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Maarif, Ahmad Syafi

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DEBATES ON  
**ISLAM &  
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# ISLAM, HUMANITY AND THE INDONESIAN IDENTITY

Reflections on History

Ahmad Syafii Maarif



**LEIDEN**  
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## Islam, Humanity, and Indonesian Identity

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# Islam, Humanity, and Indonesian Identity

Reflections on History

*Ahmad Syafii Maarif*

*Translated by George A. Fowler*

Leiden University Press

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*Dedicated to those who sacrificed  
themselves for social justice and humanity*





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## Foreword

On the morning of February 11, 2018 at 6.30 AM, a young man wielding a sword assaulted several churchgoers near St. Lidwina Church in Sleman, Yogyakarta. He then burst into the church, attacked the pastor, who was leading the choir, and slashed statues of Jesus and Mary. He had already wounded four people when a policeman, unsuccessful in his attempt to negotiate with him, fired a warning shot. When the young man did not respond, the policeman shot him in the leg. The news of what was feared to be another attack by an Islamic extremist went viral across the globe.

What did not reach international media was the reaction of Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif, one of Indonesia's most prominent Muslim public intellectuals and author of this book. When "Buya" Maarif, as he is affectionately called, learned what had happened, he immediately went to the church and then visited the young man in hospital. There he spoke with him for some time, exchanging ideas about Islam. A few days later, Buya spoke in public about the incident, commenting that, "This young man is a victim of stupidity ... he uses religious ideas and sentences to practice his ideology of death ... I have spoken to him, to Suliyono ... it seems he already regrets it ... he is one of many Indonesians who have fallen victim to this ideological trash that is imported from the Middle East, and which unfortunately many people buy .... even worse, it is already considered trash over there, but here it is valued .... And, ironically, politicians deliberately make use of it."

Soon afterwards, Bishop Robertus Rubiyatmoko visited Buya Maarif at his home to thank him, and said "Buya's visit helped to calm us down. What emerged after the incident was instead a strong sense of brotherhood". Maarif, happy to welcome the bishop to his home, said "I'm only a small cog that is striving to promote logic and healthy thinking in this country."

Unfortunately, attacks by organized groups of extremists, or by 'lone wolves' – as Suliyono turned out to be – have become common worldwide. Maarif argues in this book that Indonesian Islam is affected by international forces in a troubled world. Yet, to fulfil the promise its founding fathers believed in, Indonesia needs to reconnect to what he argues is the essential spirit of Islam, that is, its advocacy of justice, equality, welfare, freedom and moderation.

As professor Herman Beck aptly puts it in his Introduction to this book, Maarif has for decades been one of Indonesia's foremost Muslim

scholars. The breadth and depth of his ideas, however, are hardly known to the outside world since he has written almost exclusively in Indonesian. We should therefore be grateful to the translator, George Fowler, and those who made this publication possible.

In this book Buya Maarif calmly makes important arguments about contested theological, social and political issues, drawing upon a wide range of religious texts, scholars and academic sources. Some of these arguments concern the past and future role of Islam in Indonesia, while others relate to the Muslim world as a whole. For example, he argues on religious grounds that Islam is perfectly reconcilable with democracy, and states that “Indonesia is one of the fortunate nations, because from the start the majority of its people chose a democratic system to govern their new born state.” And, indeed, today Indonesia is one of the world’s big democracies, although, as he comments, for “four decades (1959–1998), democracy was consciously murdered.”

Maarif has apologized for not having sufficiently emphasized in the first edition of this book that woman and man have equal rights. He thanks one of his critics, the scholar K.H. Husein Muhammad, for pointing out this mistake. After explaining Verse 97 of *Surah Al-Nahl* (“The Bees”) “Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female ...,” the author concludes that “the discriminatory treatment meted out against women is no different from opposing the commands of the Quran.”

Buya Maarif is famed for his views on tolerance and pluralism. Global Islam in his view simply cannot be monopolized by any one group, one culture, or one current of thought. In the end, religion is primarily about sincerity. He shares his experience that the ‘heart-to-heart contact’ with adherents of other religions is “a very close one” when he feels that “sincerity (*ketulusan*) is there, and honesty.” In this book’s title ‘Humanity’ comes between ‘Islam’ and ‘Indonesian Identity.’ The central message is a wonderfully heartfelt balanced merger of the three.

Leiden University has long been a center for the study of Indonesia, of Islam in general, and Indonesian Islam in particular. This publication aims to provide an international platform for the voice of Ahmad Syafi’i Maarif, an Indonesian Muslim scholar whose vision and humanity have inspired many inside Indonesia. He may have referred to himself with characteristic modesty as but a “small cog,” but his views and practices have been vital to the political and spiritual welfare of today’s Indonesia, and may well have a role to play in our troubled world.

*Jan Michiel Otto*

Professor emeritus of Law and Governance in Developing Countries  
Leiden University

# An Introduction to Ahmad Syafii Maarif: The Man and This Book

by Herman L. Beck

Ahmad Syafii Maarif is a highly respected and influential Indonesian intellectual and moral leader. At the beginning of the twenty-first century he was one of three Indonesians given the honorary title *guru bangsa*, “teacher of the nation,” by his Muslim compatriots.<sup>1</sup> The other two, Nurcholish Madjid (1939–2005) and Abdurrahman Wahid (1940–2009), have passed away, leaving Syafii Maarif as the surviving “teacher of the nation.” One of the other honorific titles reserved for him is *muazin bangsa*, “muezzin of the nation,” an allusion to the fact that Syafii Maarif throughout his life admonished his fellow citizens to comply with the ethical principles and moral rules of their religion just as the muezzin calls believers to prayer five times a day. This honorific title was used as the title of a book dedicated to him in 2015 by friends and colleagues to celebrate his outstanding contributions to his country and religion.<sup>2</sup> The Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity was founded in 2003 to safeguard and promote Syafii Maarif’s ideas and ideals.<sup>3</sup>

Held in high esteem not only by fellow Muslims, Syafii Maarif is also respected by followers of other religions in his country. Franz Magnis-Suseno, a Jesuit priest and prominent Indonesian philosopher of German origin, for example, considers him to be “one of the most open-minded, inclusive, and on principle, nonviolent people within Indonesian Islam.”<sup>4</sup> Syafii Maarif has also won praise abroad from both individuals and institutions. The well-known Dutch anthropologist Martin van Bruinessen declares him “Indonesia’s last remaining public wise old man and a unique paragon of moral leadership.”<sup>5</sup> In 2008 he was presented with the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Peace and International Understanding – sometimes called the Asian Nobel Peace Prize. According to the jury, Syafii Maarif “promoted the country’s pluralistic society and nonsectarian principles of Pancasila amidst the call for Islamic fundamentalism.”<sup>6</sup>

The author of the book the reader is holding needs no introduction to Indonesians, but non-Indonesian readers are probably not familiar with his work. This book provides an excellent introduction to his ideas and ideals – a legacy for future generations in Indonesia. It is a translation of

the second and revised edition of *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan: Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah* (Islam, Humanity, and Indonesian Identity: Reflections on History), published in 2009 in Bandung and Jakarta. The main title of the book reveals the three pivotal themes that throughout Syafii Maarif's life have played a central role in his thinking, writing, and actions: being Muslim, being Indonesian, and being human, and their interconnection. The subtitle stresses the importance of reflecting on history as an essential tool for understanding and tackling contemporary social and moral evils such as poverty, injustice, corruption. Syafii Maarif takes as a premise that the "real nature" of being Muslim, being Indonesian, and being human can only be appreciated through education. Therefore, he engages these topics – be it separately or jointly – in most of his post-1985 speeches, lectures, articles, and books.<sup>7</sup> Here, they are collected in one volume.

Ahmad Syafii Maarif started to write this book after his retirement in 2005 as general chair of the Muhammadiyah, the highest position within this organization and one he had held since 1998. As he was turning seventy in 2005, he decided not to stand for reelection during the 45th Muktamar, the Congress of the Muhammadiyah, held in the city of Malang that year. He had also been working on an autobiography during this time.<sup>8</sup> Published in 2009, his autobiography often sheds light on views held and positions taken by Syafii Maarif in this book, the more so because he repeatedly stresses that everything should be understood in its social and historical context. By reading this book and the autobiography together, I was able to gain insight into both Syafii Maarif's intellectual heritage and his life story. This introduction aims to offer an understanding of the man and this book, without claiming to be complete. The main themes as mentioned above will be singled out and highlighted in order to show the importance of his contributions to Islamic thinking in general and Indonesian Islamic thinking in particular.

Ahmad Syafii Maarif lived through turbulent times, from the Dutch colonial period to the Japanese occupation, and the Indonesian war of independence. He experienced the so-called Old Order of Sukarno, the New Order of Soeharto, and finally the Reformation and post-Reformation era in Indonesia. Syafii Maarif was born on May 31, 1935 in Sumpur Kudus, a rural hamlet in the Minangkabau highlands of West Sumatra. The Minangkabau people are overwhelmingly Muslim, with traditional (*adat*) belief systems surviving as well. Polygamy was still quite common in Syafii Maarif's youth, and his father had several wives. At the same time, the region is famous for its strong matrilineal system. Also typical of the Minangkabau is that many men live and work outside the region for long periods. Minangkabau people are widely considered

dynamic and egalitarian in nature, which is one of the reasons that they are well represented in intellectual, government, and business circles all over the Indonesian archipelago, and in Malaysia and Singapore as well.

Since his youth, education and specifically religious education played an important role in Syafii Maarif's life. In his autobiography he describes how he entered primary school in the morning and received religious education at the *surau*, a small prayer house and communal building, after school in the afternoon or early evening. His father, who belonged to the local village elite, was also involved in the religious instruction Syafii Maarif received in his early years. He especially stresses the influence of the Muhammadiyah on his education from the moment this reformist movement established itself in Sumpur Kudus in 1944, when he was nine. This solid religious foundation helped to form his character and would become the basis on which he could build and elaborate his own structure of ideas and ideals. Islam and the Quran would be his touchstone throughout his life.

In pursuit of further education Ahmad Syafii Maarif left Minangkabau for Yogyakarta in central Java. Yogyakarta is the city where Ahmad Dahlan (1868–1923) founded the Muhammadiyah movement in 1912. He endorsed the “modernist” principles of Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905)<sup>9</sup> and intended to realize the ideas and ideals of this Egyptian reformer in Yogyakarta. The so-called modernists such as Muhammad Abduh and, in his footsteps, Ahmad Dahlan, sought to understand why the Muslim world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was so far behind the West. In their eyes this backwardness had allowed Western colonial powers to dominate large parts of the Muslim world. They came to believe that only by overcoming this backwardness would the Muslim world shake off the yoke of colonialism and Western hegemony. Purifying Islam and educating Muslims were seen as the way to overcome this backwardness. Ahmad Dahlan's initiatives in educating Muslims led to the founding of the Muhammadiyah movement; nowadays this organization is one of the biggest non-governmental players in the field of education in Indonesia and, perhaps, even worldwide. It should come as no surprise that Ahmad Syafii Maarif continued his education at one of Muhammadiyah's schools in Yogyakarta.

In his early twenties Syafii Maarif became a member of the Muhammadiyah movement. After graduating he entered the service of the Muhammadiyah as a primary school teacher, working in different regions of Indonesia, and meanwhile diligently devoting himself to intellectual and spiritual growth. Throughout his life he would voice the belief of the founder of the Muhammadiyah movement that ignorance leads to poverty, backwardness, corruption, and injustice and that, therefore,

ignorance should be overcome by education. Syafii Maarif's own pursuit of lifelong education is the most convincing evidence that he acted upon his constant appeal to his fellow citizens to seek out education. His efforts were rewarded with scholarships to study in the United States. He was a graduate student in the history of education at Northern Illinois University in 1973, and completed his MA in history at Ohio University in 1980. Just three years later he completed his PhD in Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago. Syafii Maarif's study at the University of Chicago is of particular importance, because the influence of his PhD supervisor, Fazlur Rahman (1919–1988), brought about a fundamental revolution in his own way of thinking.

In his autobiography Syafii Maarif recounts that before he became acquainted with the ideas of Fazlur Rahman, he belonged to those members of the Muhammadiyah movement who nowadays, in retrospect, would be considered fundamentalist. Their interpretation of the goal of the purification of Islam implied not only a return to pristine Islam but also the establishment of an Islamic State of Indonesia. He sympathized with Indonesian intellectuals, politicians, and activists who adhered to the same kind of ideology, men like Mohammad Natsir (1908–1993), with whom Syafii Maarif shared his Minangkabau descent, and he supported organizations and political parties that tried to realize that ideal, like the Masyumi in which Natsir played a prominent role.<sup>10</sup> When the Masyumi was banned by Sukarno and later when Mohammad Natsir was prevented from taking a role in another political party by President Soeharto, he founded the Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII), the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, in 1967 to realize his ideal in a grassroots movement. The DDII contributed substantially to the introduction and spread of the Salafi and Wahhabi body of ideas in Indonesia.

As far as non-Indonesian Muslim thinkers are concerned, Syafii Maarif admired people like Sayyid Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi (1903–1979) and Maryam Jameelah (1934–2012) for the same reasons. Mawdudi was an influential contemporary revivalist ideologue and politician; he tirelessly labored for the establishment of the Islamic State of Pakistan. He was convinced that in modern times the realization of *din* (the perfect religious system), the formation of *umat* (the true community of the faithful), and the full application of sharia (Islamic law) were only possible in an Islamic State. Maryam Jameelah was a follower of Mawdudi for a long time. Originally a non-practicing Jewish-American woman of German descent, she converted to Islam in her early twenties, went to Pakistan, and married a close companion of Mawdudi. She became known as a passionate defender of pure Islam and a keen critic of the corruption and materialism of the Western world.<sup>11</sup>



It was under the influence of Fazlur Rahman that Syafii Maarif's thinking moved in a different direction. Rahman was born in what is now Pakistan, under British rule. He held a PhD from Oxford and had taught in the UK, Canada, and the United States before being appointed in 1963 to head the Central Institute of Islamic Research in Karachi. Five years later he felt forced to leave Pakistan because the liberal, reformist Islam that he represented was being attacked by the orthodox *ulama* (religious scholars). He returned to the United States, becoming Professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago in 1969. In that capacity he earned quite some fame and attracted students from all over the world who wanted to study with him, Ahmad Syafii Maarif being one of them. Syafii Maarif must have felt drawn to many of the ideas and insights Fazlur Rahman presented in his lectures and books. To mention only a few examples:<sup>12</sup> Rahman's urgent call for a correct understanding of Quranic teachings and, in view of this, his emphasis on the importance of education and studying the Quran; his stress on morality and ethics based on a careful reading of the Quran and on the ability to differentiate "between Quranic ethics and law"; his promotion of the Quran's defense of humanity and humanism as one of the central messages of the Revelation; his conviction that democracy, human rights, and women's rights are Islamic; his plea to develop one's capability to make a distinction between "historical" Islam and "normative" Islam; his opinion that the establishment of an Islamic State is not a Quranic requirement. All these themes are found in Syafii Maarif's publications after he returned to Indonesia.

Perhaps Syafii Maarif's graduate studies in the United States contributed to his openness to Fazlur Rahman's ideas. His MA thesis, written under the supervision of Prof. William H. Frederick at Ohio University, was devoted to the study of the relationship between Islam and politics during the period of so-called Guided Democracy (1959–1965) under President Sukarno in Indonesia. His PhD dissertation for the University of Chicago was titled "Islam as the Basis of the State: A Study of the Islamic Political Ideas as Reflected in the Constituent Assembly Debates in Indonesia."<sup>13</sup> Both were translated and published in Indonesian. In these early works, Syafii Maarif deals with the role of Islam during the formative period of independent Indonesia. He is interested in the meaning of Islam for and in national politics and governmental policy or, to quote Bahtiar Effendy, "the political relationship between Islam and the state."<sup>14</sup> Although he is still focused on the Islamization of Indonesia, he no longer champions this idea from a top-down perspective by way of the establishment of an Islamic State. Instead, he favors a bottom-up process of Islamization, by way of education and democratization.

After his return to Indonesia, the shift in Syafii Maarif's thinking made it easier for him to understand Muhammadiyah's acceptance in 1985 of the Soeharto government policy "that all organizations must adopt Pancasila as their sole ideological foundation."<sup>15</sup> Pancasila is the official philosophy on which the Indonesian state is founded. It consists of five principles: "1. Belief in the One Almighty God; 2. Just and civilized humanity; 3. The unity of Indonesia; 4. Democracy guided by inner wisdom in unanimity arising from deliberation amongst representatives; and 5. Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia."<sup>16</sup> Pancasila was accepted by the Muhammadiyah only after long and heated deliberations because, according to the statutes of the organization, its first and only ideological foundation is Islam.

Syafii Maarif has defended Pancasila ever since. He did not see Pancasila as a rival of religion in general or of Islam in particular. Rather, he considered it a gift to the Indonesian people by the country's founders in order to overcome all the threats the newborn state faced after its war of independence. He also praised the wisdom of the founding fathers for their choice of Bahasa Indonesia, the Indonesian language based on the Malay language, as the national language instead of favoring one of the regional languages, like Javanese. In this way the equality of all the ethnic groups and cultures in Indonesia was stressed, which in turn contributed to the viability of Indonesia as a unified nation. In Syafii Maarif's interpretation of Pancasila this philosophy also implied a guarantee of humanism, humanitarianism, justice, and democracy. In the post-1985 writings and speeches of Syafii Maarif all these topics would play a salient role. He dedicated himself to the task of convincing his audience that all these topics are compatible with Islam and in fact are rooted in the Quran.

In the years after 1985 Syafii Maarif's star gradually rose within the Muhammadiyah. He passed through all its echelons from the lowest to the highest and held several offices before serving as general chair from 1998 to 2005. In 1998 he was vice-chair under the leadership of Amien Rais (b. 1944), who was elected at the 43rd Muktamar held in Banda Aceh to become its general chair from 1995 through 2000. However, Amien Rais preferred a political career with the Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party), which he had founded after the fall of President Soeharto in 1998. According to Muhammadiyah statutes, those who hold high office within the organization cannot pursue an active political career; therefore, Amien Rais had to renounce his position as general chair. However, Syafii Maarif was held in such high esteem by the members of the Muhammadiyah that he was elected as its general chair for the period from 2000 through 2005 during the 44th Muktamar of the organization in Jakarta in 2000.

Under the leadership of Syafii Maarif the Muhammadiyah pursued quite progressive policies, although “liberal” and “progressive” in an Indonesian context are more or less synonymous with “moderate” in the West.<sup>17</sup> As chair of an organization with an estimated 25 to 30 million members, Syafii Maarif was even better equipped to struggle against what he considered the social and moral evils of contemporary Indonesia: poverty, injustice, corruption, radicalism, and friction between the different communities. These evils were the biggest threat to social harmony and peaceful living together of all the peoples coexisting in a unified Indonesian state. With the support of the Muhammadiyah, Syafii Maarif intended to beat these evils by stimulating and defending “the ideas of democracy, pluralism, and the spirit of interfaith dialogue” and thus promoting peace.<sup>18</sup>

It is important to note that Syafii Maarif did not consider democracy an exclusively Western idea. He points to the Quranic concept of *shura* (mutual consultation) in surah 3:159 and surah 42:38 as proof that democracy is inherent to Islam. He also mentions the fact that since the death of Ahmad Dahlan, elections played a crucial role within the Muhammadiyah. Finally, he refers to Mohammad Hatta (1902–1980), Indonesia’s first vice president, who as a fellow Minangkabau countryman has always been one of his role models. Hatta once stated: “... democracy in Indonesia has three main sources: the Western idea of socialism advocating the principles of humanism, the Islamic teachings on God’s justice and the need to establish universal brotherhood, and the knowledge that Indonesian society is based on collectivism.”<sup>19</sup>

During his period as general chair of the Muhammadiyah, Syafii Maarif was also closely associated with the World Conference on Religion for Peace (WCRFP), a global organization of adherents of different religions and religious groups aimed at furthering world peace. His commitment to this organization shows his dedication to the issues of tolerance and pluralism, a commitment that is not only theoretical and on a global level. He also devoted himself to these ideals in day-to-day life by promoting tolerance and trying to solve inter- and intra-religious tensions. A few examples will suffice. First, Syafii Maarif has exerted himself to bridge the differences between the “modernist” Muhammadiyah to which he belonged and the “traditionalist” Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), with its 45 million members – by far the biggest Muslim social organization in the world. When there were troubles for political or other reasons he often managed to bring about reconciliation between the two organizations by personally visiting one or more NU leaders. Secondly, Syafii Maarif has been involved in many interreligious and interfaith initiatives, including national and international dialogue meetings and other activities. Thirdly,

Syafii Maarif has defended the right to adhere to religion other than one of Indonesia's six "official" ones and even to be an atheist. Officially – at least until recently – the policy of the Indonesian government with regard to religion was that every Indonesian citizen should adhere to one of the six "recognized" religions: Islam, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism. Fourthly, Syafii Maarif has been one of the few prominent public figures who has spoken out for Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Christian of Chinese background, politician, administrator, and the governor of Jakarta from 2014 through 2017. He is better known as Ahok. He was accused of blasphemy by radical Muslim groups, sentenced to two years' imprisonment and, thus, lost his high position.

Rightfully Syafii Maarif can be called an activist in many fields; even when he does not see himself as an activist in a certain area – for example, in the gender debate – the position he takes is often remarkable in the Indonesian context. As always, his touchstone is the Quran. On the basis of his reading of the Quran, Syafii Maarif rejects the inferiority of women and the legitimacy of polygamy, and instead defends the equal rights of men and women. According to him, there is no objection in the Quran to a woman serving as the highest leader. Consequently, a woman could become the president of Indonesia. As far as Syafii Maarif's rejection of polygamy is concerned, his Minangkabau background has perhaps influenced his view; in his autobiography he makes clear that his mother suffered terribly as one of several wives. He considers polygamy a type of injustice.

Whereas Syafii Maarif is still highly appreciated as an adviser and *éminence grise*, his influence seemed to have diminished since his retirement as general chair of the Muhammadiyah in 2005. The result of the election of a new central board of the Muhammadiyah during the 45th Muktamar in Malang has been interpreted by many Muhammadiyah watchers as a "conservative turn," a setback in comparison with the central board under the leadership of Syafii Maarif. Maybe his ideas were too progressive, and he moved too fast for many members of the Muhammadiyah. However, ten years later, during the 47th Muktamar in Makassar in 2015, this conservative turn seems to have been rectified by the election of a new general chair, widely considered to be a moderate progressive.

Time will tell whether Syafii Maarif's ideas and ideals have fallen on fertile ground. For now, the reader should be grateful that, finally, a book by one of Indonesia's most prominent intellectuals has been made available in an English edition to a wider Western public. This is quite exceptional, for works by Indonesian intellectuals and philosophers

are rarely translated into English. It is an even greater shame that the legacy of most Indonesian Muslim thinkers is largely neglected by their co-religionists in other parts of the Muslim world.<sup>20</sup> Indonesian Muslim thinkers are strongly inclined to draw on ideas and ideals from around the world, resulting in creative and courageous new perspectives. Although this book presents Syafii Maarif's ideas and ideals with regard to being Muslim, being Indonesian, and being human, with a focus on the Indonesian context, his insights may offer inspiration to Muslims and non-Muslims all over the world.



## Preface to the Second Edition

As it turned out, it took some five years for this second edition (revised) to arrive in the hands of readers. The public conveyed a variety of responses to the book, and all of these, whether critical or appreciative, have been equally important to the writer. The second edition contains refinements and even additions, particularly in “The Status of Women in Islam” at the suggestion of K.H. Husein Muhammad of the Fahmina Institute Foundation in Cirebon. Corrections and improvements were also provided by Rev. Dr. Jan S. Aritonang from the Jakarta Theological Seminary. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all, and especially to these two religious figures, who are also my friends. Finally, my heartfelt thanks to Mizan Publishing and the Maarif Institute, both of which supported the publication of this work from the beginning. *Syukur an jazilan* “Thank you very much.” I certainly hope the notes on this revision will be welcomed by readers.

*Ahmad Syafii Maarif*  
Yogyakarta, January 14, 2015





## Preface

In May 2006 I first had the idea of writing about Islam within the framework of Indonesian identity – “Indonesianness,” if you will – and humanity. After a year of unavoidable delays, I began to organize my thoughts on the evening of May 7, 2007, at my home on Jalan Halmahera in Yogyakarta. The first draft was finished on February 9, 2009. To get feedback, criticism, and suggestions from experts, I hosted a meeting on March 3, 2009 at the Maarif Institute, moderated by M. Deddy Julianto, with three of the experts who prior to this had acted as readers of the draft of this book.

The three readers were Dr. Anhar Gonggong, a renowned historian; Dr. Luthfi Assyaukanie, a specialist in Islamic studies, both classic and modern; and Dr. Putut Wijanarko, a communications expert from Mizan Publishing. Dr. Shofwan Karim, Rector of the Muhammadiyah University of West Sumatra, was also invited to this meeting. The Maarif Institute contingent included Muhammad Abdullah Darraz and M. Supriadi. I was assisted by Darraz in processing the input, critiques, and suggestions of these experts. He is a young man who had long specialized in classic Islamic studies. It was my hope that some of the weaknesses of the pre-publication draft could be reduced by integrating the suggestions and critiques of these experts. As the author, naturally I bore full responsibility for this book on my shoulders.

Raja Juli Antoni, director of the Maarif Institute, and I wish to extend our deep appreciation to all those named above and everyone who directly or indirectly participated in bringing this work into the light of day. To Mizan Publishing, I say in the Javanese language, *Matur nuwun ingkang sanget*, “I am deeply grateful.”

May this work be of benefit to its readers.

*Ahmad Syafii Maarif*  
Yogyakarta, March 4, 2009



# Introduction

This book is my reflection on Islam, humanity, and Indonesian identity. I am a devotee of history “with a mission,” to cite an attribute applied to Toynbee.<sup>1</sup> This book draws on a variety of sources, including historical ones, both Indonesian and foreign, primary and secondary. It is written in tribute to Indonesia, to Islam – the religion of the majority of Indonesians – and to humanism, which theoretically informs and protects Indonesian nationalism.

My mission in writing this book is linked to the future of Indonesia, at least as I see it as one of its citizens who is now in his seventies. I feel a kind of profound disquiet about Indonesia’s still unsuccessful realization of the promises of independence expressed by its leaders so many decades ago. Those promises had been made long before the Proclamation of Independence in 1945. It is this disquiet that pushed me to write my reflections on history, for the future of the nation. In my travels to the numerous islands throughout Nusantara (the Indonesian archipelago), the unmatched beauty of the country left an indelible impression on me. I asked myself why it was that Indonesian history did not reflect its natural landscape. Instead, we have managed our nation.

To create a framework for this book, I needed to consult a wide variety of reading materials, texts that would lead me to the type of wisdom that could be acknowledged on all sides, Muslim and non-Muslim. My aim was simple enough: that Indonesia remain whole and survive far into the future, that it not be destroyed at the hands of its own children who do not know themselves, who are greedy, blind, and obtuse. This nation must be defended honestly and responsibly. This is the concrete and true meaning of our post-independence nationalism.

The following interconnected considerations are central to making such a study:

1. The responsibility of the majority *umat* (community) to the nation is far from what it should be.
2. This will be the first book that sets out to deal with the themes under discussion in an integrated way.
3. The influence of political ideology and of authority in general is fading, which will encourage more transparent communication among our fellow citizens.

First of all, as the majority population in Nusantara, the Muslim *umat* (community) should no longer question the close relationship of Islam, humanity, and Indonesian identity. Those three must be expressed in the same breath to ensure that the Islam developed in Indonesia is friendly, open, inclusive, and able to provide solutions to the problems of the nation, no matter how great. Let us call it an Islam that is dynamic and amicably rubs shoulders with all our cultures, subcultures, and diverse religions. An Islam that provides justice, pleasure, security, and protection to all people who reside in our Nusantara, without discrimination, regardless of the religion that they do or do not follow. An Islam that solidly sides with the poor, even as its teachings seek the alleviation of poverty, until poverty is successfully driven out of this nation of islands.

If a minority of people – egotistical and puffed up with cheap rhetoric – insist on showing Islam with a fierce face, like some monster, this will naturally frighten and repel many clear-headed groups, whoever they are, whatever their religion. A monster that claims to speak on behalf of God has clearly cut loose from sharia law in a true sense.<sup>2</sup> The powerlessness that is sometimes felt by a community when confronting the challenges of the modern world, together with all the complex issues that accompany it, must not be used to intimidate the members of that community or encourage them to take extreme and wildly dangerous measures. Suicide bombing in Indonesia, along with the murder of others, is an extreme expression of despair and helplessness, whatever the political or ideological cause. For all Indonesians, suicide bombing is clearly intolerable and unjustifiable. The cause that these jihadis proclaim is not relevant and is in fact misleading. In other words, such deeds are political adventuring designed by the narrow-minded, those who “feel right on the wrong road,” to borrow the phrase sent to me by D. Zawawi Imron, an Indonesian literary figure from Madura.<sup>3</sup>

From this perspective Islam, humanity, and Indonesian identity should be understood as a plaited unity that is complementary and mutually enriching. People should not be so easily trapped seduced by the notion that Islam cannot be “caged” in the vessel of the nation-state called Indonesia. Islam, as this view would have it, knows not the boundaries of nation, race, or state. This is clearly an impractical, utopian view. If there were any truth to such notions, why does the Quran acknowledge the differences between tribes and races so that they would get to know each other in order to exchange ideas and culture?<sup>4</sup> A fatal error can of course occur if people then make idols of ethnicity, ancestry, and nationalism, as we shall discuss later on.

Based on what we know, Islam was born and developed entirely in the flesh and blood of history and not in a cultural vacuum, much less in a

quiet place far from the bustling atmosphere of cities. Islam was born and developed in the fierce commercial climate of the Quraysh tribe, not in an isolated Bedouin village. After the Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation at the Cave of Hira in the year 610 CE, he never returned there but went straight into the midst of a society that had long been crushed by injustice and discrimination. The Prophet initially shared his teachings within his own family circle and only gradually moved out into the public. Historically, Islam has always interacted and grappled with society, which is continually transforming in response to social changes, with the goal of directing such changes to stay on the road of justice.

Even during the Medina period (622–632 CE), Islam was growing and developing within a commercial urban environment. Thus, whether in Mecca or in Medina, Islam was always in close contact with a world that was dynamic, competitive, and creative – the world of trade. So great was the pull of trade that some of the Prophet’s companions forgot about God and walked off even as he was delivering the Friday sermon. The Quran describes this in the following verse: “But when they saw a transaction or a diversion [O Muhammad], they rushed to it and left you standing [and preaching]. Say, What is with Allah is better than diversion and than a transaction, and Allah is the best of providers.”<sup>5</sup> Here the Quran is very clear that even some of the companions of the Prophet were not invulnerable to the temptations of the world. And that happened during the time of the Prophet and in his very presence. His companions were just ordinary people. Thus, it is not too surprising that warfare later broke out among them upon the death of the Prophet. All this must be seen from the perspective that they were ordinary people who were not directly guided by divine revelation.

Can one, for example, separate the birth of Islam from the Arab environment? Of course not. Only those blind to history theorize that Islam emerged in a cultural vacuum. The Quran was written in the Arab language, the mother language of the Prophet Muhammad as the bearer of the final revelation. What was forbidden was the idolizing of one’s homeland, ethnic group, clan, tribe, or nation-state, which would create an ideology in conflict with Islam.

But in the case of Indonesia, if nationalism is understood as being limited to an ideology of opposition to colonialism and oppression, how can or why should it be rejected? In Sukarno’s historic speech *Indonesia Accuses*, delivered at his trial in 1930, he quoted Sun Yat-sen, who said that nationalism gives a country the power to advance and gives an ethnic group the power to protect itself.<sup>6</sup> Why then, he asks, must it be opposed and condemned? We have to think within the specific context of place and time, for otherwise we will certainly go astray. When

introducing a revealed teaching that is transcendental in nature one must use the greatest wisdom in considering the local atmosphere. The local environment must be carefully studied for the successful implanting of a teaching. A teaching is not something merely to be sung, but serves as a guide for humanity because the power of the mind alone is insufficient to solve the complex problems of facing us. Humankind, as a player on the stage of history, may not act as its own referee.

Colonialism, oppression, and racism are the skeletons in the closet of history that must be banished from the face of the earth. The first paragraph of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution states, "Whereas independence is the inalienable right of all nations, therefore all colonialism must be abolished in this world as it is not in conformity with humanity and justice." From the beginning, our constitution has emphasized the central position of humanity and justice. On the basis of such a formulation, Indonesian nationalism has two inseparable goals: banishing colonialism and struggling to establish humane and just values.

Naturally, we must start from Indonesia, a young state still searching for a more appropriate, just, prosperous, and appealing future. Who can deny that these two goals are indeed in line with and arise from the same source as the teachings of Islam that are against oppression and for justice? Of course, according to the theories of Rousseau and Hegel, a citizen's highest loyalty is to the nation-state, an understanding that must be rejected by someone of faith. We cannot accept nationalism as those European philosophers defined it. We take only its positive aspects in the interests of the country, which are the interests of us all.

While I was studying at Northern Illinois University at DeKalb and at the University of Ohio in Athens, Ohio, in the early 1970s, I heard such utopian notions from an Indian Muslim, but I questioned whether they were realistic. That Islam was universal in the essence of its teachings and humanitarian mission – yes, that was true. But the social practice of Islam in the cultural format of various ethnicities can never be free from local, national, and even global influences. That is totally natural, and there is no need to debate the particularities of historical Islam. What must be tightly guarded are its main doctrines: the oneness of God, belief, and good actions. None of these may be altered. They must stay intact as the fundamentals of a Muslim's system of faith.

Therefore, it is not an error of terminology to speak of Arab Islam, Indian Islam, Nigerian Islam, American Islam, Iranian Islam, Turkish Islam, Brunei Islam, Chinese Islam, Indonesian Islam with all its variations, and so forth. And it's not just this big picture, but people also speak of Islam as it is understood by Muhammadiyah, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Persis, the hard-liners, and so many others.

I want to comment on these issues for reasons that I hope are religiously strong and scientifically valid. I admit at the outset that I bring my own subjective views to my reading of the map of Islam, the map of Indonesia, and the map of humanity. This is unavoidable. Over the course of my life my thinking on these questions has evolved significantly. The increasingly fluid sociopolitical conditions in Indonesia may no longer be dealt with using static, narrow ideas that idolize an imagined history – as long as an attitude of moral consistency runs through the analysis like a red thread. Do I possess such intellectual integrity and honesty? Let society judge me, and judge honestly. It is its right. The progressive life is packed with the clash of ideas to find the best and the most true.

The second consideration that motivates this study is that, as far as I know, no other comprehensive study speaks deeply, critically, and creatively about the problems of Islam within the framework of Indonesian identity and what it is to be human. We have the valuable legacy of the Indonesian intellectual Nurcholish Madjid, who wrote on similar themes, and which I have found helpful; however, he did not publish a comprehensive study but rather papers and articles that were later collected in book form.<sup>7</sup>

In Indonesia, the meaning of “humanism” extends to the qualities of a “just and civilized” character, as contained in the second precept of the Pancasila, the statement of five principles that is Indonesia’s elegant national covenant. The earliest formulation of this concept came from Sukarno, at the time the Indonesian Constitution was being drawn up. This was Sukarno’s formulation of this second *sila*, or principle, in his radio speech of June 1, 1945: “Internationalism, or humanism.”<sup>8</sup> I shall cite this statement at greater length later on.

The term “God, the One, the Only” also originated with Sukarno<sup>9</sup> and later became the first principle, in agreement with the Jakarta Charter dated June 22, 1945. The clause that followed read, “with the obligation to enforce Islamic sharia for its adherents.” On August 18, 1945, the day after the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence, this was changed again to simply “belief in God, the One, the Only,” a change that has been most vigorously challenged by Muslim circles for years, by blaming Mohammad Hatta for being the architect of the meeting conducted one day after Indonesia’s bell of independence had sounded.

Over time, the paradigm of my thinking has undergone a change: after much study, I found that Hatta’s political stance can be completely understood and even justified. The wording Hatta put forth was one of the ways he used to preserve the unity of the nation that he had struggled ever since his twenties. I must also note that Hatta was an observant Muslim, both in word and deed. He was a man of rare personal integrity.

So it would be historically inaccurate to say, as some do, that Hatta was a secularist simply because of that meeting on August 18, 1945. In fact, Hatta was the “godfather” of all the top leaders of the Masyumi Party, which had fought to make Islam the foundation of the state, in opposition to the supporters of the Pancasila. To read Indonesian Islam outside the context of history is to err like a man crawling in circles in the darkness, thinking he is walking in daylight.

The third consideration is that, with the diminishing influence of political ideology, cultural exchange among Indonesia’s diverse citizens has become more fluid. As long as it is not contaminated by power politics, this form of communication can be very effective in cementing national integration, which sometimes still seems vulnerable and fragile. Also, Indonesia’s ethnic subcultures are increasingly using the Indonesian language and modern technologies to communicate with one another. Even though there are small groups here and there that still question Pancasila as the philosophical foundation of the state, the dominant thinking that flourishes within Indonesian society has consciously and willingly accepted Pancasila.

There have been instances when the acceptance of Pancasila as the philosophical basis of political or social organization was forced on those who were unwilling to receive it. Nevertheless, to this day there is no other concept that is as “right” for strengthening the unity of the nation as these five principles, read as an integrated whole. Studies by Muslim writers like me that break new ground on this important issue are still needed. To defend this nation, we cannot afford to be torn apart by narrow interests – local nationalisms, ethnic identities, or the politics of religion.

As for the moral atmosphere of the nation that remains vulnerable and even fragile, the main reason does not stem from the Pancasila. On the contrary, it is that the Pancasila has been betrayed by behavior and actions, including those of leaders and elites. This is the irony we witness in the history of modern Indonesia. In the past it was believed that ideological antagonisms were the main causes of our failure to attain the goals and promises of independence. However, now that those antagonisms have faded, it is plain that Indonesia has still not yet regained its moral consciousness. Justice is increasingly rudderless, the political climate is more and more chaotic, and the Indonesian ethos now appears to accept that the ends justify the means. The ideals of independence seem more distant than ever. Rather, corruption has grown all the more terrible after the disappearance of those ideological antagonisms from the political arena. I have not even mentioned the networks of the narcotics trade; not one subdistrict can guarantee that its territory is free from this



deadly poison. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Indonesians have become increasingly worried by the contagion of materialist culture and the worship of money. Mosques, churches, temples, monasteries, and pagodas are still widely visited, but the question remains, does this correlate to any significant extent to the moral improvement of the nation?

If this analysis is correct, and I feel it is, we have to say that our sickness is cultural and mental in character. Cultural sickness comes from the increasing brittle spiritual building in which this nation resides. What I mean is that we are suffering from a chronic illness for which we have to find a cure, once and for all, so that the future will be brighter, fairer, and pleasant for all of us.

It has been a long time since the anthropologist Koentjaraningrat said that one of the forms of that sickness is “a mentality that likes to take shortcuts.”<sup>10</sup> That is, wanting to get rich quick, without working hard, or what is usually called “a fanciful and opportunistic mentality.” This sickness infects a wide range of groups and does not exclude the religious scholars and leaders. Its long-term outcome will make our national personality and character increasingly unsteady, fragile, and vulnerable.

If such behavior is not restrained, there is no guarantee that there is anything we can do about Indonesia’s fate. It is futile to hope that others will come to our aid if we are unable to heal ourselves. The future of our people is entirely in our hands. Even a senior observer of Indonesia said: “Indonesia is beyond help.”<sup>11</sup> I cannot bring myself to reach such a grim conclusion as long as we realize how serious Indonesia’s problems are and struggle to overcome them. We must not stay silent, but rather do whatever is best for the public interest and for our collective future.

Saving the nation is a collective task and the obligation of all citizens without exception. Of course, the government must be capable of directing all the strengths of the people to this end. The people of Indonesia, generally speaking, are still “followers” – if there is an example of virtue at the top, they will follow. For Indonesia, it is axiomatic that exemplary behavior by the leaders is required.

## **The Relationship of Islam, the Indonesian Soul, and Humanism**

I have mentioned that Islam, the Indonesian soul, or “Indonesianness,” and humanism must be spoken of in one breath. Seen from the perspective of its early history, Islam, as the final message from Heaven, within a relatively brief space of time succeeded in gaining a portion of

the earth that contained a great diversity of peoples and cultures. Some one hundred years following the death of the Prophet, this religion had spread throughout the world with great speed and had been embraced by peoples and races of great diversity with their own distinct histories. Islam always came into areas that were themselves rich in systems of values and beliefs. For more than fourteen centuries, Islam has been active and creative on the face of the earth; at the start of the twenty-first century its adherents number about 1.3 billion, spread across various nations and states.<sup>12</sup> Of the 187 countries in the world, it is virtually assured that not one of these is without Muslim inhabitants. There is no sign that Islam's global expansion will wane; even in the United Kingdom, Islam has become the second religion after Christianity, even though, according to Karen Armstrong, the proportion of churchgoing citizens has fallen to about 33 percent.<sup>13</sup> But we are obliged to ask, of these 1.3 billion Muslim, what percentage still makes religion the compass of their daily lives? Who knows – quite possibly the percentage is lower than what we find among the Christian community in the United Kingdom.

Thus, we must humble ourselves and not pound our chests in pride. We must realize that Islam is facing a serious corrosion of its practice. And we have not even begun to speak of Islam in the realm of politics, where the picture is even more dismal. Islam is now becoming increasingly a doctrine justifying flawed and immoral political behavior. In contemporary Indonesian history, examples of moral misconduct and deviance are easy enough to find. Statements of support by several Muslim groups for the corrupt and repressive authoritarian regime some years back are one example. The situation is becoming ever more grave, due to the religious arguments made in approving those statements. Other bad examples have accumulated; we need not record them here. One can find similar doings not only here in Nusantara, but in all Muslim countries. Islam has been made into a commodity of power politics on a global scale.

As it turns out, we are not always honest in our religious practices because it is so easy for us to invoke the name of God to conceal short-term political objectives. Barack Hussein Obama, when he was the junior U.S. Senator from Illinois, mentioned the following observation by his mother: "For my mother, organized religion all too often blankets closed-mindedness with the cloak of piety, covers up cruelty and oppression in the robe of the truth."<sup>14</sup> Throughout history, many different belief systems everywhere in the world have abused religion for low-minded goals. Religion thus becomes a bartered commodity. But religiosity used to gain a self-seeking goal, we know well, is among the types of religious behavior that are of no value in the eyes of Allah.

That politics in Indonesia as it relates to religion, particularly Islam, at times presents an opaque picture is nothing strange. It would be difficult to differentiate, for example, between the behavior of someone who claims to believe in revelation and someone who could not care less about religion, even though we hear sharia slogans shouted everywhere. It even not infrequently happens that calls to the night prayer have been exploited and made to justify the political tendencies of the moment – to defend the position of a leader, for example. I expressed these thoughts at a forum once:

We commit too many deviations and even moral crimes, and do so not infrequently in the name of God. This is no different from the conduct of people who hijack God for their own base interests of the moment with no feelings of guilt or regret. Such unlovely scenes cannot be allowed to go on, for I am sure this will disgust people who think clearly and deeply, whatever their religion or ethnicity .... Indonesia is a nation that claims to be religious, but every day and night the noble and lofty values of religion are trampled on and raped under the shelter of all kinds of theological justifications and sacred quotations.<sup>15</sup>

Long before this, people were encouraged to practice their religion in a civilized way. Sukarno at least in theory emphasized the principle of a civilized belief in God (*Ketuhanan*), or a cultivated belief in God, in the sense of religious people having noble character and manners and adopting an attitude of mutual respect.<sup>16</sup> In other words, being religious in a civilized way is the same as being religious in an honest, sincere, and generous way. By “generous” I mean that the principle of pluralism is important; it shows in our willingness to recognize the rights of others to hold that the greatest truth resides in their respective religions, even if we do not agree with them. At the same time, other people must respect the position of Muslims who say that Islam is the truest religion. The expression “the truest” here must be understood in the light of the distinct beliefs of each adherent. It is uncivilized and it disturbs the peace to say, “Our religion is the truest and your religion is packed with myths and confused beliefs.”

The Quran enjoins all believers: “So race to [all that is] good. To Allah shall you return all together, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ [about religion].”<sup>17</sup> It appears that differences in religious understanding will never be resolved here on earth until the last day. The highest judge to decide in the end, according to this verse, will be the authority of God. The task of the adherents of all

religions is to vie with each other in establishing and spreading all that is good for everyone, not just for themselves or their own group.

But claims about which is “the truest” may not be allowed to wreck our Indonesian homeland, a nation-state owned by all of us, or make us veer off the narrow path of “a just and civilized humanity.” Sukarno was right in citing Mahatma Gandhi’s saying “My nationalism is my humanity.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, “Indonesianness” in the sense of Indonesian nationalism should never slide toward expansionist nationalism, which is no different from modern imperialism according to the theory of the Iranian scholar Mostafa Rejai.<sup>19</sup> He said, “Both in theory and in practice, nationalism is connected to messianism, expansionism, imperialism, and war.”<sup>20</sup> From this perspective, the contentious question arises as to whether or not Indonesian nationalism at the time of the takeover of East Timor was expansionist in character. I tend to say that Indonesia at that time was pursuing imperialist politics, since this territory had not previously been a part of the Dutch East Indies, whose territorial unity itself was the main justification for an independent Indonesian homeland.

In this connection, it was noteworthy that the writer and Catholic activist priest Y.B. Mangunwijaya said that the takeover of East Timor by Indonesia was illegal in international law, which only recognized Indonesia as being the former Dutch East Indies. East Timor was the former colony of Portugal, not Holland. According to Mangunwijaya, no fewer than 120,000 East Timorese were killed or went missing during the takeover, and tens of thousands of Indonesian soldiers perished in carrying out that expansionist policy.<sup>21</sup> As for the concern that East Timor under the Fretilin (Revolutionary Front of Independent Timor Leste [East Timor]) would go communist, and therefore had to be preemptively taken over, this is another matter that is not directly related to theories of nationalism.

In the discourse about nationality, the circle of major figures of the early days of the national struggle also clashed in their opinions. This of course was perfectly natural. Take the example of the polemic over nationalism between Agus Salim and Sukarno, two fathers of the nation who came from different subcultures, the Minangkabau of West Sumatra and Java-Bali, respectively. Their exchange was carried in the publication *Fajar Asia* in 1928. Both Sukarno and Agus Salim shared a love for Indonesia, but in Salim’s mind Sukarno’s love was excessive. Sukarno had said, “It is no more than your obligation that you enslave and bind yourself up in servitude to your mother Indonesia and become a son who has devoted himself to her.”<sup>22</sup> Salim was against the idolization of the motherland (the impression one has of the above excerpt, even though this may not have been Sukarno’s intention). Yet apart from

their differences, Salim also wrote about his similarities to Sukarno: they had the same orientation, “love of nation and motherland,” and the same objective, “ennoblement of the nation and independence for the motherland.”

The same starting point: In the arena of colonial politics, this was the struggle between the holders of power and the mass of the people who demanded their rights under natural law, that is, inalienable sovereignty over their own people and motherland, and independence from any foreign nation.<sup>23</sup>

At this level, there were no basic differences between Salim and Sukarno. “But,” wrote Salim, who distinguished between differing in principle and differing in intention, “our principle is religion, that is to say, Islam. Our intention is *Lillahi Ta’ala* [for Allah].”<sup>24</sup> This was written decades ago, before Pancasila entered the stage of national history. But, as it turned out, this polemic from 1928 continued right up to the eve of Indonesia’s Proclamation of Independence and after it as well, meaning that it touched on the philosophical basis of independent Indonesia (which I will discuss at greater length). Fifty-seven years separated 1928 from the enactment of Pancasila as the basis of mass organizations and parties. How bitterly and for how many years was this problem of the philosophical basis of public life debated, until a forced consensus was imposed by Indonesia’s authoritarian New Order government in 1985.

## Chapter Highlights

I will now give a brief chapter-by-chapter preview of the book before we enter into the broader discussion. Chapter 1 introduces the cultural and religious struggle that has been going on in Nusantara and Indonesia for centuries. Long before the arrival of Islam and even Hinduism and Buddhism, the lands of Nusantara were populated by the adherents of various religions and animist and dynamist beliefs. Hinduism and Buddhism, or perhaps a mixture of the two, were present in a number of islands from the fifth century CE. The first activities of Hindu believers are visible in Kutai (in East Kalimantan) and in West Java with the appearance of the Kingdom of Tarumanegara at the beginning and middle of the fifth century, respectively. The coming of Islam, therefore, was preceded by other, older religions.

It is one of the wonders of later history that this newcomer, Islam, “conquered” Nusantara so that over time it became the religion that is still embraced by the majority of the inhabitants of the archipelago. But Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucianist minority groups

have lived in peace side by side with their Muslim brothers and sisters. The main cause of the occasional conflicts in the modern era has not been religious differences but rather economic and political interests exploited by irresponsible and parochial provocateurs.

Up to the sixteenth century, Java and Sumatra in particular were still centers of Hinduism and Buddhism. The influence of Islam had not yet become widespread, although there is a theory that Islam arrived in Nusantara in the first century Hijra (seventh–eighth centuries CE) straight from Arabia.<sup>25</sup> If this theory is correct, Islam would have endured a period of struggle for about five centuries before the appearance of the first Muslim kingdom in Pasai (today's Aceh Special Territory) at the end of the thirteenth century. Buddhism and Hinduism have marked differences. Hinduism is elitist and is based on a caste system, while Buddhism is rather like Islam in social structure, having more egalitarian features. The most profound and enduring impact of these two Indian religions was in central Java, where two monumental temples – the Buddhist temple Borobudur and the Hindu temple Prambanan, both dating back to the ninth century – are maintained by the Indonesian government, even though the Hindus and Buddhists themselves are minorities in Indonesia, with the exception of the Hindu majority in Bali.

Although Islam emerged as the “victor” in its contest with these predecessor religions, its cultural achievement was more formal and quantitative. Qualitatively speaking, the old cultural remnants were maintained and fostered by some people in Nusantara. Furthermore, Islam as a religion came to Nusantara for the most part not through the power of the sword, but rather following the pattern of its Hindu and Buddhist predecessors, that is, via peaceful penetration, so that the older systems of belief disappeared from the surface only. That it traveled this peaceful path was one of the conclusions of the Medan Seminar,<sup>26</sup> but it is not impossible that as Islam expanded its power the path of violence was also traveled. We cannot close our eyes to violence, if it really did occur. We must look at our past as it was.

Beneath the surface, the multilayered syncretist forms survived, especially animism and dynamism, the original beliefs that had taken root long before the arrival of Indian influences.<sup>27</sup> The firmly implanted layers of old values explain why the puritanical Islamic movement that began in the nineteenth century in West Sumatra encountered so many cultural difficulties. The struggle continues to the present day, but it has almost never given rise to significant social upheaval. The aggressive puritanism seen in the Padri movement in the Minangkabau lands of West Sumatra has gradually yielded to more enlightening and persuasive

cultural approaches. The Muhammadiyah movement was founded in 1912 in Yogyakarta, the center of Javanese culture, and then rapidly flourished in the Minangkabau lands from the early 1920s. In addition to bearing the banner of a moderate puritanism, its activities in the fields of education and health have strengthened it as the most renowned “deed-oriented” Islamic movement in the world. In terms of numbers, almost no other Islamic movement can match it.

