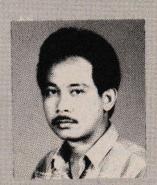# RETROSPECTIVE STUDY ON ISLAMIC POLITICS:
The Case of Islamic Leaders

Ishomuddin

There is a fundamental adagium in Islamic teachings: "The believers are brothers". However, it does not mean that every muslim must actualize his right to be political leader. Over the long history of Islam, that adagium was never understood to mean that all muslims had an equal right to involve themselves in political affairs. The history of Khulafaur-Rashidun tells us the different processes of Islamic Leaders. Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, for instance, was not elected by muslims all over Islamic country. He was appointed by a leader before, Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiq

Recently, there are three kinds of ideologies or tendencies in moslems. It is especially the relationship between Islam and governmental (politics). First, ideology illustrates that Islam is not merely religion as western interprete, that is only involves relationship between mankind and God (Allah). But it is a complete way of life. Followers this tendency commonly said that Islam is; (1) a complete way of life , (2) political system and Islamic politics that prophet Muhammad and his companions, caliphs had done when they built Islamic government. Excellent figures of this ideology are; Hasan Al-Bana, Sayyid Quthub, Rasyid Ridha and the most popular, A.A. Al-Maududi who states in his book "The Islamic law and constitution " that Islam is not a more collection of dogmas and rituals, it is a complete way of life. Second, they remark that religion of Islam is the same as interpretation of western that no relationship between Islam and politic. According to them, Muhammad, most beloved prophet of Allah, is not more than ordinary man, his duty is merely to invite and ask mankind to have good character, polite, or well behave (al-akhlaq al-karimah) and not to be a leader of state. The prominent figures of this ideology are Ali Abd. Al-Raziq and Dr. Thaha Husen. Third, Ideology refuses the religion of Islam completing way of life as first says. And rejects that religion of Islam only arranges relationship between human and creator. But it is noted that in religion of Islam we do not find out the system but contains a set of value, ethic, and political life. The figures of this ideology is Dr. Muhammad Husain Haikal. He wrote *Hayatu Muhammad"* and *Fi manzil al-wahyi.*

In this paper, I would like to invite you to discuss, recall, retrospectif study on the relationship between Islam and state or politic.

The main purpose is to find out the answer whether there is or not political system in Islam and if it has, for example, whether it is relevant to current life. Well, we start from the holy Quran, and study the history of Islamic politic at glance. Especially from the periode of Muhammad, peace be upon him, to His companions, Caliphs (al-khulafa' al-rasyidun) Abu Bakar, Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Utsman Ibn Affan and Ali Ibn Abi Thalib.

The religion of Islam

Religion is anything that is prescribed by Allah through His prophets in the form of commandment, prohibition and guidance, for the achievement of happiness in this world and hereafter. The religion of Islam which was brought by prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, is that which has been revealed by Allah in the Holy Quran and that which had been mentioned in the true tradition of His prophet, consisting of commandment, prohibition and guidance for the happiness of mankind in this world and the hereafter.

The word Islam, which is derived from Arabic, means to accept, to follow and to obey. In other words, Islam is following God, the Master. God is our Creator and Master. Our success in life relies fully on folowing the Master. Therefore, we must all obey His commands, either in words or in deeds. But God has let us be free to obey or not to obey Him. Life is like a test. The successful test taker is one who obeys God. In other words, the real success in this life and the life after death is in obeying God. True peace is also lies only in following God. The word Islam also means peace. Therefore, Islam means both obedience to God and peace. Islam seeks peace through obedience to God, the Creator and the Master. Islam is a

Muhammad, most beloved prophet of Allah, is not more than ordinary man, his duty is merely to invite and ask mankind to have good character, polite, or well behave (al-akhlaq al-karimah) and not to be a leader of state

religion from God which leads its followers to gain true peace.

The sources of Religion of Islam

There are two sources of the religion of Islam. These sources are Quran and the Sunnah. The Quran is God's words which were revealed to the prophet Muhammad and the Sunnah is the Prophet's tradition. The Quran is a guidance from God for all human beings. Therefore, God's words which were written in the Quran should be read by all human beings. God wants human beings to be happy in the world and in the life hereafter by giving the guidance and rules written in the Quran. Therefore , all people who want to be happy and safe in their life should know what is said by God in the Quran. Their happiness lies in their obedience to the guidance of God.

God sent the Prophet Muhammad as His messenger to instruct all people how to obey and to follow His guidance. What the prophet did was to explain, to inform and to give examples. Everything from the prophet was considered as the Sunnah or prophet's tradition, and it is the second source of Islamic teaching. Therefore, what the prophet did and said and also what his companions did and he agreed to all of these are the sources of Islam. All Muslims accept and follow guidance from Allah and His messenger according to what is written in the Quran and what was taught by the prophet as His sunnah.

