

Chapter 2 Islam and Democracy

A handful of people are unable to see the connection between Islam and a democratic system, an understanding of diversity and pluralism, tolerance, and the message of anti-violence. There are even those who glibly charge that these values are opposed to Islam. What is the truth? This chapter embarks on the long explanation required to answer this question, by tracing the authentic Islamic sources and citing the views of contemporary Muslim writers who are apprehensive about the state of the Islamic world today. Admittedly, there are still groups that condemn democracy and pluralism as *haram*, and consider their supporters as deviant, even unbelievers. My hope is that those who read this detailed account will be in a position to think more lucidly and objectively about these matters.

Why Is Islam in Harmony with Democratic Concepts?

The previous chapter described how democracy was implemented in Indonesia in the 1955 general election. (In the end, however, the democratic system was intentionally destroyed by extra-parliamentary forces.) Here I shall cite a set of theories about democracy that several Muslim writers have developed. Indonesian Islam is fortunate in its acceptance of democratic principles, and Indonesia's Muslim *umat* finds no difficulty in harmonizing the teachings of Islam with these democratic principles. A noteworthy example is Masyumi, the Islamic political party that was martyred for defending democracy and the Constitution. Those Muslim writers who oppose democracy, however, are unable to support their position with persuasive religious arguments.

Let me reemphasize that from the beginning the majority of the Muslim *umat* in Indonesia have supported the democratic system. In contrast to their coreligionists in other parts of the world who reject or have doubts about democracy, the Muslim majority of the Indonesian people actually see democracy as the realization of the *shura* principle as taught in the Quran.¹ Aside from considerations of religion, the Indonesian *umat* supports democracy based also on the reality of the weight of their numbers as the majority in Indonesia: the democratic system allows the democratic majority to fight for their aspirations for Islamic community life and statehood. Therefore, political parties with

Islamic features have emerged both before and after Proclamation in the context of erecting the pillars of that democracy, even if these have been thrown down along the way.

Let us take a brief look at what democracy really is in the minds of contemporary Muslim writers. The substance of democracy is the guaranteed liberty of people to freely choose their leader or formal political system, or bring a leader down if that person fails to respect the constitution.

The Egyptian writer Fahmi Huwaydi, who is not too tied up in academic definitions, has written this about democracy:

The substance of democracy – leaving academic definitions and terminology aside – requires society to choose someone who will govern them and regulate their affairs, and does not require them to choose a leader or system that they do not like. In addition, according to democracy, they must have the right to demand accountability by the leader if he is in error and to bring this leader down if he commits an irregularity. And they may not be directed toward views and opinions, or economic, social, cultural or political methods which they don't know and agree with.²

Huwaydi is surprised by Muslims who reject democracy and asks this question of them: “Then is democracy, substantially as described above, contradictory to Islam? Where does that contradiction derive from? Is there a definite argument in the Quran and hadith that supports that charge?”³ More strongly yet, he says, “The fact is, people who truly understand the substance of democracy will find that this substance comes from Islamic concepts.”⁴ Huwaydi includes religious arguments to defend his theory of democracy in no fewer than twenty-three translated pages of his work.⁵

Anywhere in the world, democracy in practice demands three or four complementary conditions: a sense of responsibility, broad-minded tolerance, a fair-minded willingness to accept defeat, and refusal to let one's awareness become rigid; as Vaclav Havel said, the spiritual energy to change human consciousness is part of true democracy.⁶ Naturally, Indonesia's experience in operating a democratic system for so many decades has not always met those conditions, so that the system has even become the tool for mutual undermining, rather than for mutual promotion. At certain times, democracy can produce disasters and catastrophes, as we witness everywhere. The result of this is narrow-minded people frivolously accusing democracy of being the scapegoat that must be cast out. Radical groups swim in this antidemocratic

current using specious religious arguments. They are generally oriented to the Arab world, which for a long time has been shackled under antidemocratic tyrants. Their minimal knowledge of Indonesia has brought them to ahistorical conclusions about it. Their sociological filters are fragile, but they feel they are still on the right road.

The Moroccan writer and sociologist Fatima Mernissi was a sharp critic of the Arab mentality that rejects democracy but defends the rule of despotic and corrupt kings.⁷ Under this system, what is called social and economic justice is never realized. Wealth is generally monopolized by rulers who are given sharia legitimacy. According to Mernissi, discussions about democracy in the Arab world have gone on for 150 years, but democracy is still rejected as a “Hellenistic” import. Strangely, though, this does not hinder the same people from enjoying other foreign imports such as cars, electricity and telephones. The rejection is not because of a thing’s foreignness, but because democracy will jeopardize the interests of the elite. Democracy is sure to open the eyes of the masses to the depravity of those in power. In a democratic system, a citizen has the right and the responsibility to participate in the decision-making process, which is taboo under a monarchy or pseudo-democracy. Mernissi writes:

In the debate that goes on now [the 1980s and early 1990s], the traditionalists hold that a person cannot be a Muslim and practice *dimuqratiya* both at the same time, because that is foreign to Islamic culture. Regimes that take their legitimacy from Islam (Saudi Arabia, for example) paint their opponents that propose democratic methods as faithless, unbelievers.⁸

Here you can see that a culture of fear has so haunted Arab rulers on the subject of democracy that even religion is sacrificed to uphold the legitimacy of their corrupt power. They do not want to see democracy empowering and enlightening the general public, as Huwaydi has explained. This fear is rooted in the possibility of being overthrown once the people are given the right to determine their own fate through a democratic system. That democracy suffers from many, sometimes chronic, diseases is something I have said in several places. But all diseases can be cured whenever the political elite espouse common sense, broad-mindedness, and a high sense of responsibility. What is certain is that in democracy the people are given access to learn openly how the machinery of power is operated and how the economy and finance are structured and allocated. And more than that, they have the basic right to participate in directly running the machinery of power. In a system of democracy they truly become independent human beings.

Mernissi also criticizes the weakness of the culture of tolerance in Arab society. On the contrary, the society defends the culture of intolerance toward differing opinions. She provides the example of the writer Anwar Jundi, who “convicts” public intellectual and fellow-writer Taha Hussein of being an unbeliever, when in fact Taha had written a number of excellent works, including a history of the life of the Prophet. Thus, the hope for freedom of opinion in Arab society is dim, because freedom is seen as inviting chaos.⁹ Mernissi describes the duplicitous performance in global forums of the same Arab heads of state who rule as religious autocrats. “This shows the role played by religion in the hazy drama offered by our heads of state: they have to put on a modern face before the UN in New York and the face of the Abbasid Caliph to terrorize us at home.”¹⁰ Mernissi is not alone in such thoughts, but the great wave of thinking required for change to lead to a more civilized world has yet to arrive. Wealth overflowing in certain Arab countries is not used for enlightenment but to pillory the independent thinking of their people. But everything corrupt that is hidden will come to light sooner or later. This will be pioneered in the Arab world by intellectuals who have been enlightened by the long and bitter experiences of their lives.

Mernissi paints a worrisome picture of the consequences of bitterness and despair in Arab societies. She writes:

The mix of despair and religion emerges explosively throughout the Mediterranean region. We must be prepared to be destroyed by its violence if we do not ask every person from every race to analyze it, understand it, and try to improve the bitterness and backwardness that have crystalized it. That is the malaise that has affected intellectuals and the common people. It creates a strong feeling of guilt among young people and increases a mass migration of the most educated to the West ... the dream of happiness for many Arabs, and unemployed youth ... [E]ven the rich industrialists vacation in Europe.¹¹

Bitterness that is given the approval of religion is a time bomb waiting for the right moment to explode. Explosions have already occurred. Meanwhile, the West, especially the United States, has made use of this instability in savage ways. Arab fears of democracy actually come from fear of loss of power and wealth. Meanwhile, *ulama* (religious scholars) who do not understand the global map look for religious arguments supporting the rejection of democracy. This is the Arab tragedy at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Mernissi continues with her disturbing picture:

In my view, the pain that all too much scatters this talent [because it is not channeled] must be considered for an understanding of how the Muslim *umat*, particularly lower-class youth – badly threatened by the high level of unemployment – maneuver around the opposition between Islam and democracy. Their love for this movement really constitutes a cry for the chance to benefit from the culture of this century and their skills. However, I will ask, How can a young person who is threatened by unemployment oppose democracy and prefer religion as the basis for struggling to succeed in the world? No matter what else it may do, religion does not create jobs. But what it does is provide room for renewal and reflections on the universe and its injustices.¹²

Mernissi wishes that the religion being taught would be an Islam that frees people from all suffering and injustice. A religion that provides people with the space to actively participate in their sphere without fear of being spied on. That space is only provided in a democratic system whose implementation is in harmony with the cultural framework of each nation, and which can be very different from what prevails in the West.

Democracy and basic human rights in the modern era are interconnected, and each needs the other. The Muslim *umat* worldwide does not have the same attitude and use the same language when confronting issues of democracy and basic human rights. If we follow the categorizations of Khaled Abou El Fadl, two groups may be roughly perceived as standing face-to-face in confrontation over democracy and basic human rights: the puritans and the moderates.¹³ Each has its reason for thinking it embodies the correct interpretation of the faith. The puritans have lately crystalized in the form of the Taliban in Afghanistan and among Wahhabi circles in Saudi Arabia, who have exported their ideology, funded by the abundance of petrodollars.

The puritan group takes its stand against all Western systems, especially democracy and basic human rights, but continues to enjoy Western technological products. In their minds, democracy and basic human rights must be opposed because they harm Islam. They want to create an ideal world based on their monolithic interpretations of the Quran and the history of the Prophet. This group is spread throughout the entire Islamic world, and in general its members have a single ideology – they want to transform the world boldly and quickly, even at the cost of bloodshed. Actually, this group has no clear idea of civilization, but is bound up in a single fascistic ideology. Among the doctrines that bind its adherents is the doctrine of an almost unconditional obedience to the

ruler. Therefore, some would categorize them as a totalitarian faction under the umbrella of sharia. They see death as trivial if one dies trying to win Allah's blessing, according to their vision and interpretation.

At the other extreme, the moderates also advocate using the Quran as their guide, but their image of the world differs completely from that of the puritans. The moderates generally accept and defend the concepts of democracy and basic human rights. They are not concerned with whether such ideas come from the West or the East. So long as such principles support the ideals of the Quran for the upholding of justice, peace, morality, and good relations with their fellow humans, why should they be rejected?

For moderates like El Fadl, universal experience teaches that only in a democratic and constitutional system of government can justice be established and upheld, because the people have access to the institutions of power and there is accountability in public offices. In contrast, in an undemocratic system it is exceedingly difficult to hold the ruler to account for the abuse of power.¹⁴ The moderate group has tried to reinterpret the concept of *ijma* (consensus) to support the idea of democracy based on the will of the majority of the people.¹⁵

It is interesting to note the encouraging fact that the three defenders of democracy cited here all come from Arab countries: Egypt, Morocco, and Kuwait. There are still others – I will discuss them shortly. This fact by itself emphasizes that political systems that bridle human liberties, as has been the practice in a number of Arab countries for centuries, are now coming under serious challenge. Their own thinkers, like these three, are highly critical of dynastic-authoritarian political systems wearing the cloak of the caliphate, monarchy, sultanate, rajadom, emirate, or imamate. Such systems are substantially the same: they reject transparency and set themselves against the people.

Another term for puritanism is the fundamentalism that opposes ideas that bring freedom to humanity. Saudi Arabia is the center of fundamentalist conservatism of the most rigid kind. Ironically, this country is a friend of the United States, which is warring against fundamentalism everywhere. Mernissi's criticism of Saudi Arabia is sufficiently relevant to be quoted here:

Rejection of progressive ideas is greatly funded by Saudi Arabia's petrodollars. This simultaneously produces an excessive "culture of princely Islam" and a rigid authoritarianism that shuts out love and compassion (*rahmah*). A more apt term for the fundamentalism in Saudi Arabia is "Petro-Wahhabism" whose pillars are veiled women.¹⁶

These harsh words of Mernissi's may still not penetrate the walls of Arab conservatism, which is wrapped in that "culture of princely Islam." "Princely Islam" holds political implications whereby the tasks of the masses are limited to obedience to their ruler. The people have no place in that closed system of power. More than a few Saudi Arabian intellectuals and some of those educated in Saudi Arabia see the "culture of princely Islam" as something that is Islamic, because they do not want to understand intelligently and honestly what its negative implications are for human liberty.

However, in the darkest part of the dark night, there is sure to be a star that shines and sparkles in the distance. At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, an increasing number of Muslim-Arab writers have been defending democracy as a part of Islamic politics. The time is ripe for them to change the backward paradigm of thinking and reform the Arab mindset in order to speed up the process of enlightening society at large, so that its members may become aware of their rights as free and respected human beings.

With this freedom, the eyes of the people will open ever wider when they see how much of the country's assets have been misused so tyrannically and irresponsibly. They will speak out loudly and clearly when the tap of democracy is opened by their conscious intellectuals on the basis of religious arguments. The time for such a maturation process is drawing nearer.

