A RELIGIOUS STATE (A STUDY OF HASYIM ASYARI AND MUHAMMAD IQBAL’S THOUGHT ON THE RELATION OF RELIGION, STATE AND NATIONALISM)

Arik Dwijayanto*, Yusmicha Ulya Afif**

Abstract
This article explores the concept of a religious state proposed by two Muslim leaders: Hasyim Asyari (1871-1947), an Indonesian Muslim leader and Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938), an Indian Muslim leader. Both of them represented the early generation when the emerging revolution for the independence of Indonesia (1945) from the Dutch colonialism and India-Pakistan (1947) from the British Imperialism. In doing so, they argued that the religious state is compatible with the plural nation that has diverse cultures, faiths, and ethnicities. They also argued that Islam as religion should involve the establishment of a nation-state. But under certain circumstances, they changed their thinking. Hasyim changed his thought that Islam in Indonesia should not be dominated by a single religion and state ideology. Hasyim regarded religiosity in Indonesia as vital in nation-building within a multi-religious society. While Iqbal changed from Indian loyalist to Islamist loyalist after he studied and lived in the West. The desire of Iqbal to establish the own state for the Indian Muslims separated from Hindus was first promulgated in 1930 when he was a President of the Muslim League. Iqbal expressed the hope of seeing Punjab, the North West province, Sind and Balukhistan being one in a single state, having self-government outside the British empire. In particular, the two Muslim leaders used religious legitimacy to establish political identity. By using historical approach (intellectual history), the relationship between religion, state, and nationalism based on the thinking of the two Muslim leaders can be concluded that Hasyim Asyari more prioritizes Islam as the ethical value to build state ideology and nationalism otherwise Muhammad Iqbal tends to make Islam as the main principle in establishment of state ideology and nationalism.

Keywords: Hasyim Asyari, Muhammad Iqbal, religion, state, nationalism.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci: Hasyim Asyari, Muhammad Iqbal, agama, negara, nasionalisme.
INTRODUCTION

Discourse on religion, state and nationalism both in theories and practices have been revisited in many studies. The practices of the religion, state and nationalism are indeed dynamic and never monolithic. Each Muslim country may offer different interpretation and policies with regard to the position of religion in national politics. As Indonesia since the beginning of Independence in the mid twentieth century, has formulated its own concept of adapting the principles of religious faith and nationalism. (Al Makin, 2017, p. 1-2).

While in India during the revolt of 1857 A.D., the Hindus and Muslims both joined together against the British, but after the revolt, the British policy of divide and rule, Hindu revivalism and emergence of Aligarh Movement contributed to rise of separatism (Madani, 2005, p. 207). The concept of religion, state and nationalism in India was presented under the phrase of “two nation theory” by the proponents of Muslim nationalism. They maintained that in the subcontinent there lived not one homogeneous nation but many nations, two of them are largest ones: Hindus and Muslims. On account of their numbers they are capable of having two separate countries to exercise their own ideologies of life which are so very different to each other (Zaman, 2012, p. 396).

This article explores the concept of religious state on the relationship of religion, state and nationalism proposed by intellectuals immediately before the independence. This article focuses on two prominent religious figures: Hasyim Asyari, an Indonesian Muslim figure and the leader of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammad Iqbal widely known as Allama Iqbal, was an Indian Muslim figure and regarded as the “Spiritual Father of Pakistan”.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Brief Biography of Hasyim Asyari