The traditionalist Islamic movement in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) – literally, Revival of the Scholars – that arose in 1926 at first wanted to check puritanical influences: it tolerated the old traditions and values. It has more recently come closer to Muhammadiyah in the sense that it has opened itself widely to new Islamic thinking. We might even say that the NU youth are more “advanced” than the Muhammadiyah in absorbing the results of the new thinking that has appeared in the Muslim world since the end of the twentieth century. I see such developments not as cause for concern but rather as part of the “race” to spread good values and enlightenment – which must be addressed positively, regardless of who is doing it. Recently, too, Muhammadiyah and the NU, representing the mainstream of Islam in Indonesia, have marched shoulder to shoulder under the banner of an Islam that is open, modern, and moderate, a social model that is highly strategic for Indonesia’s continuance as a pluralistic nation. It has become axiomatic that so long as Muhammadiyah and the NU cooperate, Indonesia will remain safe from the threat of extreme radicalism. For it is also true that, in addition to these two major streams that have drawn much closer to each other now, Muslim movements with more radical characteristics and their own political agendas have also sprung up over the past twenty-five years. This is at the same time a refutation of the view that Islam is monolithic. We see this phenomenon not just in Indonesia, but across the world, wherever Muslims have established communities.

This chapter also discusses the process of Islamization in Nusantara that replaced the Indianization process, the coming of colonialization, the emergence of a national movement, the birth of the nation and state of Indonesia, political and ideological combat, and the establishment of Pancasila as the foundation of the state philosophy.

Chapter 2 focuses on Islam’s views of democracy, tolerance, and religious and cultural diversity; the countless expressions and interpretations of the religion; and the message of anti-violence. Diversity of religion and culture characterized the inhabitants of Nusantara long before the birth of Indonesia as a nation, less than a century ago. An ahistorical notion would have it that the Indonesian people are centuries old, beginning in the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and so forth, and continuing through

the coming of religions from India, Arabia, and Europe. But what is old is not the Indonesian nation of peoples as we know it today, but the forerunners of this Indonesian nation, the multitude of ethnic groups, each with its own rich cultural mosaic, customary laws, and languages. The Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic kingdoms were also the forerunners of the Indonesian state that was brought into existence on August 17, 1945.

At the time of the European invasion of Nusantara in the early sixteenth century, the kingdoms the invaders encountered had Islamic features, but each was independent. They were not infrequently at war with each other. The Dutch needed more than three centuries to subjugate these kingdoms. They began by setting up the East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) in 1602. Aceh was the final Muslim kingdom to be defeated, and only in the second decade of the twentieth century. To weaken Aceh, Professor Snouck Hurgronje, religious adviser to the Dutch East Indies government, provided the key to “taming” political Islam.

The colonial system in Nusantara was painful and humiliating. One by one, the Muslim kingdoms were overpowered. The natural riches of the archipelago were shipped to Europe, while the people of Nusantara were kept uneducated, impoverished, and oppressed. Nonetheless, without colonialism, could the nation and people of Indonesia have ever been imagined? In other words, you might well condemn the colonial system – whether it be the Portuguese, the English, the Dutch, or the Japanese – and it really was worthy of condemnation, but the fact remains that it was due to the influence of colonialism that we began to imagine Indonesia, first as a nation, and then as a state. Its main constituent parts were the kingdoms “that succeeded in being united,” being forced to do so by the Dutch in a colonial administrative system. In the early twentieth century, the figures of the national movement, educated in the West, created a nation in the 1920s to which they gave the name Indonesia.

Also, in Chapter 2, we critically discuss the problems related to the differences in vision of the newer and older generations of Muslims, the reasons for the appearance of radical groups, and the global dimensions of Indonesian Islam. Chapter 2 ends with an account of the efforts of mainstream Indonesian Islam to find a meeting point in religious thinking. Thanks to the modern education that increasingly spreads throughout that mainstream, this sought-for meeting point has become a very real possibility. The young, educated generation, which is prepared to cast off the arrogance of dogmatic certainties, will sooner or later discover the best solution to the problem of the relationship between Islam and Indonesianness. Muslim and Indonesian identities must be



woven into one broad carpet that accommodates all citizens. The Islam being offered, of course, is an Islam that is tolerant, inclusive, and friendly to everyone who shows a good will toward the building of Indonesia as a homeland for all its inhabitants, citizen or non-citizen. Islam must become the big tent of the nation, and religious leaders must always show wisdom of a high quality.

In this regard, we cannot close our eyes to the weaknesses of the Muslim *umat* in Nusantara. One of these weaknesses is the fact that the majority do not possess the qualities they should display. Chapter 3 focuses on this problem. In this chapter, education receives special attention, since speaking of the quality of the Muslim *umat* has no meaning at all if the problem of education is not solved. Education that is oriented toward formalism but neglects substance, and so is incapable of creating good human beings who are intelligent, independent, and sincere, will only produce unemployed graduates, regardless of how many academic titles they hold. This chapter also looks critically at the achievements of Muhammadiyah and the NU in education and enlightenment. Systems bearing the label of Islam have been proliferating of late; the question is, to what degree are those systems able to offer an alternative to the current systems that are considered no longer effective? This chapter also discusses Islamic activities, and particularly the Muslim parties that are in a state of deterioration. The final part of the chapter discusses Islam and the future of Indonesia.

Chapter 4 concentrates on Islam as an open religion, on the issues of sincerity and symbolism, and on the global map of the *umat*. It tightens the links between Islam and being Indonesian and human on the universal level. This chapter takes a daring approach, philosophically and theologically. It includes Iqbal's thinking on *ijtihad* ("interpretation and conviction arrived at through reasoning and judgment of the Quranic code") and the dialogue between God and humankind.

Chapter 5 attempts to summarize the entire essence of the flow of thought from the Introduction through Chapter 4. This chapter as well tries to imagine the perspective ahead for Indonesia based on the arguments raised in this work. At the end of this chapter, I summarize my thoughts on Islam, humanity, and Indonesian identity.

Before proceeding to Chapter 1, there is something I need to reemphasize. This work is the effort of a Muslim in his advanced years to see Indonesia strong, sovereign, just, prosperous, intact, and respected by other nations. Respected, not because of the size of its population as the fourth largest in the world, but because of the moral and intellectual qualities of its people with their rich and complementary cultures. Respected, not because Indonesians are good at theorizing, but because

we are skilled at translating theories into policies that defend the weak and the destitute. Respected, because Indonesians truly care about justice for all.

To move in the direction of this big idea, history must be made into a torch. History is not simply for amusement or entertainment,<sup>28</sup> as Bertrand Russell has said. History is a mirror. History is the past that can give inspiration to anyone who wants it. History is also the laboratory of wisdom for anyone who wants to find a pearl within it. History is a critique of our behavior when we slide off the rails we have collectively laid. Above all else, "history," writes Allan Nevins, "is truly a bridge that joins the past with the present, and at the same time shows the way to the future."<sup>29</sup>

This work is my response to the conditions of modern Indonesia as well as to the map of the global Islamic *umat*, or community, which seems powerless to overcome the challenges that arise, one after another. A strong sense of cultural stagnation is still felt in all Muslim countries, as if great achievements no longer belong to them. But no matter what the situation, the flag of optimism must always be flown, even in the midst of the sea of pessimism that has engulfed part of the Indonesian people and the global Islamic *umat*. Russell well describes the difference between stagnation and progress: "Periods of stagnation are periods during which people feel powerless. Periods of progress occur when people feel that great deeds are possible and thus want to own a share in them."<sup>30</sup> Under these unhappy conditions, some Muslim writers have come forward in an effort to find the answer to these questions: Why has the Islamic world too long been at the tail end of civilization? Why does it find it so difficult to rise up?

Indonesia, with the benefit of its critical optimism, must truly rise again by giving birth to great works of high quality in the sphere of justice, and in well-being that is felt by all. Islam, if understood correctly and intelligently, will give an awesome impetus to the strengthening of Indonesian identity under the aegis of "belief in God, the One and the Only" and "a humanity that is just and civilized," as one manifestation of our faith and our common existence as a nation. Islam, Indonesianness, and humanism must be woven together so elegantly and beautifully that the widespread subcultures that constitute Indonesia as a nation and a state feel the safety and tranquility they need to survive in this "continent of islands" for all time.

Our weakness since Independence has been that we do not seriously manage and organize our Indonesianness, with the result that in certain periods, social explosions with political, economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds have continued to occur. They always result in victims.

I hope that in weaving together the conceptual framework of Islam, Indonesianness, and humanity, this nation would be prepared to organize and reread its past in the interests of the present and of the future in an honest, responsible, and profoundly loving way. The Islamic *umat* as the majority has a very great historic responsibility to defend Indonesia so that it stays intact and united, and never wavers.

Let our rich cultural mosaic flourish in the Indonesian garden that shelters all who dwell in this fertile region without fear, without a sense of alienation. The populations spread over the little islands of Nusantara must truly feel their Indonesian identity as a pleasing certainty, an awareness, and not the result of compulsion. That goal can only be realized when the majority *umat* sets the example in defending the integrity and unity of the nation, a prospect that still feels very far off. Thus we must strive for this purpose tirelessly and without succumbing to apathy. Indonesia is the home we all share, the home whose roof can never be allowed to leak as a result of particularism and indifference.

My experience over the past eleven years with leading cross-religious, cross-cultural, and cross-ethnic figures has brought me to conclude that Indonesia can still be repaired. There is still a sufficient stock of honest and sincere people who genuinely love Indonesia and who are ready, if asked, to speak openly about its future design. If Indonesia's leaders, in the not too distant future, could succeed in displaying a finely calibrated statesmanship at all levels, I feel that many of the nation's ills could be cured. The people deeply need the exemplary ideals that have almost disappeared from our contemporary culture with its pragmatism, love of simplistic solutions, and lack of long-term vision. Most of the politicians who have appeared over the past eleven years are indeed lacking in vision and sensitivity.

Indonesia should have been a more stable society, since culturally the nation was formed before politically the state came into existence on August 17, 1945. But too few true leaders appeared on the scene. What did appear were politicians and bureaucrats without a long-term vision, who found it easy to barter away principles that they should have held fast to. In other words, the nation turned out to be morally loose. The principal question then arises, Why is a nation that claims to be religious so lacking when judged in terms of morals and ethics? The answer to this question must be found. The root of the problem must be studied honestly and with academic rigor for the purpose of improving the lives of Indonesia's people. That Indonesia's culture is sick is something spoken of widely. We need to find the remedy to cure this sickness.

From the point of view of constitutional politics, there are some who propose changing the structure of the state from unitary to federal.<sup>31</sup>

My comment after reading Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin's booklet is: "The thoughts incorporated in this little book need to be evaluated critically and with suspicion. In fact, in 1945, Mohammad Hatta came out with this same idea." Since the question of federalism is still quite sensitive, I think we should let time, which matures all of us, show us which system is the best for the future of the nation. Once emotions can be controlled by the power of reason, there will be no problem "too dangerous" to discuss deeply, openly, and seriously. The federal idea actually is still held in some intellectual circles in Indonesia; several months before he passed away on February 10, 1999, Y.B. Mangunwijaya tenaciously defended the idea.<sup>32</sup> If the emotional situation in Indonesia permits, I myself tend toward the choice of federalism. Forget for the moment a state as big as Indonesia – Malaysia, whose population is only about one-tenth that of Indonesia, is a federal state. We must, of course, be particularly cautious in discussing such a sensitive issue.

## Chapter 1 Islam and Nusantara

The natural world of Nusantara, the Indonesian archipelago, is stunningly beautiful. Gaze at the verdant mountain ranges, valleys, and gorges (even though much has now been ruined). Catch sight of the lakes that spread over the islands – Danau Singkarak in the Minangkabau lands, or Danau Matano in Sorowako, South Sulawesi – with their clear, pure waters. Centuries ago many peoples came to this beautiful archipelago bringing religions and civilizations that flourished here. One of these religions was Islam, the youngest of the three that originated with the Prophet Abraham, after the Jewish and Christian religions.

The march of Islam in Nusantara lasted many long years until a *quantitative* victory was successfully consolidated. But what has not yet been realized is a *qualitative* victory. The quest for such a victory calls for a serious struggle in the future.

### **Nusantara: Where Faiths and Cultures Interact**

In the ancient world, there were ongoing trade relations between the regions of Southwest Asia and Nusantara long before Islam appeared. In fact, the arrival of Islam stimulated these trading activities even more, because trade is a permissible calling in Islam. Over the course of time – in the third decade of the twentieth century – in this region a nation appeared on the map of the world, composed of a group of diverse and pluralistic ethnicities and subcultures, the largest of which were Muslim. Islam became one of the important components of the nationalism of Indonesians, along with language and historical experience. The historical roots of this new nation penetrated deeply into the past in the form of kingdoms, various religions and diverse cultures, and hundreds of languages.

In addition to Islam, the religion embraced by the majority of the inhabitants, other religions were tolerated and flourished as well. In population, Indonesia is the largest Muslim nation on earth. There is still no final answer as to why Islam “won” the theological and commercial contests centuries ago in a region so culturally complex. This victory can only be equated with the victory of the Indonesian language – Bahasa Indonesia – which grew out of the Malay culture of the Riau Archipelago, which itself has ancient roots in the early Buddhist Sriwijaya

period. In Islamic hands, Bahasa Melayu (the Malay language) developed all the more dynamically in line with the egalitarian nature of this religion.

Perhaps, too, it may be compared with the victory of Islam and the spread of the Arabic language throughout the former Roman Empire in the Middle East and North Africa – the home of Saint Augustine (354–430) and later, the historian Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) – in the seventh century, not long after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE (that is, in the twenty-third year of prophethood). The caliphs (“successors”) and rulers who came after the Prophet as the leaders of the *umat* of believers were responsible for this large-scale process of Islamization and the spread of Arabic. The vitality of this new religion and culture propelled Islam and the Arabic language to all corners of the earth and sustained generations of Muslims in those early centuries.

But we must also record that this process was not always smooth and peaceful, and that military might and wars were not infrequently involved. The warfare was not, however, waged to force people to embrace Islam, but rather the result of conflicts that arose in the context of political expansion by Arab Muslims. In actuality, the Muslim religion has not always been able to guard against the abuse of power by Muslims in authority. We cannot assume that past events proceeded flawlessly, simply because the past shelters under the label of Islam. Honesty toward the past depends upon our critical attitude in viewing it, whoever were the historical actors. The Muslim *umat* should not feel so pure that it closes its eyes to deviant behavior, particularly that of rulers with theological approval or *fiqh* – legal pronouncements – by the scholars, who claim to be the heirs of the prophets.

Naturally, no historical writings can possibly present a flawless map of the past. Good history demands honesty by its writer, and that is not easy to achieve: humans are partial to the interests they carry about like baggage. But history must present the facts, no matter how much the facts may damage the writer or some admired group of humanity. Writing history always demands first and foremost the personal integrity of the historian.

I need to comment on the problem of honesty. Some Muslim historians and writers are reluctant to mention problematic facts due to various considerations, as though the expansion of Islamic power had always been achieved by peaceful means. Because of that, Al-Faruqi uses the term *al-futuhat* (*fatah* in the singular form), which means “opening,” that is, “opening the heart and the mind [of humankind] to the truth of Islam.”<sup>1</sup> For subjugation at the time of the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (610–661 CE), the concept of “opening” may be used,

especially in the era of the Prophet, where worldly power and riches in no way were a part of his mission. As for the siege of the Jewish tribe Bani Qurayza following its treachery after the Battle of the Trench, Ibn Al-Athir revealed this information, “The Messenger of Allah ordered the adult men of Bani Qurayza to be killed and their women and children to be spared.”<sup>2</sup> In the atmosphere of war, killing was permitted so long as it did not go beyond the boundaries of accepted custom. But in the eras that followed, the expansion of power did not always bow to religion and morals. Thus, we must be highly cautious in evaluating the use (or indeed the misuse) of religion in the interests of power. The stakes were very high; that is to say, people could act very cruelly, treacherously, and immorally, all in the name of God. As historian I will lay out in this work such excesses as they existed, even if they are neither agreeable to hear nor pleasant to acknowledge.

For me, the agreeable and the pleasant belong to the world of poetry. In history, bitterness must be given voice and unpacked bravely and responsibly, even though I may strip myself naked by doing so. There is something slovenly about the history written by people who try to conceal bitterness within a package of sweetness and light, writing history as entertainment. History is also a guideline for acting within the limitations of space and time. Within that space and time, history works itself out in accordance with the non-linear “laws” of society. The actors are humans with all manner of subjective tendencies and worldly interests often concealed, and not infrequently in packages of sacred verse.

Speakers of the variants of the Malay language may be greater in number or at least equal to the speakers of Arabic. Malay was formally consolidated in Indonesia as Bahasa Indonesia (“the Indonesian Language”) in the Youth Oath of October 28, 1928, in which Muhammad Yamin, a figure in the Jong Sumatranen Bond (“the Young Sumatran Union”), played a major role. In Malaysia, one says “Bahasa Malaysia,” but the roots of the two are the same: the Malay language that originated in the Riau Archipelago. Language was among the greatest contributions of Riau to the culture of Nusantara. Not only did the population that had been colonized by the Dutch in Nusantara speak Indonesian as their formal speech, the common people of East Timor were fluent in it, too.

The Indonesian language was key to the efforts to consolidate the national identity and overcome obstacles in interethnic communication. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Dutch East Indies government chose Malay as “the administrative language of power to optimize the efficiency of its colonial exploitation.”<sup>3</sup> The official use of the Malay language in this way spread far and wide, reaching out and

grasping tribes and ethnicities hidden on even the smallest islands. As a medium of communication, the Indonesian language was indeed situated strategically.

Muhammad Yamin's role in strengthening the Indonesian language's acceptance as the language of unity was so important that a Dutch official, P.M. Hooykaas, commented that "that young man from Sumatra will be a pioneer in the efforts to use the Malay language [the official Dutch term for Indonesian] as a medium of communication and social interaction in Indonesia and Dutch will be hard-pressed because of him."<sup>4</sup> Yamin therefore deserves to be remembered as an expert and thinker in the fields of language and culture more than as a controversy-laden politician. (The most serious of these controversies revolved around who had been the first to propose the concept of Pancasila in the session of the 1945 Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence [BPUPK], Sukarno or Yamin. I will review this crucial issue at the end of this chapter.)

In fact, long before Yamin and his comrades pioneered Bahasa Indonesia as the official language, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a central figure in Javanese culture, had suggested that Bahasa Melayu, the Malay language, become the official language throughout Nusantara. In his writings he criticized his friend Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, who had said that the Javanese language was the language of slaves and had to be replaced by Dutch. Writing with considerable heat, Ki Hadjar commented:

Language and nation are one thing. It makes no sense to kill off one language in a contrived way to make space for a new, foreign language. And since the Javanese language is used by 20 million Javanese people, it is too reckless and hasty to speak of the death of such a beautiful language. If we want one language for all the people of the Indies, you should not force us to accept a foreign language, since we have the Malay language which is not only easy to learn, but by now has become the *lingua franca* of Nusantara.<sup>5</sup>

Tjipto was more of a radical than Ki Hadjar, who always appeared calm, patient, and reflective. Tjipto even wanted to kill the Javanese language, the mother tongue defended so reasonably by Ki Hadjar. Tjipto was disgusted with what was termed feudal tradition, but he was unrealistic in taking this attitude so far as to want to replace Javanese with Dutch. Therefore, the expression of Ki Hadjar that "language and nation are one thing" became very important in this respect. Wouldn't replacing Javanese with Dutch have resulted in the cultural and spiritual extermination of the Javanese people?



The solution provided by Ki Hadjar was a very wise one: let Javanese survive for the Javanese people or other groups that wanted to learn and use it, but take advantage of the potential of Bahasa Melayu as the language of unity. It was much easier to learn, and certainly more democratic, than the status-laden Javanese language. Javanese is an old language with an extraordinarily rich vocabulary, much richer than Malay. Naturally, in the democratization process, Javanese would encounter many obstacles, because its non-democratic structure was developed in tandem with a centuries-old and multileveled feudalism that organized society between sturdy status partitions.

On another occasion, Ki Hadjar was even more forceful in his defense of Bahasa Indonesia: "For the sake of the unity of the Indonesian nation, only Bahasa Indonesia has the right to be the language of unity."<sup>6</sup> Although Ki Hadjar was a central figure in Javanese culture, defending the position of Bahasa Indonesia has to be recorded as one of his many contributions to the development of an inclusive Indonesian culture. He was very conscious of Indonesian identity in relation to Bahasa Indonesia as the language of unity, an egalitarian language that was an important pillar in the establishment of the country's democratic system.

Scientific analyses of the relationship of Bahasa Indonesia and democracy in Indonesia are few. If a Yamin or Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana defended the choice of Bahasa Indonesia, it should not be surprising, since they both were born into the Minangkabau culture of Sumatra, which shares linguistic similarities with Malay. But we must salute the Javanese Ki Hadjar who was no less outspoken in Bahasa Indonesia's defense. Thus, it is not surprising that later on many of the language experts and poets in the Indonesian language were Javanese, Sundanese, and other ethnicities that have so enriched this nation, as Ki Hadjar had predicted.

During what has been called the cultural polemic of 1935 between Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana on the one hand and Dr. Soetomo, Ki Hadjar, and Sanusi Pane on the other, we note with interest Tjipto's proposal to bury the Javanese language. For, in imagining Indonesia's future, the Javanese Tjipto had preceded Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana in adopting a European orientation when he proposed to replace Javanese with Dutch. Exchanging one language for another means changing the way one thinks and feels as a part of the culture of a nation; this is enormously difficult, no matter how feudal one believes the culture to be. In his later years, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana was not as rigid as when he first published his polemic at twenty-seven years of age. Just four years later, he reassessed the Eastern values that he had earlier judged to be out of date and an

obstacle to progress. This he did in the third cultural polemic in 1939. The writer Subagio Sastrowardoyo had this to say about Alisjabana's conversion:

In the cultural polemic of 1939, a change in the style of Sutan Takdir Alisjabana's argument became apparent. This temper now no longer flares up, indicative of a cultural view that is softer and calmer by comparison. Gone is his tendency to put forward his heavily biased views and estimations without seeing the possibility of compromise and synthesis. Rather, Takdir tends to see everything in totality, with all elements linked and fused together. And he even implicitly admits to the limitations of idealized rationalism and positivism by accepting irrational elements, for example, in political life, and that there are still many questions that cannot be answered by positivism and which at the end of the day have to be submitted to speculative philosophical thinking.<sup>7</sup>

Even at the beginning of the 1960s, Takdir gave a "high [assessment] of Indonesia's traditional arts."<sup>8</sup> All this shows that in his intellectual and spiritual peregrinations Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana had experienced a number of significant turning points. No longer is the West viewed as the sole source of progress, let alone wisdom. In contrast to Tjipto, who wanted to replace the Javanese language with Dutch, Takdir wanted Bahasa Indonesia to become the language of science. He worked hard to achieve this goal. In addition to Yamin, Takdir can be categorized as one of the fathers of the modern Indonesian language.

The choice of *Melayu* ("Malay" – subsequently officially named "Bahasa Indonesia" by nationalist youth) as the national language promoted the fluent cultural conversation between the archipelago's rich subcultures, while at the same time contributing new vocabulary to this language of unity. Bahasa Indonesia is an egalitarian language. If the Indonesian nation succeeds in finding leadership that truly appreciates and understands this cultural wealth and fluently speaks proper Bahasa Indonesia, there is hope that Indonesia will long endure as a nation and a state. Ethnic frictions could be resolved with guidance from local wisdom, under the umbrella of national wisdom.

Over the course of the history of Nusantara, whether in the era of Sriwijaya, old Mataram, Majapahit, or the modern period, such local wisdom has been greatly underappreciated, particularly when power politics has developed with a centralizing appetite. Regions far from the center are generally treated as stepchildren, and their obligation is to bow to and pay tribute to the center of power. This is one of the

sources of the fears and disquiet that reached their climax in the regional rebellions of the modern era. The blending of the heterogeneous ethnic groups has still not been successfully concluded. Almost all provinces that have developed in Indonesia since colonial times, and continuing into the independence era, were at first based on ethnic territories and their subcultures. Interethnic marriage and migrations have, of course, occurred, but these have not become a tidal wave. For that reason, efforts to keep strengthening and accelerating national integration cannot be viewed lightly. The nation is still in the creative process of becoming an Indonesia that is intact and coherent. The Java–Outer Islands dichotomy has still not yet disappeared in the independence era, a historical legacy of ages past.

Let us take a fleeting glance at the etymology of the word *Nusantara*. It derives from two words: *nusa* and *antara*. *Nusa* (Sanskrit/Kawi) means “island, native country.” *Antara* means “distance, gap, interval, space between two objects.” Nusantara are the islands located between the Asian continent and Australia,<sup>9</sup> positioned between two oceans, the Indian and the Pacific. (In the common Javanese speech level called *ngoko*, *antara* can mean “distance, space between two objects.”<sup>10</sup>) Because of the large number of the islands of Nusantara, more than 17,000, an expert was not wrong in calling this a Maritime Continent,<sup>11</sup> or perhaps it could be said to be an Archipelagic Continent.

This Maritime Continent’s distance from east to west is 5,110 kilometers, and it stretches 1,888 kilometers from north to south; it is spread out on both sides of the equator from 94°15’ to 141°05’ longitude east, and from 6°08’ latitude north to 110°15’ latitude south.<sup>12</sup> The total area of Nusantara’s land mass is 1,919,443 square kilometers,<sup>13</sup> its seas total 5,800,000 square kilometers, and its coastlines run for 95,181 kilometers.<sup>14</sup>

If Indonesia is able to survive intact and fully sovereign as a nation-state, its people must rid themselves of subculture egotism, parochialism, regional conceit, ephemeral interests, and worthless political pragmatism. We must always remember that this nation is too important and was achieved at too high a cost to be sacrificed for mean-spirited and transitory aims. In drawing near to those ideals, the principle of “justice for all the Indonesian people” must not again be frustrated, as has happened so many times in the past. There is an old Malay saying: “The raja is just, the raja is honored. The raja is tyrannical, the raja is opposed.” “Raja” here in the democratic context is a system of power that has been in operation for more than sixty years since our Proclamation of Independence.

Justice of course has never yet been realized. This is a very serious issue that will determine the future fate of the nation. As I have seen it, since the 1945 Proclamation, there has never been a pattern of development that is truly guided by the principles of Pancasila, particularly the fifth of these principles, which has been left neglected for so many decades. To be sure, it has been honored in rhetoric, but it has been betrayed in practice. That means we have not yet been honest as a nation and as a state. If we as a nation continue to face problems, we must look for their roots in harsh reality: “The word is still no friend of the deed.”

The term *Nusantara* was first used by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a freedom fighter and the founder of Taman Siswa.<sup>15</sup> Yet although this name directs our attention to the sea, the promising potential of the maritime regions has still yet to be exploited in a good way. More than that, the attention we pay to these regions is very weak. In fact, the sustainability of the life of our nation will very much depend on the generosity of that salty water with its store of enormous natural wealth. But we must never forget either that, like the wind, water is not always our friend. When the seas run amuck with tsunamis, the land can be struck with terrible force. The location and geography of Nusantara renders many of its regions vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis. The largest tsunami of the twenty-first century struck Aceh on December 26, 2004, and left thousands of victims in its wake and many devastated buildings. On May 27, 2006, tectonic movements in the Central Java area around Yogyakarta caused physical destruction and numerous casualties. At the end of 2007, earthquakes shook Bengkulu, West Sumatra, and parts of Java and Sulawesi, causing much damage. There were not many deaths, because the public was growing more aware of how to deal with natural disasters.

The name *Indonesia* has been in use since 1884, when it was popularized by the German scientist Adolf Bastian from the University of Berlin when referring to the cluster of islands of the “Malay Archipelago.”<sup>16</sup> But “Indonesia,” and “Indonesian” as the name of a new nation, only appeared in the 1920s within the circle of the Indonesian Association (PI) in the Netherlands. At first, not everyone in the nationalist movement felt comfortable with the name, but the majority vote in PI established it as the name of the newborn nation, even as the name *Nusantara* was still being used with the same meaning and continues to be used to the present day. To speak of Nusantara is the same as to speak of Indonesia. One might even consider renaming the country “the Republic of Nusantara,” a name that contains a sense of the seas and islands. But one benefit of using the name *Indonesia* is that the period of colonialization was so long, while Indonesia as a nation only emerged in the 1920s. On this basis, we can

say that Indonesia was not colonized for more than twenty-five years, including the three and a half years of the Japanese occupation.<sup>17</sup>

To be sure, the name *Nusantara* sounds more poetic and musical to the ear, and it matches the flavor of our language. It also seems more “native.” Of course, it implies many things. Therefore, we must first think carefully and deeply if we really want to adopt this name. The term *Nusa* in official use is held by two provinces: NTB (Nusa Tenggara Barat – West Nusa Tenggara) and NTT (Nusa Tenggara Timur – East Nusa Tenggara). The majority of the people of NTB are Muslim, while the majority are Christian in NTT.

And now, what of the term “Muslim Indonesia,” which has become popular in recent times? We usually link such a descriptive label to places where the adherents of a particular religion predominate. That’s why we refer to Christian Europe, Buddhist Tibet, and Muslim Saudi Arabia. Because the inhabitants of Nusantara, which then became Indonesia, are for the most part Muslim, it would not be wrong to say “Muslim Indonesia.” The meaning is quite simple: the majority of the people are devout Muslims – *santri* – or are in the process of becoming *santri*. Referring to people as *santri* indicates that they regularly observe the religious commandments associated with the Five Pillars of Islam. *Santri* come from all walks of life; they range from those who are highly educated to those who have only an elementary school education – that is, the majority of Muslims in Indonesia.

The term “Muslim Indonesia” absolutely does not mean to suggest that other religions and beliefs cannot grow and flourish, even though these are in the minority. Supposing that at some point in the future Islam were to be embraced by the majority of the population of Great Britain; then we would find the name “Muslim Great Britain” in use. It would be the same if the number of Muslims fell in Nusantara and those who espoused Hinduism and Buddhism became the majority; then Indonesia would again become Hindu-Buddhist. Spain, once ruled by Muslim Arabs, is another example. Even though the majority of the population always remained non-Muslim, still we use the term “Muslim Spain.” It refers to Spain’s having been ruled by Muslim power for about seven centuries, from the eighth to the end of the fifteenth century, a very long stretch of time. In other words, these terms do not have to be debated because they are already well understood and accepted.

Now let us focus on the religions that flourished in Nusantara before the arrival of Islam. It is a hard fact of geography that Nusantara is hemmed in by two continents, Asia and Australia, and two oceans, the Pacific and the Indian, providing space and fertile land for the spread of religions coming from outside. Because of its strategic geopolitical

location and its rich earth abundantly supporting human life, Nusantara was a target for other nations, in pursuit of various interests: religious, economic and commercial, cultural, and later, colonization. Among the most important and influential religions for centuries were Hinduism and Buddhism, as already mentioned. Both of these religions have completely Asian, specifically Indian, features. In Nusantara, these two religions on occasion struggled and even warred over influence, as when the Hindu Majapahit defeated the Buddhist Sriwijaya around the fourteenth century. Because a large part of the lands of Nusantara were inhabited, and indeed ruled, by Hindus and Buddhists almost during the same centuries, the progress of the new religion of Islam was necessarily connected with these two old religions, before it came into contact with European arrivals.

In this way, Islam, as the newcomer that then “defeated” its predecessor religions, came as a shock and a sensation of historic proportions. There is no certain historical response to the question of how this victory came about. Because of the substantial Muslim majority, at a later date some in the Muslim *umat* wanted to make Indonesia formally an Islamic state, or a state based on Islam. This wish was in fact based on political calculations in a democratic system that relies on a majority vote. More recently, small antidemocratic groups have emerged, with all their political rhetoric, to create an uproar in the name of sharia. They use the democracy in pursuit of means that are not democratic; for example, they refuse to take part in general elections. They emphasize sharia textualism over the substance of sharia, which aims at establishing justice for all.

In *The Religion of Java*, the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz actually wondered if the majority of Javanese were Muslim at all because of the syncretist practices so apparent in their populations<sup>18</sup> But Hodgson, whose knowledge of Islam and its *umat* far outweighed that of Geertz, even if he was not particularly knowledgeable about Indonesia, saw the anthropologist’s work as misleading. A footnote in Hodgson’s *The Venture of Islam* explains Hodgson’s assessment, which has been praised as an important finding about Islam in Nusantara:

Unfortunately, its [Geertz’s work’s] generally high excellence is marred by a major systematic error: influenced by the polemics of a certain school of modern shari’ah-minded Muslims, Geertz identifies “Islam” only with what that school of modernists happens to approve and ascribes everything else to an aboriginal or a Hindu-Buddhist background, gratuitously labeling much of the Muslim religious life in Java as Hindu. He identifies a long series of phenomena, virtually universal to Islam and sometimes found even in the Quran itself, as un-Islamic;

and hence his interpretation of the Islamic past as well as some recent anti-Islamic reactions is highly misleading .... For one who knows Islam, his comprehensive data – despite his intention – show how very little has survived from the Hindu past even in inner Java and raise the question why the triumph of Islam was so complete.<sup>19</sup>

Its triumph was “complete” in the sense that an awesome change had occurred, with the displacement of religions in a tremendous demographic wave, whether at the elite level or among ordinary people.

The modernist school of Muslims mentioned by Hodgson would certainly have been Muhammadiyah, Persis, and Al-Irsyad, who at first were very active in opposing the syncretist tendencies evident in the religious practices of a part of Nusantara society, and not just in Java. However, as it developed further, the modernist movement, especially Muhammadiyah, increasingly considered cultural dimensions in its proselytizing outreach. This has given it greater flexibility without compromising its main principles and mission. Persis and Al-Irsyad have survived, but have not grown like Muhammadiyah, which continues to expand. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Muhammadiyah was threatened to a minor degree by political movements associated with “*jubah* proselytizing” (named after the traditional Saudi cassock-like robe); these attacked several Muhammadiyah charity centers with a high level of intensity. Muhammadiyah was already beset with heavy burdens, and many of its branches were no longer functioning (in one region only 28 percent were reported to be still active). Naturally, this represented a challenge for the survival of Muhammadiyah. If the branches were destroyed, Muhammadiyah would lose its standing at the grassroots level.

To return to the Islamization process. Naturally, Islam’s victory in Nusantara was phenomenal. Two giant religions whose ancient footprints had been implanted in Nusantara for centuries were thrust aside, with the exception of Hinduism’s persistence in Bali. Here and there Buddhism also lives on in certain parts of society, especially in Java. The 2000 census shows the numbers of religious adherents and their percentage among the entire Indonesian population of 201,241,999. Hindus numbered 3, 651,939 (1.81 percent); Buddhists numbered 1,694,682 (0.84 percent); Muslims numbered 177,528,772 (88.22 percent); and the combined Protestant and Catholic communities numbered 17,954,977 (8.92 percent).<sup>20</sup> In 1900, the population of the Dutch East Indies (as Nusantara was known) was only about 30 million.<sup>21</sup> A century later the population had increased seven-fold, with no change in the percentage of Muslims. Although there is no conclusive answer as to why Islam achieved an overwhelming majority

of religious followers in Nusantara, there certainly are historical studies that have attempted an explanation. I will be speaking of this further.

I have mentioned that the Hindu and Buddhist religions had been very influential in Nusantara for centuries, particularly among the elites, while most of the population did not move very far from their traditional animist beliefs. There was a “general consensus,” writes Van Leur, “about the fact that Hindu culture only touched the top level of Indonesian society, and even then, only in certain aspects of life.”<sup>22</sup> With the coming of Islam, the socio-religious map of Nusantara went through a drastic change, at least demographically, as we have seen. We therefore need to find the answer to the difficult question: Why did Islam become the religion embraced by the majority in Nusantara after so many centuries of Indianization, albeit elitist in nature?

Once Islam became the religion of the majority, the friction that later occurred with Christianity did not greatly affect the religious balance. Christianity and Islam are both known as missionary religions and have competed with each other since the seventh century in Southwest Asia, Africa, and Europe. Both sides were involved in the long and bloody Crusades (1095–1291) that the Christians initiated. This historical wound is still etched in the memories of both communities in various parts of the world. There is no comparable wound in Islam’s relationship with Hinduism and Buddhism, even though India, the birthplace of these two religions, was for centuries under Muslim rule. However, Muslims do not generally call that rule a form of colonialism. Why, for example, would Muslims feel uncomfortable about saying that Hindu India was under Muslim colonial rule? The same goes for Catholic Spain (Andalusia) – why don’t they say it was an Arab Muslim colony for centuries? That this particular Muslim colonial system was in fact not harsh, did not force the population to convert to Islam, and did not drive the people out, is another matter. In the hundred years after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam expanded at high speed. If that expansion had not been checked by Charles Martel at Poitiers in southern France in 732, all of Europe might have been under Muslim rule – but to such hypothesizing, there is no end.

## **The Rise of Islam in Nusantara**

The kingdoms of Nusantara with their Hindu and Buddhist features gradually but inexorably were replaced by a system of rule with Islamic features. We can take the example of the Kingdom of Majapahit, which contained a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism. According to Coedès,



there are several reasons why Majapahit, the last of the Indianized kingdoms in Nusantara, collapsed. The main reason for the fall of Majapahit was the emergence of Malacca as a commercial center ruled by Muslims. Islam had set down footprints along the coast and, from the beginning of the fifteenth century, had gradually spread inland. Second, Majapahit was afflicted by internecine struggles for power.

The king of Majapahit, Rajasanegara, died in 1389 and was succeeded by his son-in-law and nephew, Wikramawardhana. After several years on the throne, in 1401 Wikramawardhana was opposed by Wirabhumi, the son of Rajasanegara by a concubine. The ensuing civil war lasted until the death of Wirabhumi in 1406. Although Wikramawardhana retained power, Majapahit's fragility could no longer be sustained. It survived the civil war for just over a century.

The third reason for Majapahit's collapse, according to Coedès, was the interference of the Yongle emperor of Ming-period China, who tried to uproot Javanese power over all of Nusantara and the Malay Peninsula. The Muslim Chinese admiral Zheng He was tasked with implementing this mission. In response, several emissaries were sent to China from Java, formerly subjugated by Majapahit, bearing tribute.<sup>23</sup> This meant that Majapahit had lost its moral and political authority.<sup>24</sup> There is no definite year to mark the fall of Majapahit, but its final collapse is estimated to have taken place between 1513 and 1528. There is no evidence that this collapse happened suddenly from the blows of the newcomer: Islamic power.<sup>25</sup> The disappearance of Majapahit from the stage formally marked the end of Indianization in the system of statecraft in Nusantara, where it had played a role since the beginning of the fifth century CE. The Indianization process lasted for over a millennium and bequeathed rich cultural and political legacies to the people of Nusantara.

Islam now took the place of Hinduism and Buddhism. If the process of Islamization really began in the seventh to eighth centuries CE, as the Medan Seminar concluded,<sup>26</sup> Islam's ascendancy as a political power to replace the established order must have been a long and difficult struggle. Historical evidence concerning this crucial issue is far from conclusive. What is even more astonishing is that when the Islamization process for which we have evidence began at the end of the thirteenth century, inter-island communications were very primitive and time-consuming. Still this wave kept rolling on, irresistible to any power, including eventually the gunpowder and firearms of Europe. The temperament of the sailor-merchants of Nusantara may have made a significant contribution to this Islamization process. Trading and proselytizing were an important part of the panorama of Nusantara at that time. There must have been an extraordinary passion to expand the radius of Islam.

I have said above that Islam offered an egalitarian position for everyone in the eyes of God and the eyes of history, a doctrine not offered by Hinduism. This may be one explanation for the emergence of Islam as the timeless victor, up to the present day. The Dutch sociologist W.F. Wertheim, the thesis adviser of the renowned historian Sartono Kartodirdjo, did in fact observe a sharp contrast between Islam and Hinduism in the status of people in their collective lives. But we must also be honest and admit that in certain social segments, some of the Islamic *umat* did not always obey the teaching of its religion to hold fast to the principle of egalitarianism. I shall give an example of this further on. Let us first follow Wertheim's argument concerning how thoroughly Islam humanized so many Asian anti-egalitarian practices:

Islam has made contributions on a large scale to the humanization of very many Asian customs and practices. The concept of the equality of humans did not lead to the eradication of slavery, but, as with Christianity, directed a better treatment of slaves and adopted children ... which contained an acknowledgment of the principle of basic equality between free men and slaves.<sup>27</sup>

It has been said that Islam restored the self-worth of society's "little people." The following excerpt makes this difference all the more clear:

The attraction of Islam for traders who lived under the rule of Hindu nobles must rather be found in the world of ideas: Islam gave underclass people a consciousness of their individual worth as members of the *umat* of Islam. In Hindu ideology, such a person was only a creature who was lower than members of the higher castes. In Islam, he or she could, so it was said, feel equal to those others, or even, albeit lower in the social structure, in his or her quality of being a Muslim, superior to them, since they themselves were not Muslims. In this sense, Islam could be seen as the trigger of the revolutions that occurred in the twentieth century.

To put it another way, in Islam people felt that their self-worth was not bound by the walls of caste that served to denigrate their human dignity for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Very similar phenomena occurred when the Crescent Moon confronted the Cross in the struggle for influence in Nusantara, which I shall discuss.

However, as mentioned earlier, over the course of history there have also been groups of Muslims who feel they are better than their

coreligionists, albeit not as sharply as in Hindu society, either because of bloodlines or from other artificial attributes. Among people of Arab descent, for example, the *Sayyid* group, which claims descent from the Prophet, feels grander than the non-*Sayyids*. In aristocratic circles, there is a certain haughtiness toward ordinary folk, whereas it is quite possible that the aristocrats themselves are the descendants of pirates or brigands. Or, for the rajas of Java, it is not impossible that the blood of Ken Arok, a former brigand of Tumpel who robbed Ken Dedes of Tunggal Ametung, flows through the veins of these nobles. We should not be so proud of bloodlines and descent. All will be wiped out if it is not accompanied by good personal qualities. Pride based on bloodlines and origin, but without real achievement, never lasts long, except through compulsion. And compulsion sooner or later will trigger discontent, which in turn leads to popular rebellion against the ruling elite. The more intelligent the common people, the harder it is to manipulate and trick them subtly, let alone coarsely. The Indonesian revolution of 1945–1949 was not just against foreigners who wanted to reestablish colonialism, it was also against the feudal system.

We might ask the Quran, Who is the greatest and highest in degree in the sight of Allah? Are such factors as blood or descent important, as seen in feudalism? Are ethnicity, skin color, or language the determining factors? Or, in modern times, is it the person holding academic, military, or bureaucratic titles? The firm and complete answer is: “Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.”<sup>28</sup> For me, this verse is a forthright declaration of the teaching of equality. To gain this most honored position, in Islam the door is wide open for all people who work hard and sincerely. Bloodlines, origin, position, and background all fall down when confronted with the spear-point of this verse. Before the Quran, all humankind is given the same position and the same ranking, like the teeth of a comb. For that reason, Islam ideally desires the formation of an egalitarian, moral, and meritocratic society, that is, a social order that gives a respected position to a person based only on personal integrity and quality, as well as his or her commitment to the noble, just, and civilized values of humanism. Islam strongly emphasizes the fostering of a strong and whole human character, and never more than in a leader. A person of weak character occupying an honored and strategic position will bring about disaster.

Over the course of the history of Islam, we frequently run into leaders or rulers who are weak of character, entailing all possible bad results for their countries and people. There is a saying that expresses how valuable good character is: “When wealth is lost, nothing is lost / When health is lost, something is lost / When character is lost, everything is lost.”<sup>29</sup>

In the history of prophethood, long before being elevated as Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad was known by the public at large as possessing a lofty character, having been granted the honorific title of *al-amin* (the trusted one). His character is immortalized in the Quran in the verse, "And indeed, you are of a great moral character."<sup>30</sup> So great was the character of the Prophet in that age that the Quran calls upon all those of faith to accept Muhammad as Messenger and good example.<sup>31</sup> The objective and honest witness of history will surely reinforce this affirmation by the Quran. One of the hadiths says that Muhammad has the best temperament and behavior of all of humankind.<sup>32</sup>

More than five centuries after the passing of the Prophet, a military figure appeared who was legendary in the eyes of both friends and foes. This was Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi (1137–1193), known as Saladin. He succeeded in taking back Jerusalem in 1187 after that city had been in the hands of the Crusaders for almost a century. He did not have one drop of Arab blood in him, but it was he who succeeded in uniting the Arab world – Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia – thanks to the quality and character of his leadership. Saladin was born an Armenian Kurd. He was a noble general of war and a lover of the sciences, and he treated his enemies humanely. He paid homage to the Arab Abbasid dynasty, which had been ruling since 750, although by now its authority was much diminished. No Arab general was the peer of Saladin in strength of character, thanks to the Islamic education that formed his personality.

The figure of Saladin is historical proof that the character of a person can outdo bloodlines and origins. To this very day, the Muslim world feels the highest respect toward this leader from the era of the Crusades. Unfortunately, Saladin had no idea how to do away with the system of dynastic politics, because, at that time, Quraysh blood – the blood of the Prophet's clan – was still believed to confer the right of leadership. This theory of succession has still not been entirely corrected. It is even growing in influence in some countries, with its relationship to the monopoly of power and economic resources. Under these circumstances, Islam has become the prisoner of power politics. Yet sooner or later, the corruption will be revealed.

The Khawarij faction (a puritanical splinter group) from the beginning held the view that whoever managed to become the leader, his origins would not matter, even if he were African. What, after all, was the meaning of skin color compared to the quality of devotion and piety that formed a person's character? But the radical methods and the path of violence that this group took to achieve its aims and its egalitarian theory did not reverberate strongly, and they ultimately fell by the wayside. Khawarij

extremism reached such a level that its followers even condemned as heretical Uthman and Ali, whom they judged to have committed great sins, a position that was rejected by the majority of the *umat*.<sup>33</sup> As a result, the Khawarij faction attracted widening antipathy in those early days; now its followers have become a small, even moderate, minority. The Khawarij emerged after the peace between Ali and Muawiyah following the Siffin War in 658 CE. Some 12,000 followers of Ali deserted in protest against that peace treaty, and these were the ancestors of the Khawarij faction, who for the most part originated in the rural areas in the east of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>34</sup> Even though this faction has fallen in numbers, its sectarian spirit persists within the Muslim *umat* everywhere, including Nusantara, going by various names and claiming various justifications, each faction under its own leaders. “Khawarij blood” still flows in the river of history of the Muslim *umat*.

Let us return to our original analysis. In Nusantara, when compared to the Hindu kingdoms, the system of Muslim rule was clearly looser, even if it followed the dynastic pattern, a deviation from the example set by the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (632–661 CE). With the elevation of Yazid as ruler by his father Muawiyah in 680, the egalitarian political system in the world of Islam disappeared for over a thousand years. The remnants of this Islamic dynastic political system still survive into the twenty-first century in several Arab countries, in Brunei Darussalam, and, to some extent, in Malaysia as well, although the rulers there have more of a symbolic and ceremonial function, as in Great Britain, its former colonizer. In Brunei, the sultan is the functioning head of state.

In all the dynastic political systems, the egalitarian principle has never been given proper respect. The position of individual citizens is based on descent, a principle that is demolished by the Quran, as shown in the above excerpts. In modern times, this doctrine of egalitarianism still has to be pondered over and over in the interest of clarifying for the Muslim *umat* that for centuries their fundamental rights have been plundered by the dynastic system. As for those Muslim writers who defend the dynastic system, my suggestion to them is to consult the Quran and the evidence from the early history of Islam. They should not look at the period of history when Islam was contaminated by the political culture of Persia and Byzantium, beginning in the time of the Umayyads (661–749/750). The rulers were Arab, but their system of rule was imported from those two empires. Hadn't Muawiyah, before becoming the sole ruler, served as governor in Syria for twenty years? Syria itself had formerly been part of the Byzantine Empire.

As a political system, the Abbasid Empire (750–1258), centered in Baghdad, simply carried on the Umayyad pattern, but was more open to other ethnic groups, especially Persians, who originally had been in the position of *mawali* (vassals or second-class citizens).<sup>35</sup> Significantly, the Abbasid army from the lands of Khorasan (Persia) smashed the Umayyad force, causing huge numbers of casualties among fellow Muslims.

In one aspect, there is a slight similarity between the Hindu political system and that implemented by the Muslim kingdoms in Nusantara, and that is they both had dynastic features, absent the caste system of Hindu society. Muslim kingdoms such as Pasai, Siak, Jambi, Tuban, Gresik, Demak, Cirebon, Banten, Ternate-Tidore, Banjar, Bugis, Minangkabau, Aceh, and later, Mataram, all had a dynastic character, with the head of the state being a raja, sultan, or other title, complete with “sensational” honorifics. Some of these (rendered literally) are: Glorious Sultan King of the Great Universe; Spike of the World; He, the Great Ruler; Sultan Who Holds the World in His Lap; His Majesty, Spike of the Universe. These dynastic systems were an extension of those that took hold in the Arab world with the death of Muawiyah. The Byzantine and Persian patterns were taken over by Muslim rulers for a long period of time because, of course, it pleased and benefited them. The principle of egalitarianism in the fullest sense was never realized in any of the Muslim kingdoms of Nusantara. In the succession of power, the factor of blood became a sort of axiom that had to be held on to, even though in the eyes of the Quran, it is a very fragile factor, as fragile as a spider’s web: “The example of those who take allies other than Allah is like that of the spider who takes a home. And indeed, the weakest of homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew.”<sup>36</sup> As a result of this deviation, political theory never developed in the Islamic world for hundreds of years, to say nothing of the principle of *shura* (consultation) as the Quran teaches us. If I criticize the dynastic-aristocratic political system I am not automatically defending the democratic system, except under several conditions, which I shall cite, as relevant, in Chapter 2.

When and for what reasons did this large-scale process of Islamization happen in Nusantara? It took only a short time, from about the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, continuing more intensively into the seventeenth century. It is little understood how closely the development of Islam in Nusantara was linked to the world of trading. This was a world that was dynamic and egalitarian. The north coast of Java, with its harbor cities, had built up a trading network – which long had Islamic features – with Malacca, Pasai (in present-day Aceh), Bengal, Gujarat, and even Iran. Generally speaking, the traders were creative people, sensitive

to the winds of change, including changes in the system of values. Social systems that involved caste greatly hindered the dynamism of this constant movement, to say nothing of the low regard that Hindus and Buddhists held for trading activities. From its earliest times, however, Islam was propelled by a Prophet who earlier in his life had been a trader. Thus, it comes as no surprise that Islam provided a strong impetus to traders to expand the scope of their activities with commercial centers ruled by Muslims. If the Muslim *umat* later lost out in the world of trade, that came about from a loss of entrepreneurial ethos and acuity.

The historian Sartono Karodirdjo (1921–2007) saw several factors that facilitated the Islamization process, notably in Java. They include the following:

1. The completely open urban atmosphere impelled structural tendencies for greater mobility, including changing religions.
2. The old society that was disintegrating and losing its orientation needed a new identity and new values.
3. With the decline of the centers of Hindu-Buddhist power, changes in social structures brought changes in power structures.

Islam provided a new identity and new values, which in turn buttressed that process of change.<sup>37</sup> Majapahit had weakened politically and economically, and thus the weakening of its social structure was only a matter of time. As well as through trade, Islamization proceeded through the path of mysticism, as pioneered by Abdurrauf from Singkel (also in northern Sumatra) and Syamsuddin from Pasai in the sixteenth century, which had a significant impact on coastal Sumatra and Java.<sup>38</sup> Benda also sees these mystics and sufis as accelerating the influence of Islam in Nusantara: “Most probably these sudden changes were brought about by the spread of sufistic teachings which played a role as an impetus of this belief across the Asian continent and even to China. Furthermore, this Islamic mysticism was spread to Indonesia, not by Arabs, but by Muslim Indians.”<sup>39</sup>

Once again, an Indianization process occurred, but this time it was an Indianization with Islamic features. If Islamization was as lengthy a process as stated by the Medan Seminar, which dates Islam’s arrival in Nusantara to the seventh or eighth century CE, then many links must be connected to explain that process. Therefore, several writers use historical accounts, tales and romances, family chronicles, annals, and other literary forms to connect these broken links, in spite of the difficulties in addressing the quality of these sources based on standards

of critical history.<sup>40</sup> People will always ask about the tracks leading up to an event, and if the sources are lacking they turn to tales and the like – with all their weaknesses and deficiencies. Such sources must be used with extreme care.