It is possible that there will be bloodshed, because the walls of authoritarianism and despotism to be thrown down are still thick and mighty. But we must condemn the American-style attempt to force a system of democracy upon a nation, as in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is sure to be counterproductive. A foreign entity cannot force democracy on another nation. But if the democratic idea comes from within in a conscious way, its results will be stable and long-lasting.

One other writer no less outspoken in criticizing the tyrannical conservatism of the Arabs and defending democracy is Muhammad Shahrur of Syria. We would be remiss if Shahrur's thinking were not analyzed within the framework of building democracy in the Islamic world. Shahrur traces the pre-Islamic idea of democracy in the form of the Dar Al-Nadwa (House of Assembly) in Mecca, where the heads of the most influential clans, such as the Bani Hashim, Bani Makhzum, and Bani Umayyah held consultations on economic matters and tribal politics. This council was a consultative body for tribal society, especially in deliberating over the system of trade.¹⁷ If in the pre-Islamic era, consultations were based on tribalism, the practice was later taken over by Islam, which gave it a stronger and universal foundation: the foundation of faith.

From this noteworthy perspective, Arab society in pre-Islamic times was far more democratic than in the Islamic era since the Umayyads and thereafter.

Thus, it is not surprising how difficult it is for the Arab world to appreciate democratic systems, since it has been sunk for so long in a political culture that is opposed to liberty. Ironically, this same world defends its systems with religious arguments. In such an atmosphere, it would be futile to hope for the birth of a fresh and just Islamic civilization within a system of politics that is against freedom of thought.

Shahrur rather sarcastically criticizes the democracy-allergic Arab mentality: "A man who rides a donkey to go from one town to the next has no right to criticize an airplane and demonstrate its defects and dangers."¹⁸ A democratic system "goes beyond the societies of family, clans, tribes, groups, schools of thought, and sects, and it also goes beyond patriarchal society,"¹⁹ which for so many centuries has dominated Arab society, with differences of gradation from one country to the next. Thus, the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (632–661 CE) was a spectacular historical breakthrough, but one that was sadly short-lived. Then the Arab lands sank back into the slough of authoritarianism for centuries more. It was this development that shackled Islam and kept it from developing creatively.

A more basic theory of Shahrur's is his view that the *shura* concept, immortalized in Surah Ash-Shuraa, verse 38, which means, "And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair [is determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend," is an article of faith and religious practice whose principles may not be changed by the Muslim *umat*.²⁰ But what happened then was that the Muslim *umat* threw away and buried this *shura* principle and replaced it with a system that shackled their political and social freedom for centuries. "Freedom," writes Shahrur, "is the conscious desire to choose between denying or acknowledging an existence. For its part, democracy is the practice of freedom carried out by a group of human beings in accordance with the authority of knowledge, ethics, aesthetics, and customs and traditions."²¹

While still on the topic of democracy, now let us examine the view of the late Kuntowijoyo, a renowned expert in history and social theory in Indonesia. As he saw it, the commitment of the Muslim *umat* to democracy in Indonesia need no longer be in doubt.²² Kunto then looked for the roots in the practice of *mushawara* (from *shura*, or consultation) that was commanded by the Quran, as mentioned above. For the sake of clarity, Kunto's explanation requires our attention:

Practice shows how much the Prophet himself valued *mushawara*. On the eve of the Battle of Uhud between the side of the Prophet in Medina and that of the Quraysh in Mecca, he faced two possibilities: hold out within Medina or take the war outside the city. The Prophet consulted with the Muslims to make a decision. The Prophet himself was of the opinion that it would be better to hold out within the city. However, it seems the majority of Muslims wanted to take on the enemy outside the city. What is interesting is that on the eve of the battle, there was *mushawara*, when the voice of the majority drowned out the voice of the Prophet and he bowed to the majority will. Even though in that battle it turned out that the Muslims were defeated, it was consultation that determined it. This means that in *mushawara*, the process was more important than the outcome. This also means that no matter how strong the voices of the minority were in their claim to the truth, these had to submit to the voices of the majority ... [on the condition] there could be no violation of the rights of God and his Messenger.²³

The defeat of the Muslims at Uhud had to be accepted because the strategy had been discussed in *mushawara* before the battle, even though the Prophet himself suffered physically in that battle.

As a historian who closely followed the course of history of the Muslim *umat* in Indonesia and as a scientist of high personal integrity, Kunto's opinion cannot be taken lightly. He was not a politician accustomed to bending the verses of the Quran to his own interest. Kunto's conclusion that democracy is in accord with the teachings of Islam was simply the continuation of the views that had been held by the Muslim leaders of Indonesia long before Independence, even if its adoption has been very slow in Muslim Arab countries. Kunto's authority is acknowledged on all sides, and that includes those normally categorized as hard-line political opponents of democracy.

Kunto was not only a renowned scientist but also a recognized novelist. The marriage between history and literature he achieved was among Kunto's strengths as a writer.

The Ebb and Flow of Democracy in Indonesia

At the beginning of this chapter, I emphasized that Indonesia is one of the fortunate nations, because from the start the majority of its people chose a democratic system to govern their newborn state. The Muslim-majority population had virtually no "allergy" to democracy, thanks

to the education they received from their leaders. This proved to be important capital for further development in a responsible way.

The list of practicing Muslims who supported Indonesian democracy and defended the Constitution includes names such as Agus Salim, Sukiman Wirjosendjojo, Wahid Hasjim, Anwar Tjokroaminoto, Arudji Kartasasmita, Masjku, Jusuf Hasjim, Burhanuddin Harahap, Imron Rosjadi, Mohammad Natsir, Mohammad Roem, Idham Chalid, Prawoto Mangkusasmito, Jusuf Wibisono, Kasman Singodimedjo, Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Yunan Nasution, and a host of others. They did not necessarily share the same commitment to the ideals of democracy, however, even if they all struggled together for that system in accordance with their understanding and interests, as they saw them, as the situation unfolded. That the results are still not up to expectations, owing to the mistakes and shortcomings of the leaders themselves in political practice, cannot be ignored.

The ebb and flow in the implementation of democracy in Indonesia has been closely tied to the behavior of its elite – whether they have been tolerant and liberal or impatient and irresponsible. Myopic and parochial attitudes arise from a weak culture of statesmanship, which afflicts most of Indonesia's politicians. If their vision had surmounted the limited interests of the individual, party, or group, Indonesia, with its natural resources that could be developed for the sake of the prosperity of its population, would have soared higher among the countries of the world.

In terms of its intellectual resources, Indonesia has not lagged behind other countries. Many figures from the generation of the founders and the generation of B.J. Habibie (president 1998–1999) were and are widely known throughout the world. However, obstacles remain, stemming from narrow political interests, which constrict the space for developing a culture of tolerance in elite circles. Then, under the authoritarian political system that lasted four decades (1959–1998), democracy was consciously murdered, a policy supported, ironically, by certain parties, out of short-term pragmatic considerations. They were slow to realize that giving their pragmatic support to the hangman of democracy meant that they were putting the noose around their own necks.

But because the Proclamation of Independence was closely linked to the democratic spirit and the aspiration to create a healthy democracy, every authoritarian tendency in Indonesia's politics is sure to face opposition, sooner or later. The strength of that opposition simply depends on the context. Therefore, in my view, no matter how little democracy has done for the welfare of the general populace, it is futile to try to kill it and then clamor to return to its authoritarian opposite. Indonesians should never again be driven by eagerness to accomplish this.

This attitude would only cast Indonesia into a dangerous political vicious circle, filled with uncertainties. We can understand that democracy, in the hands of a greedy elite, often brings calamity. This is what took place in Indonesia at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and it is much to be regretted. But we must hold fast to Hatta's certainty: "A declaration before God to hold to Pancasila is not easily disregarded. And therein lies the guarantee that democracy will not disappear in Indonesia. It can be repressed in many ways for the time being. But disappear it shall not. The disappearance of democracy means the disappearance of an independent Indonesia."²⁴

Hatta's certainty that "the disappearance of democracy means the disappearance of an independent Indonesia" is a valuable legacy, which should be reflected on by those who have come later. I believe that no one among the nation's founders formulated the prospects of democracy in Indonesia as acutely as that. Hatta's analysis of the meaning of democracy constitutes a milestone of optimism for Indonesia in defending and enforcing its chosen political system. From this perspective, movements launched by a handful of enemies of democracy will be short-lived. Think of their methods as tiny ripples, never capable of becoming a wave. The wheels of time too will grind these down. Even in the Arab world, which these people so often use as a reference point, a new force has emerged for democracy, because its peoples have had their fill of tyranny.

My conclusion is that Indonesia must knowingly declare that a democratic system is the only choice for the country's future and that people should not look back with nostalgia on other ones. Farewell to all political systems that put the liberty of the citizens in the stocks! Only in a climate of freedom can we become fully human. Outside that is the territory of slaves or semi-slaves. The doctrine of *tawhid* – the Oneness of God – which is the essence of Islam's system of belief, teaches that freedom may not be stifled by any arguments whatever, wherever, and by whomever.²⁵

As the closing note to this section and to reinforce the position of the defenders of democracy in Indonesia, I include the observation of the moderate Shia intellectual Musa Al-Musawi, born in Najef (Iraq) in 1930, who firmly and explicitly states that the Prophet taught the principle of democracy to his *umat*. Al-Musawi writes:

At the beginning of his preaching mission, God's Messenger taught the democratic system to the Muslim *umat*. This will not be found at any time and among any people, even in the most modern times like today or among people who are the most democratic people on earth. In the history of democracy, whether in its ancient or modern form, I have

not found a leadership like that of the Prophet. He is the founder of a state, a thinker, and a public figure who would sit together with his companions. When they were gathered in an assembly (in a circle), there would be no difference with those in front and those behind. Consequently, everyone attending sat alongside the leader.²⁶

The expression “everyone attending sat alongside the leader” describes one of the best forms of democracy in practice. The Prophet, the recipient of divine revelation, did not present himself as a being higher than his companions when they consulted together. There was no hierarchy in their seating. The noble appearance of the Prophet in the midst of his companions will surely inspire a culture of egalitarianism in the Muslim *umat*, once they are better acquainted with that legacy. Al-Musawi has worked energetically and objectively to bridge the differences between Sunni and Shia. Unfortunately, his fresh and bold thinking has yet to be widely appreciated by the Muslim *umat*, whether Sunni or Shia.

How difficult it is for this *umat* to open its hearts and minds to accept new ideas – which are in line with the ideals of the Quran – about basing community life on the foundation of equality. Humankind has only recently recognized this doctrine. Very regrettably, Muslim rulers have buried this doctrine under the ashes of history for centuries, so that some of us do not know this glorious heritage, which is ours to revive in the modern era.

Islam and the Challenges of Religious and Cultural Diversity

If we speak of religious and cultural diversity, we cannot divorce these from the principle of freedom, which constitutes one of the main pillars of democracy. But in the eyes of the Quran, freedom is not without its limits. That is to say, it is limited by human nature itself. The following conclusions reached by Machasin from his study of the verses of the Quran will help us place this freedom proportionally:

Such freedom is not totally without limits. Mankind is only free to perform deeds that are truly *ikhtiariah* – spontaneous and of one’s free will; that means, within a person there is a choice of doing or not doing. Not all aspects in one’s life can be controlled. Thus, a person takes responsibility in matters wherein he or she is not compelled to do or not do a thing.²⁷

Because I do not want to get trapped by modern jargon on religious and cultural diversity, I will try to deal with these important and sometimes controversial problems on the basis of my understanding of the position of the Quran.

We must acknowledge from the outset that the phenomenon of religious and cultural diversity within the human community has been with us from time immemorial. This is an undeniable fact, as plain as the sun at midday. The Quran from earliest times has revealed this diversity before our very eyes, for diversity is the essence of Allah's creation. Religious and cultural diversity may also be expressed as religious and cultural pluralism. Yet if we speak of religious pluralism instead of diversity, many people become highly agitated. Thus, I need to position this problem rationally and in a balanced manner. The alarming situation in which Islam finds itself trailing behind the leaders of civilization should open our eyes and our hearts to look at ourselves and see what is wrong in our understanding of Islam.

With regard to religious pluralism, the Quran is actually in the lead. It teaches that not only must people acknowledge the diversity of religions embraced by the human community, but even those without religion must have a place to carry on with their life on earth. On this issue, the Quran shows itself to be more tolerant than the majority of Muslims who make atheists their enemy. The Quran always invites humankind to have a religious creed, since having this is most important for life's journey to the hereafter. But if they still choose to not have a religion, must they be condemned on the basis of religion? Of course, religious belief provides an ontological security to humankind in its earthly wanderings, so filled with shocks and challenges; but the question remains, What do we do if a person does not need that ontological security?

The task of the prophets and their followers is only to invite humankind to have religious belief in Allah and the Last Day in a civilized manner, full of wisdom, far from compulsion.