Hasyim Asy’ari or Muhammad Hasyim, was born in Gedang Jombang village on 24 Zulkaidah 1287 H / 14 February 1871, and died in Jombang on July 1947. Hasyim was a descendant of Ulama. His great-grandfather, Kyai Sihah was the founder of Pesantren Tambak Beras, while his grandfather Kyai Usman was the founder of Pesantren Gedang and his father, namely Kyai Asy’ari was a founder pesantren Keras in Jombang. In 1893, Hasyim left for Mecca and studied with Syaikh Mahfudh At-Tarmisi who came from Tremas, Pacitan, East Java. Syaikh Mahfudh At-Tarmisi became a lecturer at the Grand Mosque and was a scholar of hadith in Mecca, he was a student of Syaikh Nawawi Al-Bantany who was a student of Syaikh Ahmad Khatib Syambasi who succeeded in combining the Qadariah and Naqsabandiah line. To complete his knowledge in the religious studies, Hasyim studied to Syaikh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi. Of the Muslim scholars, which most influence the thought of Hasyim was Shaikh Mahfudh At-Tarmisi. After 7 years studying in Mecca, Hasyim Asy’ari returned to Java and founded Pesantren Tebuireng in Jombang on 26 Rabiul Awal 1317 H / 1899 M. Many kyais (Muslim scholars) who influence the thoughts of Islam in Indonesia was originated from Pesantren Tebuireng (Barton, 2002, pp. 15-26, Arifin, 1983, pp. 71-72, Margono, 2011, pp. 336-337)
As an intellectual of Indonesian Muslim, Hasyim Asy'ari wrote several works including *Adab al-'Alim wa-Al-Mutta'allim* on ethics in a learning system that was influenced by the tradition of classical Islamic education and muslim scholars such as Imam al-Ghazali and Al-Zarnuji. His thoughts in the religious understanding seen from his defense of the way of religion with the system of ‘mazhab’ poured in his work *Qanun Asasy li-Jam’iyati Nahdatul Ulama* which later became the foundation of NU organization. In the theology, he also wrote a work entitled *al-Risalah al-Tauhidyyah and al-Qaid fi Bayan Ma Yajib Min al-Qaid* explained there are three levels of human appreciation of God. Firstly, it includes an assessment of the oneness of God (the understanding of unity for the layman). Secondly, knowledge and the theory of certainty are sourced from God (understanding of tauhid for the scholars). Thirdly, it illustrates from the deepest feelings of God’s greatness (for the Sufis who bring to the knowledge of God). In the field of the tariqah, Kyai Hashim Asy'ari wrote *al-Durar al-Muntasyirah fi Masail al-Tis'a 'Asyarah* which contains practical guidance for Muslims to be more careful in entering the world of tariqah. In addition, Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari’s speeches were published in various newspapers such as *Soeara Nahdlatul Ulama* (Voice of Nahdlatul Ulama), the official newspaper of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), published in 1928 (Khuluq, 1997, pp. 36-38).

**Religion, State and Nationalism Views of Hasyim Asyari**

Through the intellectual works of Hasyim Asyari, there is no specific work of him in discussing on religion, state and nationalism. However, according to Ishomudin Hadzik (d. 2003) as his grandson in the work of *Irsyadul Mukminin Ila Sirati Sayyidil Mursalin* reflected and summarized some views of Hasyim on brotherhood, equality and justice. Hasyim also stated in his speeches that Islamic brotherhood is the basis of democracy, which is of great value to humanity, and that it had been introduced by Islam since its early development. By planting Islamic brotherhood, unfair conditions will necessarily disappear from society. For Hasyim, Islam not only entails the attempt to free people from the worship of more than one God and to guide them to worship only one God (tauhid), but it also seeks the social, political, and economic aspects of ignorant societies. Moreover, it seeks to disseminate the spirit of Islamic brotherhood by eliminating differences stemming from descent, position, wealth, or nationality (Khuluq, 1997, p. 43).

Accordingly, Hasyim suggested that Muslims should always make every effort to unite themselves. He also repeated this call following the declaration of Indonesian independence when he stated that Islamic brotherhood seems to be disappearing from the fabric of society. It is caused of many a Muslim sees his own brother in Islam starving yet his heart is not moved to help him. Hasyim was also concerned about the political condition of Indonesian Muslims. During the early years of Indonesian independence, he was saddened by the attempt of some people to use Islam as a means to achieving their goals. Hasyim said that we find the role of the Islamic community in this political arena is very insignificant. The religious influence upon the political arena in Indonesia is very weak, even dead. But even so, there are other greater disasters, namely, that Islam has been used by some people as a vehicle towards achieving their goals and hopes, whether political or personal. It is very dangerous if people regard the users, who do not
carry out every deed commanded by Allah nor avoid the forbidden deeds as Muslims (Khuluq, 1997, p. 56).

