpretation of *ayah*s as long as done by a valid and qualified commentators (*mufassir*) are not to be disputed. History has recorded that Imam Syafii studied to Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal studied to Imam Syafii (Nata, 2002).

**Conclusion**

The main characteristic of the Quran and Hadith as the source of Islamic teachings is that they consist of detailed and passive *ayah*s and general and active ones. On one hand, both types of *ayah*s must be operated in accordance with textual messages contained therein. On the other hand, both also accept the reality of live and the changing of times.

One of the products of a changing time is democracy. Therefore, although democracy is not a product of Islam, democracy can be accepted by Islam as long as democracy exists in the frame and pole of Islam. There are some teachings of democracy that is in accordance with the teachings of Islam, such as the support of the majority of leaders and religious harmony.

Thus, this interpretation of democracy will be cooling and incontroversial, because it has taught

religious harmony in building a universal civilization. However, Indonesian Muslims are currently be trapped in the decadence of thinking about democracy, religious harmony and Islamic demistification.

The overall impact is that the role of Muslims in Indonesia in several aspects of live is in the position of the object of development. In addition, inharmony interrelationship among Muslims caused by the debate of general *ayah*s has brought about the decadence of thinking and risen the suspicions of other parties such cases occurred in Poso.

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