From my understanding of several verses of the Quran, there is no strong argument for compelling such people to have a religion. In verse 256 of the Surah Al-Baqarah, "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion." Mufasssir A. Hassan excellently clarifies the content of this verse. First, "A person may absolutely not be compelled to enter a religion." Second, "A person may absolutely not be compelled in matters of faith."²⁸ This means that every form of compulsion to make someone have a faith is the same as opposing the Quran or taking a position of superiority to Allah. Is this not an unwarranted theological arrogance? With broad-mindedness the door is open to a pleasant and safe life for people without a religion on the face of Allah's earth, bearing

in mind that they certainly have to obey the constitution and regulations agreed upon by a state. Of course, not many Muslim communities want to understand this verse as Ahmad Hassan interprets it, including his own radical former students.

Why does the Quran so strictly forbid the Muslim community from forcing other people to believe as they do? Verse 256 continues: “The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in *taghut* [worship that exceeds the limit set by Allah] and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.” The question arises here, if that truth is so obvious, and still some people choose the path that deviates from it, should they not be destroyed? My understanding tells me that all this is a matter for Allah, and earthly courts have no right to judge such a person. This means that, in life here on earth, someone may choose the wrong path and not be shunned, as long as this person is willing to maintain the pillars of harmony in social life. He or she must even be guaranteed full rights as a citizen of the state with all its provisions.

The Indonesian commentator on the Quran who uses the name Hamka (Dr. H. Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah: 1908–1981) has made a lengthy analysis of verse 256 of the Surah Al-Baqarah, introducing the reason for the revelation of this verse. Because it is important to further investigate this issue to clarify the problem, I shall quote a part of Hamka’s explanation here:

According to the story of Abu Daud and An-Nasa’i, and Ibnu Mundzir and Ibnu Jarir and Ibnu Abi Hatim and Ibu Hibban and Ibnu Mardawaihi and Al-Baihaqi and Ibnu Abbas, and several other stories as well: because they were in ignorance of divine guidance, the inhabitants of Medina before they embraced Islam felt that the Jews had better lives than they did. Because of that, there were among them those who gave over a child to a Jew to be educated; after growing up, such children would become Jews. Also there was an Arab woman, who every time she gave birth, the child died, so that when she had another child, she quickly gave it to a Jew. And the child was raised as a Jew. Then the people of Medina became Muslims and welcomed the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) and became the group called the Ansar [“the Helpers”]. Then, after the Messenger moved to Medina, a pact of good neighborliness was made with the Jewish tribes that dwelled in Medina. But from month to month, year to year, they broke that pact, whether subtly or grossly. Finally the Bani Nadhir were expelled after they had twice been found to have wanted to kill the Prophet (see interpretation of Surah 59, Al-Hasyr). Because of that, it

was decided to drive out every last one of the Bani Nadhir tribe from Medina. There seemed to have been an Ansar child among the Bani Nadhir who had been raised as a Jew. The father of that child begged the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) that the child be brought to Islam, by force if necessary. Because the father could not force him to embrace Islam, as his child was a Jew. "Half of me will go to hell, O Messenger!" said the Ansar. And at that time came this verse: "There is no compulsion in religion." If that child had become a Jew, he may not be compelled to embrace Islam.²⁹

With this explanation of the reason for this verse, it is clear that the question of faith at the highest level is the question of choice, even if environmental influences are initially quite strong. This complaint of the Ansar to the Prophet was answered by verse 256 of the Surah Al-Baqarah, and that is the final answer of the Quran. It was up to the Prophet alone to carry out that dictum, even though the Ansar felt very sad because their natural children did not belong to the same religion as they did. In cases such as that, the best attitude of a Believer is none other than following the revealed teaching by discarding all sadness and personal subjectivity. If compulsion had been the free choice of the parent toward his child in this problem of faith, that free choice would automatically be invalid. Feelings of pity and dismay may not violate revelation. Faith that comes from compulsion is not authentic faith and may not last long. Faith cannot be compared to a shirt that can be worn and taken off at the whim of the wearer. Faith has a taproot that is extremely deep, far exceeding that of relativist philosophy and science.

How should we view atheism? As mentioned above, an atheist has the right to live freely on the earth, but not free in any unlawful sense. It is impossible for a society to be well ordered if there is a place in it for lawlessness. An atheist must respect believers, and vice-versa. That is because, as far as we know, this planet earth is the only one that can be inhabited by living creatures, so there must be rules that bind our lives together so that our lives can proceed harmoniously, peacefully, and safely. A person with faith may not claim that he alone has the right to live on earth, while atheists must be warred against and exterminated. And by the same principle, an atheist has no right of monopoly over the earth by saying that believers are mentally deficient and the planet should be rid of them. Those who say that the earth is only for those who are free from faith are thinking like insane people. There is only one outcome from it – accelerating the arrival of the last day of civilization!

Atheists and theists must sit together to govern the earth so that life on this planet can be shared in complete mutual tolerance and consideration for differences. Neither side has the right to wipe out the other. Earthly life is only possible if it is established on the principle of mutual acceptance, not mutual denial. The Quran, as the main source of Islamic teaching, has anticipated many possibilities. Even the Prophet himself seems to have wanted everyone on earth to have a religion, but he is reprimanded in the Quran for thinking like that, because matters of faith must be with the permission of Allah: "And it is not for a soul to believe, except by the permission of Allah."³⁰

This means, no matter how we may long for all of humankind to have religious belief, because religious belief is good and provides an answer to the inner cry of humankind's soul, if Allah does not will it, that longing will not be realized. Remember the case of Abu Talib, the uncle who always sheltered the Prophet, and who until the end of his life stayed with the old belief, though the Prophet strongly hoped he would become a believer. The following verse gives the final provision on this sensitive issue: "And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed – all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad,] would you compel the people in order that they become believers?"³¹

According to Ibn Abbas, the Prophet really did want all of humanity to have religious belief, but Allah did not will that to be.³² Why? I cannot explain it. The feelings of the Prophet are really the feeling of humans with faith, but these feelings must be subject to the provision of Allah that atheists may carry on with their lives peacefully alongside theists. In the eyes of Allah, atheists too are creatures He has created, even if they do not acknowledge Him. They may have their own "gods" and worship them, such as ideology, science, lusts, natural forces, and so forth – which the Quran categorizes as *taghut*, as I have explained above.

It is difficult to understand humans. They are unique and do not always appear in an authentic form. Within the concept of pluralism, all uniqueness and diversity must be admitted as mental facts that are inherent in humanity's spiritual structure. To arrive at this admission, there is no other way but that people develop the culture of high tolerance – acknowledging the diversity and complexity consciously and with a positive attitude. It is not just religion and culture that are diverse, but also language and skin color are variegated and complex. Try to follow the meaning of this verse: "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge."³³ Thus, Allah indeed created that complexity intentionally so that human civilization would be filled with color and each would enrich the other.

The question of tolerance needs a particular analysis, which I shall provide before the end of this chapter. I continue with the problem of different understandings held by the old and younger generations of the Muslim *umat* in Indonesia concerning the relationship of state and religion in its many variations.

In the final part of Chapter 1, I spoke of the heated debate on the foundation of the state carried out between the supporters of Pancasila and the supporters of the concept of a state based on Islam. This debate was halted by Decree No. 5 of July 5, 1959, which decided in favor of Pancasila. I will not expand further on this issue. But subsequently, a breakthrough occurred in the thinking of Muslim intellectuals who have emerged since the early 1980s, and who were no longer interested in raking up yet again the issue of Pancasila. I must note, however, that at the same time a new force appeared, a small group within the Muslim *umat* that still insisted on making Indonesia into an Islamic state, or at least incorporating sharia into the Constitution. Thus, the 1980s generation was also not monolithic, even though the great wave of the educated had travelled the road that led in the opposite direction to that taken by the Islamic party leaders before Decree No. 5 in 1959.

The members of this big intellectual wave, some with Western educations, others with domestic educations, all thought similarly about the philosophy of the Indonesian state. Researchers have concluded that Nurcholish Madjid was a major pioneer of the line of thought in the Muslim *umat* that no longer felt the need to dream of making Indonesia an Islamic state, for having the Pancasila as foundation was sufficient to accommodate the aspirations of the Muslim *umat* in statehood. Other figures in this category included Harun Nasution, Munawir Sjadzali, Taufik Abdullah, Abdurrahman Wahid, Achmad Siddiq, M. Dawam Rahardjo, Mohammad Amien Rais, Djohan Effendi, Kuntowijoyo, and others. These were followed by the next generation, with much the same outlook, among them Bahtiar Effendy, Siti Musda Mulia (a radical female thinker, certain of the principles she held), Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Azyumardi Azra, Saiful Muzani, Komaruddin Hidayat, M. Amin Abdullah, Abdul Munir Mulkhan, M. Syafii Anwar, Moeslim Abdurrahman, Fachry Ali, Syafiq A. Mughni, Haedar Nashir, Masdar F. Mas'udi, Muhadjir Effendy, Husein Muhammad, Budhy Munawar-Rachman, Ulil-Abshar Abdallah, and Abd A'la.

A still younger generation is now emerging in a gathering wave, among which are Yudi Latif, Sukidi Mulyadi, Zuhairi Misrawi, Syamsul Arifin, Abdul Moqsith Ghazali, Raja Juli Antoni, Ahmad Norma Permata, Hasibullah Satrawi, Zakiyuddin Baidhaw, Hilman Latief, Fajar Riza Ul Haq, and Moh. Shofan. Only time will tell if they are capable of making

Indonesia into a nation that is just and dignified. Opposed to them is a small group that has not fully accepted Pancasila and still wants to offer a different philosophy for Indonesia. These are the descendants of the generation of Islamic groups that had previously fought to make Islam the foundation of the state. I suggest, so that the two sides do not waste their energy in useless fighting, they open themselves up to a dialogue that is completely academic.

I hope that this generation of intellectuals does not just busy itself with discourse and speeches, while leaving the Indonesian nation to become increasingly fragile. Some of these intellectuals must enter into the power system with far-reaching intentions to establish justice and to oppose all forms of tyranny against anyone, without partiality.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century the world of the *santri* Muslims of Indonesia got a great shock. President Abdurrahman Wahid was a *santri*, as were the chair of the MPR (People's Consultative Assembly), Mohammad Amien Rais, and the chair of the DPR (People's Representative Council), Akbar Tandjung. The three of them were together at the very summit of power. But regrettably, these three leading figures had clashing political chemistries – to borrow a saying of the Minangkabau people, “swaying together but not equally dizzy; living together but not in accord; under one umbrella but miles apart.” The three of them have never discussed in any deep way building up the nation through a healthy democratic system under the conditions I have outlined earlier.

In other words, even when *santri* leaders are at the very peak of power, if they place their egos and power interests at the forefront, then the general populace will conclude that it makes little difference if their leaders are *santri* or not. That would be an extremely dangerous conclusion, because the *santri*, so proud of their faith and so well trusted, after being tested for public positions will turn out to have failed. Thus, the next generation must observe this intelligently and critically, so that pride in Indonesia as the biggest Muslim nation in the world will have real substance: its liberation from the shackles of poverty, ignorance, and dishonesty; from disorganization and divisiveness and backwardness. We truly wish for an Indonesia that is just, prosperous, intelligent, enlightened, dignified, and completely sovereign.

In fact, with the acceptance of Pancasila as the philosophical foundation of the state by the majority of the new generation of *santri*, the opportunity is now wide open to build the nation and set aside the anger associated with theological-philosophical differences. For almost two decades, the energy of the Indonesian elite was to a large extent drained

by such disputes. The issue has been well resolved and with complete understanding, because the new generation of Muslim intellectuals, with their more comprehensive and historical perspective, reached the conclusion that the trademark “Islamic” is not needed in the national name. For them, the important thing is that Islam’s moral principles, which aim at establishing justice for all, were to be made a program for action. As for the several Islamic legal principles touching on public law, these could simply be integrated into the national legal code, so as not to be enshrined in the Constitution to the exclusion of other religious practice, except for those laws dealing with family law, such as marriage, inheritance, endowments and donations, and also the matter of religious tithes.

This new generation appears talented enough to become reliable Muslim thinkers, as long as they continue to develop themselves by constantly accessing new literary sources for incorporation into their own written work. Writing is a strategic means of introducing one’s thinking for independent appraisal in the public sphere. It clearly requires moral courage to appear as a new thinker. Some of these thinkers are widely known; others are still known in limited circles and environments. By tireless writing, over time they will achieve maturity as thinkers. Indonesia longs for the appearance of serious young thinkers who are highly committed to remaining in the Indonesian milieu. What this new Muslim generation must remember is to never discard moral integrity in their public careers.