Hasyim further compared the contemporary political conditions with those that existed during the early development of Islam. He believed that the political foundations of Islamic government as laid down by the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr and Umar b. Khattab had three goals. Firstly, providing equality for all Muslim. Secondly, serving the interest of the people through deliberation and thirdly maintaining justice. He further stated that the form of Islamic government was not defined. When Our respected Prophet Muhammad, God bless him, passed away, he did not leave any message about how to choose the head of state. Thus, the appointment of the head of state and many other things concerning statehood have been left undefined, and Muslims were not bound to one system to constrict them. All systems can apply to the Islamic community in every place (Khuluq, 1997, p. 57).

However, the teachings of Islam, he insisted cannot work well if the interests of the Islamic community are fragmented. Hence, he regarded the ultimate goal of political Islam in Indonesia to be the true implementation of Islamic teachings in all aspects of life, instead of the lip-service often paid to them. Thus, he argued that the Indonesian Islamic community, do not want to compete for position or leadership, we only want that those who sit and hold the country’s leadership to implement the teachings of Islam as commanded by Allah, the Most Holy and Glorious (Khuluq, 1997, p. 58).

Hasyim Asyari’s views on the relation of Islam and nationalism has been changed after he involved in political activities especially when ahead of Indonesian Independence. Based on historical fact, Hasyim Asyari can be regarded as having been the spiritual leader of many Indonesian political figures such as Sukarno and General Sudirman, even though his own political activities were relatively low-key until late in his career, and for the most part were not openly anti-Dutch. These activities included his establishment of a traditional Muslim organization, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Under his patronage, the NU focussed its activities on the advancement of Muslim; education, the promotion of socio-religious activities and the economic betterment of the Muslim lower classes (Khuluq, 1997, p. 61).

Hasyim Asyari early awareness of political matters came as a result of Muslim encounters with colonialism in Indonesia and the Middle East. The armed struggle of Indonesian Muslims against the Dutch during the second half of the nineteenth century, as seen in the Minangkabau-Paderi War (1821-1837), the Javanese Diponegoro War (1825-1830), and the Achehnese War (1873-1904), to mention but a few, must have influenced young Hasyim who grew up in the last quarter of that century. His political awareness also stemmed from his educational experience. Although the pesantren curriculum rarely dealt with the political ideas of Muslim thinkers or discussed political crises, the pesantren community was not unaware of the daily hardships inflicted by colonial upon indigenous Muslims. Like other traditional ulama who avoided cooperation with the Dutch colonial regime, Hasyim Asyari distanced himself by retreating to his pesantren in a remote village. From there, he launched a cultural assault on the Dutch by forbidding local Muslims to wear Dutch-like clothing or to
imitate their etiquette. Asyari launched his own non-cooperative movement against the Dutch from his village. Unfortunately, the Dutch became aware of his sentiments and burned down his pesantren in 1913. Hasyim Asyari was however undeterred by the destruction of the pesantren and even gathered his students in the courtyard of the gutted edifice, calling upon them to continue in their struggle against the Dutch. He also advised them, however, not to demonstrate public opposition to the Dutch but, rather, to keep a low profile until the opportune moment for open confrontation presented itself (Khuluq, 1997, p. 62-66).

After involving with some political figures, Hasyim Asy’ari fully supported nationalist and Muslim movement in struggling colonialism. His closest student, Abdul Wahab Hasbullah allowed to participate and join in the Syarikat Islam (Muslim Association). Furthermore, Wahab Hasbullah established a discussion forum called Tasywirul Afkar with Mas Mansur, who had studied in Cairo and later became the leader of the Muslim organization, the Muhammadiyah. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah also established an Islamic school named Nahdatul Wathan (the Revival of the Nation) in 1916, a name which clearly shows the spirit of nationalism of its founder. At the same time, Syubbanul Wathan (Youth Generation of the Nation) was established by its proponents, among them Abdullah Ubaid, Thohir Badri, Abdul Halim, with the guidance of Abdul Wahab Hasbullah. Those organizations became the seeds of the establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) with the approval of Hasyim Asy’ari. Nevertheless, for a period of time, K.H. Hasyim Asy’ari seemed to doubt whether an independent organization for traditionalist Muslims was necessary in the midst of so many other Muslim groups. Perhaps he wondered whether its establishment would endanger the unity of the _ummah_. It can be assumed that Hasyim Asyari’s agreement to found the NU was forthcoming, only after he was certain that it would not be harmful to the unity of the _ummah_. (Khuluq, 1997: 68-69).