Still in regard to Islam's progress in Nusantara, the historian Anthony Reid notes two more aspects in which Islam was superior to the Hindu-Buddhist cultures whose rulers had exhausted their energies in clashing with the newcomers. First, Islam had a superiority in weaponry as the logical extension of "the general prosperity and international contacts available to the Muslims." He mentions, for example, that the Ottoman Turks had sent artillery to assist Aceh in "winning many battles in the sixteenth century." Not only that, "Muslim Chinese were often found to be among the sharpshooters and armorers in the cities of Southeast Asia, especially the Javanese ones of Giri, Gresik, and Banten." Not many of us have such an appreciation of the role of those Chinese Muslims in the process of Islamizing Nusantara. Second, Reid cites the quality of faith of the Muslim *umat*, which felt that God was always on their side, even though they were the minority. Their sense of solidarity and belief in themselves came from the quality of that faith.<sup>41</sup>

In this chapter we have discussed Hodgson's "quarrel" with Geertz on the penetration of Islam among the Javanese. Here I would like to bring in the views of Karkono Kamajaya Partokusumo, who during his lifetime was known as an expert on Javanese culture. (His understanding of Islam was close to that of Muhammadiyah.) For Karkono, Javanese syncretism should not be so quickly judged or denigrated. The following passage explains his view:

Even though their Islam is syncretic, they would never accept being called non-Muslim. As Javanese, they still follow tradition, ceremonies, and symbols, but their faith and monotheism follow the teaching of the true Islam. Many of the Javanese traditions that contain symbols do not have to be seen as polytheistic. Those symbols and traditions are distinctive characteristics of the Javanese, just like the singular traits that are still associated with other ethnic groups.

Whenever Islamic practice in Java or the Islam of the Javanese people is as I have described it, don't let this become a basis for dispute and reprehensible actions.

From the time when the first Javanese Muslim raja R. Fatah was crowned Sri Sultan Syah Alam Akbar in Demak in 1480 up to the present, when our country has become independent and is a republic, Javanese culture has always existed side by side with Islam, intertwined and complementary. There has never been compulsion or conflict



that has forced Javanese to abandon their traditions. In my opinion, traditions will surely shift or change in line with societal trends and the strength of religious practice.<sup>42</sup>

Naturally, in the cultural domain, there has never been compulsion to become a puritanical Muslim, although matters may be different in the realm of power politics. It is often the case that religion is unable to guard against the ambitions of power politics. This occurs in all civilizations. In view of this, we should be cautious in differentiating between the expansion of power politics and religious development. Both Spain and India were under Muslim rule for centuries, with the majority of their people remaining non-Muslim. In India, the relatively unsuccessful Islamization process, compared to that in Spain, may have been due to the oppressive caste system. Islam was viewed as a solution, even though the majority of ordinary Indians remained Hindu. A portion of those who were Muslim left to form Pakistan and then Bangladesh. However, in modern India there are about 140 million Muslims, more or less 14 percent of the entire population, which now numbers 1.324 billion (2016), second in the world after China's 1.379 billion (2016).

Thus, the widely held theory about the *pénétration pacifique* in the advance of Islam in the face of this expansion of power politics needs to be corrected.<sup>43</sup> That theory is correct to the extent that it concerns the spread of Islam as a religion and a cultural force not occurring through compulsion, as this would conflict with the principles of the Quran, which was generally the reference used by the proselytizers of this religion.<sup>44</sup>

But, if it relates to the spread of power, warfare is usually unavoidable. In this respect, we must read the conclusion reached by Ricklefs, which says: "Islam was spread in Indonesia not simply by persuasion and commercial pressures, but also by the sword."<sup>45</sup> Ricklefs should also differentiate between Islam as a cultural force and expansionist behavior by Muslim rulers to achieve their political agendas, which were occasionally no less deplorable than those of their non-Muslim counterparts. In fact, the stench of such behavior was more terrible in the struggles for power among Muslims themselves, as may be seen in various periods of the history of the Muslim *umat*.

Let us look at one such example. Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636), highly admired by the people of Aceh, acted cruelly in building his power by murdering all the *orang kaya* (the independent nobility who were influential in the maritime political system) when he accused them of undermining the throne and stealing state property. Not only that, but Sultan Iskandar Muda also had all his sons condemned to death to avoid power struggles. The result of this was that for three generations after

Iskandar, the Aceh sultanate was ruled by sultanahs (female rajahs), who were easily influenced by the *orang kaya* of succeeding generations, who quickly reappeared after the demise of Iskandar.<sup>46</sup> And so, let us not exaggerate the greatness of a leader to the point that his despicable deeds are simply covered up. History wants to force open the past just as it was, but this difficult to do. Apart from the requisite source material that is never complete or unbiased, it is not uncommon for the political interests *du jour* to present obstacles to our search. But an uncompromising historian will never give in to the limitations of source material and political obstacles. He or she seeks to expose the reality of the past, even if rulers stand in the way.

We cannot close our eyes to the dark events of history. Religion is not infrequently used to justify or legitimize a system that betrays the message of that same religion. Fatwas issued by religious scholars throughout history often have a partisan cast in their efforts to defend the existing power. In the past, religious arguments were often aimed at winning over the common people so they would not be inclined to revolt against Muslim tyrants, even if this has not always been successful. I believe that fatwas such as this are nothing more than betrayals, backed by religious arguments, of the holy aims of the religion itself. Such fatwas clearly are made-to-order for rulers intent on holding onto their thrones, or they are issued to curry favor. True religious scholars are those who issue fatwas based on religious teachings; they are understood to be honest and brave in the face of all threats and inducements. Those who courageously issue proper fatwas are the religious scholars who are strong of character. But how rare such individuals have been!

In the progress of Islamization, something paradoxical occurred that is worthy of note. It was the arrival of the Westerners in Nusantara and their Christian missionary activities that accelerated Islamization. There is an interesting perspective here. Islamization commenced at the time when Indianization had reached a dead end both politically and culturally. An acute crisis hit the Indianization process, which had reached its saturation point. The Islamic experience pointed to another reality. With the arrival of the West and the wave of Christian proselytization, Islamization progressed all the more quickly and firmly. In contrast to its previous interaction with Hindus, who had come from Asia, now Islam had to confront Christianity, which even though it had originated with the Prophet Abraham, was now Westernized. Long before the sixteenth century, Christianity and Islam had been engaged in a fierce armed struggle during the blood-soaked Crusades. These had started with Pope Urban II's speech at the Council of Clermont in 1095 and ended in 1291 with the fall of Acre and the control of all Palestine by the Muslim

Mamluks. Echoes of those Crusades were felt in the contest between Islam and Christianity in Nusantara, beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing to the present day.

It is an incontrovertible fact, not only in Nusantara but in various parts of the world, that once Islam has set down its cultural footprint, however imperfectly, its adherents only very rarely change their faith, and this only in certain cases. Take the example of Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587–1629), who twice served as the Dutch governor-general in Batavia (1619–1629). Coen was not only known as having been singularly instrumental in strengthening the position of the Dutch East India Company by violent means – destroying anything in his way<sup>47</sup> – he was the first person to introduce the rice-for-faith system. That means that each child who studied in a Christian school was given a pound of unhusked rice. Hence the term “rice Christians,” people embracing religion for material gain, as Wertheim has written.<sup>48</sup> As history unfolded, Coen’s tactics were never effective, because generally faith that can be bought with material things is a low-quality faith.

With all its weakness in all the different aspects of life, the percentage of the Muslim *umat* of the entire population of Nusantara is very high, about 88.22 percent.<sup>49</sup> This is the strongest indicator that converting out of Islam for any Muslim is virtually unimaginable, to say nothing of a well-educated one. The cases that deviate from this general pattern are of little concern, although they still need to be stemmed. The worrisome problem is when the quality of the Muslim *umat* overall is unacceptably low. Ignorance is the main reason for the poverty and backwardness suffered for centuries by the Muslim community throughout the country.

So the greatest enemy is the disease of ignorance, which produces poverty and backwardness. The most important jihad should be to drive this sickness out of the body and spirit of the Muslim *umat*. If this problem of ignorance can be overcome, then the solution for so many other problems can be found. But this requires changes in the paradigm of thinking. From the quantitative – the numbers chase – to the qualitative, it calls for pursuing quality in every domain: science, technology, the economy, social and moral spheres, and Islamic thinking. Because of that, speeding up the process of sharpening and enlightening the mind is the only choice open for the Muslim *umat* to regain the position of *khaira umma*, “the best community,” as the Quran expresses it.<sup>50</sup> Each Muslim nation may compete pursuing this ideal. Unless it radically changes its paradigm of thinking, I worry that God will look askance at this *umat*, for it is still steeped in and lulled by a false pride in the name of religion; it is sunk in the greatness of the past, but it fails to deal with the present, as may be seen in the Arab world. Islam demands

the birth of an open community that firmly grasps the universal values of prophethood, but also fosters local values that can be compatibly integrated to enrich the practice of this religion in collective life. A purely legalistic approach will only end in the formation of an Islamic culture that is dessicated and lacking vitality and that surely will not last long. Humans are creatures that do not want to remain forever deprived in a culture of aridity. There is a spiritual demand for something that goes beyond the material.

Let us return to the Islamization process. Why was the advance of Islamization accelerated by Western expansion? We have already spoken of the paradox<sup>51</sup> of history in Nusantara. Supposing Western colonialism had not come to Nusantara, it is no sure thing that the majority would be Muslim. Thus, the echo of the Crusades proved useful in Nusantara, in that it broadened the belief that Christianity was the religion of the colonizer, and as such must be resisted. So it is not surprising that the doctrine that forms the backdrop of resistance against invasion by the West was born in the womb of Islam. The nobility who culturally were still drenched in Hinduism saw Islam as a liberating force. With their entry into the ranks of Islam, as pioneered by the religious adepts, scholars, and teachers, the proselytizers of reform, this class of nobles felt that their position was safe, at least for the present, until they and their religious leaders were defeated by the gunpowder and artillery of the West.

We do not know for sure what percentage of people in Nusantara were Muslim when the Europeans arrived in the sixteenth century. But they were not the majority, even if several Muslim kingdoms had held a foothold in their territories since the end of the thirteenth century. "It was especially the arrival of the Portuguese," writes Wertheim, "that caused a great number of the nobility to embrace Islam as a political move to confront Christian penetration."<sup>52</sup> From that moment on, the belief arose that the invasion by the West could be stemmed by Islam, even if the Muslim rajas did not form a united front. In fact, they quite often confronted one another. The late, famed journalist Mochtar Lubis, known to be neutral in discussing matters of religion, never hesitated to say publicly that Christianity was the religion of colonizers. "Christianity was equated with the colonial government in the same way as it was as the religion of the Dutch colonials. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches in Indonesia always enjoyed financial assistance from their mother organizations abroad."<sup>53</sup>

To lengthen the radius of their influence in the face of the quickly expanding Islam, the two Christian religions became active in the areas of education and social and health services, especially in their most basic forms. Lubis comments further:

They built schools and hospitals, and the colonial government helped, protected and encouraged them. While Islam continued its presence by *pribumi* [native, indigenous] efforts, the overseas churches kept pumping in fresh blood and funds for the sake of the mission and church work in Indonesia. Thus, Christianity even today is marked by foreign elements, such as pastors and nuns from Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, and priests from the us or the Netherlands as well as from other countries.<sup>54</sup>

We need to expand this observation by Lubis. After Indonesia gained independence, the Muslim side no longer needed to dwell on this because “indigenization” (*pribumisasi*) of Catholicism and Protestantism was proceeding rapidly. There were still foreign pastors and priests, of course, but their Indonesianness was pronounced in a number of ways. My friend Franz Magnis-Suseno was born in Germany; in defending Indonesia as his home, he can outdo the loyalty of native-born Muslims. My friendship with Magnis goes back a long way, and we are often seen together in seminars, forums, and similar discussion groups. On June 13, 2007, Magnis sent a letter asking me to make a brief recommendation in the interest of his trip to Europe to raise funds for the construction of Building s2 and s3 STF (“Philosophy High School”) Driyarkara, in Jakarta, because the old building was no longer adequate. I was happy to make that recommendation. It went more or less like this: “Seen from the aspect of enlightenment, the Driyarkara School of Philosophy has thus far made many contributions in enriching and sharpening the vision and views of the Indonesian intelligentsia, whether Christian, Muslim, or others.”<sup>55</sup> Magnis-Suseno is among those Catholic thinkers who are less concerned about the number of religious adherents than about the quality of the adherents to a religion.

I have found an identical attitude in the Venerable Monk Pannyavaro of Candi Mendut. In a conversation we had in his monastery one day when my wife and I paid him a visit, Pannyavaro said that having a large number of followers is not important, but the quality of their commitment to virtue is crucial. This monk has been my good friend for years. We appreciate each other in our differences, but we meet in a moral riverboat (*biduk*) for the betterment of all creatures. For me, a sincere friendship across faiths is very affecting. Humankind is indeed one. But let power politics intrude into those friendships, and the atmosphere will shatter, as it frequently does, even between adherents of the same religion. Examples of this are almost too numerous to mention, whether in the past or as they continue to accumulate in the present. This is the effect of pragmatic politics without a clear moral vision.

Let us return to our discussion. I have been outlining a picture of the past when Nusantara was still under a colonial system that was very dark and oppressive for the *pribumi* population. The churches at that time were all most unanimous in their support for this system; several academics have admitted this. The past cannot be changed, but it can be forgiven for the future of us all. Didn't the mosques in Andalusia under Arab-Muslim rule or in India under Mughal-Muslim rule also side with those in power?

"As long as they developed themselves in Indonesia," writes Lubis, "whether Catholic or Protestant, the churches found a pleasant place in the Dutch colonial structure. There are no records of the Christian churches criticizing or condemning the cruel and inhuman practices done to the Indonesian people by the VOC or the colonial government, the war against Banda, the *hongitochten* in the Maluku, the expansionist war in Aceh and other regions, the administration of *heerendiensten* (voluntary labor for Dutch interests) and *kultuurstelsel* (forced cultivation)."<sup>56</sup>

Such attitudes are not surprising, because the church leadership of that era was in the hands of the foreigners. It was not easily differentiated from the colonial structure. But in the revolution for our independence (1945–1949), Muslim and Christian worked shoulder to shoulder to drive out the Dutch, who were trying to reinstate colonialism with the help of the British. This strongly contrasted with the attitudes of the churches before the twentieth century.

## The Influence of Colonialism, Islam, and the National Movement

I mentioned in the Introduction that it would be difficult for us to imagine an Indonesia, either as a nation or as a state, had it not been preceded by a colonial system, and specifically Dutch colonialism, which lasted longer than Portuguese and British colonialism. It was the former Dutch colony that became Indonesia. During the Japanese Occupation (1942–1945), short as it was but no less harsh, Indonesia stood up as a nation that had been conceived in the 1920s. Nationalism and the independence movement were the direct result of the Dutch educational system, which had opened the hearts and eyes of the people of Nusantara. Western education had raised a tiger cub. Nationalist leaders gradually headed in the direction of independence using modern organization, inspired by their Western education. In this way, colonialism indirectly served Nusantara.

The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, or VOC) showed another face of colonialism. Long before the budding of national consciousness, at the start of the seventeenth century

the VOC had emerged as the trade monopoly power over various agricultural products of Nusantara. In the late eighteenth century the VOC fell into corruption and debt, and in 1799, the Dutch government revoked the company's charter and took control. By 1910, the Netherlands had expanded its control over almost all of Nusantara.<sup>57</sup> In his self-defense at the state court in Bandung in 1930, Sukarno exposed the brutality of the VOC:

We know how during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the East India Company, impelled by fierce competition with the English, Portuguese, and Spanish, established a monopoly system. We know how harshly and brutally they implanted and strengthened that monopoly. We know how in the Maluku Archipelago thousands of lives were ended, rajadoms were destroyed, millions of clove and nutmeg plants were eradicated every year. We know how, in order to guard their monopoly in the Maluku Archipelago, the rajadom of Makassar was conquered and its trade extinguished, so that hundreds, thousands of Makassarese lost their livelihoods and were forced to become pirates. We know how in Java, following a "divide and conquer" policy, as Professor Veth or Clive Day or Raffles might say, one by one the kingdoms fell under the control of the VOC, and the people's economy was constricted (by *contingenten* and *leverantien*) – yes, was absolutely pressured and extinguished.<sup>58</sup>

Sukarno was not inventing these accusations; these were the hard facts of history, and they describe what really happened. Holland, a small country, had given birth to cruel murderers so it could grab extraordinary profits. With this bitter fact before us, we blush to speak about civilization and humanity. We condemn the pirates Sukarno speaks of, but we also must understand their motives. The colonial system is the skeleton in the closet of civilization. Human conscience must oppose this system, whatever the people, whatever the religion. We need to reread and frequently reflect on a sentence in the first paragraph of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution in this connection. Let me quote it here: "Whereas independence is the inalienable right of all nations, therefore, all colonialism must be abolished in this world as it is not in conformity with humanity and justice ...." This brief but dense paragraph did not emerge out of nowhere, but was extracted from the cry of the souls of all those who struggled for independence through the long years of the colonial system.

Forcing Nusantara under one colonial administrative umbrella would facilitate the management by the Dutch of this colony, including draining the wealth of its soil. This was the forerunner of the Dutch East Indies

colony, which became the main “capital stock” of Indonesia in later days. The political process of this union constituted another form of indirect “service,” although built on countless victims. For more than two hundred years, the Dutch exerted themselves in so many ways, including war and diplomacy, to conquer Nusantara. After Aceh was subdued in 1912, up to World War II and the arrival of the Japanese in 1942 there was no more meaningful resistance from the people of Nusantara against the colonial system.

Thus, the Dutch only had thirty years in which to feel cushioned from the opposition and disturbances of the Muslim *umat*. In early times it had been a sporadic opposition, driven by the spirit of jihad, without modern weapons. Defeat was a constant risk. But it was precisely this defeat that gave birth to the multitude of heroes who lie beneath the soil of Nusantara. Perhaps the correct title for them is Heroes of Nusantara, not National Heroes, because there was not even the slightest notion of Indonesia as a nation before the twentieth century.

The factor that triggered the modern national movement was not the traditional Islamic educational system in the form of the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), but the educational system of the West that opened *pribumi* eyes and hearts. As well, during the 1930s a number of Indonesian students from Egypt became especially energetic in the movement against colonialism. The *pesantren* system served as a latent force in this opposition; however, at the outset this concept of a national movement was not within the frame of the Indonesian identity, so to speak. Fighting against the Dutch throughout the nineteenth century was led entirely by the Islamic scholars, the more traditionalist religious scholars (*kiyai*), and other Muslim figures. But, to reiterate, it was not within the context of an Indonesia. Their resistance was to maintain their own sovereignty and sense of self-esteem. Let us take, for example, the wars in Maluku, Makassar, Banjar, the Minangkabau lands, Java, and Aceh, which broke out throughout the nineteenth century. All of these were led by local Muslim figures, whether Islamic scholars or aristocrats. Even though this nineteenth-century resistance was not waged to create a nation called Indonesia, the heroic struggle became important political capital for the national movement of the twentieth century. Without such capital, how difficult it would have been to create a nation in an archipelago of thousands of islands!

When did the national movement under the banner of Indonesia actually begin? The date is often set as May 20, 1908, when the Budi Utomo (High Endeavor – BU) society was established. That date is commemorated annually as the Day of National Awakening (Hari



Kebangkitan Nasional – Harkitnas). But, historically speaking, is there a firm basis for choosing this date? To answer this question, I will excerpt part of my column in the magazine *Gatra*,<sup>59</sup> which included testimony from Ali Sastromidjojo's autobiography. I believe this testimony is the property of all the leading figures of the Indonesian Association (Perhimpunan Indonesia – PI). My argument is based solely on history, nothing else. I am quoting Ali's testimony as he gave it in 1923 in a meeting of the PI:

My national consciousness had only barely reached the level of an ethnic Javanese identity. For that reason, I then experienced moments of radical transition in the development of the *Indische Vereeniging* ("Indies Association") to the *Indonesische Vereniging* ("Indonesian Association"), which occurred in The Hague, causing a radical mental change in my soul. Immediately, my feelings of being a Javanese began to lose substance. Only then did new feelings and a new consciousness immediately grow. I began to be aware that I was not simply a Javanese, but was part of a great nation, the Indonesian nation! As an Indonesian, I was no longer an *inlander* ["native"], *inheemse* ["aborigine"] or *bumiputra* ["indigene"], but an Indonesian who possessed a motherland with a new name: Indonesia! ... All our thoughts and deeds while studying in various universities in the Netherlands were aimed at achieving the realization of those feelings and consciousness of being Indonesian.<sup>60</sup>

Similar emotions were experienced by other PI figures. For these educated children of the colony a sense of "Indonesianness" now became a credo of struggle whose vibrations were growing stronger and louder all the while.

Next, in that column, I further clarified my argument:

Ali was being quite honest in his admission and his testimony. Awareness of Indonesianness only appeared in the 1920s, replacing regional identities, whether Sulawesi, Ambonese, or Javanese. But what about Budi Utomo? We greatly appreciate the energy put out by BU as a cultural-intellectual movement, but not as the creator of a nation which henceforth would be known as Indonesia.

Thanks the struggles of the PI, which was then reinforced by the 1928 Youth Oath, the scars of Dutch colonialism appeared as a new nation on the equator as an archipelagic cluster of lovely islands, as Ali Sastroamidjojo had described it in his feelings. BU simply had not conceived of an Indonesia. Between the years 1908–1931, BU closed

itself off from non-Javanese ethnicities. It was, as the historian Ahmad Mansur Suryanegara wrote, “an exclusive organization.”<sup>61</sup>

Because of that, so that we are honest and fair to our past, I propose the designation of the origin of National Awakening Day be the formation of the *Indische Vereeniging* (“Indies Association”), a name later made more forceful in Indonesian as *Perhimpunan Indonesia* (“Indonesian Association”). Ali said it was 1923 when that change occurred, while Hatta in his *Memoir*, wrote that it was in 1922 ....<sup>62</sup>

But if people feel less than comfortable with this, then just make Youth Oath Day, October 28, 1928, as the beginning of National Awakening. The SBY-Kalla government should not hesitate to take the radical resolution in this magazine, because the old resolution is ahistorical and flawed and thus must be corrected. The building of our national history must be erected on a firm and proper foundation. Foundations that are frail will always be shaky, or, to quote the words of a poet, “A web on a shaky branch won’t last long.” We want Indonesia to last until this world crumbles!<sup>63</sup>

In the history of modern Indonesia, there are still many issues that are not clear, such as who actually took the initiative to launch the attack on March 1949 in Yogyakarta. Was it Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX? General Soedirman? Soeharto? There is unanimity that the one on the ground who carried it out was Lt. Col. Soeharto. And what about Supersemar (the order of March 11, 1966), which gave authority to Soeharto, who then, among other things, dissolved the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) on the following day? Even today there is no certainty about this.

In connection with Islam and the National Movement, I have clarified that the idea for a National Movement emerged for the first time among the students in Dutch schools, either in the Netherlands or in the motherland. The majority of this educated group was Muslim, even if non-Muslims held important roles, too, such as J.B. Sitanala, Arnold Mononutu, and A.A. Maramis. I must provide a special note about the firmness of Mononutu’s commitment to the idea of being Indonesian, as Hatta recorded it:

In 1925, a lot happened that was connected with the Indonesian Association. The colonial government [in Batavia] was threatening the parents of many of the members. Those who were civil servants were ordered to choose between their children remaining as members of the Association or their [i.e., their parents] losing their positions. Among those being threatened was the father of Arnold Mononutu. This man had become a senior clerk in the Manado Resident’s office.

Arnold was ordered to choose. Either leave the Association or, if he remained a member, commencing the following month he would not receive any allowance from home. This amounted to fl200 per month. Arnold replied to his father's letter, saying that he became a member of the Indonesian Association because of his certainty and he could no longer withdraw. And because of that, he forgave his father for cutting off his remittance.<sup>64</sup>

Who wouldn't be touched by Mononutu's sense of patriotism, when in fact he was a Christian, the religion of the Dutch? He made the political choice to belong to the PI with the fullest certainty, even if it made him suffer. Arnold Mononutu was indeed a man of character.

And then, during the Revolution (1945–1949), who wouldn't have known of T.B. Simatupang, the Christian general who fought side by side with his fellow Muslim generals to drive out colonialism?

As a result of the brutal politics of the colonial government, the PI moved quickly, gathering funds every month to assist Mononutu, who had been cast adrift. But, writes Hatta, these brutal colonial methods "only strengthened the solidarity among the members of the Indonesian Association."<sup>65</sup> From the aspect of religion, the Mononutu case is quite interesting. This "son of Manado" put the interests of the nation ahead of his religious relationship with the colonials. He forgave his father because he had been forced to cut off his remittances at a time when he, Arnold, really needed them to continue paying his tuition costs in Europe. So we see that not only since the era of the Revolution have Christian friends stood fully for the idea of Indonesia as a nation. Ever since the National Movement era, these friends of different religions worked closely with their Muslim comrades for the independence of the motherland. Dr. J.B. Sitanala, a Catholic, became one of the administrators of PI, then the target of strong suspicion by the colonial power. Such historical facts need to be repeated so that the force of national integration grows ever stronger in the midst of religious pluralism and our variegated subcultures.

Before we go on to discuss this topic, we ought to step back a pace or two, and take a look at the sociological map of Nusantara under the colonial system. Although the influence of the Dutch educational system became the main driving force of the national movement, the access of *pribumi* children to these centers of learning was very limited. Until the 1945 Proclamation of Independence, in terms of power relations in Nusantara, there were three important social groups whose interactions affected the colony. First, Dutch people in the home country were represented by the

Dutch Government in The Hague. Second, there was the community of the Dutch throughout Nusantara, who were increasingly represented by the Dutch East Indies Government in Batavia. Third, there was anyone else, other than the common people who themselves were governed by the first two groups and whose influence on the government was almost non-existent.<sup>66</sup> The colonized people for the most part were illiterate, and their fates had been at the mercy of others for decades, even centuries. By the era of the Ethical Policy at the beginning of the twentieth century, the government had no desire to improve *pribumi* minds. This was quite logical for the colonizers, since an intelligent people would clearly be dangerous for the continuation of the colonial system. The Dutch were very aware of this problem because they intended to rule rich and beautiful Nusantara forever in the interests of their little country in Europe.

At the end of the nineteenth century, there were in all of Nusantara over 80,000 lower school students, most of whom were in missionary schools. Of that number, in 1900, only 2,000 native children entered missionary schools, because the government naturally hindered them from attending. Thousands of others were in village schools whose standards were far below those of the missionary schools. Compared to the total population of 30 million<sup>67</sup> in Nusantara at that time, only a small percentage of its children went to schools of good quality. About 90 percent of the illiterate children were Muslim. If we look at the fact that in 1882, of 40,000 *pribumi* students, only 44 were girls, we immediately see that the majority of illiterates were female. To be sure, the Western educational system was gradually being introduced, but the Dutch opposed *pribumi* efforts to educate themselves. The Dutch wanted to prevent them from getting to know the Western world, for once their eyes were opened the colonized peoples would resist the West, which in Nusantara was represented by the Dutch.<sup>68</sup>

However, over the course of a history that began in the early twentieth century, the eyes of the people of Nusantara did finally open. The opposition awaited the proper time to explode into the open, even though it brought much hardship and suffering. How difficult it was for the *pribumi* elite to conduct an enlightenment movement in the midst of such mass ignorance and poverty. The Islam that this mass embraced was more for spiritual use, while the technology used to win the worldly competition was ruled by a religion not their own. A religion with a historical claim so breathtaking would become stranded midway on the journey if its community were ignorant and poor.

Palmier gives a picture of the extreme difference in income between the Europeans and the Javanese. On the eve of the 1930 world depression,

in 1929, 69 percent of the Europeans who lived in Java earned more than 5,000 florins annually. In contrast to that amount, more than 80 percent of Javanese *pribumi*, and 69 percent outside of Java, earned less than 300 florins annually.<sup>69</sup> Such conditions of poverty and ignorance in the end gradually drove a people's movement to change the people's fate with their own hands. Thus, we have the birth of Gerakan Al-Iman (Movement of Faith) through a Malay-language magazine published in Singapore in 1906, but exported to Nusantara; the establishment of the Adabiya (Polite Manners) School in Padang in 1909; and the publication of *Al-Munir* (Enlightenment) magazine, also in Padang, in 1911. These were among the responses of modernist Muslim groups to the totally destitute and illiterate situation of the people of Nusantara. There was no other way to improve their destiny save through the process of honing and enlightening their minds.

The following chronology gives a clear indication of the means by which the *pribumi* elite confronted wide-eyed the closed, discriminatory, and conservative colonial system: Al-Jami'at Al-Khairiyah (Association of the Beneficent) in 1905; Budi Utomo (BU) in 1908; Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Trade Union – SDI) in 1911, which became Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union – SI) in 1912; the Indische Partij (Indies Party – IP) in 1911; Muhammadiyah in 1912; Al-Irsyad (Guidance) in 1913.<sup>70</sup> We see that the first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a flare-up of popular movements aimed at independence, thanks to the infusion of the Western system of education their members had received. This was an unintended and unexpected contribution by the colonials to the formation of an Indonesian nation several years later.

Something that is rarely mentioned is the radicalism of the Indies Party, which early on had demanded the independence of the Indies,<sup>71</sup> anticipating the statement of the Islamic Union, which began its agitation in this cause only in 1917. In that year, SI not only demanded self-government, but also called for independence to be achieved by any means.<sup>72</sup> This meant that both IP and SI had taken militant positions, even though physical preparations and weaponry were completely lacking. The only thing available was their energy and spirit to break loose from colonialism. In the colonial climate, these two parties were truly brave and risked serious danger by taking this political position. Budi Utomo, as an intellectual-cultural movement, did not follow the SI and IP, even though it was senior to them by several years. So, once again, the designation of BU as the dawn of the national awakening is in no way supported by historical fact. Everyone acknowledges BU's good services in pioneering the process of enlightenment in *priyayi* (Javanese gentry) circles. That, among BU's contributions, was an important ingredient in the awareness

of the members of this ethnic group. In an announcement by the BU board signed by its secretary Soewarno, which was carried in the Semarang daily *Locomotief* on July 24, 1908, we read: "Our organization, Budi Utomo, was founded on May 20 with an initial membership of some 650 persons. The objective of the organization has been reported most succinctly by *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* [*Batavia News*]: to lighten the burden of the daily struggle of the Javanese *bangsa* [people, nation] through a harmonious and spiritual development."<sup>73</sup>

The use of the term *bangsa* for an ethnic group at that time was actually quite widespread. There was not just a Javanese *bangsa*, but an Acehnese *bangsa*, Minangkabau *bangsa*, Batak *bangsa*, Ambonese *bangsa*, Sundanese *bangsa*, Banjar *bangsa*, and so on, because naturally the Indonesian *bangsa* was yet to be imagined in the first and second decades of the twentieth century.

In the meantime, the proposal to designate SI the pioneer of the national movement is also not correct, as it ignores the pluralism that could be clearly seen in the PI and Youth Oath circles. The SI, known earlier as SDI (Sarekat Dagang Islam – Islamic Trade Union), had initially been a movement to empower the economy and trading business of the Muslim *umat* that felt threatened by non-Muslim commercial activities in Surakarta. However, in 1912, a radical transformation that changed SDI into SI took place under the charismatic leadership of Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto. It was not just the name that changed. The movement changed its orientation from economic to political. As a result, the economic empowerment of the Muslim *umat* was neglected, with the energies of the Muslim elite now focused on its political interests in confronting the colonial system. SI's H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, a graduate of the Dutch Administrators' School, was the first Muslim leader in the modern era to emphasize Islam as a "binding factor and a national symbol."<sup>74</sup> Despite his Dutch-style education, Tjokroaminoto did not want to work in the colonial government. Under Tjokro, SI grew quickly and came to be viewed as a threat to the colonial system. Thus, the Dutch administration sought a way to weaken the SI's political position by hitting its centralized power.

Tjokro was also the "godfather" of a number of communist and nationalist figures who appeared later on, such as Alimin, Muso, Sukarno, and many others. He was the real father of Indonesian nationalism, even though this ideological term only became popular in the 1920s. It is probably not too much to call Tjokro, as Anton Timur Jaylani did, "the 'definer' or architect to build the Muslim nation."<sup>75</sup> Aspiring leaders of the Indonesian nation studied under Tjokro at his home in Surabaya. Not long after his death in 1934, as has happened repeatedly in

modern Indonesian history, the PSII (Indonesian Islamic Union Party) split into the Abikusno Tjokrosudjono and Agus Salim factions. Political egotism was one reason for such factionalizing. Not just the PSII with its Islamic ideology, but parties with Marxist or nationalist ideologies were also vulnerable to this disease. Generally, factionalism was not caused by philosophical views that could not be reconciled, but rather was triggered by the considerations of practical politics. Political parties led by Indonesia's intellectual class were never immune from the friction of interests that brought with them factionalism.

### The Birth of Indonesia as a Nation

The movement aimed at the formation of a nation in an effective and directed way, after a national consolidation process, only came into being in the 1920s. This development took place both in the Netherlands, through PI, and in Nusantara, through youth and student organizations from various regions who had gathered in Jakarta. According to Ali Sastroamidjojo, there were only about sixty Indonesian students in the Netherlands at that time. They maintained their fervor in struggling for the ideals of an independent Indonesia, even though their colleagues at home were experiencing a spiritual crisis following the failure of the communist rebellion in 1926–1927. The PI even published a magazine, *Indonesia Merdeka (Independent Indonesia)*,<sup>76</sup> a name that was a symbol of extraordinary intellectual courage if measured by the reality of the times and where the magazine was published. The era of the 1920s was a laboratory for the budding and flowering of Indonesian nationalism and the weakening of regional sentiment. Bahasa Indonesia increasingly played a central role in fostering the sense of what it meant to be Indonesian (*keindonesiaan*), a concept still in its infancy.

Also in the 1920s, youth organizations like Jong Java (Young Java), Jong Sumatranen Bond (Young Sumatran Union), Jong Minahasa (Young Minahasa), Jong Islamieten Bond (Young Islamic Union), Jong Batakbond (Young Batak Union), Jong Celebes (Young Celebes), Sekar Rukun (Harmonious Flowers), and the Vereeniging voor Ambonsche Studerenden (Association of Ambonese Students) held meetings in Jakarta in an effort to harmonize their language as they united themselves, leaving behind local nationalisms and reaching for Indonesian nationalism.<sup>77</sup> Once again, I need to stress that national consciousness emerged in the circles of Nusantara youth who had been Western-educated. This is not surprising, because the curriculum they absorbed in their schools broadened their humanistic perspectives, including the concepts of democracy

and nationalism, which increasingly commanded their attention. By opening these centers of education, the Dutch, who had initially only wanted to mold low-level civil servants, found that they had been nurturing ravenous tigers. This process of national awareness advanced very quickly and reached its climax on October 28, 1928, thereafter being known as the Youth Pledge. The term *pledge* seems to have come later, for its name prior to that was the Congress of Indonesian Youth. Its three important decisions were:

First: We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, acknowledge one motherland, Indonesia.

Second: We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, acknowledge one nation, the nation of Indonesia.

Third: We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, revere the language of unity, the Indonesian language.<sup>78</sup>

Although the wording of the covenant mentioned “sons and daughters of Indonesia,” I cannot find the name of any “daughter” among the committee members. But including the word *daughters* meant that the “sons” were well aware of the importance of women in the national struggle. And, through the Youth Pledge, in the words of the late historian Sagimun M.D., “the Malay language was crowned as Bahasa Indonesia.”<sup>79</sup> How great was Malay’s contribution to forming an Indonesian identity!

If we read the names involved in the PI activities in Europe and the Youth Congress in Indonesia, it becomes clear that the nation was created by young people in their twenties who had a Western education, whether in Indonesia or in Europe. They used the weapons of the West to form a nation, the Indonesian nation. Once again, I emphasize that this nation was formed and established in general by young people and students, and a small percentage of the older generation, such as H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, Surjaningrat (Ki Hadjar Dewantara), Tjipto Mangunkusumo, E.F. Douwes Dekker, Agus Salim, Tan Malaka, Semaun, Soekiman Wijosendjojo, and Darsono. But the ones who were directly involved in the movement to consolidate nationalism in the 1920s were educated young people.

A poetic interpretation of the wording of the Youth Pledge was given by the poet SCB (Sutardji Calzoum Bachri); it is an interpretation I had never read in any source. In the speech he gave on culture after receiving the Jakarta Academy Award on December 10, 2007, SCB provided this commentary on the Youth Pledge: “The Youth Pledge has really never been known as poetry. But if we look at what is contained in its wording



there is imagination that is demonstrated by words that are dense but succinct and full of meaning, so it meets the conditions of being poetry.”<sup>80</sup> If we look at the committee members of the Youth Pledge, we see they include Muhammad Yamin and Amir Sjarifuddin, who were talented poets, especially Yamin. It is not impossible that the text of the Youth Pledge was drawn up by Yamin. If Sutardji esteems it as poetry, it makes sense to do so. Yamin initially worshipped the region of his birth, West Sumatra, and then worshipped Indonesia, later becoming an ultranationalist.

Let us go back to the problem of the formation of the nation. It is clear that the emergence of Indonesia as a nation and then as an independent state are the fruits of the work and struggles of figures in the national movement, whether they used a political approach or a sociocultural-religious one. Earlier I mentioned briefly that during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Indies Party and the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Association – *SI*) were born with a political orientation that grew more radical over time. In contrast, *BU*, Muhammadiyah, *Al-Irsyad* and others were conceived of having sociocultural-religious orientations. The combination of these two approaches of the two groups increasingly awakened the people of Nusantara to the importance and need for the independence of the motherland, and worried the colonialists. And the worries of the Dutch were not without basis, because of their bitter experience in confronting local rebellions that sustained the opposition to the colonial system, even if only sporadically. The Aceh War (1873–1912) against Dutch colonialism was the longest and took the most lives, including several senior officers of the Dutch army. On the Acehese side, those who perished numbered in the thousands.<sup>81</sup> Even though all the popular uprisings ultimately failed in the face of the military technology and the trickery of the colonialists, the echoes of resistance were never extinguished from the collective memory of the children of Nusantara.

In the third decade of the 1920s, the waves of the popular movement grew all the more powerful, but its political and socio-cultural patterns remained unchanged. Among the more notable popular movements born at this time were *Taman Siswa* (Garden of Students) in 1922, *Partai Komunis Hindia* (Communist Party of the Indies – *PKH*) in 1923, *Persatuan Islam* (Islamic Union) in 1923, *Nahdlatul Ulama* (Revival of the Ulama) in 1926, *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Party) in 1927, and *Perti* (*Partai Tarbiyah Islamiyah* – Islamic Education and Upbringing Party) in 1930, along with several other local organizations.

SI weakened during the 1920s as a result of the factionalism of its radical and moderate forces, or, as they were known, the “Red SI” and the “White SI.” The Red SI fused with the Communist Party, which was founded by H.J.F. Sneevliet, a Dutch Marxist who came to Nusantara with one purpose: to spread the understanding of communism. The Semarang branch of the SI was successfully “reddened.” After this fracture, the SI never again achieved the greatness of its first four years. But it would be difficult to find the equal of its services as a pioneer of the movements to erect the pillars of nationhood through the political approach.

The communist leaders lacked patience. With preparations that were all wrong, the PKH planned armed rebellions in West and Central Java and West Sumatra in 1926–1927. As expected from the start by Tan Malaka, one important figure who did not support the premature revolution, the colonial government managed to crush the rebellions in a series of lightning strikes. Very soon the leaders of these rebellions, the majority of whom were Muslim, were exiled to Boven Digul in New Guinea, while the top figures fled. Some reached Russia, the center of the international communist movement at that time. Lenin’s victory in Russia in the October Revolution in 1917 and the anticolonial slogans held special allure for some of the groups in the movement and helped persuade them to merge with the PKH, including some religious scholars.

The destruction of communist power in Nusantara inspired Sukarno and his friends to establish the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) on July 4, 1927. The young Sukarno was obsessed with unity. The year before, in 1926, he had written a long article in the daily *Suluh Indonesia Mudah* (*The Torch of Young Indonesia*) titled “Nasionalisme, Islamisme, dan Marxisme” (“Nationalism, Islam, and Marxism”). According to Sukarno, these three political ideologies had to work together in order to achieve the great goal of the independence of the nation. This is part of what he wrote: “We are certain that all the leaders of Indonesia are aware that it is unity that is bringing us to greatness and to independence.”<sup>82</sup> So obsessed was Sukarno with the concept of national unity that he seemed to have forgotten the SI’s bitter experience of having been stabbed in the back by the communists, thanks to the tactics of Sneevliet. For in 1914, Sneevliet had established the ISDV (Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging – Indies Social Democratic Association), which on May 23, 1920, changed into the Partai Komunis Hindia (PKH), the forerunner of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), with Semaun as its first chair.<sup>83</sup> The ISDV was established in Surabaya, and at first all its members were Dutch citizens.

Even though Sukarno put nationalism at the forefront of his article, in reality Islam and Marxism as formal political ideologies had emerged

earlier, through SI and the PKH. The party that openly bore the flag of nationalism was the PNI, which had been established only in 1927. And even if the SI did not proclaim its nationalism in the same way, the character of its nationalism cannot be any more in doubt. In contrast, the position of the PKH was problematic, because besides struggling for the independence of the motherland, this party was also loyal to international communism, with its base in Moscow. The dual loyalties are obvious from this vantage point: to Indonesia and to a foreign country – even though Tan Malaka, a PKH figure, often strayed from the general line of the Comintern (Communist International). Tan Malaka was never anti-SI or opposed to Pan-Islamism, a movement that had been slandered by the Comintern at a congress in Moscow. Tan Malaka was a genuine patriot and nationalist who took the weapon of Marxism to fight colonialism. Marxism, after all, was having its moment of triumph at that time, particularly after Lenin had succeeded in making the 1917 October Revolution in Russia.

Tan Malaka, born in Nagari Pandan Gadang Suliki, Lima Puluh Kota Regency, West Sumatra, around 1897, needs to be viewed against the larger context of the growth of Indonesian nationalism. Unlike other figures on the left who became increasingly anti-Islam, Tan Malaka hewed his own unique and independent path. As a true nationalist, Tan Malaka never kowtowed to Stalin, who had replaced Lenin as the top leader in the Soviet Union after 1924. Tan Malaka was a free man, a characteristic that had stuck in his soul ever since his childhood in Suliki, where it was an integral part of the egalitarian Minangkabau culture.

The proud Tan Malaka, a slave to no one and to no thing foreign, be it Stalin or the Comintern, was a phenomenon within Indonesian communist circles. The tuberculosis that was eating away at his lungs did not diminish his energy or spirit in opposing colonialism. As for his attitude toward Stalin, let us consider what Mohammad Hatta recorded:

But he [Tan Malaka] would not stay in Moscow. He would not rest, but was always on the move and struggling for an independent Indonesia. He would continue his journey to the “Far East” and from there link up with the independence movements throughout Asia. He would never be able to live in Moscow where Stalin was dictator. He did not have a spine that bowed easily. He bowed to principles that were agreed to in joint consultations, but he could not, and rarely did, bend to any one individual. In the communism that he had studied, from the start there was “every one at the same level and feeling as one” – democracy in the fullest sense. But communism under Stalin planted the seeds of slavishness within its ranks.<sup>84</sup>

If he had not been an independent man, how would he have been courageous enough to set himself against Stalin, the dictator, at the risk of serious consequences? Tan Malaka was a man without a home in search of something great: the independence of a people. Sickness and pain were no concern to him. He was hunted by the colonial system wherever he went, but he was never deterred. He kept on moving without being intimidated, for nationalism was in the very marrow of his bones. The élan of freedom that carried him from the village republic culture of Nagari Pandan Gadang found increasingly wider and more exhilarating space beyond his Minangkabau homeland, although it was filled with traps. The following excerpt from Chairil Anwar's 1943 poem "I" ("Aku") describes the passion behind such dangerous adventuring.

I am an untamed beast  
 Driven from its herd  
 Even if bullets pierce my flesh  
 I will attack in rage  
 I will take the pain and poison  
 Away in flight<sup>85</sup>

It is unfortunate that Tan Malaka did not live a long life. In 1949, at the age of fifty-two, he was assassinated by a fellow Indonesian, a vile act committed by a narrow-minded man. This man did not understand what Tan Malaka meant for a colonized people, even though the Soviet Union's socialist system so praised by Tan Malaka represented hope more than reality. Communism, so generous with its promise to eradicate poverty from the face of the earth, in the end was brought to the grave of history by poverty itself. Of course, Tan Malaka never imagined that one day communism would collapse as a result of all the promises never realized.

Even though Tan Malaka did not like Stalin, he continued to praise the socialist Soviet Union, while attacking capitalism led by America and Britain. In one of his works addressed and dated "Lawu, June 10, 1946" and published in Bukit Tinggi in 1947, Tan Malaka was certain that the socialist system was bound to succeed. Sadly, Tan Malaka had no chance to witness the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the twentieth century. Such an event – the failure of the Soviet Union's socialist system to create a society without oppression and exploitation – would have been unimaginable to Tan Malaka. As he wrote in the little work just mentioned:

With the disappearance of the *latifundia* (estate lands of the aristocracy), often hundreds of square miles in area, and the aristocratic caste in

Russia, the oppression and exploitation of the peasants also disappeared, as did finally the peasantry in the old sense of the word. With the advances of collectivism (working together) and mechanization (the use of machines), workers of the land have emerged alongside workers in the factory and mines.

The position of the worker in relation to the boss (the peasant in relation to the landlord) has changed into the position of worker to worker: equality.<sup>86</sup>

We read other praise of the Soviet Union in connection with the problems of labor and cultural diversity:

In the Soviet Union, the differences in the shape of the body, its size, skin color, language, and culture of one group of mankind with those of another no longer gives rise to contention, hatred, and hostility. The Soviet Union is able and willing to concentrate all similarities of one group to another, for example, in the necessities of life (political and economic). It is also willing and able to be flexible about the differences, for example, as regards language and custom. By using the Russian language as the medium for all of Soviet Russia and letting Caucasians, Turks, Mongols use and develop their own languages within one great "federation" of the socialist system, the contradictions of nationality have vanished.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, Tan Malaka appears to have been very certain at that time that the socialism/communism of the Soviet Union would succeed in creating a just and prosperous society, as dreamed of by communists elsewhere. We appreciate Tan Malaka the Marxist, even though all his dreams collapsed forty years after his passing. Therefore, Tan Malaka's thoughts about socialism/communism are no longer relevant. But before the Soviet Union disintegrated and before the Berlin Wall fell, belief in Marxism, in the West as well, was quite strong. If Tan Malaka had witnessed this entire historical drama, I am sure that his thinking would have changed dramatically as well, but his spirit of anti-capitalism might have even grown harsher. Capitalism as a system of exploiters has not much changed to this day.

Nonetheless, I have to record that Tan Malaka was a phenomenal figure in the struggle for the nation's independence, one of the great leaders who was tireless in fighting for the interests of his people. Chairil Anwar's poem, quoted above, captures the energy and pace of his struggle. The testimony of Rosihan Anwar is worth recording in its connection to the role played by Tan Malaka: "When I read his life's history, his

struggle for Indonesia, his ability to assert his intellectual weight in a forum like the Comintern – before he was even thirty years old – I see Tan Malaka as a great son of Indonesia. It is most regrettable that he has been forgotten.”<sup>88</sup>

Or, in the mournful words of Zulhasril Nasir: “Tan Malaka was a fighter who died so tragically – someone who tirelessly thought about and struggled for his nation for over thirty years died at the hands of his own people.”<sup>89</sup> His death in Kediri on February 19, 1949, was tragic. I still cannot accept the cliché of the revolution eating its own children. Naturally, one’s political choices not infrequently bring a person to a painful and dark corner of a historical drama. Tan Malaka was a victim of that drama.

Revolutionaries could not have been responsible for this sadistic murder. Its design could not have been known by Commanding General Soedirman, as both he and Tan Malaka shared the same vision of the struggle. Neither agreed with using diplomacy to confront the Dutch, and thus both supported continuing guerrilla tactics after the capture of Sukarno and Hatta in Yogyakarta on December 19, 1948. Alfian expresses his regret for this murder by asking this question: “Was there ever the death of a fighter more tragic than this? The general atmosphere of this tragic death was too complicated to be discussed, let alone be cleared up.”<sup>90</sup> With the passage of time, such complexities will become simpler and the mystery of Tan Malaka’s death will be uncovered. His hostility toward Sjahrir was certainly not the reason for his murder, because in 1949 Sjahrir was no longer in power. And the humanist Sjahrir was not the type to finish off his political opponents in so barbarous a manner.

We do not know how the political elite reacted to Tan Malaka’s murder – at least, I have not been able to discover the answer to this question. If the relevant sources could be traced, the reconstruction of the events would be clearer. In the end, as Franz Magnis-Suseno sees it, Tan Malaka was a national sage: “Tan Malaka was really a teacher, a national guru and sage, and the *Madilog* [his great synthesis of Marxist materialist dialectics and Hegelian logic] was his teaching.”<sup>91</sup>

I have already mentioned the immensely important and strategic role played by the Indonesian Association (PI) in consolidating the word *Indonesia* as the name of a nation. It is noteworthy that the figures behind this move were young people between the ages of twenty and thirty, who were still university students in Europe. They devised the term *Indonesia* to replace the name “Dutch East Indies” for the colonized nation. In this connection, Hatta’s speech before the Congress of Democracy in August

1926 in Bierville, France, to introduce the name of Indonesia before a world forum deserves to be recorded once again:

To those who criticize our presence at the Congress in Bierville, we would like to state that our presence showed to democratic people in the West that there is an unbreakable relationship between the basis of humanism and the revolutionary struggle for a nation's independence. The first step in introducing our motherland Indonesia abroad has been successful. The name "Indonesia" does not need to be advanced by a resolution. I was there, and after listening to my speech at the opening of the Congress, everyone used "Indonesia." The Dutch people, who in the opening address were still using "the Dutch East Indies," did not repeat that either in debate or in other speech. In their writings to the outside, to friends and as general information, they said "Indonesia." [This they did] especially after exchanging ideas with me. In the agenda of the Congress leadership, the name "Indonesia" was recorded, and cannot be changed back to "Dutch East Indies."

On the basis achieved at Bierville, the Indonesian Association has been able to convey its propaganda outside the country.<sup>92</sup>

With confidence in their own intellectual capacity, these Indonesian youth in their twenties had succeeded in their mission to introduce the name of a new nation: Indonesia. After Hatta's speech, the Dutch delegation naturally felt awkward about repeating the name "Dutch East Indies," even though Indonesia was still in the grip of colonialism. It appears that the experience of colonization had quickly matured our youthful fighters in thought and deed, as well as giving them access to world literature. This is rarely found among the members of later generations, including the present writer.

To be honest, we feel jealous of the PI delegates' intellectual ability to argue their views before all comers in international forums. One such congress was organized by the League Against Imperialism and held in February 1927 in Brussels. A delegation attended consisting of Mohammad Hatta, Nazir Sutan Pamuntjak, Gatot Tarunamihardja, and Achmad Subarjo. Hatta chaired the delegation. In this congress, the PI delegates succeeded in landing one resolution that called upon the Congress to:

1. Be sympathetic to Indonesian independence movement and always support it in any way possible.
2. Demand the Dutch government to allow full freedom of movement, abolish exile and the death penalty, and provide a general amnesty.<sup>93</sup>

The ambassadors of this colonized nation fought resolutely abroad against colonialism at the risk of arrest and imprisonment, with all its sufferings. Living under foreign oppression forged them into intellectual adulthood before their time. In Brussels, Hatta was chosen to be an executive member of an international organization that the Congress had organized: the League Against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression and for National Independence. Albert Einstein was chosen to be honorary chair.<sup>94</sup> That same year, there were wide-scale arrests in the Dutch East Indies of those accused of involvement in the communist rebellions in Java and West Sumatra. Planning for these rebellions was held in secret meetings at the Prambanan Temple in Yogyakarta.