Some of the younger generation mentioned above have indeed produced new writings. I leave it to readers to discover these themselves; I shall not provide excerpts from them here. Among them, some have succeeded in emerging as tested bureaucrats, such as Azyumardi Azra, who has built the image of Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University (UIN) as an institute of higher learning. In Azra’s hands, UIN became a campus of intellectual *santri*. However, one small question remains. Having developed its general study programs, can the university preserve a high-quality Islamic studies curriculum that remains attractive to students? If general studies dominate the curriculum, while serious attention to Islamic sciences flags, a gap will emerge within its alumni circles. Feelings of inferiority may arise among alumni who have not come out of the centers of excellence in the same campus environment. The greatest challenge faced by Islamic studies is located in particular in the inadequate numbers of truly professional lecturers; that is, those who are equally well grounded in the classical Islamic literature and in the modern world, and who then deal with both of these intelligently and critically. Without this advantage, Islamic studies will be hard-

pressed to compete with general studies. In the classical Islamic world, Ibn Rushd – known in the West as Averroes – can be categorized as just such a professional figure, while in the modern era Fazlur Rahman is an outstanding example.

The Status of Women in Islam

I have written this section in appreciation of K.H. Husein Muhammad, a religious scholar of the Fahmina Institute Foundation in Cirebon. This *kiyai* (religious sage) has worked hard to position women in a proper and dignified place in line with the teachings of Islam. This friend of mine is among those who responded to this book not long after the publication of its original edition in June 2009, especially regarding its shortcomings in not speaking about equality of the sexes.

For centuries in Muslim communities, women have not been appreciated and respected commensurate with their dignity as complete human beings. If Kiyai Husein had not provided critical notes about this issue, perhaps this important section would not be included here. This was, first and last, negligence on my part. In fact, my stance with regard to this issue of equality does not differ from Kiyai Husein's. The discussion would not be complete if Kiyai Husein's critique as it relates to the status of women were not quoted here:

It is most unfortunate that Buya [Maarif] forgot to speak in some measure about the question of feminism. Although he mentioned Fatima Mernissi, the Muslim champion of feminism, he did not touch on her brilliant thoughts on feminism. It is said it would be incomplete if feminist discourse were not included in a discussion on democracy, basic human rights, and pluralism. Of course, [Maarif] is not the only one to frequently forget this issue.

Look how women as a group in many places are not only excluded from the stage of human history, but even become victims of the structure of patriarchal civilization. Discrimination, marginalization, and violence still stalk and trap them on all sides and through many ideologies and patriarchal social systems. In many instances, human interpretations of religion join in reinforcing this. Listen to the words of this deplorable song: "Women are satans created for us. / And we beseech the Lord's protection against such satans."³⁴

I admire the courage of Kiyai Husein's opinion, which ought to serve as a model for other *kiyai*.

One of the major reasons that women are sidelined in public life is that discourse on Islam is controlled by men. Traditions such as the Javanese *konco wingking* (the friend in back), which limits a woman's activities to the kitchen, also play a role. The situation is worse when women are not given access to a level of education equal to men. Not long ago, when the Taliban controlled Afghanistan, women were forbidden to leave the house and so to school. Ironically, commands such as that were given religious underpinnings by men. Muhammad Iqbal, speaking on the question of women's education, made the profound philosophical remark: "Whereas educating a man is the same as educating an individual, educating a woman is the same as educating an entire family."³⁵

In Saudi Arabia, women's lives are heavily repressed, not much differently than the "friend in back" tradition. For decades, women there have fought to be permitted to drive cars, but the results were not encouraging, although glimmers of light are now visible, thanks to the education that they have gained. A proper education will definitely lead to a free people, men and women. Islam is the religion that liberates humanity in a true sense. But men's treatment of women has snatched away the rights of that liberation from them, not infrequently buttressed by religious arguments, as I shall discuss below.

Before Allah, the position of a woman is equal to that of a man. Both genders can have a relationship with Allah without an intermediary. If someone performs good deeds, Allah will not differentiate between a man and a woman in allotting the rewards reserved for them. Verse 97 of the Surah Al-Nahl explains those just rewards: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he [or she] is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do." Based on that verse, a woman of faith is no different before Allah from a man who also conducts himself virtuously. Both will be rewarded equally, without discrimination. Therefore, the discriminatory treatment meted out against women is no different from opposing the commands of the Quran. This is the patriarchal culture that must be buried once and for all.

If there is any difference, it is entirely due to personal achievement, which is open to everyone, not due to a difference of sex. We read this provision in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." For me, this verse affirms the teaching of

equality among human beings, whether men or women. To capture the highest position of righteousness will very much depend on the earnestness and sincerity of a person who is indeed striving greatly in that direction. Men and women are given the same opportunity, regardless of sex.

Fortunately, in the twentieth century several female Muslim thinkers emerged who, using strong religious arguments, bravely challenged the male domination of women. Among them were Professor Riffat Hassan (b. 1943, in Lahore), who holds a PhD in Islamic Philosophy from Durham University, UK. Hassan is among the most outspoken of feminist activists from the perspective of Islam. In an interview with the journalist Samina Ibrahim, Hassan explained her position. "For me," she said, "feminism means that women have the same rights as men."³⁶ These are the rights seized from Muslim women for hundreds of years, using religious arguments that had been interpreted incorrectly. And these are the rights that must be returned to them by a thoroughgoing and serious struggle. We get a sense of her bitterness at the fate of women in the Islamic world from these words: "The more I saw the justice and compassion of God reflected in the Quranic teachings regarding women, the more anguished and angry I became at seeing the injustice and inhumanity to which Muslim women in general are subjected in actual life."³⁷

From the starting point of this bitter reality, Riffat Hassan proposed that a discourse be written on women's theology in Islam. Her reason is clear: it is because the sources concerning Islamic tradition that are said to be based on the Quran, the hadith literature, and *fiqh* (legal interpretation) have been interpreted only by men who have arrogantly determined the status of women. Yet these men are mostly ignorant in the fields of ontology, theology, sociology, and eschatology. Hassan also rejects the view that woman was created from the rib of man, because that belief was imported from Jewish and Christian doctrine that entered Islam through hadith.³⁸ Such a bold view may provoke anger in some, but we must balance that with the Quran as it is correctly and sincerely understood if we really want to place the status of women on an equal level with that of men.

Professor Yunahar Ilyas of Indonesia does not agree with Riffat Hassan's view on the creation of woman. Yunahar writes:

Riffat Hassan rejects the creation of Hawa [Eve] from Adam's rib, assuming that creation from a rib bone is lower in value than creation from earth. In fact, such an assumption has no basis. The commentators themselves do not view the creation of Hawa as reflecting women's

inferiority. The origin of the creation does not determine the value of humans. The value of humans is only determined by the achievements they attain.³⁹

Yunahar's final sentence, "The value of humans is only determined by the achievements they attain," certainly contains truth. But how can women attain high achievements in a cultural environment so completely dominated by men? Riffat Hassan points out that nowadays more and more Jews and Christians reject the traditional interpretations of their religions about the origin of woman, while the Muslim community still holds fast to such stories to maintain the integrity of an Islamic way of life.⁴⁰

It would appear that more time is still needed before the adherents of the Abrahamic religions are ready to liberate themselves from the sources of their respective faiths that do not treat women fairly. In the Quran there is absolutely nothing to justify the claim that speaks of woman coming from a rib bone, even though the majority of the Muslim *umat* believe it because it is found in Bukhari-Muslim hadith literature,⁴¹ which Hassan says was imported from Jewish and Christian teaching. But verse 7 in the Surah Al-A'raf quoted by Yunahar, which is not found in Hassan's article, requires us to bring this into our analysis: "O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise"⁴² This verse indeed uses the expression *abawaikum* (the two parents), who according to the beliefs of the Muslim *umat* are Adam and Hawa (Eve). My problem with this reading is that we do not find the word "Hawa" in the Quran and also that the Quran does not speak of the creation of woman from man, as I have said.

This crucial issue needs to be debated further. Nevertheless, I still hold that there is equality between men and women in the sight of Allah, even if they are not yet considered equal in society, a view that must be demolished in the endeavor to build a more just civilization. The "friend in back" status of women in traditional Javanese society is an insult to a creature of Allah who is glorious, according to the Quran, which uses the term *bani adam* for both men and women. (See Surah Al-Isra, verse 70.)

I have not found the word for rib in Arabic, *dhila'*, in the Quran, either in the form of the verb *dhala'a-yadhla'u* (to side with, support something) or in its derivative, such as *dhila'*. Let us look in the hadith literature on the question of a rib bone as the genesis of woman, as cited by Yunahar from the commentator Abu Al-Fadl Shihab Al-Din Al-Sayyid Mahmud Afandi Al-Alusi Al-Baghdadi (1802–1854): "Tell each other to treat women nicely, for woman is created from a rib. And truly the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion, so, if you should try to

straighten that curved bone, it will break, but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked.”⁴³ It is not surprising that Riffat Hassan rejects hadiths that are unfair to women. I too believe they need to be reexamined, for why would the Quran remain silent on a question that has so greatly affected the course of human history?

Hamka, the Indonesian commentator, discussed this issue comprehensively, long before Hassan rejected the view that woman originated from the rib bone of Adam. Hamka's conclusion was:

Thus, it is not incorrect in the view of this feeble commentator [Hamka himself] if there are those who do not hold firmly to the conviction that Hawa came from the rib bone of Adam, for there is no Divine Word that mentions it in the Quran, nor anything spoken by the Prophet that precisely explains that. There are only messages or interpretations of Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Mas'ud and several other companions, who most probably heard that story from the Jews who read the Book of Genesis from the Torah.⁴⁴

Hamka also repeated the Bukhari-Muslim hadith cited by Yunahar, but with slight emendations, and then commented, “When we closely note the tone of this hadith, it cannot be made the reason for saying that woman, especially Siti Hawa [Eve], came from the rib bone of the Prophet Adam.”⁴⁵ Hamka, however, agreed that the spirit of that woman was bent,⁴⁶ which I cannot accept. That woman was the same sex as all our mothers, the mother of all humankind. If truly the spirit of woman had been made bent, how cursed with bad luck was the mother of humankind! In my view, the validity of hadiths like this one need to be reexamined, as Turkish religious scholars have been doing since 2006 in the Diyanet Project on Hadith.⁴⁷ Diyanet, a Turkish word derived from Arabic, is the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which has its center at Ankara University in the Divinity School.

The *Christian Science Monitor*, in a piece by Yigal Schleifer (March 11, 2008) under the headline “Turkish scholars aim to modernize Islam's Hadith,”⁴⁸ reported on this hadith project, but its heading was misleading. Turkish scholars did not want to modernize the hadith, but rather to examine those hadiths whose authenticity is doubtful, using the Quran as the primary reference. I will not go into this matter any further, except as it is connected with the issue of the status of women in Islam.

Ismail Hakki Unal, the head of the project at Ankara University, clarified how Islamic literature based on hadith in earlier times greatly demeaned women. He said, “The issue of women being of lesser mind and faith was something that was accepted in those days without any

argument, but it is not today, which is one of the reasons that we are trying to eliminate it We are saying that this is not in line with how the prophet lived and the Koran itself, so it cannot be accepted.”⁴⁹

Unal took as an example the prohibition against teaching women to read and write, supposedly because they are “of lesser mind and faith.”⁵⁰ That improper reading may be linked to the Taliban ruling that forbids women to pursue knowledge and leave the house. It has far-reaching consequences: women are considered as less than complete humans; they are the servants of men, no matter how cruel; or they are “satans,” as we saw in the song lyric condemned by Kiyai Husein.⁵¹ My blood boils to read of the brutal treatment of women that is justified using religious texts. Who among you would want his or her mother treated so degradingly, as it is in an oppressive patriarchal culture? And what about the saying that is so often quoted, “Heaven lies under the feet of your mother”?

To reinforce our arguments for male-female equality, let us link this discussion with Khadijah binti Khuwaylid, the employer and later the wife of Muhammad, long before he became a prophet. Could you say that Khadijah was weak in her faith and her reasoning because she was a woman (to use the language of the hadith)? Who sheltered and comforted the Prophet when he faced serious problems, both when he received the troubling divine revelation and when facing his enemies? Khadijah was the one who stood at the forefront to defend the Prophet, because her faith was hard as steel and her mind functioned perfectly. So noble was Khadijah in the eyes of the Prophet that when this was mentioned near Aisha, a displeased look was seen on the face of this daughter of Abu Bakr. But how could Muhammad not mention Khadijah for the great deeds she rendered to the Prophet and to Islam, precisely at those decisive moments in the beginning? Did not Muhammad take no other wives except Khadijah while she was still by his side?

All the sources say that Khadijah's role in the success of Muhammad's mission was unmatched, not even by Aisha. Karen Armstrong describes this critical situation, and writes of Muhammad receiving the divine revelation: “Trembling, he [Muhammad] waited for the terror to abate, and Khadijah held him in her arms, soothing him and trying to take his fear away.”⁵² When I wrote about this drama of Khadijah and Muhammad, I could not keep the tears from pouring down my cheeks.