Contents of Holy Quran

In the holy Quran, there are many verses containing guidance and way of life for human social life, for instance about occupation on the earth, read Surah Ali Imran 26, Al-An'am 165, Yunus 14, the social principals, the principals of association (musyawarah) and consultation, see Surah Ali Imran 159, Al-Syura 38, obedience of leader, read Al-Nissa 59, justice, Surah Al-Nahl 90, Al-Nissa 58, equality, Al-Hujurat 13 and relationship between Islamic people and another religion, read Surah Al-Baqarah 256, Yunus 99, Ali Imran 64 and Al-Muntahanah 8-9.

Islam : Authoritarian - Egalitarian values

Unquestionably a strong strain of authoritarianism which has supported authoritarian polities exits in the Islamic tradition. In Manfred Halpern's word *"In popular Islam, an unseen world demands continual propitiation ; in orthodox Islam, the beleiver has been given rules to guide his entire conduct by a God so powerful that only submission is possible.* Halpern argues that in fact the political culture informed by Islam is pecularly open to Marxist appeals, for many muslims are prepare to look for " a modern revelation as total in its concepts, emotional appeal, and the social control it exercises as was Islam in the past". One might add that Islam's essential egalitarianism is another value it shares with Marxism. However, authoritarian-egalitarian values may support various types of regimes, and for example, Nasser with his ideology of Arab socialism, which involves no rejection of Islamic theism, seems a more likely pattern in the Middle East than a Marxist alternative. In any case, the prospect for democratic political institutions throughout the muslims world does not seem bright.

Dogmatic authority in Islam is very high. The truth is absolute, universal and unchanging ; in ortodox theology the holy Quran in beleived to be eternal, that is, the Word of God existed before it was communicated to the prophet. Jews and Christians have valid but incomplete scriptures; the Quranic relevation is God's final and authoritative message to mankind.

Directive authority, the comprehensive set of rules by which men must order their lives, is found in *Syari'ah*, or sacred law. "Much more than a legal system properly speaking, the syari'ah is the comprehensive catalogue of God's commands and recommendations laid down for the guidance of men. How and what to eat , when to wash, what to wear, how and when to pray and fast --these and similar matters are treated on the same basis and with just as much meticulous concern as matters more strictly legal, such as marriage and divorce, or commercial transactions, or crime. Governing the whole range of man's relation with God and

Nothing is either good or evil in itself, unless decreed to be so by Allah. Even murder would have been morally irrelevant if it were not for the fact that the Quran forbids it. Even now, it is not innately immoral; it is just forbidden by Allah

society, and in the absence of any organized Muslims hierarchy, the *syari'ah* is incomparably the central institution of Islam. This low ecclesiastical institutionalization of authority is what sharply distinguishes Islamic from Catholic authority patterns. While the *Ulama'* do interpret and apply the law, the mechanisms for its enforcement have always come from the political structures.

Authoritarian values are fostered by the Muslims understanding of the relationship between morality and law. God command or decree in the Quran determines whether a given act is good or bad. "Nothing is either good or evil in itself, unless decreed to be so by Allah. Even murder would have been morally irrelevant if it were not for the fact that the Quran forbids it. Even now, it is not innately immoral; it is just forbidden by Allah". The Syari'ah classifies all acts as mandatory, recommended, permissible, reprehensible, or forbidden. While the intricacies of jurisprudence are left to the *Ulama'*, this basic perception of the nature of human actions has profoundly influenced all Muslim life.

The authorian culture of the Middle East has been largely molded by Islam, which literally means submission. Submission to the will of Allah is expressed ritually five times a day in prayers during which the believer prostrates his whole body before the divine sovereign of individualism " in Islam, in the sense that rewards and punishment will be meted out to men as individuals on the Day of Judgment. While this is true -- and parallel statements could be made for Catholicism, Hinduism, and Budhism-- the religious system as a whole is clearly not conducive to the development of individual ego strength and self-determination.

Even the egalitarianism of Islam is in part related to the fact of submission. According to

Prof. Najjar: "By nature men are unequal; they acquire their equality by submitting to God's will, and are thus reduced to the same level. Man is the slave of God, and as such he cannot claim any superiority. *Kulluna 'abidul-Allah (we are all God's slaves)* is a current retort in Muslim countries to any display of superiority or exercise of discrimination". Islamic egalitarianism, like that of primitive Christianity, did not extend to the rejection of the institution of slavery. And Islamic egalitarianism never extended to woman. Nevertheless, the equality of believers is a value deeply embedded in Islam and one strongly favorable to the general processes of modernization. The Quran declares: "The believers are brothers". Over the long history of Islam, this was never understood to mean that all Muslims had an equal right to political participation. However, it still remains an ideal which can be given greater social, economic, and political content.