Ali Sastroamidjojo, another member of the PI, recorded that Hatta's speech at the Bierville Congress had aroused the fierce anger of the colonialists. This excerpt explains:

In his speech, Bung Hatta, who at that time was only around twenty-four years old, spoke out clearly about the struggle of our people to achieve their independence. The name "Indonesia" was brought out into the open for the first time in this congress. The Dutch government, which was always surveilling Indonesian student activities, had to have known what had happened at Bierville and was highly incensed. And all the more so, because the name of the colony, the Dutch East Indies, was presented to the Congress as "Indonesia" along with information about the objective of our national movement, i.e., independent Indonesia. In fact, for years the Dutch government had propagandized that the people they ruled in the colony lived prosperously, happily, and in peace and quiet, so that people in countries outside of the Netherlands believed that the Dutch colonial government was *the best [colonial administration]* in the world. So, one may well understand how great the Dutch anger was against Bung Hatta's speech at Bierville.<sup>95</sup>

If propaganda for independence outside Nusantara was pioneered by the PI, inside Nusantara it was accomplished by political parties and sociocultural and religious organizations. Regardless of frequent internal conflicts, they all shared one goal: to break free from colonialism. Anticolonial movements with modern methods were for the most part centered in Java. West Sumatra was the most prominent anticolonial region outside of Java. Interestingly, leftist forces throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s were quite vocal in these Minangkabau lands, and this movement was generally led by religious scholars educated by Sheikh H. Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, such as H. Datuk Batuah, who tried



“to blend Islam with communism.”<sup>96</sup> Another man who appeared on the political stage in West Sumatra, the orator Rasuna Said (1910–1965), was no representative of the left but no less fierce in his opposition to colonialism. At the age of twenty-three he was arrested and imprisoned in Semarang. The authorities tried to persuade him to leave politics, but Rasuna remained unmoved. He was freed in 1939, just as World War II broke out. Rasuna was a prominent member of the Permi (Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia; Indonesian Muslim Unity) party led by Moechtar Loetfi. Moechtar himself was exiled to Boven Digul shortly after Rasuna’s arrest.<sup>97</sup> In the era of Guided Democracy (1959–1965), and even before that, Rasuna was known to be very close to Sukarno, so that there was friction between him and other Muslim figures from the Masyumi political culture who would have been diametrically opposed to this modernizing group.<sup>98</sup>

In the early 1930s, Permi was not the only object of suspicion. Muhammadiyah, which was known to be moderate, was under heavy surveillance by the authorities. The governor of West Sumatra, G.F.E. Gonggrijp, in his letter of April 16, 1930, to Governor-General De Graeff, charged that Muhammadiyah was “not loyal and had an anti-West attitude.” He advised that Muhammadiyah in this region no longer be treated like a branch of the Muhammadiyah in Java. This was a heavy blow to Muhammadiyah, coming on top of the ban of one of its main figures, A.R. Soetan Mansoer, from carrying out proselytizing activities.<sup>99</sup> Strangely, Gonggrijp’s request was turned down by the Office of Native Affairs (Kantor Urusan Pribumi) and the Dutch East Indies Attorney General, R.J.M. Verheijen. Gonggrijp was even urged to “pay more attention to improving relations between Muhammadiyah and the *adat* [customary law] authorities.”<sup>100</sup> It appears that the letter of the executive board of Muhammadiyah to Attorney General Verheijen sufficiently influenced this official to avoid making an enemy of the West Sumatra Muhammadiyah. Governor Gonggrijp himself was then reassigned one year later.

With the weakening of Muhammadiyah’s political influence in this region, Permi then took over that role, but Muhammadiyah’s proselytizing continued to permeate Minangkabau society.<sup>101</sup> Because of the specific conditions in Minangkabau at that time, the local Muhammadiyah had changed its cultural character to a very political one. But after being reprimanded by its executive board in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah West Sumatra returned to its original function as a proselytizing movement. In other words, in the interest of proselytizing, the non-political Muhammadiyah in Java succeeded in tempering the political position of Minangkabau Muhammadiyah with the good intention of maintaining cohesiveness and solidarity, albeit at the sacrifice of the

latter's short-lived radicalism. There were political benefits as well, as Governor Gonggrijp was reassigned. The Dutch authorities in Batavia obviously did not want to see the usually peaceful Muhammadiyah become radicalized over the Gonggrijp affair.

We now turn to another topic to do a bit of speculating. If World War II had not erupted, would Indonesia have become independent in 1945? Ultimately, of course, Indonesia did become independent, and there was enough cause for that: anticolonialist feelings were at a high boil, even if the leading figures were frequently at odds. The colonial authorities appeared intractable and had no desire to grant independence to a colony that they had exploited for so long. The feelings of moral obligation reflected in the Ethical Policy at the beginning of the twentieth century had not been aimed at freeing Nusantara, but rather at perpetuating the colonial system in a more "civilized" manner. Let us look back at September 1901, when Queen Wilhelmina delivered her address to the States General, the Netherlands legislature. Here is some of what she said: "As a Christian power, Holland has an obligation to arrange a better legal position for the Christian people in the Netherlands Indies, to give stronger support to the spread of Christianity and provide clarification to all officials that Holland has a moral obligation that must be fulfilled toward the people of that territory."<sup>102</sup>

Note closely the wording of that speech. Wilhelmina still links the moral obligation she speaks of to strong support for the spread of Christianity. Meanwhile, the Muslim majority population, poor and ignorant, is not the main target for empowerment, let alone for independence – far from it. Therefore, the persistent efforts and tribulations of the national movement might not have led to independence had World War II not occurred. The outbreak of that war gave the leaders of the independence movement a strategic opportunity to free their oppressed nation.

Governor-General B.C. de Jonge's interview with the *Deli Courant* in 1936 shows he was still arrogantly dreaming. He said, "We've ruled here with the lash and the whip for 300 years and we will do the same for the next 300."<sup>103</sup> Sjahrir commented cynically: "It's true that he's only certain of this based on his prosecutors, soldiers and – Digul."<sup>104</sup> It is obvious from de Jonge's statement that the Dutch benefited unduly from their colonial system while the Muslim peoples fared miserably. Poor and ignorant, they were targeted with the lash and the whip. And having been lashed and beaten, it was not at all certain they would want to unite. This is another aspect of the weakness of the Muslim community, which has experienced the sledgehammer of history time and time again without learning from its sufferings.

Here is Hatta's defense speech of March 9, 1928, before the court in The Hague: "That Dutch power will come to an end, that is, for me, a certainty. The question is not whether or not, but whether sooner or later. Let not the Netherlands deceive itself that its colonial power will remain strong to the end of time."<sup>105</sup> In fact, the Indonesian Association wanted to achieve independence peacefully, but because of Dutch obstinacy Hatta arrived at "the certainty that Indonesian independence could only be gained by violence."<sup>106</sup>

Hatta's prediction was borne out when the 1945–1949 revolution to preserve the nation's independence saw so many heroes perish in the cause. The Dutch, supported by the British, were unwilling to let go of Indonesia after the Japanese occupation. They felt no shame in carrying on with their brutal colonial policies. From this perspective, the Dutch and other colonial powers do not deserve to be called civilized nations. Quite the opposite, they were barbarians who treated other people coarsely and rapaciously. But ironically, after independence was won, that same coarseness and rapacity were imitated by the authorities of the independent nation. The result is that the people, especially the peasants, laborers, and fishermen, have yet to truly feel the meaning of independence. This has been the tragedy of history suffered by many newly independent nations after World War II.

At the beginning of his defense speech, Hatta asked why in Indonesia high-school students were already engaged in politics, unlike in the West where high-school students only prepared themselves for politics. Hatta mentioned the names of youth organizations such as Young Java, the Young Sumatra Union, Young Minahasa, Young Ambon, the Young Islamic Union, Young Indonesia, and others. Then Hatta answered his own question, explaining how hideous the colonial system was, and that it must be ended:

To be able to comprehend the reality, you have to remember that young people do not teach themselves but are taught within conditions and situations where they grow and flourish, and in the society where they exist. In colonial society, a young person quickly experiences harsh and bitter reality. He sees with his own eyes the suffering of the oppressed masses. He sees those masses begin to accept their sad fates, how for decades this youth just submits to the torments of a system that one day will surely sink out of sight. This youth feels and understands the suffering and torment of the people. That is the reason why almost all youth organizations in Indonesia contain in their programs the following objective: improvement of the social welfare of the people .... Such youths truly feel the shame of being colonized .... That is why

the youth of an unfree people, from their earliest years, have grappled with thoughts that are not experienced by Western youths of the same age.<sup>107</sup>

As one of those colonized youths, at twenty-four years of age Hatta very clearly described the bitterness and suffering of the colonized. De Jonge was right; they had been colonized by the lash and the whip.

No less poignantly, two years later, before the colonial court in Bandung in August 1930, Sukarno answered the charge of using radical language in the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) courses:

Honorable judges, to be sure, my language is radical. My language is not that of old grannies who faint dead away if they hear the word “independence.” My speeches are not the sermons of priests in church or those of the one who does the preaching in the mosque. I am a *revolutionary* nationalist, a *radical* nationalist, a nationalist *with the head of a buffalo!* My language is language that comes from the heart and throbs with a national spirit, throbs with frustration and disappointment over the calamities and suffering of the people.<sup>108</sup>

At the end of his defense speech, Sukarno declared himself to be the representative of the suffering people:

I am really standing before the court of you honorable judges not as Sukarno, not as Gatot Mangkoepradja, not as Maskoen or Soepriadinata. I stand here as a part of the Indonesian common people who moan and grieve, as one of the sons of Mother Indonesia who is loyal and devoted to Her. The voice that issues forth from my throat in this court now does not exist only within walls or partitions, my voice is listened to by the people whom I serve, echoing this way and that, crossing the plains and mountains and oceans, to Kota Raja [and] to Fak-Fak, to Ulu Siau near Manado all the way to Timor. The common people who listen to my voice feel that they are listening to their own voices.<sup>109</sup>

The language Sukarno used was truly the language of war, even if he rebutted all the charges brought against him. The fighter against colonialism naturally has to be skilled at arguing against such charges, even though, in its emotional power, language constitutes the overflow of opposition that smashes the existing system. Hatta and Sukarno performed their historical tasks most courageously before the courts of the colonial power. If these two great minds could only have worked

together longer in the post-Proclamation period, Indonesia would be far better off than it is at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Why the partnership of these two leaders broke apart will be discussed in another part of this work.

During the 1930s, the national movement faced very difficult times. The main players, such as Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir, and many others were arrested and exiled. Some went to the island of Ende, others to Boven Digul and Bengkulu, while others disappeared overseas, like Tan Malaka and several other leftist leaders. Why Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir, and others stood so strongly against colonialism was not least because they themselves had directly felt how rotten and brutal that system was. It was a system that did not value other people as fully human. Sukarno and Hatta were absolutely certain that colonialism had to end soon. And that is what happened. With the outbreak of World War II, Indonesia was given a golden opportunity to seize the independence it had so longed for, although it was disrupted by the brutal Japanese occupation.

Devising a strategy to cope with the Japanese occupation polarized the leaders of the national movement. Sukarno and Hatta worked together with the Japanese military, while Sjahrir and his colleagues operated underground against the occupiers. But it was never in doubt that all these leaders were against colonial powers, whoever they might be. Therefore, Sjahrir's claim that those who collaborated were no different from "Japanese dogs" cannot be supported.<sup>110</sup> Accusing Sukarno and Hatta of weakening the national movement during the Japanese occupation is a very unworthy charge. Their years of suffering in exile were proof that they were leaders who could not be bought.

In March 1942 when the Japanese first arrived, they were greeted with enthusiasm. Japan had promised to rid them of the Dutch. The Dutch East Indies government surrendered to the Japanese without resistance and unconditionally on March 8, 1942, at Kalijati, West Java. Governor-General de Jonge in 1936 was so certain that the Dutch would be in Indonesia centuries to come, but Dutch rule crumbled in the face of the Japanese army. Thus, it was not surprising that the cry *Banzai! Banzai!* ("May the emperor live ten thousand years!") was shouted everywhere as a sign that Indonesia was on the threshold of independence. Several months before the Japanese landing, Radio Tokyo had broadcast the Indonesian nationalists' song "Indonesia Raya" ("Great Indonesia"). Even after the humiliating capitulation of the Dutch, "Indonesia Raya" continued to resound. This was one of the tactics used by the Japanese to trick the Indonesian people – and indeed, many were tricked – because not many days later "Indonesia Raya" was forbidden, replaced by the

Japanese national anthem, “Kimigayo.” Also, the new Indonesian flag, the Red and White, was taken down and replaced by the Japanese Rising Sun.<sup>111</sup>

What this all meant was that the Japanese, themselves Asians, were the new colonizers, replacing the Dutch, who had previously acted so arrogantly. The cruelty and brutality of Japanese colonial rule left deep wounds in Indonesia. But it is well worth noting that the Dutch army did not make a single move to confront the Japanese invasion, showing how weak the Dutch colonial defense was. Although Sukarno and Hatta warned that the Pacific War would erupt at any time, the Dutch never trained the Indonesian people to cope with the danger. The Dutch must have worried that if they trained Indonesians for war, ultimately the barrels would be pointed at them.

At the end of Dutch colonial rule, a number of Indonesians were appointed to the KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger; Royal Netherlands Indies Army), such as T.B. Simatupang, A.H. Nasution, Alex Karilarang, Kartakusumah, Oerip Soemohardjo, Soeharto, and several more. These names converged in PETA (Pembela Tanah Air; Defenders of the Motherland), the defense force organized by the Japanese. After the Proclamation of Independence, ex-KNIL and ex-PETA members became the core of ABRI (Combat Force of the Republic of Indonesia), the forerunner of the TNI (Indonesian National Army). Soedirman, who later became Commanding General, came from PETA. And it is true that during the Revolution, the former KNIL soldiers aimed their rifles at the Dutch army that wanted to reestablish its power.

An interesting point of debate in the relationship between KNIL and PETA is the idea in some quarters that they conducted a struggle for command of the army. According to A.H. Nasution (ex-KNIL), such a struggle never happened, even though he first wanted Oerip Soemohardjo (a retired KNIL major) to take the position of Commanding General, not Soedirman from PETA. The following explains what Nasution said:

I had just then selected Pak Oerip, because as a retired major, he was prepared to be an adviser to the youth groups. That was something we really appreciated. We were the ones who made this choice. The role of KNIL and PETA was not too visible then. In my view, none of those present contested this, and of course we only proposed Pak Oerip because he had earlier been the Army General Chief of Staff at that time. Pak [Soe] Dirman came after that. But Pak Dirman was the one who was chosen, because he had the additional support from South Sumatra.<sup>112</sup>

Nasution strongly disputed the idea of a rift between elements of KNIL and PETA at that time. If such an impression was created, it was because “the PSI [the Indonesian Socialist Party] was always concerned about the problem of a KNIL-PETA rift. For me, that never happened,” he explained.<sup>113</sup>

When asked about the difference between KNIL and PETA, Nasution replied, “The former KNIL was clearly just an instrument. But the former PETA in the body of Indonesia had its own spirit, and that spirit came from Japan, from, among other things, the Bushido spirit.”<sup>114</sup> Maybe it was simply because of the Indonesian taste for sports that the image was projected of ex-KNILs fighting it out with ex-PETAs over positions in the army, itself as young as the Japanese occupation had been short. Nasution, in his old age, gave a wise answer. KNIL and PETA had both been trained by colonialists: the Dutch and the Japanese. They had derived great benefit from that training in the interests of defending Indonesian independence. With the Sapta Marga (the “Seven Roads,” or the Seven-Point Military Code of Honor), the TNI (Indonesian National Army) ideology was firmly in place. Educational background, whether KNIL or PETA, no longer mattered, especially after 1950, even if there was a “tendency to Japanize all formalities,” as Nasution said.<sup>115</sup>

October 5 is celebrated as Republic of Indonesia Combat Forces Day, originating with President Sukarno’s proclamation on the formation of the People’s Security Forces (TKR) on October 5, 1945. Because of his experience in KNIL, Oerip was appointed to implement the organization of that newborn army.<sup>116</sup> But it was Soedirman who was selected to be the Commanding General based in Yogyakarta. This shows that in the military at that early time, a selection system was practiced. Up to a certain point, the military also recognized democracy, in its own way, before it was put to the test. With the war to protect national independence, the Indonesian army gradually matured and became experienced in handling various forms of warfare.

## **World War II, the Constitution, and the Proclamation of Independence**

Before going on, we need to look at how World War II, specifically in the Pacific, was linked to Indonesian independence. For although fatigue had enveloped the national movement in the 1930s, the spirit and fire for independence had never faded or dimmed. Hatta’s and Sukarno’s predictions about a Pacific War had come true. This war changed the world map dramatically.

The Pacific War ended in August 1945. Japan's stamina for continuing the war had already weakened. Even if the United States had not dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima on August 6 and on Nagasaki three days later, the defeat of Japan was imminent. There is a very serious moral question here that needs to be addressed. Many military observers view the dropping of the bomb as unnecessary, including General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969); he indirectly criticized Harry S. Truman, who appointed him to lead NATO and preceded him as president. (Eisenhower served as thirty-fourth president of the United States from 1953 to 1961.) Eisenhower was present when Henry L. Stimson, secretary of war in Truman's cabinet, spoke about the potential use of the atom bomb against Japan. Eisenhower later wrote the following in *Mandate for Change: 1953–1956* (1963):

During his recitation of the relevant facts, I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives.<sup>117</sup>

But Truman and his supporters were determined to strike Japan with this terrible weapon. Eisenhower's voice was not heard.

The scientists bear their own share of responsibility for the use of the atom bomb against their wartime enemy. This may be seen in Albert Einstein's letter of August, 2, 1939, to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. At the very end of the letter, he hinted that Hitler's Germany was preparing to make an atom bomb.<sup>118</sup> This letter clearly pushed Roosevelt to develop an American bomb. It is in this context that we must read the origins of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki drama at the end of World War II.

World War II was born from the womb of modern Western civilization, triggered by the ambitions of the German dictator, Adolf Hitler, the would-be conqueror of all of Europe. Germany, humiliated by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles following the end of World War I, was waiting to take revenge. Even a nation like Germany, which had produced so many scientists and philosophers, could fall into the hands of the bloodthirsty and territory-hungry Adolf Hitler in conditions of instability and while bearing a burden of shame. What is hard to understand is the philosopher Martin Heidegger in the 1930s praising Hitler with these words: "The Führer himself, and he alone, is the German reality, present and future,



and its Law.”<sup>119</sup> Shortly after the war, when Hitler was no more, “Heidegger characterized Hitlerism as an historical explosion of a structural malady that afflicts all mankind and he stated his concern that it would take a long time to be free of that poison.”<sup>120</sup> When Hitler was ashes, Heidegger found the courage to speak critically of the leader he had praised. (Hitler and Eva Braun, who were married on the night of April 28–29, 1945, killed themselves on the following day after ordering that their corpses be burned.) Of course, it is not easy for someone to live in a totalitarianism that muzzled every possible freedom of the self. But why didn’t Heidegger flee from Germany, as Albert Einstein had done, for example, rather than engaging in philosophical prostitution? Every person exercises his or her own judgment with all its risks.

In the East, Japan’s Emperor Hirohito was not strong enough to oppose the plans of his army, which was out to conquer Asia. Thus, it was not surprising that Japan and Germany forged an alliance. Both wanted to emerge as the lords of Asia and Europe, respectively, an ambition that ended in the suicide of civilization. Although the numbers of the dead are unknown, estimates of the victims of World War II run between 50 and 60 million, including both military and civilians. The greatest number of victims were the people of the Soviet Union, who were mobilized to block Hitler’s invasion. Nothing in history matches the numbers of these casualties. In the end, Hitler even called upon twelve-year-old children to take part in the defense of Germany.<sup>121</sup> This dictator created total war beyond all human reasoning.

The Pacific War led directly to Indonesian independence. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, causing great damage and many Americans casualties, President Roosevelt requested the approval of Congress for the United States to enter the war. Here is the second paragraph of Roosevelt’s speech:

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American island of Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.<sup>122</sup>

Japan, disregarding the ethics of war, had committed a reckless act that wrecked diplomatic relations with the United States. With that, World

War II in the Pacific now became a large-scale conflict. At almost the same moment, Japanese troops attacked Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippines, Wake Island, and the Midway island chain.<sup>123</sup>

In his speech, Roosevelt assured his people that the final victory would be theirs.<sup>124</sup>

As Hitler's Germany did in Europe, Japan held the upper hand in the early years of the war, but it became exhausted over time, until it was finished off by the atom bomb. Indirectly, the acceleration of Indonesian independence was also a "blessing" of the atom bomb. August 17, 1945, is the official date of the birth of the Republic of Indonesia, only seventeen years after the Youth Pledge of 1928 that declared the unity of nation, motherland, and language. We see therefore that Indonesia is a young nation, less than a century old.

With this fact in mind, Indonesia no longer needs to bear the onerous burden of history, the burden of a people colonized over a long stretch of time. As a nation, Indonesia was colonized for less than a quarter of a century, including three and one-half years by the Japanese. The milestone of history that can be used to mark the formation of this nation can be either the moment the Indonesian Association was established in 1922 or the Youth Pledge of 1928. I want to dispel all the myths about Indonesian history, including the myth about the exaggeratedly long period of colonization.

We shall next consider the formation of the 1945 Constitution (known as the UUD 1945). The UUD 1945 was the work of the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI), which was set up on May 28, 1945, and then continued by the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (PPKI) from August 18, 1945, to August 22, 1945. The PPKI completed its work in only five days, while the BPUPKI worked for eighty-three days. The UUD 1945, which in its final formulation consisted of thirty-seven articles, was a brief constitution and was completed in quite a short time. Whether in the BPUPKI or the PPKI, the majority representation was nationalist and Islamic groups, or, for the latter, more precisely *santri* groups, as the nationalist groups were for the most part also Muslim. The categorization of groups into nationalist and Islamic must be read in the context of the political orientation of that time, not from the aspect of an individual's religion.

According to Anhar Gonggong, BPUPKI Chair Dr. K.R.T. Radjiman Wedyodiningrat played a major role in formulating the UUD 1945. Even the formulation of the Small Committee chaired by Engineer Sukarno, which produced the Jakarta Charter, was redrawn from scratch by Radjiman, who "*insisted* on holding discussions on general issues."<sup>125</sup> As a Budi Utomo member of standing, Radjiman would certainly not have been

happy if Islam were seen as dominant in the UUD 1945. Thus, the changes in the text of the Jakarta Charter of August 18, 1945, cannot be separated from the efforts of BPUPKI Chair Dr. Radjiman, even if these were accomplished through the authority of Mohammad Hatta as the deputy chair of the Committee of Nine.

After the draft UUD was overhauled, on the proposal of Otto Iskandardinata the PPKI in its evening session of August 18 elected Sukarno as president and Mohammad Hatta as vice-president.<sup>126</sup> When the Proclamation of Independence was made, Indonesia did not yet have a president and a vice-president, and so Sukarno and Hatta had signed the draft proclamation “in the name of the Indonesian people.” At first, Hatta hoped that everyone present at the home of Admiral Maeda, where this vital text was composed, would participate in signing. But Sukarno, from the youth faction, stepped forward and loudly said, “Not every one of us here has to sign the draft. It’s enough if just two persons sign in the name of the Indonesian people, that is, Bung Karno and Bung Hatta.”<sup>127</sup>

And so, at ten o’clock in the morning of August 17, 1945, the text of the Proclamation was read out by Sukarno at No. 56 Jl. Pegangsaan Timur, Jakarta, where he was living at the time. Like lightning, the Proclamation flashed to every corner of Indonesia. The entire people greeted it with tumult and uproar. A PI figure, whom I have much quoted here, Ali Sastroamidjojo, had only moved to Jakarta in April 1945 from Pamekasan, Madura. Ali, who had not been involved in the Proclamation, was surprised to hear the shouts and clamor of children who had heard that Indonesia was now independent. This was Ali’s reaction as he took in this tremendous historical event:

It would be difficult for me to describe our reactions here. My wife, whom I rarely ever saw crying, right then and there sat down, dazed, with tears flowing down her cheeks. I too felt very moved. All kinds of memories of the past rose in my mind. *Indonesia merdeka!* Indonesia was independent! The words that had symbolized the aspirations and dreams of our nation for which we had struggled so long and with such suffering and sacrifice, were now reality! Our nation, our country was free. Many different emotions rose within me. Joy mixed with sorrow. Happy, because God had allowed me to experience the realization of our nation’s dreams, and sad from remembering our friends in the struggle who were no longer among us and could not enjoy the fruits of their struggles and sacrifices.<sup>128</sup>

Ali’s sincerity in these sentences is felt very deeply. The same feelings were indeed flaring up in the breasts of Indonesians throughout the

archipelago, not just fighters like Ali Sastroamidjojo. It was entirely proper for Ali, who had first thought of himself as a part of the Indonesian nation only during the 1920s, to grieve for all the fighters who had not lived long enough to experience what the Proclamation of Independence meant for themselves and the nation.

During the period of the Revolution, the UUD 1945 could not be implemented fully. Political friction among the national elite led to Sutan Sjahrir's emergence as prime minister, and he even served three terms. This meant that the presidential system adhered to by the UUD 1945 had been disregarded, even though Sjahrir still very much depended on the prestige of Sukarno and Hatta to maintain his government; for the intellectual Sjahrir, although he was the major figure in the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI), did not enjoy significant mass support. In the 1955 general election, his PSI, which was supported by intellectuals, was reduced to only five seats in Parliament. Sjahrir seems to have been too cerebral at a time when most Indonesians were still illiterate. No one doubted Sjahrir the brave and tenacious fighter. But we can never forget that Sjahrir and his group were quite weak in their ability to communicate with the masses.

The fragile UUD 1945 was replaced in 1949 with the UUD RIS (the Federal Republic of Indonesia), which was the outcome of the Roem-van Roijen Round Table Conference. RIS was able to survive only briefly before being replaced by a unitary state with the promulgation of the UUDS (the Provisional Constitution) of 1950, with Mohammad Natsir of the Masyumi Party as its first prime minister. Sukarno was delighted with the formation of this unitary state and enjoyed a honeymoon for several months before divorcing over differences of opinion concerning the Irian Barat issue, to which we shall return further on.

The UUDS lasted for about nine years and then was torpedoed by Decree No. 5 of July 1959, which reinstated the UUD 1945. This legislation remains in place to this day, even though it has been amended four times in the Reformasi (Reform) period, after the fall of the New Order in 1998. Because these amendments are seen on various sides as signs of its weakness, it needs to be amended again, which is exhausting work. Indonesia in its sixth decade is still constitutionally unstable and as far as ever from achieving social justice.

Let us return to the Revolutionary era. The Dutch accepted that the end of the war would also bring an end to European domination over colonial lands. Colonized countries were moving to liberate themselves in historical waves – irresistible waves. In contrast, the Dutch still would not give way over Indonesian independence. Helped by the British, and through underhanded maneuvering, the Dutch returned in October

1945 to resume their colonial rule. They appeared to feel no shame at having been so roughly booted out of Indonesia by the Japanese. They supposed that Indonesia, which for decades had prepared itself mentally for independence, would be easy to rule again. At the cost of much sacrifice and with whatever military preparations were at hand, Indonesia had to fight for four years to uphold its Proclamation of Independence. It was only in December 1949 that the Dutch would recognize Indonesian independence as a result of the Roem-van Roijen Round Table Conference, held from August 23 to October 29, 1949, in The Hague. It was this conference that produced the short-lived Federal Republic of Indonesia, before the NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia; the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia) was formed on August 17, 1950, with Mohammad Natsir of the Masyumi Party as prime minister.

The impetus for the NKRI was Natsir's "Integral" motion in Parliament, which was supported by all the factions, including the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia; the Indonesian Communist Party), Masyumi's clearest political rival. Sukarno was quite satisfied with how Natsir overcame conflicts between the states created by the Round Table Conference. The later abuse of the unitary state concept in the interest of homogenization was not Natsir's fault, but entirely due to the centralized politics that killed the aspirations of the regions to flourish.

In the Round Table Conference, the Indonesian delegation led by Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta sat across from Prime Minister Willem Drees of the Netherlands. The official transfer of sovereignty by the Kingdom of the Netherlands was performed on December 27, 1949, in Amsterdam. In Indonesia, at the Presidential Palace on the same date sovereignty was transferred by the representative of the Dutch government H.V.K. Lovink from the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the government of the Federal Republic of Indonesia, represented by Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX. At that gratifying moment, the Dutch flag was lowered and the Red and White raised. Lovink immediately went to the Kemayoran airfield to return to Holland. On December 28, 1949, President Sukarno left Yogyakarta, the capital of the wartime Republic of Indonesia, and returned to Jakarta as president of the Federal Republic of Indonesia.<sup>129</sup>

The NKRI was established on the basis of the 1950 Provisional Constitution, which opened the door for a system of parliamentary/liberal democracy in Indonesia. This system lasted until July 5, 1959, when the UUD 1945 was reestablished by presidential decree. This move was opposed by some of the political parties, including Masyumi, but without effect. The army under the leadership of A.H. Nasution fully supported

this decree, for Nasution had been moving in this direction since 1954. President Sukarno himself was only convinced of the need for this change in 1957. In other words, the idea to return to the UUD 1945 arose at first in the military, not on the civil side. Later on, most of the parties supported it because of the strong current of national politics at the time.

### **Ideological Clashes: The 1955 General Election and Islam versus Pancasila, 1956–1959**

In September 1955, the first *pemilu* (general election) was organized under the aegis of the UUDS 1950, a first in the entire history of Nusantara. There were two agendas to be achieved by this election: to choose a parliament and to form a Majelis Konstituante (Constituent Assembly) with the task of framing a permanent UUD to replace the provisional version. The first agenda went well, and while the second one proceeded smoothly, after three years (1956–1959) the session choked on the issue of the foundation of the state: Pancasila or Islam.

At the outset, three proposals were submitted for the foundation of the state: Pancasila, Islam, and Social Economy. Only a minority supported the third of these proposals, and so the fierce battle was fought over whether it would be Pancasila or Islam. At the end of the session on June 22, 1959, both of these forces failed to obtain the backing of two-thirds of the vote in the Assembly. The majority of the political forces said that the Assembly had failed to frame a UUD, even though in fact only 10 percent still lacked interparty consensus, that is, on the foundation of the state. This is what provided the impetus for the famous Decree No. 5 of July 5, 1959, with its two decisions: (1) the declaration of the reinstatement of the UUD 1945 to replace the UUDS; and (2) the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly that had been produced by the 1955 general election. This meant that Pancasila, as contained in the UUD 1945, had won by decree its confirmation as the foundation of the state from July 5, 1959. Because of the number of academic studies related to the foundation of the state, we need not lengthen the discussion here.<sup>130</sup> But there is one reflection that I need to record here.

Let us step back a little. In speaking about the foundation of the state, we cannot simply jump to the post-1955 general election period that ended with Decree No. 5. In the БРУРКИ, which had been established by the Japanese occupying forces as Dokuritsu Junbi Chōsa-kai on May 28, 1945, several weeks before the August 17 Proclamation of Independence, the issue of the foundation of the state was brought up by the organization's chair, Radjiman Wedyodiningrat. According to Hatta's notes, on June 1,

the fourth day of the session, Radjiman asked, "What is to be the foundation of the state that we will form?"<sup>131</sup> At first, impatient for independence, the members responded coolly. Sukarno, however, was quite prepared to answer such a philosophical question. His speech became known as the birth of Pancasila, because Sukarno went on in great detail for one hour without text to explain his views on the foundation of the state. A first-class orator, Sukarno easily understood how to proceed at the BPUPKI session.

After modification of the five principles put forward by Sukarno, on August 18 the formulation of Pancasila as we know it today was agreed on. It was thus Sukarno, and no one else, who came up with the idea of Pancasila on June 1, 1945. Muhammad Yamin's claim that he had attached five principles similar to Sukarno's Pancasila to his own speech of May 29 cannot be accepted. No eyewitness has supported the idea that Yamin was the originator of Pancasila. After the system of Guided Democracy collapsed in 1966, a gradual de-Sukarnoization movement was recklessly conducted, particularly as it related to this foundation of the state. Sukarno, it was now said, had not sparked the concept of Pancasila, but rather Yamin in the "smuggled" attachment to his May 29 speech.<sup>132</sup>

My important note on this issue is that whether or not we approve of Sukarno's politics during the Guided Democracy period, we may not falsify history. Doing so cheats us of our civic education and shows far from noble ethics. Sukarno, at the end of his life, was subjected to insult on top of injury and was even robbed of his great work, Pancasila, for the purpose of erasing his deeds and good services. Sukarno's many mistakes in the last years of his power have no bearing on the debate in the BPUPKI in 1945.

There is no justification for the belief that the idea of Pancasila was Muhammad Yamin's.<sup>133</sup> It is a historical lie used to launch the de-Sukarnoization process by Soeharto's New Order (1966–1998). Yamin, who had been close to Sukarno, had already died, while Sukarno himself passed away on June 21, 1970, at the age of sixty-nine. To be scrupulously accurate, we cannot say that the term *Pancasila* itself originated with Sukarno; rather, it was chosen on the advice of a linguist.<sup>134</sup> Who was that linguist? It might have been Muhammad Yamin, who was an active member of the BPUPKI session.

I need to discuss the 1955 general election objectively here, even though its results were sabotaged by Decree No. 5 of July 1959. It was a gift of history that this general election was carried out democratically, directly, by secret ballot, and peacefully. Barely ten years after independence, Indonesia bravely conducted a democratic process in a civilized manner

in the midst of sharp ideological and political conflicts between the parties, especially between Masyumi and the PKI. Of course, modernist politicians remember this event proudly, because it was organized by the 1955–1956 cabinet of Burhanuddin Harahap.

Harahap was a Masyumi leader of simple presence but possessed of great self-confidence. The drafting of the General Election Law and its preparations had been underway since the Wilopo-Prawoto Cabinet (1952–1953) and had been carried forward by the Wongso-Arifin Cabinet (1953–1955), but it was well conducted by Burhanuddin Harahap's cabinet. Wilopo tasked Minister of Justice Lukman Wiradinata (PSI) and Minister of the Interior Mohammad Roem (Masyumi) to draft the legislation so important for this young state.<sup>135</sup> The event itself was extraordinary. Indonesia had organized a general election that was virtually flawless in its execution.

Because the 1955 general election was an important milestone of democracy in Indonesia, we need to study it further and locate it in the history of a recently independent nation. Intellectually, Burhanuddin Harahap was not as prominent as other Masyumi figures. Neither was he a writer of the stature of Natsir, Roem, and Sjafruddin. Burhanuddin was more of a man of action in erecting a national politics that was moral and ethical. And there is no doubt that he was an intelligent and consistent statesman. His career in politics was partly fused with the energetic performance of the Masyumi Party in its efforts to erect the pillars of democracy and constitutionalism. This party was martyred precisely because it denounced the methods of authoritarian politics that were fatal to democracy and denigrated the Constitution.

We may debate the involvement of Burhanuddin Harahap in PRRI/Permesta (1958–1962), but his good services in upholding democracy under the UUDS were phenomenal. For over half a century the name of Burhanuddin Harahap has been buried in the dust of history, when in fact the 1955 general election was the very important work of his cabinet. It was a democratic performance that Indonesia can be proud of. We need an analysis of Burhanuddin's role to connect the links in a broken chain and critically spotlight the historical significance of a countryman who has been condemned to oblivion for decades now.

Burhanuddin Harahap's cabinet did not last long, but it is vitally important to remember his role in the general election. Only in 1971 was there a second general election; however, its quality was far inferior to the one in 1955, as it was organized within the superficial democratic environment of General Soeharto's New Order regime.

Sixteen years separated the two elections. According to law, general elections should be held once every five years, but after Decree No. 5 of



July 1959 and until 1998, democracy existed in name only in Indonesia. The winning parties were determined before the vote was held. From a democratic perspective, such a general election is no more than a political farce. The reality was an authoritarian political system within the environment of a semi-feudal culture.

This was the tragedy of democracy in Indonesia. Its main cause was the disputes that frequently broke out between irresponsible and narrow-minded leaders. The result was an unhealthy course of democracy and the risk of failure to create prosperity for the masses, as had been demanded with such spirit in the August 17, 1945, Proclamation of Indonesian Independence. In the end, although Burhanuddin Harahap and his Masyumi Party experienced disaster, and this greatly harmed the development of an egalitarian political system in Indonesia, the peaceful 1955 general election is a milestone of democracy that cannot be forgotten.

What I fail to understand about modern Indonesian history as it relates to democratic dreams and ideals is that the attitude of certain political parties during difficult periods is inconsistent with the defense of democracy. The political elite is so pragmatic that its members have no trouble at all in selling themselves to those in power at the cost of democracy. In my view, this tragedy has occurred at least twice since Indonesia achieved independence. The first time was when the PNI, NU, PKI, and PSII, together with several other small parties, accepted Guided Democracy in 1959. The parties that refused, Masyumi and PSI, and to a certain extent Partai Katholik, were in the end powerless to block this move, and Masyumi and PSI were dissolved. The second time was in the era of Pancasila Democracy. Even though, beginning in 1973, the number of political parties was shrunk to three – Golkar (Golongan Karya; Functional Groups), PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia; Indonesian Democratic Party), and PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; United Development Party) – their role was not significant. The decisive power in Indonesian politics during this period was Soeharto, supported by the military and Golkar. The other two parties were merely “direct objects” with no independent sphere of action, although at the end of this era, the PDI began to demonstrate an opposition stance and presented Megawati as a central opposition figure confronting the New Order regime.

Pancasila Democracy finally collapsed, triggered primarily by the 1997 monetary crisis in Thailand that then shook Indonesia and several other East Asian countries in the following year. The indirect cause of the fall of the Soeharto regime in May 1998, though, was corruption. The New Order had survived for three decades, but in the end it too disintegrated,

leaving the people with their lives turned upside down, just as at the end of the Guided Democracy that the New Order had replaced.

In 1998, the era of *Reformasi* ("Reform") arrived, giving much hope for the people's welfare and prosperity. Eleven years later, however, in 2009, the hopes for overall improvement had yet to be realized.

In one of my columns I concluded that the central problem Indonesia has faced since Proclamation has been ineffective leadership at the national level.

Indonesia, by contrast, with a population ten times that of the neighboring country [Malaysia], is like a paralytic elephant because of the lack of strong and effective leadership. Some have even long suffered from the disease of slavish mentality as a residue from the colonial system of olden times. This disease is chronic for the interests of the future .... Therefore, let us draw the same conclusion that Indonesia's main problem in today's era is the problem of leadership. Period!<sup>136</sup>

Can the system of democracy that we espouse give birth within the brief period of independence to the quality of leadership needed to respond to the complex problems of the nation? It is hard for me to say, but we should not always be dreaming of killing democracy because of its half-failures, so we can then turn the clock back to an authoritarian system. The only wise attitude to take is not to despair in the effort to repair Indonesia's democracy, which has not yet brought prosperity to the mass of people. Democracy is indeed exhausting. For me, though, the idea of returning to an authoritarian dynastic system will only increase the height of the place from which we are bound to fall. Because of that, our choice of democracy is the right one, even though to make it work we have to learn from all the mistakes we have lived through.

If learning is still too difficult, then my question is, Does the Indonesian nation not feel ashamed in front of the world as it survives one failure after another? A more serious question is, Has Islam, embraced by the majority of Indonesians, run out of the energy to build a strong and healthy democratic system? I remain optimistic that the Indonesian nation will ultimately be able to answer those two questions with the willingness to redirect bad behavior into a positive and constructive direction. All Indonesians must move in this direction and work hard to avoid the consequences of our mistakes and weaknesses.

Among those weaknesses we have seen all along are the attitudes of the elite who so easily split into factions and fail to act responsibly in guarding the pillars of democracy. Those pillars support the freedom of the people to voice their aspirations, and they support the freedom

of the press and the opening of the doors of the bureaucracy to the public, widely and without discrimination. I still share Hatta's optimism: "Democracy can be repressed because of its own mistakes, but after being put to the bitter test, it will reemerge with full awareness .... Therefore, it can never be completely lost."<sup>137</sup>

Hatta's faith in democracy was so strong, but how difficult was it for that system to operate in Indonesia. I wrote this in one of my columns about democracy in the hands of "the Crazy Guy":

America, which calls itself a fortress of democracy, can still produce a president who is power-crazy. President George W. Bush is the best example from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Because the us is a superpower, this "Crazy Guy" can use his power to oppress other nations.

The biggest victims are Muslim countries. Afghanistan is a poor, weak country, and Iraq is a rich but ill-fated country. In 2003 Saddam Hussein, the dictator, was crushed by Bush and his allies using false charges. The Iraqi people, divided into Shia, Sunni, and Kurds, are among those who have suffered the most in recent years. Afghanistan is poor and yet has been plundered by foreign powers. First by the Soviet Union, then by the West. The average life expectancy in Afghanistan is only about 47 years, far below that of 69–72 in Indonesia. Compared to Afghanistan, Indonesia is far better off. But is that comparison relevant?

Of course not. Indonesia is a country with thousands of islands, rich in natural resources that can support the well-being of its people, provided the country is headed by someone with sensitivity and good conscience. Afghanistan is a barren land with a harsh environment. If there is any similarity between these two countries it is the religion. The majority in both countries embrace Islam. If democracy is forced upon Afghanistan from outside, in Indonesia democracy has been the choice since the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, in theory, democracy's roots in Indonesia are strong, so why hasn't it brought prosperity to the people? This is the question that has never been settled since Independence, more than sixty years ago.

Are the Indonesian elite all crazy? Clearly not. But it is an open secret that some are power-crazy and money-mad. This is one reason for the chaos that damages this country. Democracy in the hands of people who are mentally unstable will lead to catastrophe, such as has beset Indonesia for so long. Even though Hatta had argued that if democracy disappears then Indonesia's independence would disappear as well, democracy in our country is far from being healthy. Hatta's hope that democracy would bring prosperity is still far from reality. We

may say that Indonesian democracy is a “leaky” democracy, or, for a more vivid expression, “RBI” (Leaky Republic of Indonesia).

Everywhere we hear about leaks: national budget leaks, regional budget leaks, political leaks, economic leaks, haji affairs leaks, educational budget leaks. Every day without end there is news of leaks.

Wherever our Mr. Crazy holds power, that’s where those leaks become unpluggable. Now that the regions have become autonomous, the number of Mr. Crazies has soared. Out of about 460 Level II Regions, not even 5 percent have been run on the principles of good governance. Education, health, and clean water sectors have received serious attention in almost none of these regions. Some 80 percent of regional budgets go to salaries, so that the development process is severely hampered.

Such an atmosphere must be improved as quickly as possible. If not, democracy will become a burden on us all, while other, better systems are yet to be found elsewhere. Whatever political system we follow, if the humanity supporting it is lacking, the hope for a better future for our nation will become more and more remote. *Quo vadis*, Indonesian democracy?<sup>138</sup>

This is the tragedy of democracy in Indonesia – a tragedy that can of course repeat itself so long as “crazies” are elected as players on the political stage. It has been exceedingly difficult for our people to learn from bitter experience in managing the state in the post-Independence era. I will continue my discussion about democracy in connection with Islam in the next chapter. I am critical of democracy in practice, but I defend it in theory. There should be no wide gap between theory and practice, such as we have lately observed in Indonesia. The killing off of the Masyumi Party by an authoritarian regime greatly damaged the course and development of Indonesian democracy. That party was led by statesmen who were the product of Western education but who had a profound commitment to Islam and nation. In terms of political morality, they were the vanguard of democracy in Indonesia. In contrast to the Socialist Party of Indonesia (PSI), which did not have strong support at the grassroots level, Masyumi had deep roots, especially in Jakarta and in many provinces outside Java, as was manifested in the 1955 general election.

The question that is difficult for us to answer is, How could such a deep-rooted party be destroyed so easily? I will not answer that question here, other than to say that in the chess games of national politics, it would not be too difficult to destroy any political party that is not sufficiently strong in Java. Even the PKI, which had been one of the great waves

in Java, was in the end crushed by the machinery of power wearing a military mask.

Who could have imagined that Masyumi and the PKI, two political forces that had widespread mass support, would cease to exist so, their destruction occurring within less than six years of each other? Critical studies of these two mutually hostile parties are ongoing. The central question remains: Why were these two political ideologies – of the extreme right, such as Darul Islam (the House of Islam) and Tentara Islam Indonesia (the Indonesian Army of Islam), and of the extreme left – unable to survive for very long after independence. (The Masyumi Party cannot be included in the extremist category because it was led by broad-minded statesmen and intellectuals.) I hope that serious researchers will be interested in answering this question.



## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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?”<sup>3</sup> 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.”<sup>4</sup> Huwaydi includes religious arguments to defend his theory of democracy in no fewer than twenty-three translated pages of his work.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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.”<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup>

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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup> 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."<sup>18</sup> A democratic system "goes beyond the societies of family, clans, tribes, groups, schools of thought, and sects, and it also goes beyond patriarchal society,"<sup>19</sup> 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*.<sup>20</sup> 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."<sup>21</sup>

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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup>

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."<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup>

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.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup>

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." Mufassir 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."<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>

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.”<sup>30</sup>

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?”<sup>31</sup>

According to Ibn Abbas, the Prophet really did want all of humanity to have religious belief, but Allah did not will that to be.<sup>32</sup> 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.”<sup>33</sup> 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."<sup>34</sup>

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."<sup>35</sup>

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."<sup>36</sup> 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."<sup>37</sup>

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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup>

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.<sup>40</sup>

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,<sup>41</sup> 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 ...."<sup>42</sup> 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.”<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup>

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.”<sup>45</sup> Hamka, however, agreed that the spirit of that woman was bent,<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> 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,”<sup>48</sup> 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.”<sup>49</sup>

Unal took as an example the prohibition against teaching women to read and write, supposedly because they are “of lesser mind and faith.”<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.”<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup>

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.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup>

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*.<sup>56</sup> 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.”<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup>

An excellent book on tolerance and religious pluralism has been written by the young NU intellectual Abdul Moqsith Ghazali. Drawing on in his doctoral dissertation at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, Moqsith 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.”<sup>59</sup> 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.”<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup> 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,<sup>62</sup> 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."<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> 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,<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup>

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.”<sup>68</sup> 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.<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup>

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),<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup>

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*.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup> 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*,"<sup>76</sup> 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 1924<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup> 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.<sup>79</sup> 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,”<sup>80</sup> 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,”<sup>81</sup> 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.”<sup>82</sup> 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 Ibrish 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*.<sup>83</sup> 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."<sup>84</sup>

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 ...”<sup>85</sup> 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.<sup>86</sup>

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.”<sup>87</sup> 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*.<sup>88</sup> 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.<sup>89</sup> 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."<sup>90</sup>

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.<sup>91</sup>

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.<sup>92</sup>

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."<sup>93</sup> 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.<sup>94</sup> 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.





## Chapter 3 Indonesian Islam

For some time now, we have been concerned that the majority Muslim *umat* of Indonesia and the quality of their lives have been lagging badly, placing them far behind in every field, especially in science, technology, and economics. For that reason, in order to move forward, the Muslim leaders of our country must address the problem of quality so that this gap in achievement can be steadily reduced. Otherwise, the disadvantaged majority will become a burden on Islam, which seeks to build a strong and sophisticated civilization.

Education is a decisive factor. We are being punished for our lack of serious regard for education by the backwardness of our *umat* in the fields I have mentioned. When I say “our *umat*,” I mean almost 90 percent of the population of Indonesia. An encumbered *umat* is no different from an encumbered nation. It is irrelevant to speak of national construction when the majority of the people are neglected.

### The Quality of Education in Indonesia

Even though illiteracy has been vanquished to a great extent, the quality of education in Muslim-majority Indonesia is far from what it should be. Indonesia as an independent nation has never developed or prioritized educational strategies. This is the main reason why the level of development and achievement in education in Indonesia is still below regional standards, to say nothing of global ones. Indonesia is not competitive in science, technology, and economics. If we use the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report as a measure of progress in education, we see that Indonesia is still at the back of the pack. The Human Development Index (HDI) for 2015 shows how far back that is. In the UNDP report for 2016, Indonesia’s HDI for the year 2015 ranked 113 out of 188 countries. Compared to other countries in Southeast Asia, we are far behind Singapore (fifth position), Brunei Darussalam (thirtieth), and Thailand (eighty-seventh).<sup>1</sup>

If we take the Human Development Index that places Indonesia at 113th out of 188 countries as a measure of the quality of its education, then our backwardness looks extremely serious. Without the support of high-quality education, it will be very difficult for Indonesia to be considered an advanced nation. How did this happen? The answer

is connected with the low priority the government generally gives education policy. Suyanto writes:

An increase in educational funding will not have much of an effect on the situation of education in Indonesia. From early on right to the present, our education policies have been general in character and not marked as a priority, for example, pursuing excellence by the year 2020. In response to this, we need a breakthrough in development that does not constantly depend on government capability alone. To clarify, the United States should be our point of reference. In the United States, many educational institutions – from elementary schools to post-secondary education – behave like businesses or participants in the world of industry. The result is that many institutions of private education are excellent in their fields.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, in Indonesia, the private sector plays quite a large role in national education, although very few private institutions are on a par with government schools. How can they catch up? Should the curricula of private schools follow government standards? This network of private educational institutions needs government assistance, because it lacks virtually every resource. Copying the private schools popular in the United States would not be a simple matter, to say nothing of moving education into “the world of business” or “the world of industry.” The implications would surely be far-reaching. One of these would be a steep increase in school fees, especially in post-secondary institutions, and result in a more elitist system of education. Only those who could afford the private school would be able to attend at this level. If this happens, bright children from rural areas are sure to be disappointed.

The problem of education in Indonesia is a true dilemma. In steering education toward “business” and “industry” models, we would certainly place it beyond the reach of poor youth in the tens of millions. But if we do nothing about current conditions, the quality of our education will simply mark time, or even regress. But at least, as Suyanto writes, if the government developed a consistent strategy, our backwardness in the area of education would not be as serious as it is now.

As to the issue of teacher welfare, the government has been giving this area serious attention since 2008. Though long overdue, this is nonetheless something to be grateful for. However, the improvement in teacher welfare will not automatically lead to an improvement in the quality of instruction. Ongoing self-criticism is still needed in the effort to address the problem of quality. But at least we no longer need to hear

about, for example, a school principal who doubles as a ragpicker in order to put food on the table. Hair-raising stories about the conditions of teachers have been around forever, but improvement had to wait many decades. Teachers belong to that part of society that is the most patient and long-suffering in Indonesia; it is as if their modest destiny is inscribed in the lines of their palms.

The number of teachers with a true calling is very small. The majority of them teach simply to have some kind of work. So after the government has paid attention to teacher welfare, the next step will be to improve the teacher training. This will certainly take time and have a high price tag. Although the process has started, we are still in a transition period. Once a bachelor's degree becomes a requirement for primary school teachers, we hope that, step by step, teacher competency will improve. If our teachers are well trained, future generations will definitely receive a better education. The long-term indifference of government in tackling the problem of education is the main reason Indonesia's position on the Human Development Index is so far below standard.