The Muslim *umat* of Indonesia should follow the example of Turkey, not to reject the hadiths, but to screen them carefully to ensure that they do not contradict the Quran and common sense. Collecting the hadith literature for about two hundred years after the Prophet's death was no easy task. Thus, we cannot merely rely on the authority of some

claim about the validity or weakness of a particular hadith. There is no question but that those who gathered the hadiths did a great service, but they were humans like us, with all their strengths and shortcomings. The hadiths that are seen as unfriendly to women need to be set aside following serious, honest, and responsible study by those who have the authority to do so.

Not all views about women will be discussed here, such as the questions of inheritance and bearing witness in court. But there are other crucial issues that are tied to the position of women based on the verse often translated as “Men are in charge of women ...” (Surah Al-Nisa, verse 34) that need to be discussed. The segment of the verse quoted here says that men (husbands) are *qawwamuna* over women (wives). The experts differ in interpreting the Arabic word *qawwamuna*. This much-debated Quranic term comes from the root *qwm* and becomes *qama-yaqumu* (upright, standing) and *qawwam* (the singular of *qawwamuna*), which means protector, guardian, director, manager, and so forth. Some commentators interpret it as meaning leader. All those interpretations are feasible. The question is, based on this verse can a woman not become a protector, leader, guardian, and so forth, for the male community? Does this verse limit the range of leadership exercised by men to the household only?

Naturally, in certain cases it is the man who steps forward to protect the woman. Hamka has these amusing words to say about this question:

While [husband and wife are] squabbling in the house over rights and obligations, suddenly a criminal comes to rob them. Without any prior command, it is the man who is ready to confront this enemy [and] it is his wife and children whom he orders to hide. And if there were any grown male children, he would order them to stand firm with him.⁵³

Of course, Hamka is right when it comes to confronting a danger such as this one. But it would be different if, for example, the woman in such a situation were a master of karate while her husband was a timorous soul who didn't know the first thing about self-defense. In that case, it could be the husband who would go hide with the children. Thus, with a change in the picture our interpretation of the religious teaching would have to change, without changing the text.

In addition to Riffat Hassan, there are many other female Muslim scholars who defend the status and dignity of women in Islam. Names like Dr. Amina Wadud Muhsin, Dr. Fatima Mernissi, and Dr. Azizah Al-Hibri are found among the defenders of feminist principles and basic human rights in Islam. In developing their views, they have generally

been influenced by Fazlur Rahman's methodology in this area of study. Al-Hibri is not yet as well known in Indonesia as she is in other parts of the world.⁵⁴

Studies on the status of women in Islam will blossom and proliferate in the future, because women are increasingly attaining the highest levels of education. This is an extraordinary advance in the Islamic world. Men must be grateful as they observe this development and need not fear that women will dominate them so long as the Quran remains their point of reference. Men and women can be equal partners in governing the public interest and other social problems that confront humanity.

The Place of Tolerance in Islam

Taking as a point of departure "there shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion" and that the Prophet indeed did forbid compelling others to adopt a religion, then the best and rightful path for Muslims in communal life is to develop a culture of tolerance. Because the Quran upholds the diversity of ethnicities, nations, religions, languages, and histories, all of these groups must live together in harmony, safety, and peace, if an attitude of broad-mindedness and liberality is to bind humankind. Such an attitude must arise from a high level of self-confidence, not from a spiritual atmosphere or powerlessness. Having self-confidence means not to panic at differences, no matter how sharply perceived, as long as solutions to these differences can be reliably found by working together. If these prove difficult to overcome, we should let history be the final judge, provided that harmonious progress toward communal existence is not disturbed or damaged.

In a society that has not yet matured psychologically and emotionally, differences are too often seen as hostile and inimical, when in fact the strengths that have given birth to great civilizations have been driven precisely by differences of opinion. The resulting friction, if dealt with in a mature dialogue, will engender stronger and more comprehensive formulations. People must not feel that they are always on the right side before they test this view through healthy dialogue in an atmosphere of openness and tolerance. In this connection, I shall discuss the claims of truth brought forward by the streams of thought in Islam in the contemporary era that Khaled Abou El Fadl has grouped into two categories: puritan Islam and modern Islam.⁵⁵

Those in the puritan group hold to a single, monolithic truth and have virtually no interest in a culture of tolerance. Those in the modern group, usually termed "moderates," while certain of the truth of their

religion, are broad-minded and liberal enough to allow other sides to lay claim to truth as well. Each side needs to maintain respect for whatever differences exist. The attitude reflected in “I have a monopoly over the truth,” which denies the other side a similar opportunity, is the source of chaos in society. The intensity of this chaos increases as the lust for power enters into the dispute. This is what happens in various Muslim societies throughout the world. As a result, history’s great task of creating peace among fellow Muslims or between Muslims and non-Muslims falls by the wayside. Throughout history, conflicts, and even bloodshed, have been more common between Muslims than have between Muslims and non-Muslims. This is one of history’s hard facts of which the Muslim *umat* must be aware, so that it will be particularly cautious and open-minded when it becomes involved in politics.

A young NU intellectual of considerable potential, Zuhairi Misrawi, was so disquieted at the lack of tolerance in Muslim society that he wrote a book titled *The Quran: Book of Tolerance*.⁵⁶ As his motto, Zuhairi quotes a hadith from Ibn Abi Shaybah and Bukhari: “The religion most beloved by Allah is the one with the most straightforwardly tolerant teaching.”⁵⁷ In several meetings with Misrawi, I reiterated that the Quran was far more tolerant than some in the Muslim *umat*. At the end of his work, Zuhairi came out with this strongly worded statement:

In this way, the Quran can be made an oasis in a barren land, one that has long been afflicted by intolerance. With the paradigm contained in the Quran, both the verses of tolerance or reinterpretation of verses that frequently are used for intolerant acts, the Muslim *umat* must open a new horizon to greet a better future. The slogan, “Return to the Quran and the Sunnah” is a noble one. Nonetheless, sloganeering and ideologizing are not the best way to express the pearls of wisdom in the Quran. The best step is a wise, open-minded, and contextual reading of it. Because, in this way, hope for creating tolerance on the face of the earth will not be a dream. Tolerance will be both text and reality.⁵⁸

An excellent book on tolerance and religious pluralism has been written by the young NU intellectual Abdul Moqsiith Ghazali. Drawing on in his doctoral dissertation at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, Moqsiith has written an academic book with a long reach that attempts to show the friendly and sympathetic face of Islam as the model for Indonesia in the future. The closing sentence in this work is: “No one may be discriminated against and excommunicated based on the religion he or she has chosen. In this connection, the Muslim *umat* needs to develop a tolerant, sympathetic, and empathetic attitude toward

groups or communities of other religions.”⁵⁹ In following Moqsith’s line of thought, which I also present in this work, I have increasingly found confirmation for arguments that will in time surely become a great wave in the discourse of Islamic thinking in Indonesia.

The emergence of a cohort of tolerant and knowledgeable young intellectuals, from both the NU and Muhammadiyah, will guarantee that in Indonesia’s future the religion will show a face that is friendly because it is self-confident. Because of its strong and highly developed self-confidence, its adherents will surely be tolerant, democratic, and at ease in the face of anyone or anything, anywhere. Thus, the generation of intellectuals now emerging in the *umat* must safeguard their image and moral integrity so that the broader society’s trust in them and in their leadership grows ever stronger, without question. I am not exaggerating, for the empirical evidence has supported very convincingly what I am saying here. The fear of the non-Muslim communities is not a fear of Islam, but of the interpretation of Islam by small groups that rage with an almost primitive culture of violence. Furthermore, it is not only the non-Muslim communities that worry about these groups’ violent conduct; the majority of Indonesian Muslims are also angered and offended by those methods, which fall very short of the standards of public ethics.

One Islam, One Thousand Expressions

It is a fact of history that Islam as it developed over time experienced a succession of ebbs and flows. During the time of the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (632–661 CE), the expression of Islam was relatively simple. Especially under the leadership of the Prophet, all problems arising in the circle of the Muslim community could be quickly resolved by the absolute authority of the Prophet, so that the attitude of the community was: “We hear and we obey.”⁶⁰ In the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, even though there were political frictions that led to civil war, Islam had not yet been split into sects (*firqah*) that stood in theological opposition. As has been explained above, the emergence of groups such as these was generated by political rivalry between Muawiyah and the Caliph Ali bin Abu Talib, which ended with the Siffin War (657 CE), only twenty-five years after the passing of the Prophet.

As a result of the Siffin War and the treaty at Dumat Al-Jandal in that same year, the Muslim *umat* split into three sects and three expressions: Sunni, Shia, and Khawarij, each with its own theological system. At the

beginning of the twenty-first century, Islamic expressions, according to Abdul Mun'im Al-Hafni, number approximately seven hundred, representing tiny ripples or great waves.⁶¹ Their sources can be traced back to these three expressions, which in the beginning were Arab in form and feature. Because Islam was born in Arabia, the several variants that have emerged in different parts of the world over fifteen centuries refer to their respective Arab sources. Some Muslims who were born and live in the “areas of the margin” (that is, far from Arabia) cannot differentiate between Islam as a religion and doctrine of belief and Arab culture, which surely does not represent Islam. This phenomenon is especially visible in those parts of the Muslim *umat* that do not get much accurate information about Islam.

Before we scrutinize the phenomenon of radicalism in Indonesia, I shall present Johan Galtung's theory of global fundamentalism in each of its variations,⁶² for I see radicalism as a historical symptom and a brother of fundamentalism. Why Galtung? This thinker is known for being relatively objective and neutral, as well as courageous and independent. He appears to be free of any baggage in expressing his views on various world problems, including when speaking about fundamentalism, which he feels has shackled humanity at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Professor Johan Galtung is a well-known sociologist, thinker and peace activist, born in 1930 in Oslo, Norway. His works have become reference points whenever people speak of peace, conflict, and war, and of how to overcome war. When he was twelve years old, his father was sent to a concentration camp by the Nazis; he thus began to understand how cruel war is. Galtung is an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi, the legendary leader of the nonviolence movement in India. His criticisms of those who would make war are sharp, no matter their target. In 1970, Galtung predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union. By his reckoning, the current American empire will not last long because of its expansionist foreign policies and indifference to international law, even if democracy and basic human rights seem to be respected at home.

On September 14, 2002 in Cologne, in front of 25,000 German peace supporters, Galtung called out, “Moderates of the world, unite!” In this forum, Galtung spoke of three strains of fundamentalism that have made captives of the peoples of the world. In contrast to the bulk of the Western press, which, post-9/11, tends to direct accusations of fundamentalism primarily at Muslims, Galtung focuses on three fundamentalist forces that, while originating in different cultures, have a similar philosophy. First, the Osama bin Laden Wahhabi faction, responsible for the 9/11 attack; second, the Protestant Puritan faction,

which originated in England and then spread to America; and third, an expression that is rarely heard but whose workings are no less cruel, market fundamentalism.

Wahhabi and Protestant fundamentalists both see themselves as God's chosen people. Both think as though they are people living in the holy land promised to them. Both adhere to the doctrine "he who is not with me is against me." Both take the death of others in stride. When the name of George W. Bush was flying high after the September 11 2001 tragedy, Galtung named him alongside Osama bin Laden, only ascribing to the US president a more terrible killing power. There are not many people on earth with an international reputation who are as bold as Galtung is in calling out for the demolition of barbarism, tyranny, and wickedness. I feel humanity owes a great debt to the person with a primary and consistent integrity. If he attacks barbarous practices, at the same time he shows how to live in a civilized manner. He is not like those who talk about love while their actions echo a culture of hate and violence. Some speak of democracy and basic human rights, while turning other nations into prey to be brutally destroyed. Galtung says the world is full of problems, with one bigger than all the others. Its name is the "geo-fascist" United States. Inside there is a bit of democracy, and outside, fascism. In a September 2014 speech to 25,000 from the German Peace Movement in Cologne, Galtung said, about the United States, "They think they are above the law, [and] directly under God, so that there is no space for the UN, international law, and human rights." Galtung also takes aim at Israel which, also under the control of the fundamentalists, routinely flouts United Nations resolutions.

According to Galtung, the United States is beset by a third strand of fundamentalism, market fundamentalism. The Chosen Ones there are called CEOs, with their corporations. There is a holy land as well: the market. He says that, under such fundamentalism, whoever does not believe in an unfettered market and has other economic ideas and ideals must be dealt with as a traitor. The market fundamentalists also take human life lightly, with 100,000 deaths every day because the market cannot meet the basic needs of food and health; one-fourth of this total dies of hunger.

In conclusion, let us repeat Galtung's appeal: "Moderates of the world, unite!" I would add to that: "All stripes of fundamentalism are the true enemies of humankind and the sworn enemy of common sense."⁶³ For the survival of life on this earth, the wise approach is to show broad-mindedness and generosity toward differences of opinion and then to manage these differences to obtain a truth that is acceptable to all.

