

Islam and the state: Political thought contextualisation of Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah), on the state, religion and morality in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This study discusses the ‘political thought contextualisation of Hamka, on the state, religion and morality’. It specifically examines the phenomenon in society that politics tends to be legalising all means to achieve their political goals, it tends to be conflicting interests. The purpose of this study is to prove that Hamka’s political thoughts are not the case, but that the opposite is true. This means that politics is sacred and beneficial when used as a means to achieve benefits and for the sake of the society/community. This study applies a qualitative approach and is reinforced with a literature review, including interviews with close family and a very familiar Hamka figure in the field of sociopolitical activism, namely: Masjumi, Muhammadiyah, YPI Al Azhar and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). The interviews were intended to help strengthen, map, explain and analyse the political thoughts of Hamka. Subsequently, the data were analysed using a qualitative approach to the interpretation in order to derive conclusions that address existing problems. This study proves that, in the context of Indonesia, there is no separation between religion and state affairs. According to Hamka, Islam is the doctrine of revelation containing *syari’at*, worship, *muamalat* and state, rooted in *tawhid* (the supremacy of Allah). Islamic religion in this case is not narrowly conceived and executed partially as prayer alone (secular), but comprehensive in terms of society and state.

1 INTRODUCTION

Relationship problems between religion and state initially appeared in the historical development of the phenomenon in the Western world and not in the Islamic world. A combination of the power of the Church and the state took place in Europe until the medieval period. Unity was shattered due to the emergence of the recognition by the Church itself, as presented by

Pope Gelasius, that the powers of the King as the head of state and the Pope as the head of the Church were different. This doctrine is known as the doctrine of the two swords or two powers of Gelasius. In reality, it is not easy to implement because there are things that are considered to be included in their respective powers that have been disputed, some of which are more worthy of power. As a result, Europe in the middle centuries was often linked to a record of lengthy disputes, both in thought and practice, regarding the true powers of the Church and the state, which lasted until the time that two separate powers were no longer distinguishable. Thus, with the separation between the power of the Church and the power of the state, each had a symbol of power and a complete hierarchy of officials. In the Church the Pope met with his ministerial system and in the European countries there was a King with his ministers as aides (Kuntowijoyo, 1997, p. 182).

Therefore, the actual problem of religion and the state should not exist in the Islamic world. However, in fact, the debate about the relationship between Islam and the state was a classical phenomenon that continues to this day, in a local, national and international context.

The phenomenon of the debate about the relationship between religion and the country concerns the state of life in Indonesia, and, more prominently, the role played by Islam (Thaba, 1996, p. 34). Nevertheless, Indonesia recognises the existence of five other religions, namely: Christian Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, Buddhism and Confucianism, which confirms the identity of Indonesia as a country with a diverse population in terms of religion and beliefs (Jumanta, 2015, p. 36).

The relationship between Islam and the state in Indonesia has always had its ups and downs, because the relationship between the two does not stand alone but is affected by other issues, such as political, economic, social and cultural issues. Thus, addressing the relationship between Islam and the state in Indonesia remains relevant and interesting because of the objective conditions that Indonesian with majority muslim population has made Islamic image on their identity and entity for their global interaction (Hamka, 2016, p. xxiv).

The emergence of the realisation of the demands of Islamic values in the life of the state has led to a continuing debate, so there have been many opinions issued by experts regarding the position of religion in the life of the state. Most Muslims believe that the teachings and values espoused must be upheld in the life of the society, nation and state (Thayib, 1997, p. v). In almost every phase in the history of a nation, there arise problems concerning the relationship between religion and the state, and Indonesia is no exception. As an example, debates took place before and after the proclamation of independence, and they were identified into two major groups, namely between secular nationalists and religious nationalists. Among the prominent young leaders was Sukarno, a secular nationalist, and Natsir, a religious nationalist (Islam) (Iqbal, 2014, p. 32).

The general theory about the relationship between Islam and the state is classified into three types, namely (1) Secularistic, (2) Integrality and (3) Antagonistic (Suhelmi, 2012, p. 57). One of the Indonesian Islam moderate thinkers that will be discussed in this paper is Hamka, the acronym of Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. Hamka was born in Maninjau, West Sumatra on 17 February 1908 and passed away in Jakarta on 24 July 1981 (Hamka, 2012, p. 289). Hamka was well known as a scholar, writer, poet and humanist, both by the public in Indonesia and overseas, rather than as a fighter, a political activist and a national hero.