But, despite all the gloom, there are still sparkling stars that light up the heavens. By this I mean that, despite the deplorable state of education in Indonesia, there are students who do progress. This is not thanks to the educational system they pass through, but because of their strong drive not to surrender to the conditions they are in. They study independently with total discipline. It is certain that they will make full use of the internet and cybertechnology to improve themselves. The spread of the internet to the rural areas has barely begun, and the number of villages that have access to it is still very limited. In the future, teachers and students will have no other choice but to immerse themselves actively in sources of information they access online. That is a truly limitless source, and the cost is relatively affordable. In this way, the backward state of Indonesian education can be overcome, slowly but surely.

It is impossible for the Ministry of National Education (Depdiknas) to work all by itself to speed up this "internetization" process. It is going to have to work together with other ministries, such as the Ministry of Communications, and entities in the private sector. When rural areas do not have access to the internet, the gap in perspective and insights between urban students and rural students will widen to an unsustainable degree. If this gap is not quickly bridged, the pull of urbanization cannot be blocked, since the centers of excellence in education will continue to be monopolized by the cities. Yet the rural population is far greater than its urban counterpart. In the nation's march forward, unhealthy tendencies such as this will greatly affect the national integration process, which even to this day is not firmly grounded.

What I have been speaking about here is connected with the problem of national education overall. Since the colonial era, the Muslim *umat* has also established centers of general and specifically Islamic education, in the form of the *pesantren* (rural Islamic boarding school) and *madrassa*. After Independence, these came under the aegis of the Ministry of Religion (Depag). Thus, Indonesia had two “commanders-in-chief of education,” in addition to various departments that organized and operated schools to accommodate special interests. As is the case with education managed by Depdiknas, *madrassas*, which are under Depag, may be either public or private. Only education within the *pesantren* system is fully private. As far as I know, there are no government-owned *pesantren*, even though to some extent they receive state assistance.

Assistance for education is of course the state’s obligation, because according to the Preamble to the Constitution, it is the responsibility of the government to provide enlightenment to the people. This assistance is not given out of the goodness of the government’s heart but entirely because it is carrying out the will of the Constitution. By operating private schools, the private sector has helped the government in this enlightenment process. Therefore, private parties need not feel indebted when they receive assistance or subsidies from the state for education – which is the state’s responsibility. I repeat: state aid for private education is not done out of the goodness of the government’s heart, but because that is its constitutional obligation.

### The “Unity of Knowledge” Concept

Recently, we have begun to hear the idea of putting education in Indonesia under the one roof of Depdiknas for easier regulation and more efficient management and quality control. This is actually quite ideal, but it would appear that historical and political considerations need to be studied further. If we speak of political considerations, for example, Depdiknas is open to being led by a non-Muslim minister, while this could never happen with Depag. However, since Proclamation, Depdiknas has never been under a non-Muslim, even though the provisions of the Constitution do not prohibit this. Therefore, perhaps the historical experience has become a kind of convention for the two “commanders-in-chief of education” to be reduced to one under Depdiknas. In other words, the system of *madrassa* education and the like, right up to university level, would be adequately handled by a director-general within Depdiknas. And private non-Muslim education can be placed below a directorate-general within Depdiknas.

My question, however, especially for the Muslim *umat*, is, with a dual system, even one placed under the one roof of Depdiknas, will the quality of Islamic education become first-rate in the long term? There is no quick answer to this so long as the dichotomy of religious education and Western-style general education is not overcome. To this day, the Muslim *umat* has not yet arrived at the concept of “the unity of knowledge.” In this concept, what we know as secular education and what we know as religious education will have lost their relevance. Instead, all the branches of science will be directed at bringing humanity closer to Allah, as the highest source of all there is. To put it differently, the term *Islamic* for various branches of science, such as Islamic medicine, Islamic psychology, and so on, will no longer be necessary. Those attributes will lose their meaning under the big tent of “the unity of knowledge.” And under this tent, the efforts at “Islamicizing science” by some contemporary Muslim thinkers will be fruitless. If all the activities of science are to find Allah and draw near to Allah by reading the signs of His greatness and power, attaching Islamic attributes to academic disciplines will no longer be needed. If we still must speak about Islamicizing, *what needs to be Islamicized is the center of human consciousness, which is in the brain and in the heart.*

The Quran itself, notes Fazlur Rahman,<sup>3</sup> seems drawn to three types of science for the benefit of humankind. First, the natural, or physical, sciences – those sciences that can be mastered by humanity. Second, history and geography – both very important for the progress of human civilization. Pay attention to this verse: “So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.”<sup>4</sup> By wandering on the face of the earth, humankind will understand what has happened to civilizations in ages past, the factors that gave rise to them and the reasons for their downfall. In this, the sciences of history and geography become crucial for humanity, so we do not go astray in our wanderings.

Third, knowledge about humanity itself – in addition to knowledge about the natural world. The Quran proclaims: “We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient [for you] concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?”<sup>5</sup>

Based on the verses in the Al-Hajj and Fussilat suras just cited, what is meant by knowledge here is *scientific* knowledge, because it is based on observations through the eyes and ears. But ultimately, that science is to touch the heart and kindle the perceptions of humankind. In this way, humankind will transform its scientific and technological capabilities in

accordance with moral perceptions that we hope will be born within humankind itself. Rahman then concludes, “Without this perception, scientific and technological knowledge can – and definitely will – become positively dangerous.” He tells us that the Quran, in its criticism of the Meccans who were materially prosperous in their worldly existence, makes the following comment: “They well know the external side of worldly existence, but show no concern for the final consequences of this.”<sup>6</sup> In the language of the Quran itself: “... they, of the Hereafter, are unaware.”

The dualism of the educational system almost everywhere in the Islamic world may perhaps gradually be resolved into the concept of the unity of knowledge. What I am suggesting here still requires a comprehensive and rational framework, in the form of a philosophy of Islamic education. I admit that writing a philosophy of Islamic education is probably beyond me. Therefore, the following discussion produces, with occasional modifications, the rough ideas on education I brought forward several years back. These were then developed by Muhammadiyah, which so far has not formulated a philosophy of Islamic education.<sup>7</sup>

### The Muhammadiyah on Education

Speaking of Muhammadiyah education from the philosophical point of view is no easy matter, because this Islamic movement – as far as I have read – has not yet made any comprehensive and articulate formulation of its educational philosophy. The word *pendidikan* for “education,” for example, first appeared fleetingly in 1943, during the Japanese occupation. (Arabic terms were current at the time.) The word now is part of a package of formulations that are becoming increasingly comprehensive; my discussion of the official documents of Muhammadiyah will touch upon these. But formulations of a philosophical nature about Muhammadiyah education are still nonexistent, especially if an understanding of the Quran is our departure point.

The term *mendidik* (“educate”) first appears in the Articles of Association of Muhammadiyah in 1934, that is, in article 2f, which says: “to educate children and young people so that later they will become Muslims who are “meaningful” [*orang Islam yang berarti*].” (This is a difficult formulation, which I will develop in the following pages.) In article 2a here, we find the words “teaching and training” in the following context: “to advance and enliven teaching and training in the Islamic religion in the Dutch East Indies ....”<sup>8</sup> When did the word “education”

(*pendidikan*) appear in the Articles of Association of Muhammadiyah? From the documents I have traced, this word first appears in the Articles of 1943, as I have suggested; but it is only mentioned briefly in a letter of Ki Bagoes Hadikoesoemo as the deputy founder of Muhammadiyah to the head of the Dai Nippon (Japanese occupation) military government in Jakarta, as follows: “disseminate printed materials for the propagation of the faith [*tabligh*] and general education.”<sup>9</sup>

The following formulation appears in article 3b of the Articles of 1950: “to advance education and teaching [*memajukan pendidikan dan pengajaran*].”<sup>10</sup> A more complete formulation only appears in Chapter IV, article 4c, of the Articles of Association of 1959: “to advance and renew education, teaching and culture, as well broaden knowledge according to the demands of Islam.”<sup>11</sup> This formulation survived in the Articles of 1968. In Chapter II, article 4c, of the Articles of Association of 1985 resulting from 41st Congress in Surakarta, the formulation was expanded, but the word “teaching” (*pengajaran*) was left out, so that it now read “advance and renew education and culture as well as broadening knowledge, technology, and research according to the demands of Islam.”<sup>12</sup> The words “technology” and “research” only appeared in the Articles after Muhammadiyah had been in existence for seventy-three years.

Chapter I, article 3, paragraph 1 of the Standards of Primary and Secondary Muhammadiyah Education of 1988 clarifies the objective of Muhammadiyah education as follows: “the realization of pious Muslims of noble character, intelligent and with self-confidence, loving the motherland and useful to society and state, doing good works for the realization of the main society, just and prosperous, blessed by Allah, glorified and exalted be He.” Paragraph 2 states the further objective: “to advance and stimulate the growth of knowledge of society, the nation and the State.”<sup>13</sup> This formulation is clearly guided by the Articles of Association that resulted from the 1985 Congress in which political pressure by the authorities was so strong that certain articles had to be amended.

From the above documents it should be clear that we have not been able to fully grasp the philosophical aspects of Muhammadiyah education, because what is available are floating and general fragments. In several of these formulations, the concept of the unity of knowledge is seen only vaguely. But what is stated in the Articles of 1934 is “to educate children and young people so that later they will become Muslims who are meaningful,” and this can be developed further into a philosophy of Islamic education in line with the vision of Muhammadiyah. The key expression in the formulation of this objective is that the members

should be educated “to become Muslims who are meaningful.” Who are these people and what are their criteria? The attribute “meaningful” is crucial and fundamental, in my view.

To find out just who that Muslim is naturally cannot be separated from the concept of humanity, because a Muslim is a part of the human *umat*, though with special criteria: a Muslim is someone who, with full consciousness, surrenders himself or herself to Allah. As we know, the discussion of the concept of humanity has never ceased since it began in ancient times. The higher the level of the philosophy, the less clear are our perceptions of that very creature known as the human. But we must not despair, because we have the Quran to consult and discuss, and according to our belief this Sacred Book comes from *Al-Khaliq*, the Creator of humankind and all that is in the universe. In my opinion, education of this sort is an effective means to form the type of humanity that we wish for, that is, humanity that matters, based on a certain view of life – in this case the Islamic view of life, or even more specifically, the Quranic view of life. There is yet to be a satisfactory formulation of the Quranic view of life made by the Muslim *umat* of Indonesia, other than individual works that need to be developed further, especially those that directly relate to the problems of education.

### Humans Who Are Meaningful in the Perspective of the Quran

Who are those humans who are “meaningful”? Physically speaking, humans do not greatly differ from other creatures. When humans die, their bodies return to the earth, exactly like other living creatures. The Quran explains that humans were first created of “an extract of clay”<sup>14</sup> or “clay from an altered black mud.”<sup>15</sup> Then, in the womb, the creative process goes on and on until there is formed the physical shape of a human being. Additional information about the process of the creation of humans comes from the Surah Al-Mu’minun: “And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging [a womb]. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and we made the clot into a lump [of flesh] and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation [a creation with another shape]. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.”<sup>16</sup>

But what was special in the process of that creation was the key expression: “So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul ....”<sup>17</sup> Here occurs a spiritual revolution. If I may be permitted to use symbolic language in this connection, I would say:



“There is seen in this process of creation an intervention of a spirit from Heaven into the chemical makeup of the earth for the perfection of the creation of a creature called human. Extraordinary!” The Quran gives a noble position to humankind: “And We have certainly honored the children of Adam” is an affirmation of this Sacred Scripture.<sup>18</sup> After the process of creation was completed to perfection, all the angels were commanded to prostrate themselves and do homage to that glorious creature, but a malevolent spirit rejected that command because this spirit had originated in a furiously hot fire.<sup>19</sup> In this way, the malevolent spirit looked askance at the human creature, which originated from the soil – why should he have to prostrate himself to it?

But the glory of that human being was not unconditional, for there was this provision: “And by the soul and He who proportioned it [with facilities well-suited for its creation], and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, he has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption].”<sup>20</sup> It is clear, according to these verses, that human beings have within themselves wicked and good potential. Thus, among the functions of education is to motivate the potential for good within the learner to grow and develop almost without limit, while controlling the potential for wickedness through guidance so that it is not activated. I have already mentioned the formulation of Muhammadiyah’s Articles of Association of 1934. Its words “to educate children and young people so that later they will become Muslims who are meaningful” must be read in the light of the verses above, so that the philosophical dimension has a firm spiritual foundation. In modern philosophical terms, we would say, “so that the building of Muhammadiyah education has ontological security as well as functioning to shape capable and skilled people who have faith in themselves.” The “ontological security” here from the perspective of the Quran is only possible if belief in Allah and the future is made the foundation of human existence. Without that foundation, all discussion of good character, morality, a just, prosperous society, and a civilized society will not be relevant.

Before concluding this section, we should analyze the definition of education provided by the Mu‘tazilah writer Al-Jahiz (d. 869). Al-Jahiz provides his definition as follows: “a comprehensive system of education of a Muslim who is both civilized and of good character and who makes the whole world a target of his curiosity and knowledge.”<sup>21</sup> Note the use of the word “civilized.” This definition does not differentiate between what is termed religious knowledge and knowledge of the physical world, a dichotomy that is foreign to the eyes of the Quran but has been retained as a myth for centuries in the world of Islam. My sense is that Al-Jahiz’s

definition is closer to the sense of the Quran because through it runs the red thread of the concept of the unity of knowledge. Verbal signs are no longer pitted against phenomenal signs and indications, or sociological terms, an opposition that has produced fragmented individuals within the learning environment from the lowest levels to the university. Over recent centuries, the world of Islam has been densely inhabited by such fragmented personalities, with all the negative results for the structure of the collective life of the *umat*. There are factory guards or politicians who do not know how to pray, and there are many who are good at praying but do not understand the world around them.

Regarding the description of such fragmented personalities, we may follow the complaints Muhammad Iqbal made in his book *Bal-i-Jibril* (1935) to Rumi, his spiritual teacher:

My lofty thoughts reach up to the heavens;  
 But on earth I am humiliated, frustrated, and in suffering.  
 I am unable to manage the affairs of this world,  
 And I constantly face stumbling blocks in this path.  
 Why are the affairs of the world beyond my control?  
 Why is the learned in religion a fool in the affairs of the world?

Almost without a pause, Rumi provides a reply that is right on the mark: Anyone [who claims to be able to] walk on the heavens / Why should it be difficult for him to walk on earth?<sup>22</sup>

Totally false claims, the result of ignorance in understanding the doctrines of the Quran on the concept of knowledge, are the main reason why the Muslim *umat* is powerless in the face of other civilizations that keep moving on, their wheels constantly turning. The solution for breaking through this dead end could be to leave behind the concept of dualism in the education system. Do not Allah's signs stretch to all corners of the universe and within humankind?<sup>23</sup> Do not the natural sciences, astronomy, history, sociology, geography, economics, and many others besides, represent an organic part of Allah's signs that some, however, categorize as secular knowledge? The integration of knowledge in a conceptual-philosophical manner is not yet complete in the Islamic system of education. What we have witnessed is a system of education sheltering under one roof, while its spirit has long been split in two. Briefly, then, the learner who is meaningful in the eyes of the Quran is the one who is free from a personality that is split and disintegrated. He or she is a good person, whole and complete, self-confident, and able to perform works on the face of the earth that are based on faith and pious deeds, for the benefit of all creatures.

## Toward the Formulation of a Philosophy of Muhammadiyah Education

Muhammadiyah has the right and obligation to formulate a philosophy of Islamic education based on an intelligent and creative understanding of the Quran. This philosophy of education, I propose, must be broadly capable of reconciling the demands of the brain with those of the heart. This is not what is developing in the modern world today. The West is too preoccupied with matters of the brain and technology, while a part of the East is still sunk in spiritualism and horoscopes. In the language of the Quran, this is a system of education that can unite the power of *fikr* (thinking) and *dhikr* (chanting praise of Allah), whose aim is to give birth to *ulu al-albab*,<sup>24</sup> humans whose hearts and brains exist dynamically and creatively in comprehending and feeling the presence of the Source of their intellectual and spiritual development and explorations.

Other terms in the Quran that have almost the same meaning as *ulu al-albab* are *ulu al-nuha*<sup>25</sup> (having understanding, thoughts, and intelligence) and *ulu al-absar*<sup>26</sup> (having vision, sight, and sharp perception). In brief, the essence and stages of Muhammadiyah education must be directed at the formation of an individual who is at once *ulu al-albab*, *ulu al-nuha*, and *ulu al-absar*, as well as being part of *ummat al-‘amal* (the community of action). So far, Muhammadiyah has given a stronger impression of being an *ummat al-‘amal* that is very active in sharpening the intellectual life of the nation. Certainly, what may be gained through a process of education that is directed in that way is a diversity, not a uniformity, of individual qualities, something that is quite natural and mutually enriching. In this process, the role and quality of the teacher will be decisive. Muhammadiyah to a great extent has not yet moved seriously to shape educators of high quality in conformity with the reality it faces, however.

If this great philosophical idea can be realized within a period of time that is not too protracted, then wisdom (*al-hikmah*) will return to the collective life of the Muslim community, whose rays will penetrate the collective life of the community of mankind. The modern world, focused on the doctrine of *cogito, ergo sum*, which is overly reliant on the achievements of brainpower, has long been silent on the culture of wisdom. According to the Quran, the *ulu al-albab* are those who are filled with virtue and wisdom: “He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding.”<sup>27</sup>

The quality described above is the ideal quality for the direction we must head in, if indeed Islam is believed to be the antithesis of an increasingly secular and even atheistic Western civilization. Without a deep awareness of the need and the willingness to formulate and understand the philosophy of Islamic education as outlined above, the Muslim community spread over the face of the earth will continue to wander without a clear road map, exactly like other communities who do not have the Quran. This is the heaviest challenge for which Muslim thinkers who care about changing the philosophical paradigm of the Islamic education system must find a solution.

In line with what has been discussed above, another important dimension that must enter into the content of Muhammadiyah's philosophy of education is the need to emphasize the trilateral relationship between humankind and God, humankind and the universe, and humankind and itself. In many official Muhammadiyah documents since 1968, those dimensions have been touched on here and there, but they have yet to be woven together into an integrated construction that takes as its starting point our understanding of the sources of Islamic teaching: the Quran and the Sunnah. The formulation of this basic issue needs to be worked out by a cross-disciplinary team of visionary experts who truly understand what is at stake here and have a strong commitment to shouldering this collective task.

Once we have Muhammadiyah's philosophy of education, no matter how imperfect a construction it still is, a curriculum can be designed systematically upon it. This great task will take quite a while to complete, but it needs to be undertaken now. Hasn't the educational process that has existed in Indonesia for such a long time chalked up more failures than successes? Therefore, we need to make a serious effort to think of an alternative system of education for Indonesia's future.

Indonesia's national system of education is still unable to produce graduates of high quality, with the exception of those who are willing to undertake the hazards of sharpening their own intellect and enlightening themselves. Indonesian education, over the course of time, has been co-opted by the interests of power politics. The statement in the Preamble to the Constitution that one of the tasks of the government of independent Indonesia is "to sharpen the intellectual life of the nation" has never been seriously committed to; as a result, Indonesian education drags along, directionless. Therefore, every breakthrough to advance education must be supported and appreciated. This leaves the government in the position of facilitating the activities of nonstate education and, wherever necessary, providing guidance so that it does not stray beyond the bounds of the Constitution. Once again, each piece of creative thinking by private

institutions that helps to break through the dead end in Indonesian education will surely be a strategic contribution to the progress of the nation on the long road ahead.

## Education in the Nahdlatul Ulama Environment

Unlike Muhammadiyah, the NU, which has thrown its support for too long behind the tradition of the *pesantren* – the rural Islamic boarding school – has been a slow performer in the wider world of education. Conversely, Muhammadiyah has been left far behind in the *pesantren* system because its energies have been absorbed too much by general education and too little by the *madrassa*. But now the NU, with its Perguruan Darul Maarif educational institute, is working hard to also advance general education. Muhammadiyah also does not want to be left behind in developing a *pesantren* system. Among its best known *pesantren* is the Pesantren Darul Arqam Muhammadiyah in Garut, West Java.

Actually, Muhammadiyah and the NU are not the only movers and shakers in the world of education of the Indonesian Muslim *umat*. The list includes Sarekat Islam, Persatuan Islam Al-Washliyah, Al-Irsyad, PUI (Persatuan Umat Islam; Islamic Community Union), Perti, Perguruan Thawalib, Nahdhatul Wathan, Mathlaul Anwar, Al-Khairat, and many others. We should note that *pesantren*-based education is not conducted by the NU alone, even though the majority of *pesantren* have sheltered under the umbrella of the NU; other Islamic movements have offered equal services in developing this traditional educational system. In East Java, for example, the Gontor Modern Islamic Pesantren is active. However, for the purposes of this book, I will limit myself to the two big waves of the Muslim *umat* of Indonesia: Muhammadiyah and the NU.

Although the NU was only officially established in 1926, the main basis of its strength lies in the world of the *pesantren*, whose roots may be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> There is no clear indication just when this traditional educational institution first appeared, however: “We know very little about the origins of the *pesantren*.”<sup>29</sup> These centers of traditional learning of the Muslim *umat* are mostly located in rural areas. In contrast to the centralized system of education developed by Muhammadiyah, the *pesantren* have belonged to *kiyai*, religious sages who mostly joined the NU out of a commonality of religious understanding within the Sunni environment. In addition to *pesantren*, the NU has recently developed a more modern general educational system like that of Muhammadiyah, extending from kindergarten to

the university level. These schools are still quite limited in number and present a challenge for the NU, whose religious scholars have had years to devote their efforts to the *pesantren*.

I will present here the awakening of a profound awareness in the NU of the need for a new educational orientation, especially as reflected in the 27th NU Congress at Situbondo, East Java, December 8–12, 1984. Two important decisions on education were made at that congress:

1. The educational orientation in NU circles must be ... reorganized, given the development of new and correct methods for measuring the ability of students to perform real humanitarian and civic work, and directed to an introduction to the necessities of life and the sources of its fulfillment, without interfering with its basis in the Islamic faith of the adherents to the Sunnah and the Community.
2. Transparency, autonomy, and capability [are needed] in cooperating with others to prepare a better future [as well as] the skills in introducing science and technology, which are the realization of dedication to Allah, glorified and exalted be He, and to create an attitude of life that is oriented to the hereafter, and that is balanced and dynamic, as reflected in the curriculum of education within the environment of the Nahdlatul Ulama ....<sup>30</sup>

Decision number 2 includes items (d) and (e), containing formulations that are very advanced and may be appearing here for the first time in an NU educational document. In item (d) we read of “awareness of the need to use rationality in their [the students’] lives, the need to anticipate and look closely into the future [to be future-oriented] toward scientific and technological developments and their impact in later life.” Item (e) emphasizes preparation for a professional career: “growing a spirit of autonomy and creativity through the training of practical skills.”<sup>31</sup>

The above statement clearly reflects the new wave of thinking about education that has washed into NU circles. Previously, the NU was known for its traditional Islamic education in the form of *pesantren* with nonstandard curricula, or even without any formal curricula at all. The appearance of this radical new wave is linked to the influence of Abdurrahman Wahid, who was chosen to chair the Situbondo Congress, replacing Idham Chalid, who had led the NU for twenty-eight years (1956–1984)<sup>32</sup> in spite of obstruction by the New Order regime. Apart from the controversy inherited by Wahid in the NU, the breakthrough of his revolutionary thinking transformed the NU into an Indonesian Islamic movement that is quite phenomenal. Its 1984 statement on education

illustrates that the NU really is changing dynamically, at least at the elite level, although inclusion of the NU's trademark expression "adherents to the Sunnah and the Community" was not overlooked. In other words, the NU is structuring itself to deal with modernity in education, something long wrestled with by Muhammadiyah.

As mentioned, the *pesantren* in NU circles are the private property of the *kiyai*, not the property of the organization. For example, Idham Chalid, long before emerging as a national figure, had established the Perguruan Darul Maarif in 1954, even though its vision and mission were only formulated in 2000. (Its vision: "excellence in educational, social, and civic services"; its mission: "First, to shape the youth of this nation to have a noble character, be knowledgeable, and have faith and religious devotion to Allah the One and Only God, to prepare [them] to be skilled, of good quality, and able to live in society."<sup>33</sup>) Both in vision and in mission this academy did not greatly differ from the official educational policy of the Indonesian government. The NU expression "adherents to the Sunnah and the Community" was not contained in that vision and mission.

The Perguruan Darul Maarif has the objective of empowering the common people who have limited financial resources. Thus, it is a populist institution. This is illustrated in the philosophy of Idham Chalid: "I established this academy, not to earn profits like the Islamic elite schools, but I wanted to provide schooling so that the children of the three-wheeler taxis, the street sweepers, truck farmers in this district [Cipete, South Jakarta] could get some minimal knowledge and receive a diploma. I wanted to benefit the people who were neither rich nor well-educated."<sup>34</sup> Such a philosophy limits Darul Maarif's potential for growth and financial stability.

Abdurrahman Wahid, the revolutionary thinker in NU circles, was an alumnus of a *pesantren* and also studied in Egypt and Iraq. Wahid wrote about *pesantren*:

The *pesantren* hut is a cultural symbol that uses symbols of Javanese culture; it is an agent of renewal that introduces ideas of rural development; it is a center of community learning; and it is also the symbol of Islamic education, which depends on the syllabus drawn up by the prolific intellectual Imam Jalaluddin Abdurrahman Al-Suyuti more than five hundred years ago, in *Itmam Al-Dirayah [The Perfection of Knowledge]*. This syllabus became the reference point of traditional *pesantren* huts until now, with the development of Islamic studies, which are divided into fourteen disciplines that we now know, from classical Arabic grammar to the interpretations of the Quran and the texts of

the hadiths of the Prophet. All of this was studied in the *pesantren* environment as an institute of Islamic education. And also, through these *pesantren* huts, Islamic values were disseminated from generation to generation.<sup>35</sup>

The question is: can the contents and methods of Islamic education, handed down for centuries, be relied upon to release the Muslim *umat* from its atmosphere of backwardness? As an intellectual with a far-flung circle of acquaintances and contacts, Wahid's answer seems to be in the negative, although it is not made explicit. With further reference to the weakness of the system of Islamic education, especially when responding to the challenges of modernization, Wahid writes:

Islamic education, of course, is willing and able to "straighten itself out" in response to the challenge of modernization; however, awareness of that issue is precisely what does not yet exist in Islamic education anywhere at all. It is this very matter that is so worrisome to observers including this writer, because in the end a proper reply to the following question is needed: how do we make structural awareness a natural part of the development of Islamic education? To put it differently, we have to play close attention to the development of Islamic education in various places and to make a clear map of the configuration of Islamic education itself. This is a task that, like it or not, has to be handled well.<sup>36</sup>

Because the models of Islamic education are so varied and complex in all the different regions that have shaped the many different types of Muslims, and we do not yet have a complete map of these things, Wahid in the end seems to surrender to the changing times: "The best road would be to allow a high degree of diversity to stay in Islamic education and let time and place be the determinants."<sup>37</sup>

To conclude this discussion of Islamic education as it is developing in both Muhammadiyah and NU circles, the one issue that needs to be underlined is that we have not yet satisfactorily concluded *how Islamic* the education should be. Every human population imaginable needs a well-developed system of education that appeals philosophically to its self-worth. This book proposes formulating a philosophy of education that makes the concept of the unity of knowledge its starting point by using the Quran, assisted by the authentic Sunnah, as the main point of reference. Work on this philosophical formulation cannot be done individually; it must be the product of collective thinking, or, say, collective reasoning and judgment (*ijtihad jama'i*). In today's



Indonesian intellectual environment, great minds are ready to start thinking about how to formulate just such a philosophy of Islamic education.

## Conflicts in Form and Content

There is nothing wrong with the efforts of different groups to use Islamic attributes as an emblem of their struggles or activities: Islamic government, Islamic banking (*muamalat* banks), Islamic schools, Islamic students, Islamic paramilitaries, Islamic restaurants, and the like. But they will harm their own cause if these forms and features fail to present Islamic values of high quality consonant with the great claim of this religion: blessings and mercy for the universe. People are apt to neglect quality: this is what I mean by the expression “form grappling with substance.” The form can be magnificent but the content unworthy and unconvincing. The gap between form and substance has long been obvious in all Muslim nations around the world. For me, this phenomenon constitutes a very serious problem that has beset the Muslim *umat* to this day. The solution to it is none other than the need for courage to make a breakthrough so that form and substance support each other.

Why is all of this still happening? The simple answer is that the Muslim *umat* continues to be pinned down by form while at the same time it neglects substance. In Chapter 4, where I discuss the “philosophy of salt and lipstick,” this problem will be analyzed further in the dimension of sociology. Here I will highlight only one example: the image of Indonesia’s Islamic parties is steadily sinking, not because of growing waves of Islamophobia, but entirely owing to unpleasant behavior displayed by some of the elites of parties with Islamic attributes or names that represent those attributes. Some of the party elites gnaw at the foundations of the state instead of repairing and constructing it. The result is public skepticism, because the Islamic parties and the secular parties behave no differently.

In various forums I often toss out my view about the behavior of party elites in Indonesia: there is not a lot of difference between those elites who claim to believe in divine revelation and those who couldn’t be bothered with religion. They all get down together in the mud of dirty politics: corruption, opportunism, and cheap pragmatism. In such a political culture, democracy has been made a tool, not to struggle for justice and the prosperity of the people, but for the interests of the elite and the groups that support them. Thus, democracy in the hands of opportunists can become a disaster for the entire nation.

To my mind, a strong and healthy democracy is a political system supported by politicians who have a visionary outlook and, above all, a moral commitment. One example who is not too distant from our time is H. Agus Salim, a student in the Islamic Youth Association, who after independence was active in leading the Masyumi Party until it was forced to dissolve in late 1960. These were politician-visionaries and intellectuals who had a high degree of commitment to the ideals of democracy as a means of achieving the objectives of independence, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Democracy will only become a healthy political system when the participants in that system are people of morals with a sense of responsibility. In one of my writings, I conveyed the bitter reality I saw on the contemporary Indonesian political stage as follows:

But the aspirations of democracy will directly turn disastrous if the politicians, those holding the cards in the game, are a gang of opportunists for whom politics is an industry for making a living and holding power. Their philosophy is very contemptible and consists of “eat as much as you can while the eating is good.” We note Erich Fromm’s theory of “acquire it and assimilate it.” In such a society, Fromm says, not only are many things being produced that are of no use (the law, for example), but at the same time useless humans are being born as well. This is the perfect *Homo consumens* who always thrashes and destroys democracy in practice.<sup>38</sup>

In the hands of the opportunists “there is no hope for democracy as a political system to achieve its noble ideals of realizing the common good.”<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, the people must be ever more intelligent in determining their political choices so that the opportunist politicians can be marginalized and deterred from entering the political arena. An intelligent people can never again be tricked by worthless politicians, because they will be able to penetrate into brains and hearts, beyond politicians’ external posturings. Indonesian political culture must move in this direction so that democracy energizes and excites instead of being boring. There must be healthy competition to pit the positive values of democracy against each other on the political stage. Indonesia’s experiences as a nation and a state since Proclamation have handed us quite enough bitter experiences to teach us to look at ourselves honestly in the mirror with one single purpose: to build an Indonesia that is outstanding and dignified. Most regrettably, we are reluctant to look at ourselves in the

mirror – this is characteristic of nearly everyone. This is the sign of a culture that lacks self-confidence.

## Islam and Indonesia's Future

In Chapter 1, I explained that Islam came to Nusantara long before Indonesia was inscribed as a nation on the world map. Although I tried to show from various angles the process by which the followers of Islam have become the majority throughout this archipelago, it is impossible to give a complete account. Historical reconstruction of the Islamization process needs to be continued by gathering more comprehensive and refined data, as difficult as this is to do. But one fact is impossible to refute: Islam has been able to survive in Nusantara for centuries, with all its strengths and weaknesses. After Indonesia emerged as a nation in the 1920s the followers of Islam remained the majority. The resilience of this religion in its struggles in all weathers and seasons is truly extraordinary. However, it is less praiseworthy that this majority community is still bound up in the shackles of poverty, ignorance, and backwardness.

In spite of all concerns, the experience of the centuries shows that this majority will continue to survive in the face of all challenges. Indonesia too as a country that is some six decades old, despite all the bitter experiences it has undergone, is still relatively whole as of this writing. That, too, is a fact of history that cannot be denied. But moving forward will depend on the ability of leaders and the people to govern and defend the Indonesian nation and state with honesty, intelligence, and responsibility. It is here that resides the importance of the idea I have expressed, that the Muslim *umat*, the majority of the people of Indonesia, no longer live in hollow pride. In outlook, they must appear as humanitarian cadres, cadres of the nation, cadres of the community, and only then as cadres of their respective organizations.

It has been my observation that, with all our vigilance to ensure that our *umat* does not decrease in numbers, it is its improvement in quality that must be prioritized. With good quality we can raise our collective face in world society with complete self-confidence. The Quran's dictum about the need for the marriage between faith and knowledge as the condition for becoming a first-class<sup>40</sup> community must be taken as an axiomatic truth. If this dictum really is axiomatic, the Muslim *umat* has no other choice for moving forward but to shape the message of this verse into our living reality. That is why this work has spoken at length about strongly urging the reform of the problem-filled education system in the Islamic world, particularly in Indonesia, which people hope will

become an example of a peaceful, open, and moderate Islam. If this hope is realized, then Indonesian Islam will be the antithesis of the image of Islam that has been marred by a handful of people who have chosen the path of violence.

From my experience of over a decade of meeting and socializing with leaders of all sorts of religious groups, cultures, and backgrounds, I have come to the almost definitive conclusion that they all can accept the leadership of a political Islam that is inclusive, broad-minded, pluralistic, and fair. Non-Muslim groups have come to terms with the sociological fact that Muslims are the majority group in Indonesia. But they will be tormented and troubled if they are discriminated against and deprived of the freedom to practice their religions and traditions. Their places of worship have frequently been the targets of blind violence in the name of God. These groups are quite open with Muslim leaders who are inclusive and fair, and tell them their internal problems, which sometimes are no less knotty than those within the Muslim community in all its diversity.

In this regard, I must emphasize that the democratic system, which normally relies on the voice of the majority in reaching decisions, must be operated very carefully. Democratic leaders must be sure not to sideline fairness and consideration. Democracy is the chosen system, but it was not chosen to allow the majority group to act simply as it wants. There is also the principle of traditional customs that should and must be considered. The safety of the future of Indonesia cannot be detached from the willingness of the majority to hold to this doctrine: "Even though we are the many, we will not trample you; and even though we are the larger, we will use our size to shelter and shade." This saying comes easily to the tongue but is not always easy to put into practice, except by those with a broad humanist and nationalist outlook and who are filled with tolerance. At the same time and with the same breath, minority groups must learn to carry themselves wisely in a democratic environment that is still unhealthy. We are tired of seeing victims being made every so often, simply because of the provocations triggered by irresponsible parties or by the friction of amoral political interests.

Indonesia with its motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* [Unity in Diversity] is a multiethnic, multifait, and multicultural nation of multiple political expressions. This diversity, if managed well, intelligently, and honestly, will undoubtedly be a cultural treasure. That is the future of Indonesia that we must defend and fight for with all our hearts, patiently and broad-mindedly. Such a cultural treasure must never again be gambled against meaningless and parochial interests. Parochialism is the enemy of Indonesia's future. *Eman-eman*, as the saying goes in Javanese, "it's regrettable" if we still suffer from the disease of shortsightedness in

governing a nation and a state as big as this. An Indonesia that is led by Mr. Myopia will surely be confused when looking into the future, because of a vision that sees only its front yard and the eaves of its roofs.

Another important matter that needs to be highlighted is the sociological fact of the increasing weakness of the entrepreneurial spirit of the Muslim *umat*. If we scrutinize the pyramid of Indonesian wealth, the group that we know as the *santri* (observant Muslims) is a real minority among those who manage to make it to the top. For the future of Indonesia, such conditions will surely be dangerously explosive if there is no reform and improvements are not quickly implemented, because the impoverished and powerless majority will very easily become victims of extremist ideology from whatever direction. The experience of post-Proclamation history is authentic proof that poverty and powerlessness of a part of society always triggers off and encourages acts of violence. Poverty and hunger are the true enemies of Pancasila. Why then have not the two of them been subdued yet?

An interesting proposal has come from the Muslim feminist writer Irshad Manji about how to overcome poverty in the Islamic world by mobilizing businesswomen in rural districts through small-scale enterprises, using loan capital. Manji sees such efforts succeeding in parts of Kabul, Afghanistan, a city torn apart by foreign invasions and civil war. As to the importance of mothers, Manji stated her philosophy as: "Educate a boy and you educate only that boy. But educate a girl and you educate her entire family."<sup>41</sup> An educated woman will make a great contribution to the well-being of the family. She continues, "Muslim businesswomen can not only save a family and its neighbors, but also the people and places outside it. Entrepreneurial mothers create spaces for trade – and imagination – for their children."<sup>42</sup>

There are many examples of Muslim "business mothers" in various cities in Indonesia: Pekalongan, Ponorogo, Solo, Padang, Makassar, and many others. However, because of the lack of skills training in business, those ventures are still unable to overcome wide-scale poverty. The Afghan example can spur us on and inspire us to develop the talents of entrepreneurial mothers in Indonesia. Once mothers are empowered in the commercial world, their positive impact for driving out poverty will increase. Are not mothers more careful in trading, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMES)?

When the monetary crisis hit in 1998, people then concluded that the economic force that could ensure the survival of the Indonesian nation was the SME sector. But when the winds of crisis subsided, the conglomerates that had been flung about by these events adroitly resumed their position at the top of the pyramid; meanwhile the SMES, which had

provided the necessary services, began to be crushed once again. They were unable to compete with the conglomerates, which were benefited by the wave of global neo-capitalism. The bulk of the SMEs have their basis in the majority population, which happens to be Muslim. It was their ancestors, when Nusantara was still under the colonial system, who defended Islam, so that they wear the badge of the majority to this day.

But once again, the label of majority minus quality will shake our Indonesianness, so to speak, over the long term. The social explosions that often hit this nation cannot be detached from the conditions of the Muslim *umat*, which are far from being just or fair. If the rate of poverty in Indonesia reaches 40 percent, then 90 percent of these poor will be Muslims. If the government is unsuccessful in empowering this majority, it will not stay silent. Their brains and hands must be set into motion to change their lot in life. Their only choice is to rehabilitate their lives by entering the world of education and enterprise consciously and with total determination. Poverty cannot be made the scapegoat for not making progress. Take the example of the Palestinians who have struggled for over sixty years to gain their independence but have never given up.

In striving to improve and raise the quality of life in the countryside, for example, there are many roads that might be taken, on condition that brains and hands are not kept unemployed. As someone who comes from the isolated village, or *nagari* (to use the Minangkabau term), of Sumpur Kudus in West Sumatra, I saw many opportunities available for people to change their social status and move beyond dependence on only one source for their livelihood. In Sumpur Kudus, out of an entirely Muslim population of around 4,600, about 60 percent were in the grip of poverty, although no one died of hunger. In this *nagari*, the source of income in recent times has been almost entirely from rubber, so when the price of rubber rose, life there sparkled. But the atmosphere would change to overcast immediately if the prices plunged, as happened in 2008–2009. Because in general people there had yards and rice fields, such property could be used for planting marketable non-staple crops. From my experience of having lived in that village for eighteen years, I remember everywhere there was empty land – while young people busied themselves playing dominos or drinking coffee at the food stalls, or just dozing away.

As a result, poverty inevitably throttled the village for decades. Over the past twenty years, some of the people have become migrant workers in Malaysia. Those who were thrifty and whose heads were full of calculations succeeded in bettering their socioeconomic status after returning to their *nagari*. There was only one condition: you had to use

your brain and your hands to change your fate. If you didn't, and just stayed at home, the risk was that you would become an "unemployed person" with all the problems resulting from that. Another way of changing your life would be to *merantau*, to seek your fortune in the world outside your *nagari*, a choice reinforced by Minangkabau tradition for centuries.

The situation in other isolated villages in West Sumatra in general does not differ greatly from that of Sumpur Kudus. The facts are similar: the yards and rice paddies are never exploited to the maximum.<sup>43</sup> For the population of Sumpur Kudus, gradual improvements in the transportation of goods and people, along with electrification, which was brought in beginning in 2005, truly opened up opportunities for improving one's economic lot in life. The question is, what percentage of the *nagari* population is good at perceiving opportunity? Sumpur Kudus is a part of Indonesia, no matter how small. That is the reason I have used it as an example to look through a telescope, as it were, into the future of our country. Isn't Indonesia made up of thousands of small villages, almost half of which are in backward conditions?

Thousands of villages in Indonesia are thus still squeezed by poverty and still have not felt the meaning of independence in the sense of having been touched by prosperity. Speaking of rural areas is no different from speaking about Indonesia, since 57.6 percent of our territory consists of rural areas. According to data from 2006, the number of villages in Indonesia totals 70,611. Of this figure, 32,379 (45 percent) are included in the category of backward villages.<sup>44</sup> These are very high figures. The *nagari* Sumpur Kudus, which I have cited, is but one of those many backward villages.

Although the problem of nutrition is usually directly linked with the level of welfare, based on direct experience I find that this assumption does not always absolutely determine a person's intelligence. At the same time, we cannot deny that improvement in nutrition is an indicator of a village's progress. The 45 percent figure for backward villages is clear proof that development in Indonesia since the Proclamation of Independence has been precarious and verges on failure. So it is not surprising that some people become nervous when speaking about the future of Indonesia the moment they see these figures. Does this nation have a proper future if the gap in development levels is not quickly closed up? And the majority of those who live in backward villages belong to the Muslim community. I do not know if the Muslim ministers in the cabinet or the Muslim politicians have seriously consulted with each other about these statistics. This question needs to be answered as honestly as possible.

If the answer is “Yes, they have consulted,” the next question is, to what extent has the substance of their consultations been translated into reality? The reason I submit such questions is simply because I want to see, as quickly as possible, this biggest Muslim majority liberated from a false pride, as if development has succeeded, while the statistics refute it. Honesty in stripping oneself bare is one sign of maturity in living in society, and as part of a nation and a state. Political rhetoric voiced during presidential elections that covers over the running sores on the body of the nation are a hidden betrayal of the nation. The risk is that the people will become divorced from reality. A real statesman will explain honestly exactly what the condition of this nation is. Concealing the reality will only increase the height of the inevitable fall.

The title of this section is “Islam and Indonesia’s Future.” I have explained how the followers of Islam quantitatively have survived for so many centuries in Nusantara, up to the present day. Yet for the future, the quantitative will not have much meaning if the followers of this religion keep marching in place, in the sense that there are no radical breakthroughs in thinking about improvement in the quality of the religious character of the *umat*. If Islam dealt only with the vertical relationship between humankind and God, then matters might be less problematic, because that is completely personal and subjective. But because the scope of Islamic teaching goes beyond the realm of the personal, in the sense that it also demands the proper arrangement of horizontal relationships within society at large as a reflection of the vertical relationship with God, many problems arise that need to be resolved. If they are not resolved, Islam will always exist in protracted crisis. It is the tension between these vertical and horizontal dimensions that calls for Islamic thinking of high quality. This is the field of *ijtihad* (reasoned judgment and interpretation of the Quranic code) in a broad sense.

There has not yet been complete agreement among Muslim thinkers in various parts of the world, including in Indonesia, on how Islam is to regulate political, economic, social, cultural, and other systems. In building the nation, for example, what is the position of women? Can a woman be the head of state or hold other executive offices, or are these exclusively the domain of men? Neither Muhammadiyah nor the NU has settled this matter conclusively, even as we argue in the meantime that Islam is “suitable for every time and place.”<sup>45</sup>

The broader issue is, if change and social development turn out to be ever farther away from the domain of Islam as it is understood, arguments like this surely will no longer be relevant. The weakness is in our inability



to understand the religion's teachings contextually, with the result that changes occurring in society are increasingly removed from the safeguard of revelation. In other words, the environment grows ever more secular and unconstrained, while religion retreats into an ivory tower. Religion's adherents are busily squabbling over inconsequential matters that were already tedious centuries ago. Islam's great mission to build a civilization that is both beautiful and just on the face of the earth is buried under the dust of history. This is the tragedy of religion in the modern era. Will Indonesian Islam appear at the forefront to provide an example of how to build that beautiful civilization? The answer very much depends on the quality of its ability to first solve its domestic problems in all earnestness.

Once its internal problems have been resolved, it is not impossible that inclusive and moderate Indonesian Islam will be able to contribute to erecting the pillars of a firm and friendly civilization over the entire planet for the benefit of the human species. But we cannot simply speculate. We need to cultivate a deep self-awareness to continually criticize ourselves plainly and objectively, so we can enter a new era free from the false pride that has afflicted the Muslim *umat* over the years.

Finally, for this section, I need to reemphasize that in the effort to improve the economy of the Muslim *umat*, women entrepreneurs in SMEs need sincere attention in the period ahead of us. This is not only because women's SMEs tend to outnumber men's, but because trade in the hands of women can develop in a more balanced fashion. In this connection, the tradition of some heads of households to forbid their wives from leaving the house, let alone from doing trading, is long outmoded and thus needs to be buried, bearing in mind that the wives must preserve their honor and morality in business interactions. Denying the role of mothers in economic activities would be the same as not respecting them as complete human beings, creatures of Allah, with the potential to contribute to the well-being of the family no less than that of men. So for that reason, Irshad Manji, with her broad and varied experience, highly praises mothers who are active in business. Manji also nominates Indonesia with its thousands of islands as an example of democracy for the Muslim world, with its philosophy of "unity in diversity."<sup>46</sup> Of course, external observers greatly hope that Indonesian democracy will succeed in bringing justice and prosperity to the people. If Indonesia succeeds in building a nation and a state on the pillars of democracy, it may even win the recognition of other Muslim nations that are mired in dynastic and authoritarian political systems.

I have spotlighted how democracy in the hands of opportunists brings calamity to a nation and a state. But even given that fact, there is no argument that democracy is *haram*, or theologically proscribed, and its

supporters are *kafir* (unbelievers). Thinking like this is more appropriate to the dark ages when the rulers decided everything and their subjects were little more than the slaves of those same rajas, sultans, caliphs, and other titles that symbolized antipathy to the common people. If bizarre ideas such as that still appear in these modern times, we will simply let history judge them. As human values become increasingly universal, surely, in the end, the people will be all the more aware of their own value and dignity. The moment the people have a direct view of the corruption that usually accompanies a system of concentrated power, sooner or later they will surely oppose these despots.

We can be proud of Indonesia because democracy has been the choice of this nation from the beginning, even if its road has frequently been blocked by people with uncertain commitment to true democracy who emerged on our political stage. For democracy in Indonesia not to lose its luster, we must always make every effort to present competent political players. If parties want to be long-lived, then they must carry out planned political education for their supporters. Among the important elements that must be incorporated in their curricula are the democratic principles and political systems that have been known throughout history. In this way, we hope that politicians will no longer appear to be deficient in even the most elementary knowledge.

To end this chapter, I present a stern warning by Mohammad Amien Rais about the habit of the government in the Reform era of selling the nation's assets without adequate calculations. We very much need to take this warning to heart when looking to the future of Indonesia. Rais writes:

The Indonesian government has become a foreign servant. Many national assets such as state-owned enterprises and banks have systematically moved into foreign ownership. A part of our forests and land has been rented out to foreign corporations for terms of almost one hundred years, and our mineral wealth, both oil and gas and other forms, almost all of it, is managed by foreign corporations. The colonization of the Indonesian economy by foreign corporate powers is given a legal umbrella by statutory law and various political decisions.<sup>47</sup>

The irresponsible sell-off of assets is the same as pawning the sovereignty of the nation and the state to foreign interests. Is this any different from economic colonialism by modern neo-imperialist powers?

## Chapter 4 The Future of Religion

It would be a catastrophe if a person claimed to have faith but was dishonest in his or her actions. Such a person might appear observant symbolically and ritually, but symbols and rituals are not the same as the substance of a steadfast belief. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, religion confronted complex problems, not only due to external factors, but also to the internal conditions of its adherents, which are far from resolved. At the same time, much of the world is unfriendly to spiritual values. Need the *umat* surrender? Surrendering would be the same as digging one's own grave.

### Islam: An Open Religion

What if the Quran were asked, does Islam have the courage to confront the challenges of science, theology, ideology, Sufism, and philosophy, challenges that arise almost anywhere? If the *umat*, which claims to believe that the Quran is the final message from Heaven, is now powerless to prove the truth of this message in the real world, will God be silent and waive His responsibility to preserve the Quran as the source of wisdom for humanity? We cannot surrender our search for the answers to such questions merely to human reason, whoever possesses it, whether *ulama*, theologians, philosophers, or famous Sufis. We must be prepared to negotiate with the Quran about these formidable problems.

With all its awesome capabilities, mankind is still limited. Mankind is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. If the questions we address are in the realm of the limitless, then we must call on faith to discuss them. Reason and intuition at this stage only function as faith's ancillaries. This postulate is sure to be rejected by atheist philosophers, because a theist in their eyes "is someone who lacks the nerve to be an atheist," to borrow the expression of the French Catholic writer de Bonald.<sup>1</sup> The Quran, as I understand it, gives the freedom of choice to each person to be a theist or an atheist, with all the risks of each of these. The reason for this is that without free choice it would be difficult for us to locate the proper place of human responsibility. For responsibility can only be asked of a morally free humanity. It would be virtually impossible to ask a slave or someone with a slave's mentality to take responsibility for his

or her behavior. Slaves generally act at the command of their masters and do not have the freedom to choose.

If mankind is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, the energy stored in its Ego, according to Muhammad Iqbal, is extraordinary, on the condition the work of *ijtihad* is bravely performed. In the context of this stream of thought, Iqbal's concept that *ijtihad* needs to be given an adequate portion continues to be relevant to the condition of the Islamic world, which is still gasping to overcome endless internal problems. It would seem extremely difficult to make the Muslim *umat* in general understand absolute freedom of thought as a condition for a sincere *ijtihad*. In fact, the success of prophetic values regarding social change and the advance of civilization will very much depend on the quality of *ijtihad* performed by the Muslim thinker bravely and with a complete sense of responsibility.

For Iqbal, *ijtihad* is the "principle of movement" within the Islamic structure.<sup>2</sup> Because of that, the cessation of *ijtihad* for centuries now has brought the world of Islam to a situation of rigidity and gloom. According to Iqbal, for some this is the result of lazy thinking in confronting big problems. In an era of spiritual decay in the world of ideas, the great Muslim thinkers have been idolized.<sup>3</sup> Their pronouncements are placed above the Quran and the Sunnah, whether consciously or not. As Iqbal sees it, the idea that the formulations of Muslim thinkers of the past, no matter how breathtaking, are final, goes against the entire spirit of the Quran. There is not a single authentic guideline found in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet that would have us stop thinking, that would have us blandly accept everything that has been laid out by the classic thinkers. This does not mean that their work is unimportant; on the contrary, it is very important to study them. Did not the companions of the Prophet themselves quarrel and argue? They even fought against each other – which we, however, should not imitate.

If that is the case, what is demanded of those who come later? Nothing less than a critical attitude in evaluating their thinking, because the result of *ijtihad* is definitely bound up with the spirit and energy of the time and the place. Thus, the *ijtihad* of our predecessors was born out of their interaction with the times they lived in. How can we be certain that even their contemporaries thought the same way as they did, let alone us moderns, who live in such a different era? Iqbal argues, "The only road open to us is to conduct an approach to modern knowledge with the greatest respect, but with an independent attitude when evaluating the teachings of Islam in the light of this knowledge, even if it may happen that we will be guided to differ from those who preceded us."<sup>4</sup> Of course, Iqbal's statement here must be treated with care to avoid our being fettered by modernism, because that is not our direction either.