My view is that in an uncertain and very unjust world, enlightening ideas such as those Galtung broached are vital. They give hope to the world's people that clear and objective thinkers still exist, even if they are hard to locate among the morass of narrow, short-term interests. The words of George bin Laden and Osama Bush lead to the conclusion that the two of them differ from each other in only minor ways – both are destroyers of civilization, but of course Bush's criminality is far worse because it is masked by a superpower state and abundant dollars.

We now return to my original analysis and to Nusantara, where I shall scrutinize the emergence of the “new-style Khawarij” movement. It appears in the form of the MMI (Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia; the Indonesian Mujahidin Council) and the FPI (Front Pembela Islam; the Defenders of Islam Front). Then there is HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia; Indonesian Party of Liberation), which is transnational and bears the flag of the Islamic Caliphate. There are many others as well, too many to discuss here. These three groups arose out of Sunni Islam. MMI and FPI are led by Indonesian citizens of Arabic origin. Although these two do not necessarily support the path of violence in achieving their aims, their basic philosophy does not greatly differ from fundamentalist doctrine, as described by Galtung. There is no truth outside their respective organizations.

There exists some literature on the characteristics of these radical movements.⁶⁴ Among their most prominent features is their demand for Islamic sharia to be imposed constitutionally in Indonesia. MMI, for example, greatly regrets the sidelining of the Jakarta Charter, in particular the crossing out on August 18, 1945, of seven words from the first *sila* (principle) of the Pancasila,⁶⁵ which said “with the obligation to uphold Islamic sharia for its adherents.” The rejection by the great current of the Muslim *umat* of the constitutional implementation of sharia automatically put the majority into the category “unbelieving, fascist, and tyrannical,” as far as MMI was concerned.⁶⁶ MMI was really very bold to have come out with a judgment of such ill will toward its fellow Muslims. (In contrast, NU and Muhammadiyah tended to hold to the principle of “fundamental objectives of sharia,” in the form of establishing justice, equality, and eternal solidarity among humankind, without discrimination.) But, as is often the case in various parts of the Islamic world, the hardline groups are very vulnerable to splitting. That is what happened with MMI in August 2008, when the “emir” was expelled by his deputy and charged with many painful accusations, such as being a Shia, an Ahmadi, and a communist.⁶⁷

The Egyptian writer Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, many of whose fatwas have become reference points in Indonesia, when speaking about “fundamental objectives [of sharia],” based his interpretation on the opinion of Ibn Al-Qayyim: “The basis and foundation of sharia is the benefit of mankind in this world and the hereafter. The entire sharia contains justice, mercy, benefit and wisdom.” Al-Qardhawi thus rejects the approach of the literalists “who cannot see the meaning, substance, and true essence, but rather the form.”⁶⁸ If we use Al-Qardhawi’s parameters, then the MMI, FPI, and HTI are surely within the literalist category by neglecting the meaning and substance of sharia.

As an antidemocratic group, MMI, for example, seems to doubt its own powers to fight for its political aspirations. On August 15, 2000, it met with Golkar, PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; United Development Party), and PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang; Crescent Star Party) at the Parliament Building in Jakarta to convey to them the principles of its thinking as they had been formulated at the Mujahidin Congress I in Yogyakarta a few days earlier, on August 5–7.⁶⁹ As an antidemocratic force, MMI should not have been setting foot in the Parliament Building and meeting with these political parties – all of them symbols of democracy in Indonesia. But it looks as if in politics, such inconsistencies are business as usual, even if they do betray the slogans of a movement’s own ideology.

A notable researcher in Indonesia’s Islamist movements, Deliar Noer (1926–2008), was sitting on the executive board of MMI as an outcome of Congress I and Congress II. I had no idea that this senior to whom I paid my respects had taken this step; I did not pay much attention to the other names, although some were those of my friends. Deliar Noer, one of whose works, *Gerakan Moderen Islam di Indonesia, 1900–1942* (*The Islamic Modernist Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1942*), has become a classic, seemed so unlikely to be attracted to this radical movement. Did he despair of Indonesia’s murky future and thus place his hope in MMI with its simplistic and black-and-white ideas? But Deliar Noer also criticized the lack of clarity of the ideas of this radical sharia group in relation to state institutions in a foreword:

In the question of the relationship of religion (Islam) and state, it is a certainty – believed in by the majority of those categorized as the radical factions – that such a relationship exists in and must be reflected in civil life. Thus, sharia must be established and enforced in the ideal state. Sadly, the relationship proposed here is very unclear, except, as usual, what relates to the law: cutting off hands, stoning, and the like.⁷⁰

This radical group is really no different from other hard-line groups, whether in thinking, in emotions, or in actions. Al-Qardhawi categorizes it as “a new *Zhahiri madrassa*,” with six prominent characteristics: literalist understanding and interpretation, harshness and complexity, haughtiness in its views, rejection of differing opinions, indifference to *fitna* (slander and libel),⁷¹ and branding as “infidel” differing opinions.

These literalists are not satisfied with rejecting people whose opinions differ from theirs, but they make a bigger issue of this, that is, they view them prejudicially [*buruk sangka*], treat them as deviationists [*membida'kan*] and as iniquitous [*memfasikkan*], and even call them infidels [*mengafirkan*].

The principle governing [their condemnation of] people who differ in opinion with them is [satisfied by] an “accusation.” In fact, according to human law, the principle governing someone who is accused is “innocent (not guilty)” until proven by a court decision (on the basis of the principle of presumed innocence). This is emphasized by Islamic sharia. But for them, the principle is that the accused is guilty until proven innocent. And the person’s innocence is in their hands, not in anyone else’s.

To refute those Muslim thinkers who do not go along with them, they write a lot of big books which they treat to deluxe printing. They broaden the scope of their refutation by accusations of personal deviationism, depravity, and even infidelity to Islam. Among these thinkers they oppose are Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Dr. Muhammad Imarah, Fahmi Huwaydi, and I myself.⁷²

Of course, not all hard-line groups are quick to call people infidels. The Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI) appears to be the most prominent in this business. Its members want to monopolize the truth, a kind of arrogance that will only lead to the destruction of civilization by people wearing blinkers!

Now I shall look at the next radical group, the Defenders of Islam Front (FPI). FPI raised its head during the Reform era; more precisely, it was established on August 17, 1998, at Pesantren Al-Umm Ciputat, Tangerang, and was engineered by several friends and *kiyai*.⁷³ It is said that the context of its emergence was the long oppression suffered by the Muslim *umat* in places like Aceh, Lampung, Tanjung Priok, Haur Koneng, and Sampang, but these acts of oppression were never brought to light or taken before the courts.⁷⁴ But here is the irony. The news was broadcast that there was some military presence in its early meetings, and that the military even provided assistance in the form of funds

and military training.⁷⁵ If this is true, it means some army thugs were playing with fire that could in time burn Indonesia. Experience shows that FPI's anarchic actions against churches, Ahmadiyah, and others, often go unopposed by any force. This means that law enforcement agencies do not seem to care about such criminal deeds. FPI sees all these acts of violence as playing a part in preventing disobedience to God's word.

The issue here is not that anyone is arguing that disobedience to God's word can be allowed to happen, because clearly the pillars of social life would be destroyed by narcotics, fornication, gambling, and drinking alcohol. My question is, In a country of laws like Indonesia, are private armies permitted to act against sin? Would all this not be the job of the police? So why are the police silent? As long as the police adopt an attitude of indifference to the behavior of the private armies, the public at large will remain suspicious that there may be something going on between them. In such a revolutionary mental climate, it would be very easy indeed for the police to use FPI as a tool for the purposes of power politics. President B.J. Habibie's government, which is quite modern, oddly enough received strong support from radical groups because this was seen as "benefiting the Muslim *umat*,"⁷⁶ although the same groups rejected democracy.

Wasn't Habibie chosen through the democratic process? This writer also supported Habibie, because Habibie was the father of Indonesian democracy after Mohammad Hatta. It was Habibie who reopened the democratic faucet after it had been closed off for almost forty years, since the start of the Guided Democracy period in 1959. So I would like to know, do the radical groups oppose democracy in theory but enjoy its results in practice? Seen this way, for them any contradiction between theory and practice poses no problem at all. They are actually just pragmatists, taking shade under a parasol of sacred verse.

The tragedy of June 1, 2008, when FPI attacked the AKKBB (Aliansi Kebangsaan untuk Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan; National Alliance for the Freedom to Embrace Religion and Faith) at the National Monument in Jakarta, led to the public losing sympathy for all forms of violent action. The police were quite effective in overcoming the riot. Several leading FPI figures were arrested without a struggle. This proves that if law enforcement agencies carry out their functions properly, acts of violence can be dealt with successfully, or at least minimized. Society's perception of the sluggishness of these agencies in anticipating disorders is justified. The National Monument tragedy must awaken us to one thing: violence can be prevented, if law enforcement agencies are not negligent in carrying out their duties.

The next focus will be on HTI (Indonesian Party of Liberation). In contrast to MMI, which has local Indonesian features, HTI is a transnational Islamist political movement conceived by Taqiyuddin Al-Nabhani. The goal of his struggle is the formation of a caliphate that will subsume the entire Islamic world under one political umbrella. In HTI's imagination, the caliphate system is the only system allowed by sharia. But in fact, the caliphate system that arose in Islamic history after the era of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs was a complete and serious deviation from Islamic political ideals with their strong egalitarianism, as found in the early era of Islam under the leadership of the companions of the Prophet. Although that new system still referred to itself as the caliphate, in reality it was no different from the usual dynastic political arrangement, with the same cruelties and bloodshed. HTI is completely insensitive to this obvious deviation.

In a later section I provide an excerpt from a paper I prepared at the request of PSIK (Pusat Studi Islam dan Kenegaraan; Center of Islamic and State Studies) at Paramadina University in Jakarta in March 2008 (with occasional editorial changes and additions) on the origin of this caliphate system in the perspective of history. No one contests HTI's right to want to raise the banner of the caliphate, on condition that the democratic mechanism be used, and with attention to the Indonesian Constitution. But if HTI carries on this quest outside the constitutional framework, the movement will surely be confronted by the state, which must preserve the enforcement of its constitution.

The dissolution of the caliphate of Ottoman Turkey by the Turkish Parliament in March 1924⁷⁷ ended the system that had been in active existence for more than thirteen centuries, at least in name if not necessarily in the form permitted by the Quran. For Shah Waliyullah (c. 1702–c. 1762) of Delhi, the caliphate that flourished after the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs differed only slightly from the imperial systems of Byzantium and Persia.⁷⁸ In terms of morality, justice, and egalitarianism, naturally that early period of the first four caliphs was relatively ideal for establishing a reference point, so that Ibn Taimiyah called it the Caliphate of Prophethood.⁷⁹ Still, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the three caliphs after Abu Bakr (r. 632–634) died covered in blood. Umar bin al-Khattab (r. 634–644) was killed by a non-Muslim, while Uthman bin Affan (r. 644–656) and Ali bin Abu Talib (r. 656–661) were the victims of tragic, sensational, and shameful political maneuverings with fellow Muslims.

As a product of the post-Muhammad age, the theoretical position of the caliphate is nothing more than an issue of *ijtihad* (interpretation, through reasoning and judgment, of the Quranic code), although for

the time being the jurists defend it as having a *shar'i* character (in accordance with religious provisions). I myself do not support this latter view, because there is not one valid religious argument that can justify it. Social and political theory has surely experienced development and change throughout history. Only those who do not believe in the principle of change will still cling to something that is moldy with age.

Let us trace the roots of the theory of the caliphate even farther back, especially as it was propagated by the Sunni jurists in the post-Muhammad age. When the Prophet departed this life in June 632, he had been “the effective prophet-ruler over most of the Arabian Peninsula,”⁸⁰ but there was no sign of how to carry forward his task to lead the community of Muslims that had just been born, nor was there any mechanism for doing so. As a result, the Muslim community, still in its adolescence, “was hit by a constitutional crisis,”⁸¹ to use the parameters of modern political theory. Neither the Quran nor the *Sunnah Nabi* (the deeds, sayings and permissions, and other examples of the Prophet) gives clear orders about how a political system should be built after the Prophet was no more. The delay in burying the Prophet's body reflects the seriousness of the problem of the transfer of leadership in the Muslim community. Finally, after long and heated discussions at the pavilion of the Banu Sa'ida tribe, the Emigrant leader Abu Bakr was chosen as the first caliph to lead the *umat*, although prophethood and messengership could not be inherited.

As history records, the two companions of the Prophet who had the most influence, Umar and Abu Bakr, immediately came to the pavilion of the Banu Sa'ida to deal with the ongoing crisis, which they did effectively. It is quite probable that without the intervention of these two, the unity of the *umat*, the main asset for the future of the Muslim community, would have faced grave danger. “Thanks to the decisive intervention of the two companions of the Prophet, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab,” writes Helmut Gätje, “this dangerous crisis could be overcome.”⁸² In a strict sense, the terms “caliph” and “caliphate” refer to the period right after the death of the Prophet. So, too, the term “imamate” (*imamah*), a political concept developed by jurists in the Middle Ages, was a later formulation. As for its then being sanctioned under sharia, this was entirely in the interest of preserving the formal leadership of the Muslim *umat*. As the fruit of human thought, it is bound to its space, time, and place. There is no “certain and absolute provision” concerning this issue, as there are in the provisions concerning daily prayer, fasting, tithing, and so forth.