The reason underlying the discussion of Hamka in this paper is because we still rarely find viewpoints on the political thoughts of this character active in the Indonesian Islamic party Masjumi Indonesian Council of Ulama and Muhammadiyah (Noor, 2015, p. 55). Another interesting thing is that while Islamic thinkers make a reference to Al Quran, Hamka wrote a book *Tafsir Al Azhar* (Tafseer of Al Azhar) (Ridwan, 2015). Furthermore, he was also involved in the independence struggle against the Dutch and Japanese, being critical to the regime of Sukarno and becoming a political prisoner. Then when President Suharto was in power, Hamka resigned from his position as the chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council because of a dispute with the relevant ministers about the MUI *fatwa* (edict) on Christmas in 1981 (Shobahussurur, 2008, p. xiii).

The focus of this paper is limited to the relationship between Islam and the state; the contextualisation of Hamka's political thoughts about the state and religious morality. The purpose of religious morality is the universal values of Islam based on the Qur'an, which are used as the ethical foundation in politics. Examples include the values of equality, fairness, discussion, honesty, trust and the whole universe blessing in relationships between countries (Hamka, 2015).

2 RELIGION AND STATE RELATIONS IN INDONESIA

The discussion on the relationship between Islam and the state in the context of Indonesia was started by the founders of the nation prior to independence. Before independence on 17 August 1945, the founders of the state, the religious nationalists and secular nationalists, were involved in the debate on the basis of the philosophy and ideology of how the Indonesian state was to be established. From their debate, we realise how difficult it was to formulate

the basic philosophy of the Indonesian state, as the country was composed of diverse ethnic, racial, religious and political groups. The debate about the basic philosophy of the state began in the first BPUPKI Assembly, when there were three speakers, namely M. Yamin on 29 May 1945, Mr. Supomo on 31 May 1945 and Ir. Soekarno on 1 June 1945 (Latif, 2012, p. 9). As can be seen from the speeches of the three founders of the country, the issue of the basic philosophy of the state was at the centre of the debate between nationalists and Islamic groups. At first the religious groups wanted the state to be based on the Shari'a; the nationalists, however, did not agree with the proposal and wanted Pancasila as the basis (Maarif, 2003, p. 109). Then there was the signing of an agreement, namely the Jakarta Charter on 22 June 1945, which was intended as a draft Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The different formulation of Pancasila through the Jakarta Charter was the first principle, with the formulation of the Deity with the obligation to enforce Sharia Law for adherents (Kaelan, 2009, p. 11–12).

When the nation of Indonesia proclaimed its independence on 17 August 1945, which was proclaimed by Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta, on behalf of the entire nation of Indonesia, then the PPKI (Indonesian Independence Preparatory Committee), headed by Sukarno and with Hatta as the vice chairman, started their duties. Ahead of the opening of the first official office on 18 August 1945, Mohammad Hatta proposed changing the design of the 1945 Constitution and its contents, which was done because of complaints from the people of East Indonesia, so that the formulation of the sentence in the Jakarta Charter 'with the obligation to run sharia Islam for its adherents' should be abolished. At the historic meeting, then through an agreement, it was approved that it should become 'Belief in one God' (Kaelan, 2009, p. 112).

The founders of Indonesia made the distinctive and innovative choice about the country's position in relation to Islam. The first principle of Pancasila, 'Belief in one God', was considered as the relationship paradigm between religion and state in Indonesia. Additionally, through a very serious discussion accompanied by high moral commitment, they came to a choice that Indonesia is based on the Oneness of God. Given the diversities of the Indonesian people and a nation that consists of various ethnic groups, ethnicities, races and religions, it seemed the founding fathers found it difficult to easily decide the state principles (Hakim & Talha, 2005, p. 1).

Indonesians believe that the independence proclaimed on 17 August 1945 was not merely due to the people's struggle. Had the God Almighty not wanted it to, it would never have happened. Thus, the birth of Indonesia has been based on the values of divinity. Furthermore, the third paragraph of the 1945 Constitution Preamble also states, 'Indonesia's independence is a blessing from Allah the Almighty'. In addition, the state guarantees religious life, such as what is contained in Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution (the Secretary General of the Assembly, 2004, p. 52). In accordance with the principle stating that 'the Country is based on the Oneness of God', religion and Islam in Indonesia have become the spirit of integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. According to Adi Sulistiyono, religion is treated as one of the ideals of state-formation (*staatsidee*) (Sulistiyono, 2008, p. 3).