Here is another question. Why do we fear to be different? Does *ijtihad* not straighten out the road to agree or differ with mature and rational arguments? We have to ensure that Islamic teaching can function with stability and has the power to resolve problems that arise endlessly in social life. At the highest intellectual level, it is revelation that has to show the way for humanity whenever science and philosophy have thrown up their hands in surrender. Science and philosophy, for example, will not be able to answer the question of the meaning of life and death, for such things are in the realm that transcends history.

It is not possible to make Islamic teaching something that lives and gives life in our times if we are not brave enough to critically assess all the unquestionably rich Islamic thinking of the past eras. And we courageously take what is relevant to our own era and to our benefit after we have tested this against the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah, and based on our *ijtihad* by referring to these two main sources. For example, in political thought, with all our respect for Al-Mawardi (d. 1050), a jurist and diplomat of the Al-Shafi'i school of Islamic jurisprudence, with his famous work *The Ordinances of the Government*,<sup>5</sup> is this work not really only a justification and defense of the rule by the Abbasid dynasty that was crumbling from within? In one of his lectures in Chicago in 1981, Fazlur Rahman very expertly laid out the argument that the political system in the form of the imamate/caliphate did not represent a religious commandment. "The caliphate," he said, "is not a divinely ordained political system, but that Islam needs a political power for rendering its precepts and ideals into the reality of history is no doubt divinely ordained."<sup>6</sup> For me, speaking about political systems in Islam is simply the work of *ijtihad* according to the spirit of the times, as has been examined in Chapter 2.

The performance of *ijtihad* is without question a major task that needs the perspective of breadth, depth, and intelligence. For Iqbal, a *mujtahid* (one who performs *ijtihad*) must possess penetrating thought and fresh experience for a reconstructive undertaking that stretches into the future.<sup>7</sup> Reconstructive work by itself contains within itself deconstructive work on the past, which we view as needing correction. There is really nothing special in this process, because if it is not undertaken, it means that we are making an idol of obsolete thinking, something so sharply criticized by Iqbal. As an important key for performing *ijtihad*, a knowledge of Arabic is indispensable, as is an acquaintance with a critical attitude toward the record of Islamic history from the earliest times to the present. This critical attitude will be increasingly stimulated by modern findings and the world these create. Without an awareness of all this, our level of intellectualism would seem to simply remain on the sidelines.

Because the Islamic world has not fully roused itself from its deep and protracted sleep, to begin its reconstructive work on the entire structure of Islamic thought, we are confronted by a number of challenges and obstacles. But these must be faced bravely. Iqbal, who called himself “the first Adam in a new world,”<sup>8</sup> was well aware of how difficult it would be to penetrate the fortress of conservatism in Muslim society, which survives in three power structures:

1. Mullahism (*ulamaism*). The *ulama* have always been a source of great power in Islam. But over the centuries, and especially since the fall of Baghdad [to the Mongols, in 1258], they have become very conservative and do not provide an opportunity for the freedom of *ijtihad* in matters of the law.
2. Mysticism. The Muslim masses have been diverted by a kind of mysticism that blinds them to reality. From its elevated status as one power of spiritual education, mysticism has fallen headlong into a state of merely being a tool to exploit the ignorance and beliefs of the masses.
3. The rajas. The eyes of the Muslim rajas in earlier times (but how is this different from today?) were firmly focused on the interests of their dynasties. As long as these interests were assured, they never hesitated to sell their countries to the highest bidder.<sup>9</sup>

If Islam is to function with sincerity in its entirety, the means that is open is to penetrate the fortress of conservatism wisely and through dialogue, but with total courage. (Iqbal may have gone too far in describing this courage when he said, “I will not paddle my *prau* [boat] into the seas where there are no crocodiles in the waves.”<sup>10</sup>) It is not just the fortress of conservatism that must be attacked, however. The fatalistic worldview, according to Iqbal, must also be opposed, because it goes against the truth of life, which has to be enriched with the movements of endless struggle: “If you are capable of composing poetry / Touch it to the touchstone of life.”<sup>11</sup>

For Iqbal, poetry does not just express a profound sense of beauty, it has at the same time the mission to enhance the quality of life. The Islamic world, which is at the margin of civilization, must give birth to the poetry of enlightenment and consciousness, and Iqbal did this with a great *élan vital* until death took the pen from his hand. Did not Allah swear to the importance of the pen: “*Nun*. By the pen and what they inscribe?”<sup>12</sup>

*Ijtihad* may be done only by someone brave enough to carry on imaginative dialogue with God. In his philosophy of the Ego, Iqbal wants

to emphasize that mankind's Ego (*khudi*) is creative and its wanderings have a definite objective. It is in this creativity that the difference between humankind and other, lower, creatures lies.<sup>13</sup> In this way, the Ego is a creative force that always moves forward, never thinking of stopping. The environment is penetrated and subdued according to the will of the Ego. In an imaginary dialogue of humankind, which speaks familiarly with God in spite of its critical attitude, Iqbal gives us this poem:

God has decreed  
This is the way things are  
Forget about any further ideas you may have about it.

Mankind responds:  
No doubt about it – that is the way things are  
But this is the way they ought to be.<sup>14</sup>

For one fleeting moment, humankind looks as if it is rebelling, but it is not that we see. What is intended here is that humankind should not give up, so long as the challenge confronting it is still within the human grasp.

Humankind's answer, "But this is the way they ought to be," symbolizes just how awesome its creativity is, if it only knew. *Ijtihad* demands bringing the highest creativity to understanding the message of Islam, so as to guard against social changes veering off onto the wrong track. It is as if Iqbal invites God to discuss what God has created. If so, then why hesitate to question the result of the *ijtihad* of past generations of Muslims who were limited by their times? In this way, we see that the enemy of creative thinking is simply and solely the fear of being different, if that difference is crucial for a greater good. Why do we still not have what it takes to think big, while the reality in front of us is truly breathtaking? The Islamic world is being manipulated by other groups simply because our quality leaves us easily manipulated. I fail to understand how there still are Muslims who feel "happy" to live in false pride while floundering in the shattered greatness of the past. False pride is the refuge of people in despair, not much different from those who espouse a theology of death. If Iqbal were still living, surely the detonations of his poetry would knock down those who run from reality out of fear of facing that reality.

The Ego's advance is not movement without an objective in Iqbal's system of thinking, unlike what we find in the *élan vital* of the French philosopher Henri Bergson, which moves aimlessly. According to Iqbal, the Ego longs to approach God under its own power and effort. Borrowing power and energy from some other party is taboo, because this paralyzes

the Ego in its efforts to get close to the Absolute Ego (that is, God). The closer one gets, the more perfect one becomes (*Insan Kamil*), or in Farsi, *mard-e mu'min*, an expression borrowed by Iqbal from the linguistic treasure house of the Sufis.

In breaking through to begin its advance, the Ego always encounters a variety of obstacles. The greatest obstacles are matter and nature. These obstacles must be opposed and overcome by courageous struggle. Only someone brave can healthily develop the potential of his or her Ego. A coward will never attain meaningful goals in life; the coward is by nature a highwayman on the highway of life whose nature is unhealthy for the development of human emotions. Iqbal would like humankind to develop without fear to achieve emotional health. For this poet there is no mountain too high to climb and no valley too deep to descend into. The only condition is courage.

Iqbal was also an outspoken social reformer. His attention to the poor was especially impressive. In a letter to his son, Javid Iqbal, our poet writes:

The way of life of the rich man is not my way  
I am a mendicant, a faqir,  
My advice: do not sell your Ego;  
Even in destitution, find time to drink your fill of satisfaction.<sup>15</sup>

How beautiful and profound is the poignancy of this advice, but how difficult it is to realize without superior spiritual training. The writer himself is still far from success in carrying out such spiritual practices, which must be grasped through devout religiosity together with deep meditation and thought.

Iqbal really does liken himself to a faqir who no longer has material needs. He identifies himself as rooted in an impoverished society, not in the society of the wealthy elite. In *Rumûz-e Bekhûdî*, his affection for the humble folk comes through very clearly. The following excerpt clarifies his social stance:

I am committed to the masses  
It is a real blessing to me  
A maturity of my essence  
Originates from the masses  
Draw yourself up close to them  
As close as can be  
Give yourself over to the people  
As Khair-Al-Bashar has said:



Only a satan  
Separates us from the mass of society.<sup>16</sup>

For Iqbal, the Ego has meaning only if it unites with society at large. Outside of society, the Ego has no meaning. Is not a wave called a wave as long as it rolls along on the surface of the water? Thus, improving the quality of life of the common people both externally and internally was central in the social philosophy of the poet. His anti-elitism is keenly felt. His social philosophy fuses with the beat of the pulse of those who are discarded and ill-fated.

Brave deeds are needed to improve these social defects. The value of practicing Iqbal's thinking is located here, but it is ironic that his message was received with indifference by his fellow countrymen. His biography tells how Iqbal was very generous. He would always be ready to help anyone who came to him. For Iqbal, philosophy without practical value would only be empty speculative daydreaming, regardless of the sophistication and complexity with which such speculations might be framed.

Finally, the attitude of surrendering to fate using the excuse of predetermination in Iqbal's view shreds the teaching of Islam about the responsibility to work and to struggle, since the essence of life is stored in action (*'amal*): "In action is hidden the essence of life."<sup>17</sup> In other words, it is only the results of our deeds that really belong to us. The results of the work of others belong entirely to them.

Now let us return to the main point of our discussion. So that we do not move too far off from these philosophically and theologically nuanced problems, let us see the response of the Quran. The first question is about the courage of Islam in confronting challenges. In one verse, the Quran issues this challenge: "And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful."<sup>18</sup> The Quran exegete Muhammad Ali Al-Shabuni explains the call for witnesses as follows: "And call upon your assistants and helpers who can give support to you in opposing the Quran, apart from Allah, glorified and exalted be He."<sup>19</sup> This verse emphasizes that the Quran may not be opposed, although it can be tested with the aid of philosophers, theologians, and thinkers of whatever caliber and originating in whatever civilization.

Naturally, we know from empirical experience that this is easier said than done. Under the circumstances of a weak *umat*, one lacking in authority, someone will glibly say that all our backwardness has been

caused by the Quran, which stands in the way of human progress. If the Quran urges mankind to be intelligent, why then for hundreds of years has the Muslim *umat* been shunted away from the mainstream of civilization, the good and the bad? Regardless, Muslims not infrequently identify themselves “as the best of all *umats*,”<sup>20</sup> in spite of having fallen flat on the ground. In connection with this topic, the criticism by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (STA), leveled at the Muslim *umat* in the Constituent Assembly (1956–1959), is worth reflecting on: “The chosen creatures who embrace the chosen religion cannot be weak, poor, and backward. That would be a betrayal of the religion itself.”<sup>21</sup> This criticism was very sharp, but, I feel, delivered in all sincerity, even though in those constitutional debates STA rejected Islam as the basis of the state. For STA, the weak, poor, and backward conditions of the *umat* were the signs of betrayal by its adherents of the religion that was believed to be the best and truest religion of all. Why had the Muslim *umat* fallen into such conditions as expressed by STA? No one theory can give a complete answer to this question. The late Fazlur Rahman, in one of his lectures at the University of Chicago in the 1980s, lamented the far-from-progressive condition of the Muslim *umat* when he said, “We live in a different kind of Islam, not in Quranic Islam.”<sup>22</sup> What did he mean? We need to explore this further.

In contrast to the accusation of some experts who link the ignorance of the Muslim *umat* to the Quran, Rahman argued the opposite. It is precisely because the Quran is no longer understood properly and intelligently that the Muslim *umat* is oppressed, ignorant, and impoverished. We are beaten in the race of civilizations and our fate in the hereafter is by no means assured. The Quran is of course still read, and is even a runner in the race, so to speak, but the spiritual atmosphere of the world of Islam, as I see it, is by no means equal to the image given in this holy scripture. That image portrays a life that is just, intelligent, prosperous, peaceful, secure, and free – all of which is the realization of the dictum “a blessing for the universe.” In its current position, however, the Muslim *umat* seems to have trouble differentiating between the straight road that must be traveled and the twisting road that must be avoided, let alone spreading the blessings of the Quran more widely. In our hands, the Quran no longer functions as *al-furqan*, the criterion that differentiates between the right and the wrong roads.<sup>23</sup>

But the Quran forbids the Muslim community from sitting passively, “with hands on lap,” and lamenting its bad fortune. There still is a strong belief among us that we must rise up and no longer be squeezed into a narrow and stifling back alley. After having been hammered by history for centuries, sooner or later the various Muslim worlds will surely come to an overall awareness of the need for enlightenment. That is, on condition

that the initiative for “arousing” God’s attention must be made in the form of brave and creative works to penetrate and dispel the miasma of stagnation.<sup>24</sup> In this connection, the old saying, “brave because you’re right, afraid because you’re wrong,” must be changed to “being brave is right, being afraid is wrong.” This is not just a change in the wording but a change in the thought paradigm to facilitate a breakthrough. Because the Quran is an open scripture, therefore logically the Muslim community must appear to be an open *umat*. Open, and bold enough to admit all its ugliness and weaknesses so as to promptly set about correcting them in all sincerity. Leave behind the pride in fakery, use accurate parameters so we may reflect ourselves as intelligently as possible, hiding nothing, as I have said so often. Speak out and admit frankly that the past of the Islamic *umat* is filled with history’s infamies as well as the wonderful creativity of its thinkers. A balanced approach toward the past is the only approach that is just and proper. Otherwise, the picture will be distorted, dishonest, and misleading.

This transparency I call for means there remain no hidden weaknesses such as those that have been with us for decades now, if not centuries, and have been purposely concealed out of shame. A humanity that is prepared to laugh at itself shows that it has awakened from a long and deep sleep. This is important, because living in false pride is proof of dishonesty and a lack of self-confidence. Readiness to see oneself openly is a form of courage in assessing one’s naked reality. Admission of one’s own weaknesses and readiness to correct them is a prerequisite for moving forward to a better future.

In the realm of abstract intellectual thinking, the Islamic culture of which we are heirs is now almost completely the product of Muslims’ past interactions and clashes with various elements of other civilizations: Hellenist, Persian, Roman, Turkish, and Indian. Philosophy, theology, Sufism, and the political thinking that then blossomed in the Islamic world were due to the stimulation of that creative interaction. This did not always go smoothly, but it did enrich the treasure house of Islamic civilization that flourished for about five centuries, from the eighth to the thirteenth of the Common Era.

During this period, the Islamic world, whether in Southwest Asia, North Africa, or Europe, was admitted to be the most advanced and civilized region. This period is usually crowned the Golden Age of Islamic Civilization, although not without a qualifying footnote in the form of friction between the famous thinkers of the different schools of Islamic jurisprudence. These were not merely intellectual clashes, but also not infrequently wars between the Muslims themselves. In Indonesia, their resonance was not strongly felt, perhaps because of the geographical

location of Nusantara in the East, separated as it was from the centers of intellectual strife in Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Spain, in an era when communications were still primitive.

Because of Nusantara's position far in the East, the Islam of Indonesia has its own strengths and weaknesses. Its strength is that it can make a fresh beginning without being burdened by ideological friction that at its worst results in mutual slandering or even anathematizing opponents as *kafir* (unbelievers). The condition for making a fresh beginning is for Indonesian Muslims to equip themselves with a broad and deep knowledge, a quality that still needs to be struggled over in Indonesia. Its weakness is that Islam in Indonesia is supported by adherents who, for the most part, do not understand the Arabic language, including the readings during the congregational prayer. And yet to understand the authentic sources of Islam, command of Arabic is a requisite. This shortcoming can be overcome, so long as a person wants to study. This statement does not necessarily mean that understanding Arabic means a better understanding of Islam. That very much depends on whether or not ability in Arabic is used to understand religion and history in an intelligent and honest way within the framework of a just and civilized humanism.

The second question is, will God be silent even if the *umat* of Muhammad lacks the power to protect and maintain the Quran? The evidence of history shows that over the past fourteen centuries, the text of the Quran has been preserved. Every time soiled hands try to destroy it, the Muslim *umat* will always emerge to set matters right, because the memorizers (*huffaz*) of this holy scripture will guard against all possible harm to the Quran. As far as I know, throughout history the Quran, with its thirty sections, 114 surahs, and over six thousand lines, has been the only holy scripture that can be memorized.

The facts of the matter cannot be denied. Experience shows that memorizing Chairil Anwar's famous poem "Karawang Bekasi," which is only thirty-two lines in length, is quite difficult. How much more so it would be to memorize thousands of lines?<sup>25</sup> Why is the Quran memorizable? There is no easy rational answer to this, but empirical experience is forced to admit it. Rationally speaking, memorizing the Quran by rote is really something miraculous. Beginning with the Prophet and his companions, the memorizers of this holy scripture carry on this practice to the present day and will surely continue to do so in the future. What's more, there are a number of *pesantren* in Indonesia, for example, that specialize in developing this culture of memorizing. The weakness of this culture is that ability to memorize the Quran is not balanced by the ability to understand this holy scripture.

But the above question demands a further answer, because the expression “protect the Quran” is not only limited to the purity of the text, but also to ability of the Muslim *umat* to carry its message to the world. We can debate long and hard about this problem of ability. What is clear is that the Muslim *umat*, beginning in the eighteenth century, no longer counted for much globally, even though the Ottoman Turks were still sovereign; for the process of disintegration within was also underway there. Some of the regions of Nusantara had begun to be colonized as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century. Other regions were subdued gradually.

### Islam and Religious Sincerity

Why must we talk about sincerity when we discuss religion or religions? What is sincerity? Can the relations between the religious faithful continue amicably and peacefully without sincerity? This is one of the key questions for which we must find the answer within the framework of Islam, humanity, and Indonesian identity, which are the main focus of this work.<sup>26</sup>

I shall begin with an exploration of sincerity and its implications. *Ketulusan*, the Indonesian word for “sincerity,” from the root word *tulus*, contains the meanings “honesty, purity, truthfulness, devotion.” *Tulus* and *ikhlas* are also frequently joined together to mean “pure of heart, honest.”<sup>27</sup> *Ikhlas* comes from the Arabic root *kh- l-s*, which means “pure, clean, unadulterated, free.” *Ikhlas* means “sincere devotion, honesty, truthfulness.”<sup>28</sup> The English word “sincere” (Latin: *sincerus*) means “pure and clean, trusted, free from trickery and pretense, honest, genuine, pure, and straightforward of speech.”<sup>29</sup> It so happens that the idea of *ketulusan* means substantially the same thing; all these words contain within them the ideas of purity, honesty, and cleanliness. A proper religion must possess these main values. Otherwise, religion is no more than a ceremonial show, all symbol and no substance.

Now let us look at what the Quran says about who among humankind is sincere and what are the signs of this sincerity. According to the Quran, the prophets and Messengers are those who are *tulus ikhlas*, pure of heart, free from envy, pretense, and all the ills that can bring down the edifice of human nature.<sup>30</sup> In the same way, all religious followers are ordered by God to be *tulus* and truthful in understanding and practicing their religion, whatever it may be.<sup>31</sup> Without *ketulusan*, a religion would mean nothing before God and would even mislead others as well as oneself. It seems that there is almost no civilization on the face of the earth that

does not understand these concepts in much the same way. Religion will then emphasize and exalt the meaning of the word *ketulusan*. Putting it another way, *ketulusan* is the part that fuses with primordial human nature, a nature that has never been contaminated.

A person who is *tulus* – sincere – when giving something to another person does not look to receive anything in return except the blessing of Allah, not the blessing of man. In the language of the Quran: “We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.”<sup>32</sup> Such an attitude of the faithful is of course taught by other religions as well, because giving without ulterior motive may fully originate in the doctrine of Heaven, although after arriving on earth it has been distorted by the partiality and weakness of mankind. Giving without ulterior motive is surely supported by the strength of true sincerity.

We do not easily come across this true sincerity in modern and secular, not to say atheistic, civilization. But religion certainly will not surrender to those worldly challenges. In traditional Abrahamic monotheism, Islam is the youngest religion, after Judaism and Christianity. Therefore, the Muslim *umat* must learn as much as possible from its “older brother religions” in confronting the attacks of atheistic secularism, even as we know that these older brothers themselves have been sent reeling from these attacks. Nietzsche’s words that appeared for the first time in *The Gay Science*, “God is dead,” present a reading of this philosophy about increasingly nihilistic<sup>33</sup> modern civilization, at a time when the European churches seem powerless. What is interesting is the observation of Nietzsche that it is Religious Man, pious and filled with devotion, who has slaughtered God. “For Nietzsche,” writes Gianni Vattimo, “the entire process of nihilism can be summarized with the death of God, or with the bankruptcy of the highest values.”<sup>34</sup>

The paradoxical statement that the pious have killed God needs serious attention on the part of the religious *umat*. In the context of the Muslim *umat*, is our religious attitude really *tulus* (sincere) if we do not defend the principle of a just and civilized society but instead allow the poor and the orphans to be abandoned and neglected in their misery, as apparently is the general trend of Indonesian society? Centuries before Nietzsche was born, the Quran flung out this question: “Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor.”<sup>35</sup> In other words, in the eyes of the Quran, the one who cares not for the suffering of others is a liar.

The twin of sincerity (*ketulusan*) is truthfulness (*kejujuran*). Without exception, all religions teach honesty, even if not all their followers are honest. These qualities are the fruit of a sincere faith. This is a matter of

the heart and not the work of calculations by the brain. In daily life, I not infrequently meet with friends who profess different religions, but I feel the heart-to-heart contact is a very close one. Why? Because sincerity is there, and honesty. Differences of belief do not become obstacles to the linking of two human hearts. And if that is the case, then sincerity (*ketulusan*) is indeed of great value.

Indonesia does not lack experience in political cooperation between adherents of different faiths. Modern Indonesian history has recorded close and productive comradeship carried on by major figures of the Masyumi with Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, and other leaders. The closeness of Natsir or Prawoto Mangkusamito with I.J. Kasimo, Herman Johannes, A.M. Tambunan, or J. Leimena, both during the revolution for independence and afterwards, is still fresh in our collective memories. As is that between Burhanuddin Harahap and the Balinese Hindu Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung. Kasimo even joined with Masyumi and PSI (Indonesian Socialist Party) leaders in trying to oppose Sukarno's authoritarian political system during the Guided Democracy era (1959–1965), even though in the end they were frustrated because that system was also supported by the military and certain other political parties.

Perhaps, quite apart from the foundation of their sincere friendships, there was another factor that more and more tightened the bonds of friendship: that is, they all possessed idealism and personal integrity. They all were genuine moralists who had been born in the womb of the Indonesian nation. Ultimately, J. Leimena was coopted by the authoritarian system, although that does not diminish the respect that the Muslim *umat* has felt for him.

Sweet memories such as this have somewhat disappeared from subsequent generations in the past three decades. I see a number of possible reasons. First, later generations never experienced the revolution for independence, which succeeded in building up comradeship among the generation of Natsir-Kasimo-Johannes, and others. Later on we had the 1966 Movement, but it appears that the personal integrity of its leading figures was not as firm as that of the preceding generation. Second, the seductions of power politics were more formidable in the years that followed the Natsir-Kasimo-Johannes era; its temptations truly contaminated one's sincerity. Third, the issue of Christianization during the New Order period (1966–1998) has increased mutual suspicion, especially between the adherents of Islam and Christianity.

We most certainly cannot allow feelings of mutual suspicion to exist and to grow. The results could shatter the body and soul of this nation. The destruction of lives and property that occurred in Maluku (1999–2002) must awaken us all to correcting ourselves, so that provocateurs

cannot easily wreck the feelings of brotherhood among us that it has taken so long to build. In that conflict-ridden region, the clashes were not initially religion-based, but rather instigated by economic and political interests. But then religion was manipulated for the unhealthy objectives of stirring up emotions and exploiting solidarity.

If religion is misused the results can be very destructive and even fatal. It is easy for people to kill each other in the name of religion. Such phenomena happen not just between the followers of different religions but among believers of the same religion. Such situations become extremely complex. When religion is misused this way, sincerity and honesty as authentic proof of faith become powerless, and the whisperings of satans take over to plunge the religious communities into calamity and mutual destruction.

The next question is, will we always need religion? To illustrate religion as a source of the doctrine of sincerity, I should now discuss some musings by A.J. Toynbee (1889–1975) on the function of religion in the age of technology, which is ever more sophisticated yet ever more malignant. This historian was a Christian and an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi. Toynbee wrote thirty pages to answer this central question: Is religion a perennial need?<sup>36</sup> To facilitate his response, Toynbee raised a number of sub-questions within the framework of strengthening the position of religion as an eternal need for mankind. These sub-questions included: Why are we here? For what reason are we here? Is life a blessing or a curse?

According to Toynbee, religion is an effort to give answers to these urgent questions, inasmuch as science and philosophy are unable to provide complete answers. “Religion,” he said, “is an attempt to discover how to reconcile ourselves to the formidable facts of life and death.”<sup>37</sup> What worried this British historian is how difficult it is to discover *Homo sapiens* in modern civilization. How little we show wisdom in controlling ourselves and in ordering our relations with each other, he writes. In the event that we do succeed in surviving in the midst of this technological revolution, only then will become *Homo sapiens*, in truth and in name.<sup>38</sup>

If we connect Toynbee’s concept of *Homo sapiens*, which, we might say, means “the intelligent one,” to our discussion about Islam and religious sincerity, we will see a clear red thread running through the two. Sincerity is the basic characteristic that fuses with the character of *Homo sapiens*. The person who claims to be intelligent but is dishonest in his or her deeds is making a false claim. So, too, is someone who trades in religion in the name of God. At the same time this person plays dangerous games with the truth, he or she is disavowing the concept of sincerity. Treating your religion as commodity to be bought and sold tarnishes that same



religion, for once it is traded, religion degenerates into a worldly good of no value. In this situation, religion no longer is perennially needed. That is the reason Toynbee categorizes religions into “higher religions,” which are those religions oriented to Heaven, and “lower religions,” those religions that cleave to the earth and busy themselves on behalf of low interests. Nationalism, for Toynbee, is part of the lower religions, which often trigger conflicts between countries.<sup>39</sup>

We return to the issue of relations between and among religious adherents. I have seen that it is often the case that among religious communities quantity is emphasized over quality. For the former, the total number of followers is the important thing, even at the cost of mediocre quality. So it comes as no surprise that their people think of ways of getting the most fellow-members. If necessary, they herd the inhabitants of the earth like livestock into having the same faith as they do. Such an arrogant and intolerant attitude is harshly criticized by the Quran in the following verse: “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?”<sup>40</sup>

This verse, and still more others, strictly forbid people from using force, whether gently or harshly, in religion. Elsewhere in the Quran, the pluralism of religions and cultures from thousands of years ago is a hard fact of history, and thus must be respected and acknowledged with thanks. This is because, when seen in a wider perspective, such phenomena have enriched the universal edifice of humankind, so long as we are capable of managing them. But the small-minded see the historical fact of pluralism in religion, culture, customary law, ethnicity, and civilization as a threat to their existence. If such narrow views are allowed to dominate in society, religion will no longer be a blessing but a curse and a doctrine of compulsion. Ethical systems born out of them will surely be authoritarian and will attempt to monopolize the truth.

If that happens, how difficult will this life be? God has created diversity, but humanity instead chooses honesty-killing uniformity. Genuine friendship can only be built on a foundation of firm belief that engenders sincerity and honesty. As to the issue of relationships across religious lines, I would offer this formula: “Be varied in your friendship and be friends in your differences.” Otherwise I am afraid that religion will no longer function as a source of tranquility and peace, but rather be source of discord, disorder, and even war. Therefore, the Quran warns: “So take warning [from the experience of the past], O people of vision.”<sup>41</sup> The genuine *Homo sapiens* are those who know well how to glean deep wisdom from the human experience, experience gained in layer upon layer of centuries and eras. History in this sense is a laboratory of wisdom.

But how dearly bought is that wisdom! And, too, how often history is written for the benefit of the rulers, so that when we search for wisdom, falsehood is what we find.

### Symbolism: Salt and Lipstick

Comparing salt to lipstick, as I interpret it, comes from something Mohammad Hatta said in 1976 in the context of teaching the Muslim *umat* of Indonesia to be wiser in struggling for the Islamic politics they aspire to. The Muslim *umat*, according to Hatta “should use the science of salt: it is tasted but not seen. This is different from the science of lipstick: seen but not tasted!”<sup>42</sup> Even if Hatta may not have further explained what he meant by this, for me it is a guide to a cultural strategy that it is exceedingly important for the Muslim *umat* of Indonesia to reflect on deeply. The science of salt and lipstick is a part of the response by Hatta to this question from Z. Yasni: “Mr. Hatta, what pushed you to form a new party, the PDII [Partai Demokrasi Islam Indonesia – the Indonesian Islamic Democratic Party]?” Hatta replied, “The main objective was to educate the Muslim *umat* in Indonesia on how to have political parties with an Islamic basis in a responsible democratic life in a state that is founded on the Pancasila.”<sup>43</sup>

This idea of Hatta’s was very clear. Its objective was to educate the Muslim *umat* to be skillful and clever in carrying itself in its fight for the teachings of Islam in Indonesia. To be frank, my brain and my heart have wrestled long and hard with these thoughts of his, given the actual sociological conditions in Indonesia. I finally arrived at the conclusion that Hatta’s idea should be greeted positively, because of course it embodies the crucial issue that has for decades burdened our Muslim *umat* when speaking about the relationship of Islam and politics. As I have said repeatedly, if people want to fight for Islamic teachings in Indonesia, use “the science of salt, not the science of lipstick.” When salt dissolves into food, it leaves no visible trace, but its effect in the taste is certainly decisive. In contrast, the lipstick worn by women is eye-catching red, but it is tasteless. Hatta was very sharp in perceiving the connection between Islam and the Indonesian soul. So far, I have yet to find such advice from anyone else, including from the top leaders of the Islamic parties in the past, let alone today.

These words by Mohammad Hatta were so strategic in interpreting and dissecting the link between Islam and Indonesianness that I am going to take several pages here to discuss them. Who does not know Mohammad Hatta, the leader with a character as strong as coral? He was

as well a moralist seldom matched in modern Indonesian history, an authentic Pancasila leader in theory and practice. I would definitely react if any group called Hatta a secularist, simply because of the matter of the “seven words” that went missing from the Jakarta Charter in the summer of 1945.

With his sincere belief, Hatta was unwilling to witness Indonesian Islam as lipstick, visible but not tasteable, occupied with ceremony but lacking in substance, bellowing “*Allahu akbar!*” while wrecking and defaming other people. For Hatta, faith was something subtle that teaches humankind to be civilized and to possess an elegant courtesy in human intercourse.

To see Hatta’s character from a distance, let us look at what Arnold Mononutu, a companion of Hatta’s since 1923 in the Netherlands, had to say, and then we will consider Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX’s impression of him.

In April 1923, when the Indische Vereeniging was about to change its name to PI (Perhimpunan Indonesia), Mononutu was invited by Alex Maramis to be present at The Hague to witness this name change. Mononutu at first doubted whether Hatta and his friends in the PI would want him there, because he was “neither Indonesian nor Dutch.” What happened next? Mononutu was accepted with great warmth. This is the testimony of that Christian nationalist figure: “I was greatly moved that I was accepted as I was by Bung Hatta, Soebardjo, Nazir Sutan Pamuntjak, Iwa Koesoemasoemantri – the leaders of the PI. From then on, I no longer danced and drank liquor at the hotels, and I worked only for Indonesia, from 1923 in the PI up until now [1984]. From that moment, Perhimpunan Indonesia gave me an Indonesian nationality! From 1923, Bung Hatta became my loyal comrade until he passed away.”<sup>44</sup>

This statement proves that it was the PI in 1923 that infused the “virus” of nationhood into Arnold Mononutu. Before that, he was only a young Minahasan who did not feel he was Indonesian – Indonesia as a nation, of course, had not appeared before the 1920s. Because he was directly affected by Hatta’s strong character, Mononutu gave up his playboy life in Europe.<sup>45</sup>

When Hatta visited Paris, he would usually work in Mononutu’s room at the Hôtel du Progrès. One day, Hatta wanted to borrow Mononutu’s typewriter. “Arnold,” he said, “lend me the typewriter. I want to type a letter.” Because the typewriter had already been pawned, this was Mononutu’s reaction:

I made a pretense of looking for it. Bung Hatta watched me and said, “Ach, Arnold, the typewriter’s not something small. Why are you looking

for it like that? Where is it?" I was forced to admit that Soebardjo and I had pawned it and the money had been spent on messing around in bars. Hatta got really angry and exclaimed, "That's national property, and you had the nerve to interfere with national property! That is absolutely no good!!"<sup>46</sup>

Mononutu was quite honest about the past, even though it was very spotty, as one might say. Mononutu did not want to pretend he had been pure; he examined himself critically as he really had been. This is the sign of a great-spirited person.

And now the testimony of Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX about Hatta when the capital of the republic had to move from Jakarta to Yogyakarta to continue the revolution. Here is what he had to say:

While the other leaders were busy relating their travels, Bung Hatta was totally absorbed in the political situation. After his own exhausting journey, the first thing he asked was about the fighting spirit of the people in Yogya. Could the economy of the people support the struggle for independence? Did they understand what it meant to be independent? He said very little about himself. I got the positive impression that what he put above all else was our struggle and the condition of the people. This really impressed me. If everyone had had his spirit, there would have been no power in the world that could have crushed our revolution for independence.<sup>47</sup>

Now that we have seen the testimonies of these two national figures about Hatta, the next thing will be an analysis of "the science of salt" and "the science of lipstick" in the context of the history of modern Indonesia. It was Nurcholish Madjid (1939–2005) among the Indonesian intellectuals who gave quite serious thought to the right form for the relationship of Islam to Indonesian identity. Very unlike the Muslim leaders of the older generation, Nurcholish did not want to drain away any more energy in pitting Islam against Pancasila. He saw that they were not truly in opposition. As Nurcholish wrote, "Some Islamic values are actually found in the national ideology, especially Pancasila."<sup>48</sup> He even added that "so far, Pancasila appears to be satisfactory and now, practically speaking, it constitutes the single ideology of the nation."<sup>49</sup> But, he continued, Pancasila, in the hands of irresponsible politicians, has been a bitter experience for this nation, in that it has strayed from its real function "as a foothold and a common value."<sup>50</sup> Yet although it has been misappropriated, for the Indonesian nation "the basis of Pancasila is a factor that gives color and character to each political or social idea

that grows in its soil.”<sup>51</sup> In support of Hatta’s view, for Nurcholish “the principle of God the One and the Only is the primary principle and the main one that spotlights and becomes the source in human life.”<sup>52</sup>

As I have said earlier, the acceptance of Pancasila as the philosophical foundation of the state by the younger Indonesian Muslim thinkers has been a conscious acceptance, neither from calculation of power politics, nor to replace Islam with Pancasila, which in any case would be impossible. These thinkers are an educated generation who live in times far different from the earlier years that were preoccupied by exhausting clashes over the foundation of the state. Lines of thinking and intellectual strategies are now different: “The science of salt is more important than the science of lipstick.” They value Hatta as the visionary father of the nation when they peer into the future of Indonesia. They know that it cannot be torn apart by useless and tedious philosophical debates, and that the spirit of the sharia in the form of justice for all the people is far more important than the official form, devoid of content and quality.

This, of course, suggests another question, if the “science of salt” is also not effective in improving the character and morals of the Indonesian nation, then what science must we look for to do this? Those who profess “the science of lipstick” will surely let out loud cries: “We’ve reminded you all along that you won’t get anywhere with the cultural approach without formal protection by a constitution like the Jakarta Charter.” This succinct argument does make sense, but if we want to think calmly and with an eye to history, the facts speak differently. Let us take the example of Pakistan, which, following its proclamation of independence in 1947, was driven by the energy and spirit of Islam, and which in 1957 officially called itself the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Apart from having become a nuclear power, Pakistan in actuality is not better than our Pancasila Republic. Fighting between political parties never stops, there have been a string of military coups, and corruption there is no less awful than in Indonesia. Do our friends who advocate “the science of lipstick” close their eyes to a reality such as this one? Jamaat-e Islami (the Islamic Congress), the party created by Abul A’la Maududi (1903–1979), which was so enthusiastic and hard-working with the purely Islamic label, never received significant backing from the Pakistani people. The zigzag course of the party between opposing and supporting the government has brought it to a steady loss of authority.

Meanwhile, in the global order, the world of Islam is still very nervous and vulnerable. “The science of lipstick” is on display everywhere, while “the science of salt” seems to be ignored. The late Fazlur Rahman, in one of his classes at the University of Chicago early in the 1980s, bemoaned

how problematic the world of Islam was, even to the point of uttering these words: “We live in a different kind of Islam, not in a Quranic Islam.” I have often repeated this tragic statement in different forums to show just how wide the gap is between the ideals of the Quran and the reality of the fragmented brotherhood of the Muslim *umat* – for nothing is more emblematic here than how difficult it is for this *umat* to raise up the spirit of brotherhood that this holy scripture so explicitly and keenly commands. Look at what is happening in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq, which are being torn apart by bloody strife between ethnic factions. It is as if these dramas are the gift of the world of Islam to the twenty-first century. It really is a tragedy.

Of course we can validly accuse others of playing us off against our fellow Muslims. But we must not forget that these others can only create turmoil in our ranks because our ranks are themselves in turmoil. When corruption fills the *umat*, that is the very time that external foes are the most eager to weaken us, if not destroy us, and then rob us of our wealth. We are often powerless. Indeed, a number of Muslim countries really do have great assets coveted by foreigners, in the form of tremendous mineral wealth that has highly strategic value in the “game of global chess”: oil, coal, gold, and timber. All of that has been in foreign gunights for decades now, particularly oil, a large proportion of which is buried in Muslim soil.

A basic question is, with so much potential wealth, why are the majority of Muslim countries impoverished, while a minority of them prosper? The answer is simple: the sense of inter-*umat* solidarity has long been feeble. There are drops of needed assistance here and there for the poor of the *umat*, not to empower them, but only to keep them from starving to death. That is why we feel so deep and piercing a heartache at seeing such wealth; instead of bringing our hearts ever closer, as fellow Muslims, to help each other, it drives us farther and farther apart. Not infrequently, oil is made into an instrument by rich Muslim countries to oppress and force other Muslim peoples to submit to hegemony, for the sake of power politics.

Over the course of the history of the *umat*, Islam as the cement of brotherhood is so often neglected, as if this religion has lost its energy to unite us. Even more ironic is the fact that Muslim countries that are rich in oil often surrender their purses to be squeezed by foreigners, who are unwilling to see Islam emerge as a force in determining the direction of global civilization. The strange thing is, those who are squeezed actually feel protected. The rich region of Southwest Asia has long been under the strong influence of the United States, even while this region’s political rhetoric speaks out against foreign domination.

The Islamic world has yet to awaken to the commands of its religion to emerge as the arbiter of human civilization. How far we are from that position! Truly, we “live in another Islam.” But as Muslims, we naturally may not lose hope, no matter how dark the path we have to tread. The divine word of Allah in the Surah Yusuf tells us: “[They continued] until, when the messengers despaired and were certain that they had been denied, there came to them Our victory, and whoever We willed was saved. And Our punishment cannot be repelled from the people who are criminals.”<sup>53</sup> This is a sign to the Muslim *umat* to continue acting and working sincerely, earnestly, and creatively as we await the assistance that, sooner or later, must come. We believe that surely this *umat*, after being bludgeoned by history, will understand in time, and Islam will again be the great force in joining together the hearts that have been scattered. The Quran still awaits the Muslim *umat* to consult it to find solutions to the many complex problems that confront humanity, as I will now explain further.<sup>54</sup>

### The Global Map: Between Hope and Alarm

If, when we scrutinize the face of Islam, we see that it is still marred and blemished at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we also see that the map of global civilization is far from perfected if seen from the system of prophetic values.<sup>55</sup> In fact, these values are all the more cast adrift, whether in the stream of secularism and atheism, or in the current of religious fundamentalism. Richard Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, and an anti-Zionist American Jew, wrote this in early 1998, two years before the turn of the century:

The advent of the new millennium leads us, at the very least, to embolden the imagination. It is a marker thrown on the shore in the darkness of night while the river of history rushes by. We see no more and no less than what imagination allows, especially our deepest hopes and our most dreaded fears. This millennial passage encourages extremes of expectation: the end of the world or the beginning of a new order.<sup>56</sup>

This excerpt is very poetic. The river of history has flowed for well over a decade since Falk’s words appeared. The world has indeed not yet ended, but a new order, more friendly and bringing hope to all of humanity, has yet to show its face. Several Muslim nations such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine are still lashed by suffering. The hope for full independence for Palestine has not yet been realized. Indonesia, the biggest Muslim nation,

still has not recovered from its various social illnesses. The arrogance of the superpower state is not abating. Religion and the values of sincerity have long ceased to be important considerations in relations between civilizations. Economic considerations and power politics appear to have replaced religion as the highest moral reference points. It is as if God has no place and is “powerless” in the modern world.

The world has indeed been set loose and turned on its head. If the European Middle Ages are viewed as disrespecting the dignity of human beings in the interest of God, then, especially since the Renaissance, the situation has swung to the other pole. Thus, in the interest of humankind, “the great idea about God was repressed in modern culture,” as the French thinker Maurice Clavel has said.<sup>57</sup> Of course, formal acknowledgment of and respect for God still appear, including on some countries’ money, but human actions have long disregarded God. God is still stamped on us coinage (“In God We Trust”),<sup>58</sup> but neo-imperialist wars against powerless nations go on and on, under a thousand pretexts. The United Nations has long been barren of ideas to stop the barbaric aggressions of the strong countries. Will the course of this twenty-first century offer a scintilla of hope? This is hard for us to answer, even if we have never lost hope.

Significant religious figures have often gathered to find a common point to formulate the contribution of religion to peace, but so far without effect. Between 2000 and 2007, I, too, have joined these global ecumenical meetings. They were inspired by deep concern, but what could spiritual leaders do in the face of rulers who were deaf to them? At the same time, we must admit the bitter fact that it is far from clear that an atmosphere of peace has been realized within the religions themselves, quite apart from modern secularism’s longstanding indifference to what is called faith. On September 7–9, 2003, in Aachen, Germany, an international meeting was organized with the theme “War and Peace: Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue.” In this meeting, I delivered a paper titled “Indonesian Islam and the Muhammadiyah’s Humanitarian Mission.” It laid open my determination in the circle of the world’s religious notables to find a new formula for world peace. The main obstacle is the rulers who prefer to stir up war. In a world lacking in morals, it will be very difficult for us to see the establishment of the dictum: Right is might. What we find is just the opposite: Might is right.

Our present century is clamped in a vise between atheistic secularism and hope for peace with God. We eagerly await the creation of a new balance whereby humankind is still in the honored position, but Heaven is invited to address the world again; the present imbalance weighs us down like a shoulder pole we have lost the strength to carry. In



1937, two years before the outbreak of World War II, Albert Einstein reminded humanity of the similar functions of religion, the arts, and the sciences:

All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it above the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual toward freedom. It is no mere chance that our older universities have developed from clerical schools. Both the church and the university – insofar as they live up to their true function – serve the ennoblement of the individual. They seek to fulfill this great task by spreading moral and cultural understanding, renouncing the use of brute force.<sup>59</sup>

The reality that stretches out before us at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not the prevalence of moral and cultural understanding, but quite the opposite, the use of brute force by the strong against the weak, resulting in thousands of innocent victims. The main targets this time are a number of Muslim nations, as I have said. Science is used, not to “glorify mankind,” as Einstein had hoped in his testimony above, but to annihilate it.

President George W. Bush was the person most responsible at the beginning of the twenty-first century for the practice of that cruelty and malignancy. The irony is that Bush sees himself as a religious person, even a devout one. This fanaticism, with the credo of “[you are] either with us or against us,” has divided the world into two sharply opposed camps – but because of America's invulnerability, the other camp, which includes the United Nations, is powerless. What is so very bizarre is that about 30 to 40 percent of those who voted for Bush often see this regime as acting in the interest of a religion of Biblical prophecy and the second coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>60</sup> How absurd it is that, for the sake of oil, gas, and other energy, religion has been bartered by American Christian fundamentalist circles, just as Muslim fundamentalist groups have done. Bush and Osama, both fundamentalists, have made the world unsafe: Bush with his neo-imperialist acrobatics, Osama with his theology of death.

The destruction of Iraq is the result of the adventures of Bush and his neocon advisers in the imperialistic foreign policy circles of the United States. Bringing down Saddam Hussein was only a pretext to control Iraq's petroleum at its source. Noam Chomsky, an American anti-war expert, has harshly criticized the invasion of Iraq by America and its allies. He has said that people are made to believe that America would have liberated Iraq even if its main products “were lettuce and pickles, and

the main energy source of the world were in central Africa.”<sup>61</sup> What he meant was that, if Iraq did not have a strategic energy source in the form of oil, America would not have even glanced sideways at it, a country that had a high civilization before and during the Abbasid Empire. Then, when asked about Bush, Chomsky answered that Bush was only the symbol of the people who surrounded him as “the most dangerous administration in American history.”<sup>62</sup> In Bush’s hands, democracy was used as a cloak for the desire to oppress other people who were powerless and themselves too afraid to provoke America.

In a survey published simultaneously in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Mexico on November 4, 2006, President Bush was viewed by a large majority of respondents as “a danger to world peace,” ranking second after Osama bin Laden.<sup>63</sup> As I see it, Bush should be classified as a war criminal. His escapades have truly alarmed the world, including the West itself. If such adventurism is not stopped, the fast-flowing river of history, to borrow Falk’s words, will gradually fill the world with blood and tears, and civilization will no longer be distinguished from barbarism. Fortunately, in the 2006 midterm elections for the US Senate and the House of Representatives, the Republican Party was defeated, a sign that the Bush administration had been rejected.<sup>64</sup> It is too late to punish Bush; that is not how democracy works. Two years later, in the election of the American president on November 4, 2008, the Republican candidate was defeated by Barack Obama, who became the first black president of the United States.

To return to the question of democracy – whether or not there is a better alternative to democracy for providing people with the freedom to assess a would-be leader. This is the dilemma of democracy: people must be patient with this system, and sometimes must even suffer the results of the evil acts of an elected leader. Evil must be rejected with moral and intellectual force when it invokes the name of democracy and basic human rights. A superpower must not tyrannically manipulate humanity out of greed for wealth and power. Humanity that is still pure surely opposes criminal acts, no matter who does them, regardless of religion and politics.

In an interview by the *Pravda* journalist Lisa Karpova, Kent Mesplay of the American Green Party was asked about the difficulty of identifying an alternative presidential candidate from a third party in the United States. This is a country where everything political has been bought up by the Republican and Democratic parties: democracy with a two-party system has prevented other forces from emerging. Lisa Karpova asked him, “As we can see, the present system acts very much against third

parties. What steps do you think are needed to break the stranglehold of this two-party system?" This was Mesplay's reply:

The first step would be to allow candidates equal time and access to media coverage .... Running for office is a money-grab, with backup provided by the committees in the two parties that accept funding and direction from corporations [e.g., debates are not regulated impartially but rather deemed expensive "in kind" political contributions, and are corporate-driven in contents and appearance]. So, getting the money out of politics is important, such as by publicly funded campaigns. Still, rather than just have taxpayers subsidize advertising agencies, it would be better to reinstitute equal access laws. Also, having proportional representation and, as a step to this, preferential voting such as I.R.V. [instant run-off voting, with ranked choices on the ballot for a single seat] will help improve representation and alternative party access.<sup>65</sup>

Mesplay's hopes express an ideal, to be sure, but would unquestionably be very difficult to realize at a time when politics is dominated by money and the law sides with corporations. But that ideal system of democracy needs to be aspired to and put into action so that politics does not transform into a commodity, as seen in almost every system of Western-style democracy and in other countries that imitate these systems. In Indonesia too, this money-game sickness is now an open secret, whether in electing members to seats in the legislature or leaders to the executive branch. As a result, a leadership candidate who is good but poor is almost sure to have no chance. This is a real tragedy! If people become impatient spectators at the corrupt game of politics, there will surely arise greater and greater waves of apathy, a dark advertisement for democracy in Indonesia.

Thus, it is not surprising why approximately half the people in the United States do not participate by voting in presidential elections. The citizens of this important country are fed up with the waste of taxpayer money in these elections. The domination by the two parties seems to have become an obligatory axiom in the US political system. An identical situation occurs as well in the United Kingdom with the dominance of the Conservative Party and the Labour Party, which simply rotate in office from election to election.

Several Muslim countries have become the prey of brute force, to use Einstein's words. In regard to this problem, at the end of January 2008 I came out with a *Resonansi* column titled "Fukuyama, Neocons, and Mayhem." Here is an excerpt:

Why are these three terms lined up to form the title of *Resonansi* today? The answer is that they will be the core of what I will be presenting to my readers. The last sentence in my *Resonansi* of June 8, 2004, was, "It is not just the American people who have been fooled by Bush, but the whole world has been, too. This is the modern civilization (or more correctly, the barbarity) under the leadership of the White House, which has intervened in other states, on the basis of public deceit."

Thanks to this trickery, it would appear that barbarism and tumult have obtained approval among some of the public so that Bush was reelected president of the United States in 2004. Now [early 2008], after the abscess of this mendacity has been increasingly exposed, George W. Bush, who has just been called Ehud Olmert's vassal by Uri Avnery, the former member of Israel's Knesset, peace activist and anti-Zionist, has long since lost the authority to say anything at all about the imperialist foreign policy of his country.

Bush was the hero of the neocons (the "neoconservatives"), who pushed him into attacking Iraq, which spread disorder and suffering. And what about Francis Fukuyama? This influential writer is a US citizen, born in Chicago in 1952 to Japanese parents. His father studied the sociology of religion at the University of Chicago. Fukuyama received his PhD from Harvard. There he got to know Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated on December 27, 2007. One of the neocon "brains," Paul Wolfowitz, former American ambassador in Jakarta, had been Fukuyama's mentor and friend for decades. However, the US invasion of Iraq, which Fukuyama opposed, severed their association, and from 2004 Fukuyama became an apostate from the neocon ideology when he supported the Democrat John Kerry in his run for the presidency.

Fukuyama is a first-rate sociopolitical philosopher who had originally been praised by the neocon group. After he cut himself off from them, all kinds of accusations were leveled against him, including that of antisemitism. When he was still in the neocon environment, his controversial work *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) was attacked by British political philosophers as the work of a palace philosopher advocating global capitalism. In this work, Fukuyama appears to be the chief defender of capitalism and liberal democracy as the acme of history. But by taking such a position, he allowed himself to sink into the vicious cycle of blind fanaticism.

History seems to have stopped with no longer anything superior to capitalism and liberal democracy, which under the Bush regime destroyed the pillars of civilization that had initially been so glorified

by the original neocons. As a result, the neocons now have nothing to offer to the public, thanks to Bush's dark foreign policies.

I need to insert here that there are as well fanatic evangelicals supporting Bush who are very close to Zionism. For these Christian evangelicals, to quote Martin Kramer, "The American Interest" in *Azure (Ideas for the Jewish Nation 26, 2006)*: "Israel is, for them, the manifestation of a divine plan, and they support it as a matter of faith." So it is not at all surprising why Bush, as Avnery sees it, is nothing more than Olmert's vassal, in view of his weakness in confronting the pronouncements of the leader of Zionist Israel.

Another view of Fukuyama's that dealt an insightful blow to the neocon contemporary political doctrine was that "Islamic terrorism is not an existential threat to the United States, that political Islam has demonstrated itself to be a failure everywhere it has taken power, and that the Islamic terrorist movement had been largely a failure prior to 9/11. Those attacks, as well as the Iraq war, gave it a new lease on life," as quoted by Robert S. Boynton in *The American Prospect* online (September 18, 2005).