If Yusuf Ibhish mentions the succession process of the *umat* leadership as a constitutional crisis, it is really only to illustrate just how acute the situation was, because what was known as the Medina Constitution or

the Medina Charter did not govern the issue of this rotating leadership. As Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad could not be replaced because the divine revelation stopped forever when he passed away. However, there had to be a leader of the *umat*, for without one, anarchism and wild confusion would ensue. So, to protect and guard the integrity of the *umat*, urgent negotiations were held at the pavilion of the Banu Sa'ida. These talks produced the leadership of Abu Bakr, even though a minority of the Arab elite of the Ansar clan opposed this result.

The choice of Abu Bakr as the first caliph was considered *ijma* (a consensus) of the majority of the *umat*, which the Sunni then used as a foundation in developing their political theory. Almost all of Sunni political theory uses sharia arguments to accommodate a political reality that changes over time. Particularly before the fall of Baghdad, the center of the Abbasid Empire, at the hands of the Mongols in 1258, the jurists and the theologians centered their theories on the problem of caliph-leader. Then, following the destruction of the Abbasids, jurists and theologians like Ibn Taimiyah shifted their political doctrine from the issue of the caliphate to the central position of sharia as the main binding force in the life of the Muslim *umat*.⁸³ In other words, the jurists and theologians formulated their theories on the basis of the historical reality that now confronted the *umat*. Only then did they rack their brains to identify sharia principles to justify their theories. Fauzi M. Najjar writes, "religion was used to sanction the realities of political life."⁸⁴

Taking our departure from that fact, we can see that even though the caliphate became an institution in the course of Islamic history, there is no place that justifies it in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Therefore, the efforts of some parties to provide a sharia-sanctioned umbrella for the caliph or for a leader must be viewed as a politicization of religion for the sake of seizing power. After all, those political theories were devised by jurists more than three centuries after the Prophet, at a time when the Abbasid Empire was in a period of decline in the tenth century. This conclusion of mine does not close the door on developing new political theories, but we must bear in mind that an absolutist attitude will only constrict the *umat* into an intellectual back alley and stifle creative thinking. In the end, Islamic civilization will mark time, or the *umat* may even be told to lament for a brilliantly colored past, while failing to build the present, let alone the future. This is the model of thinking that I have worried about for a quarter of a century now.

Is there no solution for confronting such theories? As someone who wants to see the Muslim *umat* have an authoritative, influential, and dignified place in the global order, I believe there is no problem that cannot be solved, but we must adopt an attitude of humility. One who is

humble will surely grasp these verses: “give good tidings to My servants. Who listen to speech [of someone else] and follow the best of it ...”⁸⁵ The arrogance of people who think of themselves as being “the most right” makes for an attitude that is unforgiveable in terms of sharia. Arrogance is not a characteristic of a person of authentic faith, but rather it is a pride in one’s origins that is bequeathed by the devil.

In a previous section, I said that difference and diversity in interpreting religious teachings is a fact to be acknowledged. The historian Taufik Abdullah, speaking sociologically, uses the expressions “Islam in Aceh” and “Islam in Central Java,” for example. Here is a more complete citation:

The problem becomes more important if we also remember that not only the power of each religious dimension – that is, certainty, knowledge, ritual, devotion, and religious experience – in each differing ethno-cultural unit differs, even the size of the space and depth of religious influence on social life differs as well. It is in this context that we can speak of “Islam in Aceh” or “Islam in Central Java,” and so forth.⁸⁶

Even in Aceh itself, if observed closely, religious ways and means differ here and there.

In terms of instruction, such differences do not present a problem. However, the situation can become problematic if those differences and the diversity of interpretations bring division and hostility toward fellow Muslims in the *umat*. The existence of a kind of Acehnese Islam and a kind of Central Javanese Islam is not unusual at all. No one can, nor need, ignore local dimensions and influences, so long as all these are connected to cultural manifestations permitted by the Quran. Indeed, those who are enemies of diversity are those who would monopolize the truth, and if need be, “use” God for their own purposes. I have observed that what are usually categorized as hard-line groups tend to be intolerant of differences in religious interpretation. But if we follow how Taufik Abdullah interprets and examines the socio-historical map of the *umat*, we will become adept at broad-mindedness and will not sink into divisive monolithic interpretations. “The truth of the matter is that each problem brings to itself new hope. Matters that are totally ambiguous are the things that constitute the dynamics of religious and community life.”⁸⁷ It is those who are quick to take offense who attempt to quash ambiguity for the sake of a monolithic Islam.

The Global Dimension of Indonesian Islam

The characteristics of Indonesian Islam are shaped by both local elements and by global influences, through reading and through using the internet, for example. These influences cannot and need not be avoided. What we must consider is that the Islamic civilization being constructed in Indonesia must not either be washed away and dissolved in backward local elements or be dragged off by global currents that can bring disaster to it, such as violence in the name of religion and materialistic lifestyles. Therefore, the Indonesian Muslim *umat* must develop a kind of filtration system for dealing with local “viruses” as well as global threats. In order to assess what is negative and harmful, naturally the *umat* very much needs a basic knowledge of Islam, because without this, it will toss about aimlessly like someone with no self-confidence in the face of successive attractions and tugs from left and right.

To cope with more complex intellectual and spiritual problems, certainly a mere basic knowledge will not be sufficient. Supplying deeper forms of knowledge will be the central role of institutions of higher learning, research institutes, and other brain trust centers. These must work seriously to prepare an effective filtration system so that Islam does not become just another commodity to be traded back and forth. Islam as an individual and public moral rule must be given the paramount position in human interaction, whether local, national, or global. Indonesian Islam needs to create a first-class intellectual army, especially for confronting ever more terrible global challenges. This army, besides having a good understanding of the heritage of classical Islamic thought, will stand with its feet planted firmly in the modern world, with all its tumult and clamor. *Ulama* who know only the classical treasury but are blind to the present will find it difficult to be invited to speak about the development of contemporary civilization (or perhaps the rise in contemporary barbarism).

Over the past several years, young NU and Muhammadiyah intellectuals have emerged, along with those from other Islamic movements. I touched on this earlier. They have an extraordinary potential to become the core army of thinkers, whose numbers need not be too great. There is but one condition, that they not be contaminated by the flattery of power politics, which does so much to sap energy and waste time in fighting for position. Not many politicians on the face of the earth are truly guided by an idealism that inspires them to defend the interests of the broad public. Therefore, a division of labor is needed between politicians and intellectuals. So, if politicians want to obtain accurate data about the society, nation, and state, they can invite intellectuals to

discuss how they can acquire this information. Such cooperation has not been widespread in Indonesia. The results of this are clear – politicians exhaust their stock of ideas to give weight to their careers. This reality will surely distract democracy in its efforts to achieve its objectives in the interests of the people, and it may even end in suffering, confrontation, and failure. Indonesia's experience since Independence is clear proof of its various failures.

Because intellectual work always requires zeal, intelligence, dedication, time, and patience, Indonesia faces its own dilemma: how to secure the economic underpinnings of this activity. An intellectual cannot be allowed fall into poverty, but how to avoid that? I have yet to find the best response to that question. But Indonesian intellectuals can approach the authorities and Indonesian philanthropists to join in finding a way out of this dilemma. The nation really does need an army of reliable thinkers to preserve the continuity of the future of its people. Otherwise, the culture of a nation will fall upon very hard times indeed, much like the old saying about the dry *sirih* leaf on the stone – “reluctant to live and afraid to die.” That is, unless the army of thinkers are sufficiently prepared for the various challenges that arrive in an unending procession. Culture can only move ahead if it is always guarded by creative intellectual power.

Among the range of Indonesian entrepreneurs whom I know are some whom we can approach to join in realizing these great aspirations. They well understand that without an intellectual force with free minds and self-confidence, Indonesians will always remain confused and uneasy as they look into the future. I am unwilling to see this most numerous of Muslim peoples in so frail a condition. I must observe, though, that Indonesia truly lacks thinkers of excellent qualifications on a universal scale.

Let us return to the potential of the NU and Muhammadiyah. In this evening of my life, I have come to the conclusion that the cadres of these two forces need to sharpen their vision. Within Muhammadiyah circles the slogan is that the cadres must be formed in this order: association cadres, *umat* cadres, and nation cadres (*bangsa kader*). In my view, this order should be radically reversed and augmented as follows: humanity cadres, nation cadres, *umat* cadres, and association cadres. I hope my friends at NU will consider my proposal for their own formulation, and place the humanity cadre category at the very top.

Why reverse the order? In accordance with the spirit of this work, I propose positioning the humanity cadre first after a number of considerations.

1. The mission of Islam is to be “a blessing for the universe,” as has been frequently said. By making humanity the first point of entry, this Muslim intellectual army will be driven to think on a global scale: the entire community of humanity, whoever it may be, is, at base, our companions. If hostilities occur they must be resolved within the framework of civilized and equitable humanitarianism. In a world filled with conflict and hostility, the dictum that exhorts Muslims to be “a blessing for the universe” is heard too distantly, as a remote ideal. But the Muslim *umat* may not let go of this dictum, for it comes from the Voice of Heaven, no matter the atmosphere that has prevailed on earth for thousands of years of disputes and even bloodshed, not least between fellow Muslims. In other words, pioneered by Muslim intellectuals with a global perspective, the wheels of civilization must turn toward the creation of a universal brotherhood of the community of humanity. The world of Islam, which stretches from Morocco to Merauke, is a world that is still being torn to pieces, both because of the scourge of poverty and the tired old differences in religious understanding. I am optimistic that the Voice of Heaven can and must be brought down to earth, because it came down to us for the good of the earth. The Muslim *umat* cannot merely casually cite and read these messages from on high. The entire civilization that must be built has to aim at this doctrine from Heaven. If we fail, we will mumble futilely when we speak of Islam’s superiority. We must bring the message of Islam’s superiority to the world of reality, not only sermonized from the pulpits of mosques and in religious discussion groups. Beyond that is a sea of poverty and suffering. How can we offer a message of superiority if the *umat* has exhausted its efforts to do what is best for the good of the *umat* of fellow human beings?
2. From the humanity cadre, we descend one step to the nation cadre, because we live and breathe in the nation-state of Indonesia. Muslim intellectuals and the Muslim community overall should not confine themselves in a narrow byway of *umat*, in a limited meaning of that word. In a pluralistic society, the concept of *umat*, besides being located within the framework of universal humanity, must expand to see the haven of national identity as the launching pad for moving farther outward. With this philosophy, the Muslim *umat* will appear as the vanguard in defending and treating the interests of this nation together with other *umat* in an atmosphere of profound and honest brotherhood.
3. Human beings were of course created, not in a single sociocultural form, but within the diversified environments of communities, each

with its own special characteristics. The existence of these special characteristics is the sign that Allah, the One and the Only, did not favor uniformity, for sameness could result in a humanity with narrow perspectives and awkward social intercourse. This is an irrefutable historical fact. Therefore, let each different *umat* turn out its own cadres for the benefit of their different environments, but within a vision of living in a tent of national identity, over which spreads the vast tent of all humanity, virtually without end. My beliefs have not encountered the slightest problem in expanding the radius of my social association and companionship with every kind of humanity, on the condition of holding fast to the concept of *lita'arafu* (of greeting each other and exchanging experiences and courtesies).

4. My analysis is linked to the condition of an Indonesia that is still forming its identity, in which NU and Muhammadiyah have been “predestined” to be the two main wings of the Muslim *umat* up until the present day. Thus, each of these wings naturally requires its own cadres to creatively continue its movement and mission. In the Muhammadiyah environment, these are known as association cadres, while the NU has its own term for these, and there they have their own features. Whether Muhammadiyah or NU, these cadres have the perspective and the mental grasp that exceeds the radius of their respective Muhammadiyah-ness and NU-ness, so to speak. Both become one with the three above-mentioned domains of social intercourse: humanity, nationhood, and community. And all of these require a change of mindset and mental attitude that is both courageous and radical. I myself regret having reached this kind of thinking only at this late point in life, when physically I have much aged.

If I repeatedly mention the potential of the NU and Muhammadiyah here, it does not mean that I do not also to some extent criticize both of them in the context of Islam's ideals and aspirations to spread its universal blessings. There are several key questions that need to reach the leaders and members of these two big organizations.

The first question is, are Muhammadiyah and the NU certain that the doctrine of nonsectarianism or *aswaja* (*ahlusunnah wal jama'ah*), which they have always held as their internal philosophy, is adequate to be brought to the creation of such a universal brotherhood? I very much doubt it. Just open the basic documents of these two movements. Does it not occur to us, especially for Indonesia, to create a broader Islamic perspective that is post-Muhammadiyah and post-NU Islamic?