However, this does not mean that Indonesia is a theocratic state. The relationship between the state and religion is that of symbiotic mutualism, in which one and the other give and take. In this context, religion provides 'deep spirituality', while the state guarantees religious life. Indonesia is not a theocratic state but is based on law. Law is the commander and supreme power is above the law (Syarifuddin, 2008, p. 10).

The management of the relationship between religion and state can also be constructed on the basis of checks and balances. On the one hand, the state's hegemonic tendencies, which could easily become repressive against its citizens, must be controlled and balanced by the values of the Islam-Religion that spreads mercy to all creatures in the universe, including by upholding human rights. On the other hand, the possibilities of the Islam-Religion that are misused as authoritarian practices must also be controlled and balanced by the rules and norms of democratic life, which are guaranteed and protected by the state. Therefore, both historically and legally, the Indonesian state, in its relationship with religion, has been using the paradigm of Pancasila. According to Mahfud MD, Pancasila is a prismatic concept.

A prismatic concept is one that takes the good aspects of contradictory concepts and combines them together as a concept of its own so that it can always be actualised with the reality of Indonesian society and its continuous development. The Indonesian state is not a theocratic state, as this kind of state bases itself on only one religion, yet the Pancasila state is not a secular state either, as this kind of state does not involve any religious matters, including Islam. A Pancasila state is a religious nation state that protects and facilitates the development of all the religions embraced by its people without taking into account the numbers of their followers (Busyairi, 2015).

Muslims, as the majority in Indonesia, contribute significantly to maintaining a conducive environment towards the ideology of Pancasila. The first principle of Pancasila, 'Believe in one God', is in harmony with the view that there is no separation between religion and state affairs. Religion as a political force in Indonesia has emerged since the periods of pre-independence, throughout the Old Order, the New Order and up to the present time. The New Order is a political order that was different with the Old Order. In this discourse, the political format of the New Order attempted to create a balance between conflict and consensus (Rauf, 2001, p. 127–131). If, during the Old Order, the development was emphasised in the political field, then the New Order turned it into the economic field. In politics, the ruling regime were faced with efforts to create a new political format. This effort was practically simultaneous with the growth of people's optimism as they came out of difficult times, having the optimism for a new and improved life that was more democratic and more secure. In the following sections we will discuss Buya Hamka's thoughts concerning the state and religion and the relationships among states in the context of Indonesia as part of the international community.

3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAM AND THE STATE ACCORDING TO BUYA HAMKA

Buya Hamka views that the establishment of a state is because of common beliefs. This can mean that the elements regarding the formation of a country originate from communities that have one shared view or belief, and that their centralised focus is the aim to preserve and develop their communities. Actualization of their beliefs exist in a large domain called state. Meanwhile, the establishment of a country begins once human understand deliberation and statehood (Talha, 2005, p. 94).

Based on the above, deliberation is a basic element in the formation of a state. This is due to the rational thought that it is unlikely that a country will be formed if the inhabitants of the country never consult one another. A deliberation is where members consist of various elements or different ethnicities who can reach a collective agreement if each member has the same purpose and belief. In this regard, it is the idea to establish a state (Asy-Syawi, 1997, p. 17–21).

However, the above opinion is relatively different from the opinions of other Islamic political thinkers. Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rabi and Al-Farabi, for example, argue that human beings are social beings who have a natural tendency to socialise. This is due to the fact that they are not able to meet all their needs without the assistance or co-operation of others, and this is the rationale of a country's formation. The same thing has been stated by Al Mawardi, yet he dominantly includes this element in his theory of religion (Al Mawardi, 2013).

According to Al Mawardi, Allah the Almighty creates human beings who are not able to meet their own needs with the purpose of making us aware that He is the Creator, the Provider, and that we need Him and require His help. In the Qur'an, it is not clearly explained about the state principle, and Al Mawardi more firmly argues that the Qur'an does not give a clear definition on it, be it on the purpose and the idea of an institution, the concept of sovereignty, voting principles as the conception of human rights or as the regulations of a state (Iqbal, 2014, p. 21).

As for the relationship between Islam and the state, Hamka is of the view that religion and state are inseparable, as both need one another. The reasons are that, on the one hand,

the state needs religion as the fundamental basis of its efforts to establish the morality of a nation, which is essential for the survival of a state. On the other hand, religion requires the state as the main factor of its existence and development (Fuad, 2015).