In short, the 9/11 tragedy and the invasion of Iraq have given the breath of a longer life to these radical movements. But this tragedy, which also gave the Bush name the bounce it needed for a second election victory, after that [gave Bush] an increasingly "fallen" name, fallen because the opportunity to govern was not used to create a culture of global wisdom, as I had proposed to him when we met in Bali on October 23, 2003. Rather than building a civilization, the neocons have instead created an empire of barbarity and arrogance on the face of the earth.<sup>66</sup>

The United States under Bush was truly isolated from the global discourse, a foreign policy burden that was very difficult for his successor in 2009 to overturn. Slightly encouraging was the fact that the young people of America were becoming aware of how bad had been the impact of the foreign policy adventures of the neocons. Not just bad for the rest of the world, but bad also for the American people who had been deceived by their leaders. I have repeatedly presented the idea, in various forums and media, that an imperialistic foreign policy is not just obsolete, but also legalizes barbarism in the name of democracy and basic human rights. Here is the failure of America's foreign policy that forces its will on powerless nations. That power has never been able to learn, nor does it want to learn, from its many postwar failures. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the United States become the sole superpower, and before long it suffered a relapse of its historical amnesia. Power often does blind

the powerful and kill the conscience, so that what we call global wisdom never claims its appropriate place in the foreign policy of the superpower that is steadily losing its authority.

There are writers who predict that the United States, as the only superpower of the post-Cold War era, will be destroyed just like its former rival, the Soviet Union. But according to the analyst Fareed Zakaria, what will occur is not the destruction of the United States as a nation-state, but instead the loss of its authority as a superpower to dictate to the world, because of “the rise of the rest” – especially in the areas of economics and investment. Zakaria notes that the biggest investment on earth is now in Abu Dhabi; the biggest movie industry is in Bollywood, not in Hollywood; the tallest building is in Taipei, and (as I write this) soon to be in Dubai; the biggest public company is in Beijing, not in New York; the biggest passenger plane is made in Europe, not in the United States. All these factors by themselves tell us that America’s days as the single global superpower have now ended.<sup>67</sup> Naturally, all these facts make America, so haughty for so long, very worried, but, I wonder, are the elite of that country smart enough to learn from history? As we read in the theories of Ibn Khaldun, whoever has reached the top has nothing to do except go back down. Humankind’s biggest problem throughout history is that the supporters of civilization are unaware that the position at the top is now headed for collapse, sooner or later.

In the history of Islam, we have the case of the Ottoman Empire, which lasted almost seven centuries but finally was unable to escape the iron law of history. This empire collapsed in 1924, never to arise again. Its decay had gone on for some three centuries. The American elite generally are interested in history, but now that their power is at its peak they have become careless and inattentive, as though their nation’s exalted position will last forever. Was President Barack Obama, with his philosophy of change, able to transform the gloomy face of America in the global order? Such enormous challenges are not easily overcome.

## Chapter 5 Islam, Humanity, and Indonesian Identity

This work was written at a time when the map of global humanity presented a particularly ominous picture, one very far from an image of justice and conviviality. The genocide in the Gaza Strip at the end of December 2008 and through January 2009, a barbarity that was criticized worldwide, was allowed to continue for twenty-two days. Even within Indonesia the situation was far from calm and hopeful. In the formulation of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, “In a society, justice is only called justice where there is no difference between those who are near to us and those who are far from us.”<sup>1</sup> Here, “we” and “they” must be seen from the perspective of a humanism that is sound and unimpaired, not a bogus humanism. The inequality between rich countries and the rest of the world is vast. The Islamic world, which controls a decisive proportion of the world’s oil energy reserves, has not yet awakened sufficiently to play its historical role, owing to poor leadership. I find this situation alarming. Others, too, who are honest and clear-headed in their thinking are surely aware of it, but the magnitude of the problem has thwarted them. Fortunately, they still speak out on behalf of justice for all.

Those at the apex of the pyramid of power are generally not interested in the serious problems that the Muslim *umat* must face in achieving a just and civilized society. They are not even genuinely interested in defending the dignity of their own people, whose conditions continue to deteriorate. Their energy is drained by the never-ending struggles of power politics. These rulers think nothing of selling the dignity and sovereignty of an entire nation to foreign interests just to earn foreign exchange to cover the corruption-riddled and chronically deficit-saddled national budget. Indonesia is well known in the ranks of such countries for its many sales of state assets, but it continues in this path. Our nation still has a “low birth rate” of political visionaries who are ready to defend this country consciously and responsibly.

But, as the analysis presented in this book shows, Islam, Indonesianness, and humanity can not only walk together, but these three values can unite in building a uniquely Indonesian “pleasure park.” These three “value forces” must be complementary. In this pleasure park, the universal character of Islam appears in the form of a just and civilized human-

ity. Islam is the religion embraced by the majority of the population of Nusantara, and all movements of an Indonesian character must always bear in mind this socio-historical reality in the interest of security and peace.

The success of this religion in achieving its noble aim must be pursued in noble and civilized ways. Off this path, Islam will halt at the level of soulless ritual, while its main mission will have fallen along the wayside. What remains will only be its skeleton in a formal, if not monstrous, shape, silent as to the subtle, refined, and refreshing values of humanity. It would no longer be an Islam that lives and brings life, nor indeed, prophetic Islam or Quranic Islam, which is always the inspiration for doing what is best for all creatures: Did not Allah create death and life to test who amongst us is best in deed?<sup>2</sup>

Even without evaluating the various sociological factors scientifically, I now see, after years of observation, two possibilities for all radical movements on the left or the right: First, there are movements that will never grow, their energy dissipated in fruitless pursuits, even if they act in the name of God. Second, there are movements that are born to fail, lasting only till the first harvest season and then disappearing, leaving behind much historical trauma and many victims. The PKI throughout Indonesia and DI/TII (Dar'ul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia – the House of Islam/the Indonesian Army of Islam) in Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi are examples; their historical legacy has not been long gone from us. We will never know for sure to how many lives were cut short and how much of the people's property was stripped from them in the name of "belief" or of Marxism. If movements like these represent the mainstream, then you can imagine the fate of Islam in Indonesia. Perhaps all that will remain will be memories. Luckily, its mainstream still advances in reason and conscience, even though the pull of power politics frequently weakens the main mission of this mainstream. At a time when politics has become a livelihood, there are naturally not many leaders who can survive in the sphere of idealism.

W.S. Rendra's proposal of a "Culture Machine" [*Mesin Budaya*] representing the people's sovereignty for shaping a just and creative Indonesia of the future interests me. In his speech upon being awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa from Gadjah Mada University on March 4, 2008, Rendra proposed the following: "The 'Cultural Machine' that is the people's sovereignty, just, humanitarian, and appreciative of the dynamics of life, is the 'Cultural Machine' that can stimulate the vitality and creativity of the members of society within this state. But the 'Cultural Machine' that is the rulers' sovereignty, which oppresses and colonizes, is elitist, not populist, and is very dangerous."<sup>3</sup>



Rendra is speaking to the level of the state in Indonesia that is not much changed since the colonial period. “The rulers’ sovereignty” nearly always defeats “the people’s sovereignty.” “People’s sovereignty” is another name for a healthy democracy. The historian Anhar Gonggong makes a point about the relationship between democratic institutions and their protagonists that is well worth reflecting on: healthy democracy is maintained “not only by having the institutions of a democratic state, but particularly by the emergence of leaders of character and personal integrity in those institutions.”<sup>4</sup> As mentioned repeatedly here, democracy always demands political players of honesty, responsibility, broad-mindedness, and, obviously, integrity. This integrity is what Indonesia needs to form and nurture in its political players, for the building of a democratic system that will always be on the side of the common good.

At the same time, in society, we perceive a culture of harshness displayed by a small group of people lacking in wisdom. This has given rise to a widespread negative reaction holding that Islam is no longer the source of blessings, as has been often said; that instead, Islam has been forced to become the source of calamity and of violence by irresponsible people teaching mistaken and ahistorical interpretations. Muslims must bring meritorious deeds to confront them. This means that we must be able to provide a better alternative if we assess a system as unjust or un-Islamic. This can only be accomplished by great minds that are sincere, patient, and intelligent. It is not the work of rioters or demonstrators with cries of “*Allahu akbar!*” but of one who is noble, serious, and properly directed. The weakness of Islamic civilization in this century is an *umat* that still fails to offer a system of life that realizes the dictum, “a blessing for the universe.” This great historical claim awaits the appearance of young people who are talented, inclusive, and broad-minded, who have humanitarian commitments that are genuine and knowledge-based. Creating an Islam in Indonesia that shows a friendly face to its surroundings is the main task that cannot be forgotten for even a second.

The mainstream as represented by the NU and Muhammadiyah, with all its various shortcomings, has nevertheless been a trade mark for Islamic movements that are moderate, modern, open, inclusive, and constructive. This does not mean that there are no scoundrels in this mainstream, but they have not put their stamp on it and they are usually sidelined from the inner management and leadership. Their thinking seems too foreign to be able to fuse with a mainstream that is Indonesian in character and promotes a friendly Islam. Contemporary Indonesia is fortunate because these two big currents are not moving apart, but rather coming closer to complement each other’s strengths and cover each other’s weaknesses and shortcomings.

Although the strength of the NU is almost entirely concentrated in Java and South Kalimantan, its national influence must always be considered. Naturally, the instinct for power politics of some of its leading figures often disrupts the advance of the NU as a cultural and intellectual movement. This problem has forced the NU to rethink the future framework of Indonesian Islam. For me, cultural movements have to be supported by bold intellectual qualities, but also accompanied by patience and sympathy. The NU has charted an extraordinary path in intellectual development, thanks to the modern education that has spread far into the world of the *pesantren*.

In the meantime, Muhammadiyah, which is slightly more impervious to the temptations of power politics, has the slogan, "Muhammadiyah doesn't go anywhere, but is everywhere." In reality, such a position cannot always be maintained, to say nothing if a top cadre is involved in national politics. Experience during the rather chaotic Reform era presents strong proof of that statement. Naturally, it would be ideal if the NU and Muhammadiyah were led by cultural power that was cohesive but not allergic to politics. Taking part in power on these two cultural bases would be decisive in influencing the path of Indonesian history, before, now, and in the future.

As to the young intellectuals of the NU and the Muhammadiyah, I hope they devote their innovative and creative thinking to an Indonesian Islam in the post-Muhammadiyah and post-NU paradigm. I have often been in dialogue with and associated with young people in this mainstream. My conclusion is that they have a very open attitude, quite different from the elder generation. We have to understand that Muhammadiyah and the NU are not religions, but rather movements to achieve the aims of Islam – which include the entire dimension of human existence – to uphold justice, brotherhood, and community in pluralistic Indonesian society.

Therefore, seeing the shining intellectual development among the young people of these two major streams, we may ponder whether perhaps it is only a question of time before the leadership falls into their hands in a democratic fashion. With that in mind, these young folk should not lose hope when faced with leaders whom they view as neither visionary nor engaged, and they should beware of running off to form new splinter groups. These would be very difficult to grow, and all the while they consume so much energy and thought in the effort.

In my view, the wise approach would be for them to stay within the wave of the mainstream. They should maintain strong, but respectful, critical powers, while creating a field conducive to the appearance of a new generation of leaders possessing moral and intellectual integrity that is recognized on all sides. The young members of the NU and

Muhammadiyah must constantly conduct intensive dialogue in their efforts to formulate and settle the form of the relationship of Islam and Indonesian identity. Movement in that direction has commenced, but we still need a sharper vision so that the Islamic image that appears is that of an Islam that shelters and protects all groups. The war drums being beaten by a small clutch of individuals must be confronted with the drumbeats of peace, justice, courtesy, inclusiveness, and pluralism. In this effort we employ means that are fully authoritative because we are certain of the principle of truth that we hold.

What I have written here is far from perfect; these young people and the young people of other religions will perfect it for me. My message to them is to keep up their spiritual stamina and sincere commitment to a just and prestigious Indonesia. We look to the structuring of Indonesia as a “dwelling,” to borrow the expression of Jakob Oetama, “to provide that feeling of comfort in our lives together as a nation and as a state”<sup>5</sup> – not an Indonesia torn to pieces by centrifugal forces or the clash of parochial interests in the name of faction, religion, ethnic group, and history.

Indonesia is still in the process of becoming an intact and united nation. Indonesia is not a given. Rather, it has to be constantly and ceaselessly struggled for. Our negligence since Proclamation shows that we take a frivolous attitude toward maintaining and guarding this thing that is no given. It is a sign of thinking that everything is in order. This parochial point of view is one of the reasons why Indonesia frequently faces sociopolitical explosions that drain energy and attention, and, not infrequently, blood.

The potential within the NU and Muhammadiyah for guarding the integrity of the Indonesian nation is really extraordinary. That the older leadership occasionally feels uncomfortable with the doings of these youth is nothing strange. After all, every progressive intellectual breakthrough is sure to create shock and possibly even suspicion; provided the ideas being offered stand on a sufficiently strong religious and rational foundation, however, the old order will quietly go along. We generally see this occurring because of the generation gap in reading, information, and the scope of social intercourse. Young people are perhaps more ravenous in devouring new and fresh reading material, while the old cling to the treasury of classics whose relevance to new developments is uncertain. This appears to be the historical tendency in almost all Muslim countries. Islamic civilization cannot be allowed to become the proverbial dry *sirih* leaf on the stone, that is, “reluctant to live and afraid to die.” We need courage for making a breakthrough by standing with both feet on religious arguments that are understood properly and intelligently, textually as well as contextually. Let us not make an idol of classical

Islamic exegesis so that no one has the courage to interpret Islam in a new, fresh, and responsible way. Such new interpretations must be valid in scientific terms, but still remain within the parameters of sincere belief.

All Islamic movements in Indonesia must always remember and carefully take into consideration that clashes that carry the scent of religion, ethnicity, and culture must not happen again in the future. The price to be paid is too high. To a certain extent these have already wrecked the atmosphere of our lovely pleasure park of Nusantara. Indonesia, a nation-state that is less than a century old and has experienced the bitter and the sweet, must learn as skillfully as it can and pluck wisdom from a past that is filled with beautiful experiences and things of great value. Because Indonesians have chosen democracy as their political system and have struggled in its name for a century now, since the beginning of the national movement, we cannot be half-hearted in defending it, however exhausting it can be.

Once again, democracy in the hands of political adventurers can be a source of disaster and suffering, as has been well demonstrated by America's imperialist foreign policy under President George W. Bush, who used various false pretexts to destroy other nations. Similar abuses of democracy happen everywhere on earth. But here is another question: has any political system in history been known to establish equality among people except democracy? The Islamic political system in the period following the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (after 661 CE), even though there were some who still governed properly as caliphs, was no more and no less than a system of monarchs who trampled the principles of basic human rights and the freedom of humankind, deviating in both very far from the egalitarian teachings of the Quran.

If we speak about Islam, Indonesianness, and humanity, it means we have entered a domain that is deep and wide. The future of Indonesia we are to build must be accomplished in such a way that anyone who lives in Nusantara feels true pleasure and security, because the principle of justice is valid for all. There will be no discrimination of any kind. Because the majority of the population is Muslim, its responsibility is to create an Indonesia that is just and presents a friendly face, an Indonesia that is very great, in line with the great numbers of this population. But such a responsibility will be hard to carry out if the quality of the Muslim *umat* remains below what it should be, impoverished, badly educated, and volatile. Some even espouse the doctrine of a quick death because they are not being brave enough to live, a doctrine of madness and chaos.

In my opinion as a Muslim, even people of no faith must be protected by the state so long as they obey the constitution and the statutory laws

prevailing in Indonesia, and so long as similar provisions also are in effect for those who acknowledge profession of a faith. The state has no right to punish someone of no faith, so long as this person has not broken the law. Having or not having faith is one's free choice, as long as that is conducted honestly and with full responsibility, and it is not exclusionary. In this perspective, converting from one religion to another or choosing not to have a religion is a basic human right that must be respected. Classic Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which condemns apostates to death, must be reexamined, as it goes against the spirit of the Quran, even if Allah is angry at those who change their faith.

Perhaps the picture I am drawing here is too idealistic, but isn't progress nothing more than dynamic and creative movement toward the ideal? The more a reality nears the imagined ideal, then it is our task to shift that ideal to a higher level, and so continue on like that without stopping. The moment reality fuses with the ideal, we might say that civilization-building has reached a dead end, if not indeed begun to decay. Therefore, the historical dialectic must always be examined so that worn-out elements are put aside without hesitation or placed in the museum of history, while those that are positive and fresh are allowed to unite with new elements in a synthesis that invigorates life. The Quran commands: "O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered."<sup>6</sup> This command calls out for humankind to move toward a life that is meaningful, pleasant and creative, under the divine shelter of theology and prophethood – not to futile death, even in the name of God.

The Quran must be understood holistically, and the red thread of its teaching followed, so that before our eyes stretches out a clear view of the world that is refined, beautiful, and filled with a sense of justice and with blessings for all creatures, without exception. Perhaps such an ideal may be unattainable on the face of this earth. Still, the wheels of civilization must move tirelessly in that direction, even if the way is choked by brambles and thorns. What we call the struggles of life consist in pushing aside those brambles and thorns, bravely and wisely. Whenever the Muslim *umat* can present the colors of life replete with humanistic values, that is the essence of the mission that invigorates, the true mission. Caliph Umar bin Khattab's carrying out the mission through excellent example is what made the Palestinians, who were still not Muslim at that time, weep when he was about to return to Medina. They seemed to be saying, "Umar, do not leave Palestine, even if we and you are not of the same faith." Can Indonesian Islam

bring the nation into the future under the umbrella of “a civilized and just sense of humanity,” where non-Muslims feel free and comfortable living in Nusantara? A Protestant clergyman from North Sulawesi once asked me, “What does ‘properly religious’ mean?” to which I quickly answered, “To be authentic in one’s own religion, in accordance with one’s own holy scripture, understood properly and with complete sincerity.”

In order to strengthen our Indonesianness and humanity, we should no longer look at the Jakarta Charter from a formal and legal perspective, but rather we need to take its spirit by establishing justice for all, without discrimination, throughout Nusantara. At the same time, Pancasila must open the door as widely as possible to accept the moral sources of the religions that flourish in Indonesia. And Islam must provide the greatest contribution. Why Islam? Not simply because it is practiced by the majority of the population, but because the quality of its teaching makes that very much a possibility. None of the five principles of Pancasila, if understood properly and fully, need to be questioned from the angle of Islamic theology. Yet the first *sila*, “God, the One, the Only,” will become an empty principle if justice and prosperity for all do not become the reality in Indonesia. The traumas of the past, when Islam was involved in power politics, must never recur. To put it differently, the Islam that must be offered is an Islam that is prepared to walk hand in hand with the values of Indonesianness and the values of civilized humanity.

Thus, a proper religious attitude must be seen in the honest, whole-hearted, and broad-minded behavior of the religion’s adherents. The differences in each theological system must not be used to diminish the quality of friendship between communities, but rather should be made into a source of mutual enrichment in the religious experience of the Indonesian nation. So, the proposal of this book – to place Islam in the framework of Indonesian identity and humanity – may be something for all groups to reflect on, so that we will be ready to speak with each other in language that is sincere, tolerant, and constructive. Constructive, I mean to say, of an Indonesia that is sovereign, endowed with self-esteem, just, and prosperous – not an Indonesia that is like a *kampung* (village) with no *kampung* head, mocked and manipulated by foreign powers.

In the context of Indonesian Muslim thinkers’ concerns about the future of Islam in the framework of Indonesian identity and humanity, the words of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana are still worth pondering. STA spoke them at the end of his oration on February 11, 1975, at the Building of National Awakening, in Jakarta:

If we look at and compare various expressive cultures, that is, cultures that are ruled by intuition, feelings, artistic and religious fantasies, perhaps the culture of Islam, professed by the majority of Indonesians and which is strong in its religious, scientific, and economic values, seems intended and searches for the answers to human questions of the twentieth century.

But to do that, it may be that the great Islamic thinkers must return to formulating a balance between religion and science, between the secret sanctity of life and the universe with the reality of the empirical world. Who knows, in this age, Indonesia with the largest number of Muslims in the world, may lead the Islamic community of the whole world in facing the times that are coming.<sup>7</sup>

STA's optimism about the future of Islam is a qualified optimism and not an automatic one. The expression "a balance between religion and science" outlines one condition required for Indonesian Islam to appear to lead. For STA, in scrutinizing the map of Indonesian Islam, "the approach through the deductive method is what must be constantly put to the test by the inductive method in the form of empirical experience. In other words, Islamic doctrine that has religious, economic, and scientific value must be brought down to earth to give a basic answer to the questions confronting the human *umat* in this century and in the ones to come."<sup>8</sup>

I have said many times that to make Islam the deciding factor in Indonesia's future, the legal-formal approach will not be effective because it is blind to the sociological reality of this diverse and rich nation. Only a person who cannot read a map would attempt to import to Indonesia the experiences of contemporary Arabia or Afghanistan with Islam as a political and cultural force. It could have only one ending: failure. The sociocultural maps of these counties are very different from the map of Indonesia. Therefore, domestic Indonesian sharia regulations cannot be imposed by force, as this would invite unrest and suspicion. And not just suspicion. In practice, such local regulations themselves do not bring virtue and justice. Yet is the final purpose of sharia not to establish justice and prosperity for all?

Those imports, whether inspired by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the Jamaat-e Islami of Pakistan, or the Hizb Al-Tahrir (Party of Liberation) of Palestine, whether they bear the banner of the transnational caliphate or of the jihad ideology of Afghanistan, will wither in the soil of Indonesia. The cultural makeup is very different in Indonesia, which will surely reject them. The experience of communism, which tried to subjugate Indonesia, also ended in national catastrophe, while at a global level this

ideology was led to the gallows of history. In short, the soil of Nusantara is not fertile for extremist political ideologies in any format, right, left, or center. Historical experience shows that the chemical makeup of Indonesian culture rejects all forms of extremism. Nonetheless, we are aware that forms of extremist ideology will still appear sporadically so long as the justice demanded by the Pancasila does not descend to earth in Nusantara, as a result of the defective consciences of the nation's elite. In their hands Pancasila is turned into amoral political rhetoric. This is the main reason why the Indonesian nation finds it so very difficult to rise up authentically and with dignity.

Thus, the next task is to fill the Pancasila with prophetic values that are rich in morality, ethics, the sources of the law, and eschatological doctrine that would be impossible for humans alone to devise. In the face of these great questions, the Pancasila must stand ready to admit its limitations and to govern itself within the confines of Indonesianness, even though the universal elements of the other four *sila* can be developed much further.

If the Pancasila remains a play of the lips, while its principles are ignored in civic, national, and state life, it is very difficult to imagine any improvement in Indonesia's future. Indonesia has been independent for sixty years, and I have seen almost no administration that truly took the side of the impoverished masses. In the period of Liberal Democracy in the 1950s, two or three cabinets proposed very good programs for the people's welfare, but they had no time to implement them. Interparty squabbling was the major reason for the instability and brief lifespan of the cabinets in that period.

Constructing an edifice of Islam within the framework of Indonesianness and humanity is more the work of proselytization and culture than of politics. Through the approach based on proselytizing and cultural activity, the basic values of Islam, of the "Indonesian soul," and of humanity can be defined carefully and patiently for the long term. If these basic values are strong, then their effect will also be felt in the political realm, that is, in the emergence of the politics of solidarity, not the politics of force that pushes others to the side. Politics led by prophetic values is sure to take the road of peace and justice, even when its actors have different ideologies.

Differences of outlook in the framework of Indonesianness and humanity must be made the motive force for finding a better meeting ground in social, national, and state life. Here is where we find the main key for strengthening the nation's spirit of integration. We must always keep in mind that Indonesia is a young nation still searching for more



appropriate forms through an approach that is intelligent, honest, and responsible. My great desire, before I close my eyes for the last time, is that there will begin to appear, however faintly, the signs of an Indonesia of justice, dignity, and cohesiveness. If such signs do appear, I will feel that my appeals have not been in vain. As someone fascinated by history, I am very aware that to build an Indonesia comprising thousands of islands is no simple task, but that it is nevertheless not impossible. All depends on the good intentions and the capabilities of the people of our nation. Do they want to see Indonesia last for time without end, or fall apart because of leaders who lack vision?

Why do I have hope in the young people of Indonesia? The answer is simple: I still see the potential in our nation's idealistic and knowledgeable young people for leading us toward the goal proclaimed at the time of our independence. I have mentioned this goal several times already. It is the creation of justice for all, prosperity without favoritism, and sincere brotherhood between fellow members of the nation, whatever their ethnicity or religion. This nation now awaits their presence: young people of sensitivity, of conscience. I only hope that we do not have to wait long.

As the author of this book I am fully aware that building such a vast Indonesia is no simple task. But have our experiences of success and failure over so many decades not been enough to make us a nation that has come to its senses? We need not only great minds, but also, and perhaps even more urgently, a clean conscience, as clean as the water of Lake Matano in Sorowako, Sulawesi. Many intelligent minds have been born, but intelligent and sincere hearts must be struggled for. How to marry brain and heart – that is the task for our entire educational system in a not-too-distant future. Development of the brain can give birth to great scientists and technologists. That is not enough, though. It must be accompanied by development of the heart to bring forth wisdom and disinterested sympathy. Indonesia, a large heterogeneous and pluralistic nation, greatly needs leaders who have that intelligence and wisdom. Indonesia's weakness ever since independence lies in its insufficient attention to the dimension of the heart.

In the hands of leaders with these qualities, the “chemical compound” that binds Islam – supported by the other religions that exist in Indonesia – to the values of Indonesianness and humanity will allow this nation to find its genuine and harmonious identity. This compound will give Pancasila the spiritual foundation of resilient prophethood. An Indonesia of the future that is sound and complete needs a spiritual-cultural base that is strong in its endeavors to support the standing and dignity of the nation for the long run, the limitless run.

The spirits of the founders of the Indonesian nation and state will smile in delight in the land beyond if their successors are intelligent, wise, and sensitive of conscience. But these same spirits will weep if the next generations have no more use for the noble values that were engraved in the spirit of this nation from the moment of its formation in the 1920s. This work is my attempt to bring back those great values to guard the course of this nation in a world that is not always friendly. Before my closing appeal, permit me to quote from “Between Karawang and Bekasi,” written in 1949 by Chairil Anwar. This well-known poem is a deeply felt remembrance of those who are not with us but whose services for the nation and state were truly extraordinary:

We are but scattered bones,  
which now belong to you.  
It is you who decide their value:  
Whether we died for freedom, victory, hope,  
or for nothing at all.

We do not know, cannot say.  
You are the ones who must now speak.

We speak to you in the stillness of a silent night  
When the chest feels empty and the wall clock ticks.

Remember, do remember us,  
Carry on, carry on our lives.<sup>9</sup>

## Afterword

I am quite optimistic concerning the future of Islam in the framework of Indonesian identity and humanity, but only if the *umat* places greater importance on quality in all dimensions of life. The Quran teaches the importance of quality for ensuring a bright future: “How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah.”<sup>1</sup> Pay close attention to the meaning of this verse, which at first was addressed to the small army of King Saul as it confronted the much larger army of Jalut (Goliath). The tested army of Saul was small in numbers. The others under Saul’s banner wanted to surrender to Goliath’s army, but in the end, the victory went to the minority who obeyed Saul’s command when they crossed a river. That order was that his army was not to drink their fill, but only a little. The victory of the minority was again seen in Muhammad’s time at the Battle of Badr, at the beginning of the Hijra years: the lesser army of the Muslims defeated the large Quraysh army. We see that a minority can win the day if it possesses the needed conditions. It is obvious here that physical and spiritual quality determine the successes and victories of a community – and this does not exclude the Muslim community in Indonesia. But sadly the Muslim majority in Indonesia for the most part live in poverty and ignorance. How to succeed, when the level of education puts in doubt the ability of most of them to finish primary school?

The leaders of this *umat* therefore must always be deeply aware of the need to improve its conditions if we truly want to see the future of Indonesia on the side of Islam. If it is to succeed, Islam must be understood as an Islam that shelters and protects all people. Minority groups must feel safe and at peace living in Indonesia because they are treated fairly and as true fellow citizens and patriots. Their rights must be fully guaranteed, with no discrimination. In other words, the Islam that must be cultivated and developed is a protective spiritual force, not a threatening one. This is the goal of jihad, and also of *ijtihad*. We must put a stop to the use of violent methods to achieve our objectives, once and for all.

My very final word is that this work is intended to raise a call that rises to the surface from a deep spiritual awareness: *Long live a united Indonesia! Long live our Indonesia, a Motherland for all!*

Yogyakarta

13 Rabi’Al-Awwal AH 1430

March 11, 2009



# Notes

## Introduction by Herman L. Beck

- 1 Ahmad Najib Burhani, Muhammad Abdullah Darraz, and Ahmad Fuad Fanani, the editors of the book *Muazin Bangsa dari Makkah Darat: Biografi Intelektual Ahmad Syafii Maarif* (Jakarta: Serambi and Maarif Institute, 2015), 9; Sudirman Nasir, "Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Seruan Moralitas untuk Peningkatan Derajat Kesehatan Masyarakat," *ibid.*, 226; Abdul Munir Mulkhan, "Sintesis Peradaban Ahmad Syafii Maarif," *ibid.*, 346.
- 2 *Muazin Bangsa* is the epithet used to describe Syafii Maarif in the book's title.
- 3 See, for example, Ahmad Syafii Maarif et al., *Catatan 1 Dekade Maarif Institute 2003–2013* (Jakarta: Maarif Institute, 2013).
- 4 Franz Magnis-Suseno, SJ, "Christian and Muslim Minorities in Indonesia: State Policies and Majority Islamic Organizations," in *Democracy and Islam in Indonesia*, ed. Mirjam Künkler and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 81.
- 5 As quoted by Muhammad Ali, "Gagasan Islam Nasionalis-Humanis Ahmad Syafii Maarif," in *Muazin Bangsa dari Makkah Darat*, 276.
- 6 See <http://rmaward.asia/?s=ahmad+syafii+maarif>.
- 7 To mention only two such "immature" books: *Peta Bumi Intelektualisme Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1993) and *Membumikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995).
- 8 There are different versions of this autobiography. I have used *Titik-Titik Kisar di Perjalananku: Autobiografi Ahmad Syafii Maarif*, 3rd rev. ed. (Bandung: Mizan, 2009).
- 9 James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in *The Imagination of Reality: Essays in Southeast Asian Coherence Systems*, ed. Alton L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1979), 245–268. However, in *Pemikiran Muhammadiyah dan Muhammad Abduh: Suatu Studi Perbandingan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1993), Arbiyah Lubis defends the thesis that Ahmad Dahlan and the Muhammadiyah are in fact more influenced by the interpretation of Muhammad 'Abduh through Rashid Rida, his disciple, than directly by Muhammad 'Abduh himself.
- 10 For Mohammad Natsir and the Masyumi, see Yusril Ihza, "Combining Activism and Intellectualism: the Biography of Mohammad Natsir," *Studia Islamika* 2, no. 1 (1995): 111–147; Rémy Madinier and Andrée Feillard, "At the Sources of Indonesian Political Islam's Failure: The Split between the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Masyumi in Retrospect," *Studia Islamika* 6, no. 2 (1999): 1–38; and Rémy Madinier, *L'Indonésie, entre démocratie musulmane et Islam intégral: Histoire du parti Masjumi (1945–1960)* (Paris: Karthala, 2011).
- 11 For Mawdudi, see, for example, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press,

- 1996), 3, 81–106; for Maryam Jameelah, see, for example, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, “Maryam Jameelah,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 3, ed. John L. Esposito (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 59–60.
- 12 Most of the following examples are taken from Fazlur Rahman’s *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), especially 141–162.
- 13 The MA thesis has been published in an Indonesian translation: *Islam dan Politik di Indonesia pada Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959–1965)* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1988). The PhD dissertation was published three years earlier in an Indonesian translation: *Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan: Studi Tentang Percaturan dalam Konstituante* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985).
- 14 Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam and the State in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), 108.
- 15 See, for example, M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1200*, 3rd ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 377.
- 16 Moch Nur Ichwan, “Official Reform of Islam: State Islam and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia, 1966–2004” (PhD diss., Tilburg University, 2006), 367.
- 17 See, for example, Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Liberal and Conservative Discourses in the Muhammadiyah: The Struggle for the Face of Reformist Islam in Indonesia,” in *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the “Conservative Turn,”* ed. Martin van Bruinessen (Singapore: ISEAS, 2013), 105–144.
- 18 *Titik-Titik Kisar*, 340.
- 19 Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Islam and Democratization in Indonesia,” in *Islam beyond Conflict: Indonesian Islam and Western Political Theory*, ed. Azyumardi Azra and Wayne Hudson (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 47–52.
- 20 Martin van Bruinessen, “Indonesian Muslims and Their Place in the Larger World of Islam,” paper presented at the 29th Indonesia Update Conference, Australian National University, Canberra, September 30–October 2, 2011, especially 21–22.

## Introduction

- 1 See Marvin Perry, *Arnold Toynbee and the Crisis of the West* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982), 11–31.
- 2 Khaled Abou El Fadl’s *Speaking in God’s Name* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001) is very important reading, especially by those who would hijack God to gain objectives that are in fact purely worldly in nature. When speaking of radical Islamic movements, including extreme ones, this view of El Fadl is something we will study, along with his other works.
- 3 During an event in Surabaya on August 26, 2007.
- 4 Qs Al-Hujurat (49):13. In these notes, Q refers to the Quran; s refers to surah.
- 5 Qs Al-Jumu’ah (62):11. This surah was transmitted at the beginning of the Medina period. According to several interpretations based on hadiths, there

- were only twelve companions not tempted by the pull of trade goods and games. See Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir Al-Wajiz 'Ala Hamishi Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim wa Ma'ahu Asbab Al-Nuzul wa Qawa'idu Al-Tartil* (Damascus: Dar Al-Fikr, AH1402 / 1972), hadith 555. This incident was the reason for the transmission of this verse in Surah Al-Jumu'ah.
- 6 See Sukarno, *Indonesia Menggugat* [Indonesia accuses] (Yogyakarta: Aditya Media Yogyakarta, 2004), 127. This book is based on Sukarno's speech before the colonial court in Bandung on December 1–2, 1930. It was 170 pages long and delivered in Bahasa Indonesia. See Bob Hering, *Soekarno Bapak Indonesia Merdeka: Sebuah Biografi, 1901–1945* [Soekarno, the Father of Independent Indonesia: A Biography, 1901–1945], trans. Hasono Sutejo, 2 vols. (Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 2003), 1:213.
  - 7 See, for example, Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Kerakyatan, dan Keindonesiaan* [Islam, populism, and Indonesian identity] (Bandung: Mizan, 1993). This book is a collection of writings by the late Nurcholish Madjid from the 1970s through the 1990s. An earlier collection was titled *Islam, Kemodernan, dan Keindonesiaan* [Islam, modernity, and Indonesian identity] (Bandung: Mizan, 1987). I prefer the term “Indonesian intellectual” for Nurcholish Madjid, not “Muslim intellectual,” for this figure represented the spirit of the times of his nation. He wanted to see an Indonesia that was just and prosperous, a home for all the people, without discrimination. He felt no conflict between Islam and being Indonesian. We do not know Allah's secret plan for why he was called home so soon, on August 29, 2005. As a friend and fellow alumnus of the University of Chicago, I along with many others deeply felt his loss.
  - 8 See Soekarno, *Lahirnya Pancasila* [The birth of Pancasila] (Jakarta: Departemen Penerangan RI, n.d.), 27.
  - 9 *Ibid.*, 27–28.
  - 10 See Koentjaraningrat, *Kebudayaan, Mentalitas, dan Pembangunan* [Culture, mentality, and development] (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2002), 45.
  - 11 Said in exasperation by Suardi Tasrif, according to the senior journalist Rosihan Anwar during a meeting at the Jakarta Academy in or around 2005.
  - 12 The most recent data of Jasser Auda on the composition of the adherents of Islam across the world is as follows: Arab, 19%; Turkish, 4%; Indo-Pakistani, 24%; African, 17%; Southeast Asian, 15%. See Auda Jasser, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London and Washington: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2007), xii. It is obvious that non-Arab Muslims far exceed the number of Muslim minorities in Europe, North America, Latin America, East Asia, and other places. A quarter of the 6 billion inhabitants on earth are Muslim, an *umat* that is rapidly growing. I met this writer at a meeting in Kuala Lumpur on October 25–27, 2007. This work comes from his PhD dissertation at the University of Wales, July 2007.
  - 13 Karen Armstrong, *The Future of God*, a one-hour recorded lecture distributed as an audiocassette (Sounds True, 1995).

- 14 Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (New York: Crown, 2006), translated into Indonesian by Ruslani and Lulu Rahman as *Menerjang Harapan: Dari Jakarta Menuju Gedung Putih* (Jakarta: Ufuk Press, 2007), 157.
- 15 Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Indonesia Baru di Tengah Pertarungan Antara Mosaik Budaya yang Elok dan Kaya dengan Ancaman Keserakahan* [The new Indonesia in the midst of the battle between the elegant and rich cultural mosaic and the threat of greed] (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University, 2004), 4. This booklet comes from a speech I gave upon receiving the Hamengkubuwono IX Award from Gadjah Mada University on December 20, 2004.
- 16 Soekarno, *Lahirnya Pancasila* [The birth of Pancasila], 27–28.
- 17 See QS Al-Ma'idah (5):48.
- 18 Soekarno, *Lahirnya Pancasila*, 22.
- 19 See Mostafa Rejai, "Nationalism, East and West," in *Ideologies and Modern Politics*, by Reo M. Christenson et al. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1975), 25 and 44. Italics per the source.
- 20 Ibid., 44.
- 21 See the private letter from Y.B. Mangunwijaya to President B.J. Habibie dated August 8, 1998, at <http://www.etan.org/et/1998/august8-14/14letter.htm>.
- 22 See Hazil Tanzil, ed., *Seratus Tahun Haji Agus Salim* [One hundred years of Haji Agus Salim] (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984), 346.
- 23 Ibid., 356.
- 24 Ibid. Quoted directly from the original.
- 25 See Panitia Seminar Sejarah Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia [Board of the Seminar on the History of Islam's Entry into Indonesia], *Risalah Seminar Sejarah Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia* [Minutes of the Seminar on the History of Islam's Entry into Indonesia] (Medan, 1963), 265.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 The classic work on the process of Indianization of Southeast Asia was created in great and careful detail by the French scholar George Coedès (1886–1969) in *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, translated by Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968). This 403-page book consists of 256 pages of text in addition to a foreword, end notes, and index. All the kingdoms inspired by Indian civilization in Southeast Asia are recorded in this work, beginning with the early centuries of the Common Era. Coedès recorded that the arrival of Indians bringing Hinduism and Buddhism was a peaceful process without any evidence of force or military conquest. The kingdoms of Southeast Asia with Indian features, and specifically in Nusantara at Kutai in East Kalimantan, Tarumanegara in West Java, Sanjayawangsa in Central Java, Sailendera in Central Java, and Sumatra, Sriwijaya and Melayu in Sumatra, Kediri, Singasari and, largest of all, Majapahit in East Java, were generally independent and headed by indigenous or mixed-blood rulers. The Indian arrivals functioned as advisers, while their main tasks were more of a cultural nature. This was in contrast with what occurred in Vietnam, where the governing positions were directly in the hands of the Chinese. That is why the influences of China were limited to the territories



- it conquered, while the Indian influences far exceeded their commercial voyages (see pp. 34–35). For over a thousand years, Vietnam was a colony of China.
- 28 Bertrand Russell, *Understanding History and Other Essays* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), 9.
  - 29 Allan Nevins, *The Gateway to History* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 14.
  - 30 Russell, *Understanding History*, 13.
  - 31 See, for example, Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *Mengapa Indonesia Harus Menjadi Negara Federasi* [Why Indonesia must become a federated state] (Jakarta: University of Indonesia Press), 2002.
  - 32 See Nico Schulte Nordholt, “Romo Mangun, Activist,” in *Inside Indonesia* online (July–September, 1999).

## Chapter 1

- 1 See Isma‘il R. al-Fârûqî and Lois Lamy al-Fârûqî, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1986), 203–228.
- 2 Ibn Al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh* (Al-Maktabah Al-Shamilah, n.d.), Sect. 1, 306. See also Ibn Kathir, *Al-Fusul fi Sirat Al-Rasul S.a.w.* (Al-Maktabah Al-Shamilah, n.d.), 60–61.
- 3 Aji Rosidi, *Bahasa Indonesia Bahasa Kita* [Bahasa Indonesia, our language] (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 2001), 10.
- 4 See Restu Gunawan, *Muhammad Yanin dan Cita-Cita Persatuan* [Muhammad Yamin and the aspirations of unity] (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2005), 22. P.M. Hooykaas was the Resident in Bengkulu.
- 5 Ki Hadjar Dewantara, *Karya Ki Hadjar Dewantara Bagian II: Kebudayaan* [Works of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, part II: Culture], 2 vols. (Yogyakarta: Majelis Luhur Tamansiswa, 1994), 2:109–110. Ki Hadjar originally wrote this in Dutch and it was carried in *Hindia Poetra* 1 (1916–1917).
- 6 *Ibid.*, vol. 1 (1962), 514.
- 7 Subagio Sastrowardoyo, “Sikap Budaya Takdir dalam Polemik Kebudayaan serta Pengaruhnya” [Takdir’s cultural stance in the cultural polemic and its effects], in *Sang Pujangga: 70 Tahun Polemik Kebudayaan Menyongsong Satu Abad S. Takdir Alisyahbana* [The poet: Seventy years of the cultural polemic on the eve of one century of S. Takdir Alisyahbana], ed. S. Abdul Karim Mashad (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006), 358.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 359.
- 9 See J.S. Badudu and Sutan Mohammad Zain, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* [General dictionary of the Indonesian language] (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1994), 63 and 950; see also Widada et al., *Kamus Basa Jawa (Bausastra Jawa)* [Dictionary of Javanese language] (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius, 2001), 540.
- 10 Widada, *ibid.*, vol. 22.
- 11 That expert is M.T. Zen of the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Bandung.
- 12 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistik Indonesia* (Jakarta, 1975), 3.

- 13 Christine Drake, *National Integration in Indonesia: Patterns and Policies* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 9.
- 14 See Khudori, "Pemanasan Global dan Adaptasi Pertanian" [Global warming and agricultural adaptation], *Republika*, September 22, 2007, 4. Widi Agoes Pratikto (Secretary-General of the Department of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries when this note was written) said that the coastal length of Nusantara is 95,181 km, the second longest in the world after Canada. The size of the maritime areas that Indonesia possesses is thanks to the Juanda Declaration of December 13, 1957, which asserted that Indonesia's maritime territories extend twelve miles from island shorelines. Previously their extent had been only three miles. After this declaration, the extent of Indonesia's waters grew to three-quarters of the entire territory of Indonesia (see *Jawa Post*, November 19, 2007, 14). These figures are still contradictory; we need more authentic sources. The main thrust of the Juanda Declaration is: (1) The shape of the Indonesian state is archipelagic, in which its maritime territory contains islands; (2) the boundary of our archipelagic state is a straight line drawn from the outer islands in accordance with the *point-to-point* theory; (3) Indonesia possesses territorial waters of twelve nautical miles. See Agus S. Djamil, *Al-Qur'an dan Lautan* [The Quran and the seas] (Bandung: Arasy Mizan, 2005), 268.
- 15 The term *Nusantara* was used in old Javanese texts in reference to the "other islands." See Bernard H.M. Vlekke, *Nusantara: A History of the East Indian Archipelago*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945), 400. J.L.A. Brandes, the Dutch scholar, reintroduced the term with a new meaning in the late nineteenth century. In the 1920s, *Nusantara* was used by leftist political activist E.F. Douwes Dekker. (Our thanks to the anonymous peer reviewer for additions and corrections.)
- 16 *Ibid.*, 324. Etymologically, the name Indonesia refers to the Latin *Indus*, meaning India, and *nesos*, which is ancient Greek for island. The British ethnologist George S.W. Earl in 1850 proposed the term *Indunesians*. Later, a student of Earl's, James Richardson Logan, used the word *Indonesia* as a synonym for the Indian Archipelago. Soon after that, Adolf Bastian popularized this name in his book *Indonesien, oder die Inseln des Malaysischen Archipels* [Indonesia, or the islands of the Malaysian Archipelago]. The first Indonesian scholar to use that name was none other than Ki Hadjar Dewantara, when he established a press bureau in the Netherlands with the name *Indonesisch Pers-bureau* (Indonesian Press Bureau) in 1913. (See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia>.) Naturally, Ki Hadjar had not intended that the word *Indonesisch* stand for the name of the entire people, but he was a visionary who anticipated the name Indonesia, which was crowned by the Indonesian Association [PI] in the 1920s.
- 17 If we can use the date as an indicator of the birth of a nation, the name change from *Indische Vereniging* (Indies Association) to *Indonesische Vereniging* (Indonesian Association) occurred in 1922: the Indonesian nation was born then and colonized for only twenty years before 1942. But if the Youth Oath of October 28, 1928, is taken as the benchmark, then Indonesia was colonized for an even shorter period, fourteen years. I certainly reject the view held by

- many that Indonesia had been colonized for centuries. The hard facts of history refute such views entirely.
- 18 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), a work that caused an uproar among Indonesian social scientists in the 1960s and 1970s. This book was first published in 1960 by Glencoe Press.
  - 19 Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2:551. The same excerpt can be read in another of my books, *Islam dan Pancasila Sebagai Dasar Negara: Studi tentang Perdebatan dalam Konstituante* [Islam and Pancasila as the foundation of the state: A Study of the debate in the Constituent Assembly] (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2006), 2. The title of the abovementioned work by Geertz clearly shows that the religion of the Javanese is not fully Islamic, but is a Javanese religion. Geertz, who was recognized worldwide in anthropology thanks to the findings from his research in Central Java, in Hodgson's view made systematic and misleading errors.
  - 20 Leo Suryadinata, Evid Nurvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 104. These data show that once people became Muslim in Nusantara, it was very difficult to convert them to another religion.
  - 21 See Leslie H. Palmier, *Indonesia and the Dutch* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 5. According to Palmier, in 1900, out of 30 million inhabitants, fewer than 2,000 *pribumi* (indigenous) children had been able to enter Dutch schools, the majority of which were Christian missions. Colonial government policy in fact hindered *pribumi* people from entering Dutch schools.
  - 22 J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1967), 148.
  - 23 Coedès, *Indianized States*, 241–242.
  - 24 *Ibid.*, 242.
  - 25 See note 24.
  - 26 W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1969), 196.
  - 27 *Ibid.*, 198.
  - 28 See QS Al-Hujurat (49):13.
  - 29 A saying of General Soemarno Soedarsono, General Chairman of Yayasan Jati Diri Bangsa (Foundation of the National Identity). See Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Jenderal Sepuh and Jati Diri Bangsa [An elderly general and national identity],” *Republika*, June 12, 2007, 12.
  - 30 QS Al-Qalam (68):4.
  - 31 QS Al-Ahzab (33):21.
  - 32 See Muhammad ‘Ali Al-Shabuni, *Safwat Al-Tafasir*, 3 vols. (Beirut: Dar Al-Qur’an Al-Karim, AH 1405 / 1985), 3:425.
  - 33 Fazlur Rahman, in his lecture “Readings in Islamic Theology” on the campus of the University of Chicago, October 8, 1979.
  - 34 See Mahyauddin Hj. Yahaya, *Ensiklopedia Sejarah Islam* [Encyclopedia of the history of Islam], 6 vols. (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1986), 2:613–614.