Authorian-egalitarian values are the most significant Islamic contributions to contemporary political cultures. Over the past hundred years considerable intellectual energy has been expended in attempting to prove or disprove the compatibility of Islam with democracy. Muslim interpreters attempting to establish this compatibility have been motivated by a sometimes confused mixture of apologetic and reformist considerations. Some have sought to prove the validity of Islam by showing that democratic ideas and institutions were and integral part of Islam from its inception. Others have sought to legitimize modern democracy and encourage Muslims to accept it by pinting to its alleged affinity to Islam. The major premise has often been unclear in such discussion. Futhermore, the argument often centered on largely irrelevant historical questions, such as the practice of *Syura* (consultation) in con-

nection with the appointmen of the early caliphs. *Ijtihad* (private judgment) was never understood as an open invitation to the Muslims to make their own laws. Modernist interpretation of ijtihad and *Ijma'* (consensus) as sources of law claimed them as a firm foundation for modern democracy, overlooking the fact that the consensus was that of the ulama' on a point of legal interpretation. The concepts do not bear the least resemblance to any notion of popular soverignty.

While their interpretations were often strained and historically invalid, what was most important was not the modernist' arguments but their existence. The fact was that a considerable number of Western-educated Muslims found it possible to subcribe to liberal democratic values while remaining faithful to what they regarded as the essence of Islam. Their interpretations even the farfetched ones, played a significant role in the Muslim encounter with modernity. However, they consistently underestimated the weight tradition which, as we have suggested, has been and is strongly authoritarian.

While not as pronounced as in Chatholicism, in Islam also high dogmatic authority has led to an ideological orientation toward politics. Islamic political parties, from Egypt and Sudan to Indonesia, have waged ideological *Jihad* (holy war) against both liberal secularists and Marxists. In all of thesecountries there has been a moderate sector of Muslim opinion inclined toward accommodation of those holding opposing world views, but the most devout Muslims have generally been the least receptive to compromise. Since the truth has been so clearly revealed to man, categorical opposition to contradictory views is the only logical course for a true believer.

Islamic leader : Election System mode

We all know the history of Islam, focused on the process of choosing leader. According to the Islamic History written in some Islamic books, besides Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon Him, all caliphs appointed as a leader through *musyawarah* (mutual consultation) In period of Caliphs, there is no mode of specific appointment system. There is no guidance how to finish the function of Islamic leader. They finish their function till they died. Prophet Muhammad as a single Islamic leader owning authority based on *Wahyu* (relevation) and has responsibility on His acts to God, but it is different from His companions (Caliphs). They have social interaction to society. It is related to the condition and situation which has changed and developed at that time. Abu Bakar was appointed through open consultation by five persons as vices of Islamic society elements. They are "Muhajirin" and" Anshar", either from " Khazraj" or Aus" group.

It differs the process of promoting Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. As a second Islamic leader of Caliph, he was appointed by a leader before and never through open election and open meeting. After Abu Bakar decided that Umar was one who fitted to occupied that position, then be arranged close meeting with some senior companions. Different case also happened to Utsman Ibn Affan, third Caliph. He was appointed in open meeting held by "formatur board" consisting of six persons chose by Umar. It was not based on element agent to nominate but on the quality, achievement. They are from Muhajirin element.

It was not more different way to nominated Ali as the last Caliph from the other before. But the situation of society in Madinah is very confusing. Furthermore, only a few Islamic figures who lived in it. He was appointed through open meeting and open consultation. Because of that country condition and situation some people refused him as a leader (in Islamic history the

> **Islamic political parties, from Egypt and Sudan to Indonesia, have waged ideological *Jihad* (holy war) against both liberal secularists and Marxists**

man who refused is Mu'awiyah bin Abu Sufyan, Governor of Suria).

Sources

H. Munawir Sadzali, MA,*Islam dan Tatanegara, Ajaran, Sejarah dan Pemikiran,* UI Press , 1990.

Mizan , vol.III No. 1 1989.

------, vol.III No. 2 1990.

Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion and Political Development* Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1970.

Djamaluddin Darwis, *English for Islamic Studies,* Aditya Media, Yogyakarta, 1992.

Medium, a quarterly Magazine, no.2 vol.1, 1991, IKIP Muhammadiyah Jakarta.