This is not to say that these two forces must be replaced, but their vision cannot simply remain unchanged within the narrow radius that they made their reference point for action. Muhammadiyah and the NU are simply instruments for achieving the objectives of Islam, is that not correct?

If these instruments lack the lubricant of dynamic and creative Islamic ideas to solve the many different problems of a broader humanity, would these instruments not need to be renewed? Burying itself in the treasury of classical Islam, however rich that may be, but failing to deal with present-day problems, is a disaster for Islamic civilization that has to be neutralized. All the products of human thinking are bound up in space and time. However awesome has been our past in the fields of science and civilization, for example, the original owners were not us, but those who created these things. Thus, for me, the past is not to be idolized, but criticized, so that we who come later must have the steadfast resolution to surpass our forebears both in quality and quantity. But I worry that the Muslim *umat* will lack the courage to think like this and to rise up from its suffocating rear-guard position in today's civilization.

My second question is, did the energy that Muhammadiyah and the NU have mobilized over the many decades produce the optimal results as demanded in their respective articles of association? Or are these articles even read at all? Have they become a kind of museum object? As someone involved in the whirlwind of the Islamic movement for many decades, I have become increasingly uneasy at seeing a large part of the energies of these two forces wasted, not infrequently on divisive power politics. In this connection, I hope that at least some talented intellectuals from both wings of this *umat* will be better at governing their lives and careers to attain something greater, more abiding, something I feel powerless now to do.

Third, have ideas and visions of the future of Indonesia over the next twenty years ever entered the minds of the leaders of these two organizations? Or are we happy with drifting along until our nation glides into increasingly more difficult waters? I appreciate how tempting are the attractions of power politics, but there still must be a stock of intellectuals who think as visionaries, and are not sunk in pragmatic politics, which leaches out everything of value. I do not deny the importance of political power. But more important is the answer to the question: What is power actually for?

Fourth, are Muhammadiyah and the NU quite satisfied with the present condition of Islam, which is still unable to find a comprehensive and intelligent solution to the problems of nation, state, and humanity? Why are their leading figures not more far-reaching in their thinking to break

up the legacy of old and now-irrelevant opinions to solve the problems of humanity in this century? I think the answer lies to some extent in their day-to-day preoccupations with running their organizations, so that they lack the time to pursue new thinking that is no less formidable than our classical heritage. Ironically, some of these leaders are very suspicious of their younger generation of thinkers, whom they consider no longer suitable for the Muhammadiyah identity, or to have turned away from the path of non-sectarianism. Do the formulations of the Muhammadiyah identity or non-sectarianism stand for something that is final and then to be idolized?

With these four questions, to which I could add more, I want to knock on the heart's door of the leaders of both wings of the *umat* to engage in regular dialogue. Major themes for the agenda would deal with culture, the economy, society, politics, humanitarianism, the global situation, capitalism, and a thousand and one other issues. Junior members will surely assist their seniors in preparing the material for these intellectual dialogues. Through frank and high-quality dialogue, I am certain they would arrive at many meeting points for the benefit of the nation and of humanity itself.

One thing to beware: the older and more established generation will not take lightly to the sight of a new generation emerging with intellectual capacities and commitment beyond its own. This is a disease of the old we can call "museum culture." It leaves people incapable of meeting the demands of the current age.

But please understand, if I criticize the senior generation, I am stripping myself bare, because I too belong in that category. I am doing this so that we seniors will not disdain the fresh buds that are starting to blossom, because these same buds will be continuing the long caravan journey pioneered by earlier generations. Through this self-criticism I grow all the more aware how massively we, the older generation, have been afflicted by weaknesses and shortcomings, however little some of us are unwilling to acknowledge them. This is one of the reasons why the generation gap in thinking seems so unbridgeable. But this is not the right way of putting it: better to say, our unwillingness to open ourselves up to each other bravely and honestly is what complicates the creative intergenerational dialogue. In a world that is growing ever more open, a secretive attitude is a calamity that obstructs enlightenment. There is but one risk: the stagnation of the culture.

Besides the intergenerational dialogue of both wings of the *umat*, we must not forget the other groups of the Muslim *umat*, which are considerable in number and diversity. Who knows? Within the younger generation there might emerge brilliant and inclusive thinkers, but

mostly unknown to the mainstream if they are poor communicators. I do not know, for example, if the intellectual Yudi Latif comes from the Muhammadiyah culture or the NU one. If someone enters the world of intellectuals on the strength of his or her creative works, the issue of origin is no longer relevant. We are sure to meet in big themes, which are always emerging, because that is the habitat of the true intellectual. One thing that we should always be conscious of is that the egos of the intelligentsia are often too big to appreciate their friends – but this can be overcome if each one is aware that he or she too has limitations and deficiencies. The attitude of true humility, which our religion teaches us, should never be put aside. Follow the philosophy of the rice stalk: “The more rice the stalks bear, the lower they bend.”

Let us not forget, then, that the interfaith dialogue we have pioneered over the past several years must be intensified. The experience of being together with other people has enriched my perceptions of their humanity and my love for the Indonesian nation, which is no less than the love felt by the majority *umat* here. They are our companions within the framework of a just and civilized nationhood and humanity. The occasional friction at the grassroots level must be swiftly resolved so as not to grow into bigger conflict. The people of Indonesia are tired of their bitter experiences in overcoming conflicts that, in the end, have no true religious foundation.

In closing Chapter 2, I shall quote from the thoughts of Jaudat Sa’id (b. 1931), a religious scholar from Syria, and a spokesman for an Islam of peace with a resounding message of anti-violence. I shall refer here to my article on this figure – who is not well known either in the Islamic world or in the West – in the weekly publication *Gatra*.⁸⁸ In my limited readings about Jaudat Sa’id, I have found very many ideas of his that need to be explored further, because of his courage in “deviating” from the mainstream of Arabic thinking, fettered as it is by the political tyranny of the rulers.

In contrast to Fazlur Rahman, Fatima Mernissi, Khaled Abou El Fadl, Mohammad Arkoun, and many others who circulate their thoughts on Islam in Western languages, Jaudat Sa’id, a graduate of the Faculty of Arabic of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, writes in his mother tongue of Arabic. Jaudat has produced several works, among which are *There Is No Compulsion in Religion: Studies and Discussions on Islamic Thinking*, published in 1997, and before this, *The Doctrine of the First Son of Adam: The Problem of Violence in Islamic Activism*, published first in 1996. This work is the antithesis of the writings of Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), particularly *Signposts Along the Road*, published in 1964, in the midst of the sufferings he underwent at the hands of the Nasser regime.

Qutb, hanged in 1966 by the authoritarian regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, was a revolutionary. He wanted to change the world through revolution because, for him, the twentieth century was no different from the Age of Godless Ignorance that must be overthrown. In his exegesis *In the Shade of the Quran* are found sparks of that revolution, which have inflamed young people of the Muslim *umat* into becoming involved in changing the map of the world, and who to this very day are risking their lives with bloody results. The emergence of fundamentalist groups like Islamic Jihad and *Al-Takfir wa Al-Hijra* ("Excommunication and Exodus" is one possible literal translation) in the Arab world is a manifestation of Qutb's thinking.

Jaudat initially joined the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Hassan Al-Banna, and then broke away from it in opposition to the violent methods taken by some of its members. As a *hafiz* (one who has memorized the Quran), Jaudat was unwilling to see the revolution that the movement inspired in the end destroy the pillars of civilization of whatever remained of humanity, assaulted by waves of crude secularism and religious fundamentalism. Both have the same outcome: "destruction on earth." The Quran strongly opposes all forms of destruction and violence as opposing the Divine Truth of the creation of humankind as noble creatures.⁸⁹ Even more difficult to understand is that acts of destruction and violence are frequently committed by people filled with pride and cries of *Allahu akbar*. If religion is allowed to be the companion of such deviant behavior, everything will become *halal* (permitted). Does this not contradict Islam's message of peace? Islam is in no way a religion that calls for blood, even if some members of its *umat* do precisely that in its name.

Jaudat well understood what this ugly phenomenon held for the future of Islam and its *umat*. That was the reason he flew the banner of enlightenment and peace in the midst of a growing current of religious fundamentalism that impeded his steps to convey the truth of Islam as a universal blessing. Jaudat has been isolated and treated as an enemy by fundamentalist forces, but this old man insists on expressing his thoughts; initially these were much inspired by Abd Al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi, Muhammad Iqbal, and Malik bin Nabi. The influence of these three thinkers from Syria, India, and Algeria, respectively, is among the reasons why Jaudat left the Muslim Brotherhood. The essence of Jaudat's message is fused with his teachings of anti-violence, opposition to compulsion in religion, and advocacy of peace. For Jaudat, violent methods and religious compulsion arise out of a human mentality that lacks self-confidence; those who believe in themselves will surely take the road of peace to achieve their aims. The Muslim *umat*, for him, must not

sink so deeply into historical romanticism as to forget historical reality. Qabil's (Cain's) killing of his younger brother Habil (Abel) in Jaudat's *The Doctrine of the First Son of Adam* became a starting point for Jaudat in constructing his Islamic theories of anti-violence. Jaudat sees Habil as the paragon of the human who loves peace. His character is immortalized in the Quran: "If you should raise your hand against me to kill me – I shall not raise my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds."⁹⁰

Who would not be moved by Habil's attitude in letting himself become a victim of the cruel act of his older brother? This brother was "an early pioneer of fundamentalism" who took the path of violence to seize for himself a woman who was none other than his twin sister, who should have been the spouse of Habil. Jaudat's philosophy has been summed up by the writer Novriantoni Kahar as follows:

According to [Jaudat] Said, the story of Qabil and Habil gives forth a deep meaning. First, there is an element of total resignation to God. Second, there is the ability to make a sacrifice, even one's own life, so that others may find the path of truth. Third, it provides the model for breaking the cycle of violence. This became an exceedingly important parable for Said. Because of that, he hoped the school of non-violence would also become a part of the principles espoused by Islamic activists, who at that time were seething and raging in crying out for armed resistance.⁹¹

I have incorporated Jaudat's thoughts here as part of the dimension of global Islam in the hope that they will soon be disseminated widely in Indonesia, and contribute to the beneficial image of a peaceful Islam. I hope that this image increasingly comes to dominate the perceptions of the public. This is needed, for the bomb blasts in Bali, at the Marriott Hotel, and other acts of violence have yet to fade from memory, as if Islam is a religion of destruction and a continuation of Qabil's act in ending the life of his own brother Habil, himself a symbol of anti-violence. (Habil made the choice not to defend himself.) Readers who would like to know more about Jaudat's message of peace, apart from reading his works, may also follow his thinking through his website either in Arabic or in English translation.⁹²

Jaudat has proselytized for more than forty years to pass on the message of peaceful Islam and anti-violence. A number of Muslim activists in the Arab world have gravitated to him. This is a noteworthy success in midst of all the opposition by conservative groups, which accuse him of being "a materialist in Islamic disguise."⁹³ This business of tossing

accusations back and forth is nothing new in the history of Islam. Even worse, differences of interpretation have been known to ignite warfare within the Muslim *umat*. These are among the stains upon the surface of Islamic history, even though the Quran forbids them, an eternal prohibition that must never be violated.

Islam, as a message of peace, must sound and resound throughout the entire Muslim world through all modern media: print, digital, the pulpit, and all others. If a faction that misunderstands the religion and chooses violence has been able to spread its ideas massively, then there is no other choice for the flag bearer of peace but to actively counterbalance this message equally massively, but through methods that are civilized and polite. Civility and politeness are hallmarks of a society that is psychologically stable. In stark contrast, barbarism and the culture of violence are the marks of a government that is unstable and reactive, and is lacking self-confidence. The Muslim *umat* must do all it can to show itself as a community that serves as a big tent where people can take shelter. But all of this can only be realized if we are superior in our sciences and refined in our morality.

Over the course of time, we believe that the force behind the message of peace will win this match, because the culture of violence has not got the least place in Islamic teaching. Something that has no place to stand, theologically speaking, will disappear with time. There is an expression in the Quran, according to which the froth that represents iniquity will not last long before it vanishes when confronted by water, the symbol of the truth that will be eternal on earth.⁹⁴ Because of that, the flag bearers of peace must be convinced of that verse with all their hearts to stand firm in carrying out their humanitarian mission without ceasing, without doubt, and without exhaustion. Islam truly needs many armies of peace, because the prophets sent into the world carried out a great mission for the spread of blessings and mercy, and the establishment of genuine peace in the midst of the universal community.

As for those who take the way of violence in achieving their aims, we hope there will come a time when emotions have begun to calm and the condition of the Muslim *umat* will gradually heal, and they will then prefer to follow the ways of peace. A community that feels assailed from without naturally will not be able to think clearly and rationally. It would appear that to make our way to a climate of reason and enlightenment, we will need time – on condition that people want to learn and mix with their fellows.