The thoughts of Hamka were influenced by the thoughts of al Mawdudi and Al Mawardi, who were of the view that the political matters of a country are ruled by Islam. Sovereignty is, therefore, not in anyone but in God the Almighty. God orders that human beings do not obey anyone, except Him. This is what is meant as a straight path. As for specific cases and pragmatic realities for other cases, Al Mawardi states a symbiotic paradigm in the context of religious laws and the state in the political sense. Both are related reciprocally, and they mutually need one another. Religion requires the state in order to develop itself and the state needs religion as a guidance for ethics and morals. In this regard, Hamka argues that a state will collapse when its people neglect what is called the Islamic values and morality, and it is actually the duty of religion to establish them in society and state (Herdiawanto, 2006, p. 94).

As stated previously, Indonesia is a country that believes in the Oneness of the Almighty, and this has been made as the first principle of Pancasila of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, any policies or regulations that are adopted and enforced must be based on the spirit of this principle, either formally or substantially (Fatwa, 2010, p. 5) The principle of the Oneness of God means absolutely that in the Republic of Indonesia there is no point of contention in terms of divinity/Islam towards the attitudes and actions of anti-divinity or anti-Islam and there is no compulsion of religion (Soeprapto, 2004, p. 11).

The relationship between religion and the state has actually existed since the 1945 Constitution, particularly Article 29. The article reveals two things: the state principle based on the Oneness of God and the freedom of religion in accordance with one's religion and beliefs (Secretary of MPR, 2002, p. 51). The article, either explicitly or implicitly, states that the link between religion and state in Indonesia is inseparable. The divinity in the first principle of Pancasila is, in fact, a subject of Indonesia's socialism, more particularly religious socialism (Sahrasad, 2000, p. 5).

4 CONCLUSIONS

The author of this study focuses on the study of Buya Hamka. In Islamic heritage, his name has gained a reputation as a great scholar and writer. His thoughts are broadly welcomed by various circles, especially among Indonesian Muslims, and he is often identified as a modernist or reformer. Hamka is also a Qu'ran interpreter (*mufassir*) in Indonesian, with his phenomenal books the *Al Azhar Tafseer*.

Among the aspects of life in Islam are the principles and ethics of life in society and the state, so this is one of the indications and evidence that Islam also regulates the social system and state, known as Islamic politics, with a variety of theories to apply the basic framework of the thoughts of the Qur'an and as-Sunnah. In the view of contemporary Islamic thinkers, modern political science is not universal, and it can even be said to be rather specific.

Hamka believed that the Qur'an does not require a separation between religion (Islam) and the state. He believed that they are mutually enhancing. One example is the concept of *shura* (deliberation). Hamka viewed that, in the Qur'an, the *shura* technique is not well described, but he explained that, depending on the circumstances, *shura* is not out of religion. Then the concept of state and head of the state that declare the creation and obligations to make a welfare state are the responsibility of a leader, and his people must have the morals of the Qur'an in their daily life. On the subject of international relations, Hamka believed that Islam does not prohibit Muslims from co-operating with non-believers, as long as they do not fight and expel the Muslims from their homeland. Regarding the political morality of religion, Hamka further highlighted the consistent attitude of political actors and political behaviour. From the above interpretation, we can conclude that Hamka wanted to reconstruct the human understanding of politics from negative to positive and to interpret the Qur'anic verses related to political discourses. He hoped that Muslims could understand that politics is noble when it is connected to a moral religion.

From the above description, it can be concluded that Indonesia upholds religion and it is positioned as the basis or rationale on matters related to the affairs of state, as evidenced by the first principle concerning the God Almighty God in Pancasila. In this case, Buya Hamka concurred on the importance of the relationship between religion and the state. Both are influential and correlated, and therefore create a seamless relationship. The thoughts of Buya Hamka have a positive relevance to the practice of statehood in Indonesia with regards to the relationship between religion and state. It is also evident that the Republic of Indonesia can accommodate religious life, which was proven by the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesia Ulema Council in 1975.

The relationship between religion and the state is reflected both in individual life and in the life of the nation. If we observe the environmental community, it continues to increase the splendour and solemnity of Islamic activities in the form of ritual and the social form of Islam. The spirit of Islam is also reflected in the life of the state, which can be found in the public documents concerning the state philosophy of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution and the development plans that give life and colour to the speeches of statehood.

In its implementation, the national development of religious spirit becomes stronger with the enactment of basic faith and devotion to God Almighty as one of the foundations of development. This means that all enterprises and national development activities are inspired, driven and controlled by faith and devotion to God Almighty, as the noble values that form the basis of spiritual, moral and ethical development.

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