- 35 *Mawali* (singular: *maula*) in this context means those who are ruled, not slaves, “but who in live in an environment of childhood. They ... did not have the right to have views in carrying out public affairs.” See Muhammad Shahrur, *Dirasat Islamiyyah Mu’asira fi Al-Dawla wa Al-Mujtama’*. I have used its translation, *Tirani Islam: Genealogi Masyarakat dan Negara* [Islamic tyranny: Genealogies of society and the state], trans. Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy and Badrus Syamsul Fata (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2003), 157. *Maula* can also mean God (see QS Al-Haj [22]:78), protector, overseer, and so on.
- 36 QS Al-‘Ankabut (29):41.
- 37 Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia Baru: 1500–1900, Dari Emporium Sampai Imperium* [Introduction to modern Indonesian history: 1500–1900, from emporium to imperium] (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1987), 26.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 39 H.J. Benda, “Kontinuitas dan Perubahan dalam Islam di Indonesia” [Continuity and change in Islam in Indonesia], in *Sejarah dan Masyarakat: Lintasan Historis Islam di Indonesia* [History and society: The historical course of Islam in Indonesia], ed. Taufik Abdullah, trans. Mien Joebhaar et al. (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1987), 32.
- 40 See Anthony Reid, *Sejarah Modern Awal Asia Tenggara* [The history of early modern Southeast Asia], trans. Sori Seregar, Hasif Amini, and Dahris Setiawan (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2004), 20–52.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 46–47. Our knowledge about the role of Chinese Muslims in this Islamization process in Nusantara is very limited. In fact, that role is quite important, even if not as important as the role of Arab Muslims and Indian Muslims.
- 42 Karkono Kamajaya Partokusumo, *Kebudayaan Jawa, Perpaduannya Dengan Islam* [Javanese culture and its blending with Islam] (Yogyakarta: IKAPI Jakarta Branch, 1995), 301. I personally knew this person who had been a member of the Constituent Assembly of the PNI during the years 1956–1959.
- 43 See note 24.
- 44 See, for example, QS Al-Baqarah (2):256 and Yunus (10):99, which strictly forbid such compulsion.
- 45 M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), 13. This excerpt is translated from the author’s Indonesian-language version.
- 46 See Ong Hok Ham, *Dari Soal Priyayi sampai Nyi Blorang: Refleksi Historis Nusantara* [From the *priyayi* issue to Nyi Blorong: Reflections on the history of Nusantara] (Jakarta: Kompas Books, 2004), 75.
- 47 Ricklefs, *History*, 27.
- 48 Wertheim, *Indonesian Society*, 201. Karel Steenbrink in *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts, 1596–1950*, trans. Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993), does not mention “rice Christians” when discussing colonial politics. Eight pages (60–67) deal in some detail with Coen’s initial hard line toward Islam. For Coen, architect and administrator of Dutch power in Nusantara, religious differences were the main reason for colonization. Coen died of sickness in 1629 at a time when

- Batavia was besieged by the Sultan of Mataram, a powerful Javanese Muslim raja (pp. 61–64). The siege itself ended in failure.
- 49 See note 46 and the many modern problems discussed in this book for examples of such weakness.
- 50 QS Ali Imran (3):110.
- 51 I found the term “paradox” in Wertheim, *Indonesian Society*, 199.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Mochtar Lubis, *Indonesia: Land under the Rainbow* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), 91.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 At the time when I was writing this section, this message was still saved in my handphone email and was dated July 5, 2007.
- 56 *Hongitochten*: *Hongi* means a war fleet in Bahasa Ternate, *tochten* means “sailing,” so that *hongitochten* means sailing with a fleet as a part of the monopoly politics of the VOC that forced Malukan males to cut down vast areas of clove and nutmeg trees. The venture triggered popular resistance, although the VOC won in the end. All the spice trees in Hoamoal were destroyed until the place became devoid of human habitation, with the exception of crews from the *hongi* who came to search out the remains of the wild nutmeg trees for final destruction. (See Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia Baru*, 179; Ricklefs, *History*, 61.)
- 57 See Reinhard Schulze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World*, trans. Azizeh Azodi (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 87.
- 58 Soekarno, *Indonesia*, 35–36. *Contingenten* refer to a type of tax paid with crops by the village heads; with *leverantien*, the chiefs were forced to make sure crops were deposited that would be bought by the Company, the amount and the prices being set by the Company. See notes 2 and 3 in this source.
- 59 Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Kesaksian Ali Sastroamidjojo: Gugatan Hari Kebangkitan Nasional [The testimony of Ali Sastroamidjojo: The claim of National Awakening Day],” *Gatra*, May 30, 2007, 106, with minor modifications.
- 60 Ali Sastroamidjojo, *Tonggak-Tonggak di Perjalananku* [Milestones in my journey] (Jakarta: Kinta, 1974), 43.
- 61 Mansur Suryanegara, *Menemukan Sejarah* [Discovering history] (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), 201.
- 62 Mohammad Hatta, *Memoir* (Jakarta: Yayasan Hatta, 2002), 73.
- 63 Maarif, “Kesaksian” [Testimony], 106.
- 64 Hatta, *Memoir*, 172.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 See Palmier, *Indonesia and the Dutch*, 2.
- 67 Ibid., 5.
- 68 Ibid., 6–7.
- 69 Ibid., 13.
- 70 Al-Khairiyah, SI, Muhammadiyah, and Al-Irsyad, which represented modernist practicing Muslims in the national movement, can be read about in comprehensive detail in Deliar Noer’s *Gerakan Modern Islam di Indonesia, 1900–1942* [The modern Islamic movement in Indonesia, 1900–1942] (Jakarta:

- LP3ES, 1995). This work is now a classic and began as the writer's dissertation at Cornell University in 1962.
- 71 See Ricklefs, *History*, 163.
- 72 See Palmier, *Indonesia and the Dutch*, 18.
- 73 See Akira Nagazumi, *Bangkitnya Nasionalisme Indonesia: Budi Utomo 1908–1918* [The rise of Indonesian nationalism: Budi Utomo 1908–1918], trans. Pustaka Utama Grafiti and KITLV (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1989), 262, Addendum I. Akira Nagazumi (1929–1987) analyzed BU's growth and development over a ten-year period for his dissertation at Cornell University. We owe a debt of gratitude to this Japanese scholar who has enriched our knowledge about a period whose lines are not always easy to trace. Before he passed away, Nagazumi mentioned this to his colleague, Peter Carey: "When the moment of my physical death arrives, in accordance with my family tradition ... I will say the name Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light. There is nothing for me to fear."
- 74 See Donald Eugene Smith, ed., *Religion, Politics, and Social Change in the Third World* (New York: Free Press, 1971), 109.
- 75 Timur Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam Movement: Its Contribution to Indonesian Nationalism" (MA thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1959), 48–49.
- 76 Ali Sastroamidjojo, *Empat Mahasiswa Indonesia di Negeri Belanda Tahun 1927* [Three Indonesian students in the Netherlands in 1927] (Jakarta: Idayu Press, 1977), 9.
- 77 See Gunawan, *Muhammad Yamin*, 23.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 27. The Youth Congress was formed in June 1928 with a committee composed of Sugondo Djojopuspito (PPP/Perhimpunan Pelajar-Pelajar Indonesia [Association of Indonesian Students]), chair; Djoko Marsaid from Jong Java, deputy chair; Muhammad Yamin from Jong Sumatranen Bond, secretary; Amir Sjarifuddin from Jong Bataks Bond, treasurer; Djohan Muh. Tjai from Jong Islamieten Bond, assistant I, Kotjosungkono from Pemuda Indonesia (Indonesian Youth), assistant II; Senduk from Jong Celebes, assistant III; J. Leimena, from Jong Ambon, assistant IV; Rohjani from Pemuda Kaum Betawi (Batavia Youth Group), assistant V (p. 25). Regrettably, Amir Sjarifuddin (1907–1948), one of the architects of this 1928 Youth Congress, the former minister of defense and prime minister during the Revolution, met a tragic end after being accused of involvement in the Madiun PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) rebellion, which began on September 19, 1948. Amir was finally captured by forces under Kemal Idris at Desa Klambu, Purwodadi, on November 29, 1948, when he was suffering from dysentery. Amir was first brought to Yogya, and then at the order of the attorney general as prisoner of war he was sent to Surakarta to be examined by Military Governor Gatot Subroto. Then, at the order of Gatot Subroto, Amir and his friends were shot dead on the night of December 19, 1948, at Desa Ngalihan, Karanganyar, Surakarta. Amir was known as a great orator, second only to Sukarno; see Soe Hok Gie, *Orang-Orang di Persimpangan Kiri Jalan* [People on the left side of the intersection] (Yogyakarta: Benteng, 1997, 250–265). When the words of the Youth Pledge were launched, who could

- ever have imagined that twenty years later the congress treasurer would be executed in a small village far from the land of his birth as a Tapanuli Muslim of North Sumatra, a convert to Christianity in about 1935, and later a prominent figure in the PKI.
- 79 Sagimun M.D., *Jakarta: Dari Tepian Air Ke Kota Proklamasi* [Jakarta: From the waterfront to the city of the Proclamation] (Jakarta: Museum and History Service, Government of the Jakarta Special Capital Region, 1988), 266.
- 80 Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, “Pidato Kebudayaan SCB [SCB’s speech on culture]” at the Little Theater, TIM (Taman Ismail Marzuki), December 10, 2007, 4.
- 81 The numbers of victims of the Aceh War may be read in Ibrahim Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah* [War on God’s road] (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1987), 266–267, Addendum A and B. This work derives from the writer’s dissertation at Gadjah Mada University, which was defended in 1981. The late Prof. Dr. T. Ibrahim Alfian was a lecturer of the philosophy of history when I attended IKIP in Yogyakarta in the 1960s. I felt very close to Pak Ibrahim Alfian.
- 82 Soekarno, *Di Bawah Bendera Revolusi* [Under the flag of revolution], 2 vols. (Jakarta: Panitia Di Bawah Bendera Revolusi, 1965), 2:22.
- 83 See Timur Jaylani, “The Sarekat Islam Movement,” 76.
- 84 Hatta, *Memoir*, 137. Hatta met Tan Malaka in Berlin in July 1922 at the request of Dr. Soetomo, and it was there that they conversed. Hatta was twenty years old; Tan Malaka, twenty-seven.
- 85 H.B. Jassin, *Chairil Anwar: Pelopor Angkatan 45* [Chairil Anwar: Pioneer of the 1945 generation] (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1959), 30. This translation, by John H. McGlynn, is taken from the *Lontar Anthology of Indonesian Poetry: The Twentieth Century in Poetry*, ed. John H. McGlynn et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2017), 66.
- 86 Tan Malaka, *Thesis* (Jakarta: Bukit Tinggi, 1947), 19.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 19–20.
- 88 Rosihan Anwar, *Menulis Dalam Air: Sebuah Otobiografi* [Writing in water: An autobiography] (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1983), 27. Rosihan Anwar, a seasoned journalist, was born on May 10, 1922, and was still writing well into his eighties. I was fortunate to spend time with him at the Jakarta Academy at beginning of the twenty-first century.
- 89 Zulhasril Nasir, *Tan Malaka dan Gerakan Kiri Minangkabau* [Tan Malaka and Minangkabau leftist movements] (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2007), 59. See also the three-volume biography by Harry Poeze, *Verguisd en vergeten. Tan Malaka, de linkse beweging en de Indonesische Revolutie, 1945–1949* (Leiden, KITLV, 2007: III, 1460–1467; also in Indonesian translation).
- 90 See Alfian, “Tan Malaka: Pejuang Revolusioner yang Kesepian” [Tan Malaka: The lonely revolutionary], in *Manusia dalam Kemelut Sejarah* [Humankind in the crisis of history], ed. Taufik Abdullah, Aswab Mahasin, and Daniel Dhakidae (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1981), 170.
- 91 Franz Magnis-Suseno, “Madilog-nya Tan Malaka” [The Madilog of Tan Malaka], *Basis*, March–April 2001, 52. [Translator’s note: *Madilog* is Tan Malaka’s acronym of the neo-Hegelian formula “Materialism Dialectics Logic.”]
- 92 Hatta, *Memoir*, 203.

- 93 Sastroamidjojo, *Ampat* [Four], 10.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 10. Italicization by the author.
- 96 See Rosihan Anwar, *Sejarah Kecil (Petite Histoire) Indonesia* [A little history of Indonesia] (Jakarta: Kompas Books, 2005), 91.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 95–101. According to notes made by Hamka, Rasuna was held for only six months in Semarang along with Rasimah Ismail. In 1937, Rasuna was in Medan to oppose the Registered Marriage Ordinance together with Zainal Abidin Ahmad. Also, the date of his death was not 1965, as Rosihan has it, but 1963, in Parabek, West Sumatra. See Hamka, *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera* [My Father: The life of Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah and the struggle of religious communities in Sumatra] (Jakarta: Umminda, 1982) 316–317.
- 98 For anyone wishing to learn about the fighting among the Islamic parties during Guided Democracy, see Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dan Politik: Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959–1965)* [Islam and politics: The divide and conquer theory during Guided Democracy (1959–1965)] (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996).
- 99 Rosihan, *Sejarah Kecil* [A little history], 94–95.
- 100 Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989), 289.
- 101 *Ibid.*
- 102 Quoted from Aquib Suminto, *Politik Islam Hindia Belanda* [The Islam policy of the Netherlands Indies government] (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985), 21, note 47.
- 103 See Sutan Sjahrir, *Out of Exile*, translated from the Dutch by Charles Wolf Jr. (New York: John Day, 1949), 112.
- 104 *Ibid.*
- 105 Mohammad Hatta, *Indonesia Merdeka* [Independent Indonesia], translated from the Dutch *Indonesie Vrij* by Hazil (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1976), 151. It is taken from Hatta's defense speech in The Hague on March 9, 1928. In this court hearing, Hatta was defended by the Dutch lawyers J.E.W. Duys, Tj. Mobach, and E.P.A. Weber.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 150.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 12–13. Excerpt per source text.
- 108 Soekarno, *Indonesia*, 194.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 211. Excerpt per source text.
- 110 See Soe Hok Gie's spotlight on Sutan Sjahrir's "Perjuangan Kita [Our struggle]" (1945) in *Zaman Peralihan* [Times in transition] (Yogyakarta: Benteng, 1995), 85.
- 111 Some of the data concerning the Japanese occupation were taken from Panitia 75 Tahun Kasman [The Committee of 75 Years of Kasman], *Hidup Itu Berjuang: Kasman Singodimedjo 75 Tahun* [To live is to struggle: 75 years of Kasman Singodimedjo] (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1982), 46–66.
- 112 Data and Analysis Center Team *TEMPO, Jenderal Tanpa Pauskan, Politisi Tanpa Partai: Perjalanan Hidup A H. Nasution* [The general without an army, the



- politician without a party: The life of A.H. Nasution] (Jakarta: PDAT and ISAI, 1998), 295–296. I was delighted when this book was given to me by Pak Nas when I visited his home on March 10, 1998.
- 113 Ibid., 296.
- 114 Ibid. Bushido was the code of the samurai during the feudal period in Japan. The values embedded in this code were honesty, resoluteness, bravery, frugality and simplicity, courtesy, sincerity, and, above all, loyalty to leadership and the country. Although the feudal system ended in the mid-nineteenth century, the influence of the code survived, especially in military circles. Living by those values was the only way a soldier could preserve his honor. Otherwise he would perform harakiri (ritual suicide by disembowelment). Nasution saw the bushido spirit in PETA, certainly not in KNIL.
- 115 Ibid., 297.
- 116 See Nugroho Notosusanto, “Soedirman: Panglima yang Menepati Janjinya” [Soedirman: The commander-in-chief who kept his word], in Taufik Abdullah, Aswab Mahasin, and Daniel Dhakidae, *Manusia* [Humankind], 54.
- 117 See Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change: 1953–1956* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 312.
- 118 See “Einstein–Szilárd letter,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Einstein%E2%80%93Szil%C3%A1rd\\_letter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Einstein%E2%80%93Szil%C3%A1rd_letter).
- 119 *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Ultimate Reference Suite DVD, 2005), s.v. “Martin Heidegger.”
- 120 Ibid.
- 121 See Herbert F. Ziegler, “Legacies of World War II,” in *Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia*, 2002, <https://sites.google.com/site/nccmn2x4/legacies-of-world-war-ii>.
- 122 Franklin D. Roosevelt, “FDR’s ‘Day of Infamy’ Speech,” <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2001/winter/crafting-day-of-infamy-speech.html>.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Ibid.
- 125 See Anhar Gonggong, “Salah Kaprah Pemahaman Terhadap Sejarah Indonesia” [Common accepted errors in understanding Indonesian history], in *Menjadi Indonesia: 13 Abad Eksistensi Islam di Bumi Nusantara* [Becoming Indonesia: 13 centuries of the existence of Islam in Nusantara], ed. Komaruddin Hidayat and Ahmad Gaus AF (Bandung: Mizan, 2006), 47.
- 126 See R.M. A.B. Kusuma, *Lahirnya Undang-Undang Dasar 1945* [The birth of the 1945 Constitution] (Jakarta: Center for Constitutional Law Studies, Faculty of Law, Universitas Indonesia, 2004), 376.
- 127 Hatta, *Memoir*, 455.
- 128 Sastroamidjojo, *Tonggak-Tonggak di Perjalananku* [Milestones in my journey], 140.
- 129 On the subject of the Round Table Conference negotiations, see Hatta, *Memoir*, 558–563.
- 130 There are at least three studies that can be referred to on the issue of the foundation of the state. These are, in the order of publication: (1) Ahmad Syafii

- Maarif, *Islam dan Pancasila Sebagai Dasar Negara: Studi tentang Perdebatan dalam Konstituante* [Islam and Pancasila as the foundation of the state: A study of the debate in the Constituent Assembly] (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2006) – previously titled *Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan: Studi tentang Percaturan dalam Konstituante* [Islam and the issue of the state: A study of discussions in the Constituent Assembly], first printing 1985 based on the translation of my dissertation at the University of Chicago in 1983; (2) Adnan Buyung Nasution, *The Aspiration for Constitutional Government in Indonesia: A Socio-legal Study of the Indonesian Konstituante 1956–1959* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1992), also a dissertation by the writer at Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1992; (3) a broader approach by Faisal Ismail, *Islam and Pancasila: Indonesian Politics 1945–1995* (Jakarta: Office of Religious Research and Development and Training, 2001) – a dissertation written at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1995.
- 131 Hatta, *Memoir*, 435.
- 132 The most blatant is *Risalah Sidang BPUPKI and PPKI* [Minutes of the BPUPKI and PPKI sessions], ed. Saifuddin Bahar, Nannie Hudawati Sinaga, and Ananda B. Kusuma (Jakarta: State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 1992), 7–22. These official minutes of the Soeharto government clearly state that Muhammad Yamin had spoken about those five foundations of the state on May 29, 1945.
- 133 The belief that it was Yamin who “invented” Pancasila is found as well in the work of Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Piagam Jakarta 22 Juni 1945: Sebuah Konsensus Nasional tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia (1945–1949)* [The Jakarta Charter of 22 June 1945: A national consensus on the foundation of the state of the Republic of Indonesia (1945–1949)] (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 1997), 15–19.
- 134 Soekarno, *Lahirnya Pancasila* [The birth of Pancasila], 28.
- 135 See Mohamad Roem, *Bunga Rampai Sejarah* [The garland of history], 3 vols. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1983), 3:317.
- 136 Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Citra [Image],” *Gatra*, November 15–21, 2007, 106.
- 137 Hatta, *Demokrasi Kita* [Our democracy] (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1966), 9.
- 138 Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Demokrasi di Tangan ‘Si Gila’ [Democracy in the hands of ‘the crazy guy’],” *Republika*, February 5, 2008, 12.

## Chapter 2

- 1 See Qs Al-Shuraa (42):38 and Qs Ali ‘Imran (3):159.
- 2 Fahmi Huwaydi, *Demokrasi, Oposisi, dan Masyarakat Madani: Isu-Isu Besar Politik Islam* [Democracy, opposition, and civil society: Major issues of Islamic politics], trans. Muhammad Abdul Ghoffar (from the Arabic *Islam wa Al-Dimuqratiyah*) (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 212.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid. 212–234.

- 6 Vaclav Havel, *Toward a Civil Society: Selected Speeches and Writings 1990–1994* (Prague: Lidové Noviny, 1995).
- 7 I have taken Mernissi's views on democracy and the attitudes of the Arab world from Fatima Mernissi, *Islam dan Demokrasi: Antologi Ketakutan* [Islam and democracy: Anthology of fear], trans. Amiruddin Arrani (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 1994), especially 52–72.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 63.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 58–59.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 81.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 67.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 68–69.
- 13 See Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 180–202.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 187.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 193.
- 16 Mernissi, *Islam dan Demokrasi* [Islam and democracy], 195. Mernissi took the term “Petro-Wahabism” from the work of D. Nur ‘Abdalla, *Al-Petrole wa Al-Akhlaq* [Petroleum and Virtue] (1990).
- 17 Shahrur, *Tirani Islam* [Islamic tyranny], 157.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 454.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 *Ibid.*, 158.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 147.
- 22 See Kuntowijoyo, *Identitas Politik Umat Islam* [Political identity of the Muslim *umat*] (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), 95.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 96.
- 24 Hatta, *Demokrasi*, 30.
- 25 The Quranic interpretation about human freedom may be seen in Machasin, *Menyelami Kebebasan Manusia: Telaah Kritis Terhadap Konsepsi Al-Qur’an* [Fathoming human freedom: A critical study on the conceptions of the Quran] (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996). This 144-page work, apart from the introduction, index, and bibliography, derives from the writer's 1995 dissertation at UIN Yogyakarta. Machasin is quite careful in gathering sources for his work and then interpreting them. Naturally, one senses the subjective dimension throughout this book, because of course humanity is relatively unable to be fully free from background influences and philosophical tendencies that have fused within ourselves.
- 26 Musa Al-Musawi, *Meluruskan Penyimpangyan Syi’ah* [Correcting the Shia deviation], trans. Ahmad Munif (Jakarta: Qalam, 1995), 36–37. The title of the original work is *Al-Shi’a wa Al-Tashih: Al-Sira bayn Al-Shi’a wa Al-Tashayyu’*. In my view, this work needs to be disseminated far and wide in the interest of enlightening the Muslim *umat*. Its scientific authority is no longer in doubt, as its author holds a PhD in Islamic law from the University of Tehran and a PhD from the Sorbonne (University of Paris), and has lectured in various institutions of higher learning in the Muslim world and in the West. With a vision characterized by support for reconciliation, Al-Musawi has been

- harshly criticized within conservative Shia circles, which accused him of having converted to Sunnism. It is not easy to make a breakthrough in reconciliatory thinking in the midst of adherents who have made an idol of history, but we must continue to make the attempt if this Muslim *umat* still respects the Quran as its guide.
- 27 Ibid., 143.
- 28 See A. Hassan, *Al-Furqan* [The criterion] (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1962), 82 note 310, interpreting verse 256 of the Surah Al-Baqarah.
- 29 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* [Exegeses of Al-Azhar], vol. 3 (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1986), 21–22.
- 30 QS Yunus (10):100.
- 31 Ibid., verse 99.
- 32 See Al-Shabuni, 1:598.
- 33 QS Al Rum (30):22.
- 34 Husein Muhammad, “Menghapus Dikonomisasi, Menjemput Masa Depan” [Eradicate dichotomizing, meet the future], its author’s response to this work, written in Cirebon, June 4, 2009, 8.
- 35 The views of Iqbal on women’s education are widely available online.
- 36 “Riffat Hassan: Interview by Samina Ibrahim,” *Newsline* (Karachi), April 2001.
- 37 Riffat Hassan, “Equal Before Allah? Woman-Man Equality in the Islamic Tradition,” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 17, no. 2 (January–May 1987): 2–4.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Yunahar Ilyas, *Feminisme dalam Kajian Tafsir Al-Qur’an, Klasik and Kontemporer* [Feminism in interpretive studies of the Quran, classic and contemporary] (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1997), 149.
- 40 Riffat Hassan, “Equal Before Allah?”
- 41 See Yunahar Ilyas, *Feminisme*, 65.
- 42 Ibid., 110.
- 43 Ibid., 65.
- 44 Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* [Exegeses of Al-Azhar], vol. 1 (Jakarta: Pustaka Tinamas, 1982), 173–178.
- 45 Ibid., 174.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 The Diyanet Project on Hadith published its results in Turkish in 2013 (available online). Translations into other languages are ongoing.
- 48 See the *Christian Science Monitor*, March 11, 2008.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 See note 34.
- 52 Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 84.
- 53 Hamka, *Tafsir* [Exegeses], vol. 5, clarification of verse 34 of the Surah Al-Nisa, 47.
- 54 Readers who would like to learn about the views of Al-Hibri on the status of women in Islam can read the article by Tamara Sonn, “Fazlur Rachman and Islamic Feminism,” in Earle H. Waugh and Frederick M. Denny, eds.,

- The Shaping of an American Islamic Discourse: A Memorial to Fazlur Rahman* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), 123–140. Al-Hibri's full name is Azizah Yahia Muhammad Toufiq Al-Hibri; she is a legal expert and US citizen of Lebanese descent. She was appointed by President Obama as a commissioner on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in June 2011. Al-Hibri is Professor Emeritus at the Richmond University Law School.
- 55 See Khaled Abou El Fadl et al., *The Place of Tolerance in Islam* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 7–11.
- 56 See Zuhairi Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Toleransi, Inklusivisme, Pluralisme dan Multikulturalisme* [The Quran: Book of tolerance, inclusiveness, pluralism, and multiculturalism] (Jakarta: Fitrah, 2007). I shall not quote the numerous religious arguments used by Zuhairi to support his theories. As an alumnus of the Podok Pesantren, Prenduan, Sumenep, Madura, and Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Zuhairi has the authority to quote both classical and modern sources from the treasury of Islamic thought.
- 57 Ibid., iii.
- 58 Ibid., 478.
- 59 Abd. Moqsih Ghazali, *Argumen Pluralisme Agama: Membangun Toleransi Berbasis Al-Qur'an* [Arguments for religious pluralism: Building tolerance based on the Quran] (Jakarta: KataKita, 2009), 401.
- 60 Qs Al-Baqarah (2):285.
- 61 See Abdul Mun'im Al-Hafni, *Ensiklopedia Golongan, Kelompok, Aliran, Mazhab, Partai dan Gerakan Islam* [Encyclopedia of Islamic groups, factions, sects, schools, parties, and movements], trans. Muhatrom (Jakarta: Soegeng Sarjadi Syndicate-Grafindo Khazanah Ilmu, 2006).
- 62 See Johan Galtung, "Moderates all over the world, unite!" <http://www.sopos.org/aufsaetze/3e74775b512e7/1.phtml>. Besides this source, I also used Galtung's website <http://www.transcend.org>.
- 63 My writing on Galtung can also be read in the "Perspektif" column of *Gatra*, April 10, 2008, 114.
- 64 The most comprehensive literature on these radical movements has been written by Haedar Nashir, *Gerakan Islam Syariat: Reproduksi Salafiyah Ideologis di Indonesia* [Sharia Islamic movements: Reproducing the Salafist ideology in Indonesia] (Jakarta: PSAP, 2007). It derives from the writer's dissertation at the Postgraduate School of Gadjah Mada University's sociology study program. Other useful works are Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal: Pergulatan Orma-Ormas Islam Garis Keras di Indonesia* [Radical Islam: The battles of hard-line Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia] (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002); S. Yunanto et al., *Gerakan Militan Islam di Indonesia dan di Asia Tenggara* [Islamic militant movements in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia] (Jakarta, 2003), in the form of a collection of writings by several authors, also available in an English edition; Jamhari and Jajang Jahroni, *Gerakan Salafi Radikal di Indonesia* [Radical Salafist movements in Indonesia] (Jakarta, Raja Grafindo Persada), 2004.
- 65 See Haedar Nashir, *Gerakan Islam Syariat* [Sharia Islamic movements], 398.
- 66 Ibid., 400.

- 67 See Herry Mohammad, "Abu Bakr Ba'asyir Keluar dari MMI" [Abu Bakr Ba'asyir leaves the MMI], *Gatra*, July 31–August 6, 2008, 12; Herry Mohammad, "Islah Bersyarat Tak Bisa Mengikat" [A conditional peace settlement cannot be binding], *Gatra*, August 28–September 3, 2008, 12.
- 68 Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, *Fiqh Maqashid Syariah: Moderasi Islam antara Aliran Tekstual dan Aliran Liberal* [Fiqh maqasid sharia: Islamic moderation between the textual and liberal streams], trans. Arif Munandar Riswanto (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2007), 7.
- 69 Haedar Nashir, *Gerakan Islam Syariat* [Sharia Islamic movements], 399.
- 70 See the foreword by Deliar Noer in Zada, *Islam Radikal* [Radical Islam], xvii.
- 71 Al-Qardhawi, *Fiqh*, 49–55.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 54.
- 73 See Jamhari and Jahroni, *Gerakan Salafi Radikal* [Radical Salafist movements], 129–130.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 131–132.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 130.
- 76 See Zada, *Islam Radikal* [Radical Islam], 168–170.
- 77 See Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gokalp* (London: Harvill Press, 1950), 94. The word *khalifa* [caliph] or its plural form *khulafa/khala'if* appears eight times in the Quran, twice in the singular form and six times in the plural form; that is, QS Al-Baqarah (2):30 on Adam; QS Sad (38):26 on the Prophet David; QS Al-An'am (6):165; QS Yunus (10):14 and 73; QS Fatir (35):30; QS Al-A'raf (7):69 and 73; QS Al-Naml (27):62, on mankind in general, including the prophets. The Quranic commentator Mufassir Muhammad Makhluf provides a definition of *khalifa*: "someone who replaces someone else and occupies the position he had represented" (*huwa manyakhlufu ghaira wa yanubu manaba*). His task was to "develop the world and regulate humanity" (*fi 'imarat al-ardh wa siyasad al-nas*). See Makhluf, *Shafwat Al-Bayan lima'ani Al-Qur'an* (Kuwait: Wizarat Al-Awqaf wa Al-Shuni Al-Islamiyah, AH 1408 / 1987), 11. See also Al-Suyuti, *Qur'an Karim: Tafsir wa Bayan ma'a Asbab Al-Nuzul* (Damascus: Dar Al-Rashid, n.d.), 6.
- 78 See Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shah-Wali-Allah and His Times* (Canberra: Ma'rifat, 1980), 290.
- 79 See Qamaruddin Khan, *The Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyah* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1973), 81.
- 80 See Fazlur Rahman, "Islam and the State," paper presented at the Conference of Religious Conviction and Public Action: The Life of Faith in a Pluralistic World, University of Chicago, April 2, 1982, 2.
- 81 Yusuf Ibish, *The Political Doctrine of Al-Baqillani* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1966), 1.
- 82 Helmut Gätje, *The Qur'an and Its Exegesis*, trans. and ed. Alford T. Welch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 13.
- 83 I wrote this text on classical Islamic political theory over a quarter of a century ago, with a few subsequent revisions. See, for example, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dan Pancasila sebagai Dasar Negara: Studi tentang Perdebatan dalam*

*Konstituante* [Islam and Pancasila as the foundation of the state: A study of the debate in the Constituent Assembly] (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2006), 19–40. This work is a revised edition of the translation of my dissertation, first published by LP3ES in 1985 with the title “*Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan: Studi tentang Percaturan dalam Konstituante*” [Islam and the issue of the state: A study of discussions in the Constituent Assembly]. My adviser, the late Prof. Fazlur Rahman, asked that, before entering into discussions of the basic problems of the state in Indonesia, I first trace back the political theories developed by Muslim jurists and theologians of the Middle Ages. By considering the historical background of the political thinking in scholarly Muslim circles, both classical and modern, we will see that the entire structure of those theories was closely bound up with conditions of time and place. There is no absolute here, except the Quranic dictum that the principle of *shura* (consultation) must underpin the structure of political and social theory. Sad to say, such jurists do not depart from that dictum.

- 84 Fauzi M. Najjar, *The Islamic State: A Study in Traditional Politics* (Darien, CT: Monographic Press, 1967), 11.
- 85 QS Al-Zumar (39):17–18.
- 86 Taufik Abdullah, *Islam dan Masyarakat: Pantulan Sejarah Indonesia* [Islam and society: Reflections on Indonesian history] (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1987), 248.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ahmd Syafii Maarif, “Jaudat Sa’id: Juru Bicara Islam Damai” [Jaudat Sa’id: Spokesman of an Islam of peace], *Gatra*, October 23–30, 2008.
- 89 See, for example, QS Al-Isra (17):70.
- 90 QS Al-Ma’idah (5):28.
- 91 See Novriantoni Kahar, “Profil Jawdat Said: Islam yang Menghidupkan, Bukan Mematikan” [Profile of Jaudat Sa’id: Islam that gives life, but does not take it], in IslamLib.com, July 24, 2008.
- 92 Jaudat’s website is <http://www.jawdatsaid.net>.
- 93 See the interview of Jaudat Sa’id by Bashar Humeid, “Philosopher Jawdat Said’s View of Islam as a Violence-Free Religion,” translated into English by Mark Rossman and published in *The American Muslim*, December 22, 2006 (originally published in German in Qantara.de [2006]). Available at [http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/philosopher\\_jawdat\\_said\\_s\\_view\\_of\\_islam\\_as\\_a\\_violence\\_free\\_religion](http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/philosopher_jawdat_said_s_view_of_islam_as_a_violence_free_religion).
- 94 QS Al-Ra’d (13):17.

### Chapter 3

- 1 Table 1, “Human Development Index and its components,” in United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone* (New York: UNDP, 2016), 198–201. These statistics have been updated for the English edition.
- 2 See Sismono La Ode et al., eds., *Di Belantara Pendidikan Bermoral: Biografi Pemikiran dan Kepemimpinan Prof. Suyanto, PhD* [In the jungle of moral

- education: A biography of the thoughts and leadership of Prof. Suyanto, PhD] (Yogyakarta: UNY Press, 2006), 30.
- 3 See Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis and Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 33–34.
- 4 QS Al-Hajj (22):46.
- 5 QS Fussilat (41):53.
- 6 Rahman, *Major Themes*, 34; citing QS Ar-Rum (30):7.
- 7 See my paper “Muhammadiyah Education: Normative and Philosophical Aspects,” delivered in a seminar organized by the Central Executive Committee of the Muhammadiyah Council on Primary and Secondary Education, Jakarta, March 25, 2000.
- 8 See Mh. Djaldan Badawi, ed., *Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga Muhammadiyah, 1912–1985* [Articles of association and bylaws of Muhammadiyah, 1912–1985] (Yogyakarta: Secretariat of the Executive Committee of Muhammadiyah, 1998), 22. In the Articles of Association of 1912, article 2, item *a*, the word “teaching” (*pengajaran*) appears. Then, in the Articles of Association of 1914, the word “training” (*pelajaran*) was added after “teaching” (see *ibid.*, 1 and 4).
- 9 *Ibid.*, 44, item 4c.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 49.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 68.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 140.
- 13 See Umar Hasyim, *Muhammadiyah Jalan Lurus* [Muhammadiyah: The straight road], Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1990, 358–359.
- 14 See for example QS Al-Hijr (15):26, 28, 33, and other verses. In the commentaries and explications of Hasanain Muhammad Makhluf, *Tafsir wa Bayan Kalimat Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (Damascus: Dar Al-Fajr Al-Islami, 1997), 263, the word *shalshal* means *tin yabis ka'l-fakhkhar* (dry earth like thick clay), *hama'in* means *tin aswad mutaghayyir* (black soil that can change), and the word *masnun* is *mushawwar* (given form), human form that is still empty without any understanding (*surata insan ajwaf*).
- 15 *Ibid.*, note to p. 263.
- 16 QS Al-Mu'minun (23):12–14.
- 17 QS Al-Hijr (15):29, QS Sad (38):72.
- 18 See QS Al-Isra (17):70.
- 19 QS Al-Hijr (15):27.
- 20 QS Al-Shams (91):7–10.
- 21 See Tarif Khalidi, *Classical Arab Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1985), 57.
- 22 Quoted in Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, 58.
- 23 See QS Fussilat (41):53.
- 24 Summarized from QS *Ali Imran* (3):190–191. The expression *albab* (the plural form of *lubb*) derives from the verb *labba*, which means live or settle in one place. It also means to be intelligent and clever, reasonable and logical, wise and level-headed, to understand, be well educated, etc. *Lubb* means heart, thought, intellect, understanding. Therefore, *ulu al-albab* (encountered in fifteen places in the Quran) is that group of humanity that is intelligent, wise, well-intentioned



in mind and heart, and have a grasp of thought and feeling that exceeds all that is visible. It is these people who have succeeded in marrying the power of *dhikr* and *fikr*.

- 25 See QS *Taha* (20):54 and 128.
- 26 See QS Ali ‘Imran (3):13; QS Al-Nur (24):44, and QS Sad (38):45.
- 27 QS Al-Baqarah (2):269.
- 28 See Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia* [Yellow books, *pesantrens*, and *tarekat*: Islamic traditions in Indonesia] (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), 23.
- 29 Ibid. See the decision of the 27th Congress of the Nahdlatul Ulama in *Nahdhatul Ulama Kembali ke Khittah* [The Nahdhatul Ulama returns to the line of action] (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), 23.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid., 158.
- 32 The election of Idham Chalid (b. 1922) as the national chair of the NU in the Medan Congress in December 1956, according to available information, was not according to his own wishes, but because K.H. Dachlan, who was supported by Idham, had many opponents. As a result, the choice fell on Idham, who wrote, “Regardless of my wishes, I was chosen to be the national chairman.” See Arief Mudatsir Mandan, ed., *Napak Tilas Pengabdian Idham Chalid: Tanggung Jawab Politik NU dalam Sejarah* [Following in the footsteps of the devoted service of Idham Chalid: Political responsibility of the NU in history] (Jakarta: Pustaka Indonesia Satu, 2008), 321–322. As it turned out, Idham served the longest term as the national chair of the NU, even though he came from South Kalimantan, until he was succeeded with little tension by Abdurrahman Wahid in 1984 in the Situbondo Congress.
- 33 Ibid., 388, connected with note 4, p. 408.
- 34 Ibid., 394–395.
- 35 Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islamku Islam Anda Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Negara Demokrasi* [My Islam, your Islam, our Islam: Religion of the society of a democratic state] (Jakarta: Wahid Institute, 2006), 223–224.
- 36 Ibid., 225–226.
- 37 Ibid., 227.
- 38 See my article “Demokrasi di Tangan Aji Mumpung” [Democracy in the hands of opportunists], *Gatra* online, December 11, 2008.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 See QS Al-Mujadila (58):11.
- 41 See Irshad Manji, “To Fix Islam, Start from the Inside,” *Newsweek* online, December 31, 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/1777388/output/print>.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 You can read about the *nagari* Sumpur Kudus in my autobiography, *Titik-Titik Kisar di Perjalananku* [Turning points in my journey] (Yogyakarta-Jakarta: Ombak-Maarif Institute, 2006), 3–99.
- 44 See DetikNews, September 12, 2006. This is based on information from the Minister of National Development Planning, Syaifullah Yusuf.

- 45 In Muhammadiyah, this issue of female leadership (particularly the question of a woman becoming president) was discussed by the Muhammadiyah Central Executive's Council of Legal Consideration and Reform Movement during the 2010 National Conference of Legal Consideration in Malang. Discussion relating to female leadership at the conference was a continuation of the 1976 Legal Consideration Congress on Pious Women in Islam, which included a discussion of "Women of Islam in the Political Field." The 2010 National Conference issued a final decision or fatwa, which has yet to be formalized, that states, in part:

The book *Adabul Mar'ah Fil Islâm ...* (1982) states that women can become leaders at various levels, such as school principals, company directors, ... mayors, judges, and ministers .... It is stated that "religion does not criticize or block the progress of men or women so long as it does not release the person from devotion to Allah." *Adabul Mar'ah Fil Islâm* also does not regard the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), transmitted by Abu Bakrah, ... to be a correct reason for prohibiting women from becoming leaders. This hadith cannot be understood as a general rule, and on the contrary must be connected with the context of the Prophet at the time he pronounced it. ...

This hadith cannot be understood that all the highest rulers of the female sex are sure to meet with failure, because this goes against the Quran, which tells of the shrewd and wise Queen of Sheba .... More than that, ... we see so many women who lead this or that country and they are successful in doing so .... By paying attention to the experience of world history, which recognizes female leaders, some of whom are immortalized in the Quran, as well as the fact that we do not find any *naskh* verses of the Quran or hadith that forbid Muslim women from becoming leaders, and by making the association with previous positions that were normally held by women, as stated in *Adabul Mar'ah Fil Islâm*, there is not the slightest obstacle for a Muslim woman to become president.

- 46 See Manji, "To Fix Islam."

- 47 Mohammad Amien Rais, *Agenda – Mendesak Bangsa: Selamatkan Indonesia* [Agenda – Urging the nation: Save Indonesia] (Yogyakarta: PPSK Press, 2008), 223.

## Chapter 4

- 1 See Henri Peyre, "Existentialism and French Literature: Jean-Paul Sartre's Novels," introduction to *The Age of Reason*, by Jean-Paul Sartre, trans. Eric Sutton (New York: Knopf, 1968), xv.
- 2 Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Kashmiri Bazar, 1971), 148. In fact, Iqbal's thinking on *ijtihad* and the philosophy of the Ego, with occasional editorial additions or deletions, was included in Ahmad Syafii Maarif and Mohammad Diponegoro, *Percik-Percik Pemikiran Iqbal* [Shards of Iqbal's thinking] (Yogyakarta: Shalahuddin Press, 1983), 1–12. This treatment originated in my article in *Panji Masyarakat* 323 (1981), published when I was at the University of Chicago.

- 3 Ibid., 178.
- 4 Ibid., 97.
- 5 See Abu Al-Hasan ‘Ali bin Muhammad bin Habib Al-Bashari Al-Bagddadi Al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam Al-Sultaniyyah wa’l-Wilayat Al-Diniyyah* (Cairo: Mustafa Al-Babi Al-Halabi, 1973). The very first sentence in this work makes quite an interesting statement on the position of *al-imamah* (the system of imamate rule): “The system of imamate rule was institutionalized to replace the prophetic function in guarding religion and governing the world.” This expresses the main task and responsibility of a government in Islam. What concerns me is that Al-Mawardi’s thesis is meant to preserve the dynastic imperial system, in this case that of the Abbasids. Because I have analyzed Islamic political thinking of the classical period in another book, I will discuss this only briefly here.
- 6 My lecture notes at the University of Chicago, November 30, 1981.
- 7 Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 178–179.
- 8 See Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel’s Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 178.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 See the excerpt of Miss Kazimi, “Iqbal’s Revolt,” *Iqbal Review* 3, no. 1 (July 1954), 3.
- 11 Ibid., 109.
- 12 QS Al-Qalam (68):1.
- 13 See G.R. Sabri, “Individual and Society in Iqbal’s Thinking,” *Iqbal Review* 18, no. 4 (January 1978), 2.
- 14 Kazimi, “Iqbal’s Revolt,” 114.
- 15 Sabri, “Individual and Society,” 11.
- 16 Ibid., 12. *Khair Al-Bashar* (the Best of People) refers to the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Iqbal’s love of this Last of the Prophets knows no bounds.
- 17 See *Kulliyat-e Ash‘ar-e Farsi Maulana Iqbal* (Lahore and Tehran: Kitab Kaneh Sinai, 1964), 35.
- 18 See QS Al-Baqarah (2):23.
- 19 Al-Shabuni, *Safwat Al-Tafasir*, 1:42.
- 20 “The best community” (*khaira umma*) indeed does come from the Quran (QS Ali ‘Imran [3]:110), but definitely would not refer to a community that is falling into decline.
- 21 See Konstituante Republik Indonesia [Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia], *Risalah Perundingan: Dasar Negara* [Minutes of the negotiations: Foundation of the state], vol. 6. Jakarta: 1957, 157.
- 22 This quotation of Rahman’s statement is based on my memory when I attended his lectures between 1979 and 1982 at the University of Chicago.
- 23 See QS Al-Baqarah (2):185.
- 24 See also Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Muhammad Asad tentang Al-Qur’an” [Muhammad Asad on the Quran], *Republika*, October 17, 2006, 12.
- 25 See H.B. Jassin, *Charil Anwar*, 66.
- 26 Most of this section comes from a paper I gave at the Catholic Seminary of Kota Baru, Yogyakarta, in a limited discussion held April 1–2, 2000, under the

- title “Agama dan Ketulusan” [Religion and sincerity], with occasional additions and modifications.
- 27 See J.S. Badudu and Sutan Mohammad Zain, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* [General dictionary of the Indonesian language] (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1994), 1547. See also Sheikh Othman bin Sheikh Salim et al., *Kamus Dewan* [Institute dictionary], new ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1986), 1400.
- 28 See J.M. Cowan, ed., *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1976), 254–255.
- 29 See David B. Guralnik, ed., *Webster’s New World Dictionary* (New York: World, 1970), 692. See also R.E. Allen, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 700.
- 30 See, for instance, QS Sad (38):46.
- 31 QS Al-Bayyinah (98):5.
- 32 QS Al-Insan (76):9.
- 33 See Gianni Vattimo, *Nietzsche: An Introduction*, trans. Nicholas Martin (London: Athlone Press, 2002), 75. See also Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 20.
- 34 Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, 20.
- 35 QS Al-Ma’un (107):1–3.
- 36 See A.J. Toynbee, *Surviving the Future*, 3rd ed. (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 37–67. This work was the result of a long dialogue between Toynbee and the Japanese thinker Kei Wakaizumi, a professor at Kyoto Sangyo University.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 58–67. Higher religions are religions oriented to transcendental values; lower religions are religions that busy themselves with things of this world, distinct from prophetic and transcendental values.
- 40 QS Yunus (10):99.
- 41 QS Al-Hashr (59):2.
- 42 Z. Yasni, *Bung Hatta Menjawab* [Bung Hatta responds] (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1979), 179. This book represents a long series of interviews Yasni held with Muhammad Hatta in the context of commemorating the seventy-sixth birthday of the Proclamator. This interviews went on for approximately one year and were then incorporated into a 215-page book.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 177.
- 44 Arnold Mononutu, “Kenang-Kenangan tentang Bung Hatta” [Memories of Bung Hatta], in *Bung Hatta: Pribadinya dalam Kenangan* [Bung Hatta: The man in memory], ed. Meutia Farida Swasono (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan-Universitas Indonesia, 1980), 613. Boldface per the source.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 614.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 613–614.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 616.
- 48 Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Kemodernan, dan Keindonesiaan* [Islam, modernity, and Indonesian identity], 89.

- 49 Ibid., 93.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid., 105.
- 52 Ibid., 178.
- 53 See QS Yusuf (12):110.
- 54 Approximately the final two pages in this section were taken from my column *Faktor Islam* [The Islamic factor], with occasional editorial modifications. See *Gatra*, July 19–25, 2007, 114.
- 55 With quite significant changes and additions, the initial idea for this section came from my column *Resonansi* [Resonance]: “Peradaban di tengah Harapan dan Kecemasan” [Civilization between hope and unease], *Republika*, June 14, 2005, 114.
- 56 See *Just Commentary* 8 (January 1988), 1.
- 57 See Michael D. Aeschliman, “The Real Nietzsche,” *The World and I*, January 1990, 846.
- 58 See, for example, the face of the US coin issued in 1972.
- 59 Albert Einstein, *Out of My Later Years* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 9.
- 60 Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Perils and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 93.
- 61 See Michael Hastings’s interview with Chomsky, “A Tale of Two Quagmires,” *Newsweek*, January 9, 2006, 52. See also my column about the comparison of Zalmay Khalilzad (former US ambassador in post-Saddam Iraq) and Chomsky in *Republika*, January 24, 2007, 12.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 The influential print media that conducted this survey were the *Guardian* (UK), the *Toronto Star* (Canada), and *Reforma* (Mexico). See Phillips, *American Theocracy*, vii. A comment by the *Chicago Sun-Times* reviewer on the back cover of this book by Phillips reads: “Everyone should have access to what *American Theocracy* tells us about our country at this critical time.”
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 See *Pravda* online, February 21, 2008. Mesplay was the presidential candidate of the Green Party. IRV, or instant-runoff voting, is a voting system used to identify the single winner in an election, whereby the voter ranks the candidates in order of preference. In an IRV system, if no candidate wins the majority of votes in the first round, the candidate with the smallest number of votes is eliminated and his or her votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to the choice of voters in that round. This process is repeated until one candidate obtains an absolute majority of the votes.
- 66 Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Fukuyama, Neokons, dan Keonaran” [Fukuyama, neocons, and mayhem], *Republika*, January 29, 2008, 12. Continuing from the asterisk: “... This means that had the 9/11 tragedy and the Iraq war never occurred, the power of those radicals would have diminished because of course the absolute majority of the Muslim *umat* rejected them. The results of a six-year Gallup survey on three continents showed how false was the charge that Islam itself was the same as ‘radicalism and violence.’ About 93% of 1.3 million

Muslims were moderate and only 7% were politically radical.” (See “Survey challenges notions of Islam,” *The Jakarta Post*, February 28, 2008, 1. “Politically radical” does not necessarily mean that they are terrorists; a small number of people act out of despair caused by their failure to adapt to modernity and all its implications.)

- 67 See Ahmad Syafii Maarif, “Where Is Indonesia and Where Is It Going?” *Kompas*, October 18, 2008, 6. A summary of *The Post-American World* (2008) by Fareed Zakaria is available in his long article “The Rise of the Rest,” *Newsweek* online, May 12, 2008. Zakaria’s previous work has been translated into various languages and titled *The Future of Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003). Zakaria, a well-known *Newsweek* columnist, was born in India in 1966; he moved to the United States at the age of eighteen.

## Chapter 5

- 1 An excerpt from Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, quoted by Souleymane Bachir Diagne in “Religion and the Challenge of Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Future of Values: 21st-Century Talks*, ed. Jérôme Bindé, trans. John Corbett (Paris: Unesco, 2004), 100.
- 2 Adapted from QS Al-Mulk (67):2.
- 3 W.S. Rendra, *Megatruh Kambuh: Renungan Seorang Penyair dalam Menanggapi Kalabendu* [The Megatruh of relapse: Musings of a poet in response to the Kalabendu era] (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University, 2008), 2.
- 4 Anhar Gonggong, *Indonesia, Demokrasi, dan Masa Depan* [Indonesia, Democracy, and the Future] (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2005), 233.
- 5 Jakob Oetama, *Berpikir Ulang tentang Keindonesiaan* [Rethinking Indonesian identity] (Jakarta: Kompas Books, 2001), 4.
- 6 QS Al-Anfal (8):24.
- 7 Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, *Sejarah Kebudayaan Indonesia Dilihat dari Segi Nilai-Nilai* [The history of Indonesian culture seen in terms of values] (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 1982), 50.
- 8 See my analysis of the views of STA in Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Peta Bumi Intelektualisme Islam di Indonesia* [The map of Islamic intellectualism in Indonesia] (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), 114.
- 9 H.B. Jassin, *Chairil Anwar*, 66. Chairil was inspired by Archibald MacLeish’s “The Young Dead Soldiers Do Not Speak” to write the poem “Karawang Bekasi,” which has been translated by John H. McGlynn as “Between Karawang and Kekasi” and was published in the *Lontar Anthology of Indonesian Poetry: The Twentieth Century in Poetry*, ed. John H. McGlynn et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2017), 91.

## Afterword

- 1 QS Al-Baqarah (2):249. This verse is from the time of the Battle of Badr, during the war between the Muslims and the Quraysh of Mecca. There were only 317 Muslims, while the Quraysh polytheists numbered about 3,000. The Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Your numbers are equal to the numbers of the army of Thalut [Saul] [about 300 men].” See Al-Tabari, *Jami‘ Al-Bayan fi Tafsir Al-Qur‘an* [A compilation of statements on interpreting the Quran] (Mauqi‘ Majma‘ Al-Malik Fahd li-Taba‘ah [Al-Maktabah Al-Shamilah], Sect. 5, n.d.), 351.





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## About the Author

**Ahmad Syafii Maarif** was born in Sumpur Kudus, West Sumatra, on May 31, 1935. He majored in history at Northern Illinois University (1973) and received his MA in history from the University of Ohio in 1980. He was awarded his PhD in Islamic thinking from the University of Chicago in 1983 with his dissertation “Islam as the Basis of State: A Study of the Islamic Political Ideas as Reflected in the Constituent Assembly Debates in Indonesia.” He has been a professor of history at Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan (Institute for Teacher Training and Education; IKIP), now Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta; Institut Agama Negeri (State Institute of Religion), now Universitas Islam Negeri (State Institute of Islam); and Universitas Islam Indonesia (Islamic University of Indonesia). At present, he is Professor Emeritus at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta State University). He has been a guest lecturer at the Universitas Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia) and McGill University, Montreal.

Maarif has been active in the social organization Muhammadiyah, established by the renowned Indonesian Muslim reformer Ahmad Dahlan in 1912. Maarif was the Deputy Chairman of Muhammadiyah’s Central Executive Committee (1995–1999) and held the position of Acting Chairman of Muhammadiyah’s Central Executive Committee (2000), replacing Amien Rais, who had entered the world of politics. At the Muhammadiyah Congress in 2000, he was elected Chairman for the period 2000–2005. In spite of the many calls on all sides for him to serve again, he decided to resign and become Adviser to the Central Executive Committee (2005–2010). To promote democratization and an inclusive, tolerant, and pluralist social order, he, together with several leading figures of Muhammadiyah, established the Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity in 2003.

He has received national and international awards recognizing his work as an activist intellectual and his dedication to humanity. In 2008, he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award in the category of Peace and International Understanding. In addition, he also received the Hamengkubuwono IX Award in the category of Multiculturalism (2000), the Mpu Pradah Award in the category of Pluralism (2009), the Habibie Award (2010), the IBF Award in the category of Islamic Book Figure (2011), the Nabil Award (2013), and the UMM Award (2014). He was named Dedicated Intellectual by the daily newspaper *Kompas* (2013).

In the international arena, Maarif is President of the World Conference on Religion for Peace (WCRFP), based in the United States. After serving as chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Muhammadiyah, he focused on national issues. His writings have appeared in various forums, seminars, and media. They include *Gerakan Komunis di Vietnam* (The Communist movement in Vietnam); *Mengapa Vietnam Jatuk Seluruhnya ke Tangan Komunis?* (Why did Vietnam fall completely into the hands of the Communists?); *Aspirasi Umat Islam Indonesia* (The aspirations of the Indonesian Muslim *umat*), co-authored; *Percik-Percik Pemikiran Iqbal* (Shards of Iqbal's thinking), with Mohammad Diponegoro; *Dinamika Islam: Potret Perkembangan Islam di Indonesia* (The dynamics of Islam: Portrait of the development of Islam in Indonesia); *Duta Islam untuk Dunia Moderen* (The envoy of Islam for the modern world), with Mohammad Diponegoro; *Islam, Kenapa Tidak!* (Islam, Why not?) and *Orientalisme dan Humanisme Sekuler* (Orientalism and secular humanism), with Dr. M. Amien Rais; *Masa Depan dalam Taruhan* (The future at risk), 2000; *Mencari Autentisitas dalam Kegalauan* (Finding authenticity in uproar); *Meluruskan Makna Jihad* (Rectifying the meaning of jihad), 2005; *Menerobos Kemelut* (Breaking through the crisis), 2005; *Menggugah Nurani Bangsa* (Arousing the conscience of the nation), 2005; *Titik-Titik Kisar di Perjalananku* (Turning points in my journey), 2006, republished in 2009; *Tuhan Menyapa Kita* (God addresses us), 2006; *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan*, 2009 (published in English as *Islam, Humanity, and Indonesian Identity*); *Gilad Atzmon: Catatan Kritis tentang Palestina dan Masa Depan Zionis* (Gilad Atzmon: Critical notes on Palestine and the Zionist future), 2012; and *Memoar Seorang Anak Kampung* (Memoir of a kampung kid), 2013.



## About the Translator

**George A. Fowler** lived and worked in the Asia-Pacific region for over thirty years, including twenty-three years in commercial banking. Since 2002, he has been a translator of Chinese, Indonesian, Malay, and Tagalog, based in Seattle, Washington. Among his literary translations are *Old Town* by Lin Zhe (Zhang Yonghong) and *Sitti Nurbaya: A Love Unrealized* by Marah Rusli. He co-authored two nonfiction books in the early 1970s: *Pertamina: The Story of Indonesian Oil* and *Java: A Garden Continuum*.