During the early days of the NU, Hasyim Asyari and the organization adopted an accommodational approach towards Dutch authority, even though the latter was non-Muslim. This posture was undoubtedly rooted in the Sunni political doctrines developed by such political thinkers as the late Imam Ghazali and Imam Mawardi. Moreover, this stance was influenced by the example of _Syarekat Islam_ and the hardships it encountered when it opposed the colonial government. Consequently, at the third NU Congress in Surabaya (1928), a non-Muslim government was praised. The accommodational approach was also emphasized by Hasyim and the NU at its 1936 Congress in Banjarmasin (South Borneo). When asked if the land occupied by non-believers should be defended from external threat, Hasyim Asy’ari replied in the affirmative. It was stated that the East Indies could be regarded as still an Islamic country because it had always been the home of an Islamic people, even though it had been occupied by the infidels. Thus its status as an Islamic country was eternal (Khuluq, 1997, p. 73).

As a leader of Nahdlatul Ulama, Hasyim also expressed his views on nationalism through his fatwa known as the Resolution of Jihad on October 22, 1945. The _fatwa_ encouraged the spirit of struggle to defend sovereignty when allied forces including the Dutch who wanted to colonize Indonesia, Hashim Asyari as the great leader of NU (Rois Akbar) issued a decision as follows:
1) Appeal to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to determine a concrete action and against the efforts which would endanger Indonesian independence, religion and the state especially on the Dutch side and its agents.

2) In order to continue the struggle of Sabilillah for the establishment of the independent Republic of Indonesia and the Islamic Religion (Bruinessen, 1994, pp. 121-122).

Biographical Sketch of Mohammad Iqbal

Mohammad Iqbal, born on 24 Dzulhijjah 1289 or February 22, 1873, in Sialkot, Punjab, and died on April 20, 1938. He began his elementary and secondary education in his hometown in Sialkot. In 1895 Iqbal left for Lahore to pursue his education until he obtained a Master of Arts (M.A) degree. In this city Iqbal studied at Maulana Mir Hasan, a great and famous scholar capable of mastering Urdu literature. He also studied at Thomas Arnold, an orientalist who according to many accounts influenced Iqbal and encouraged him to proceed to England. In 1905, Iqbal went to England and became a student at the University of Cambridge to study philosophy. Two years later (1907) he moved to Munich Germany. Iqbal holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in the field of Sufism with his dissertation The Development of Mytaphysic in Persia. In 1908, Iqbal returned to Lahore and was appointed as a philosophy lecturer in addition to his lawyer work. On his return to Lahore Iqbal gave lectures at various universities in India. His lecture materials were later published in the form of a book entitled The Recontruction of Religious Thought in Islam (Maitre, 1989, p. 13, Khuzai, 2003, p. 182, Hawi, 2016, p. 242).

The result of his intellectual journey in the Western world encouraged Iqbal to redefining the thoughts that he contributed to Muslims, especially in India-Pakistan. At least, there are three important things encouraging him as follows. First, the activities of Western life. Second, he gained a vision of many things that the Eastern world has not yet dreamed of, but have done by the West. Actually, the potential of the East world is quite possible for that, even more than that. Third, the life of a European man individualistic and materialistic often lead to intense competition without recognizing ethical and moral values, made Iqbal criticize the West. For him, many things are positive from Europe, but Europe is not an example the good one. In some ways, Europe is good, but Islam teach better (Ali, 1993, pp. 30-31, Khuzai, 2003, p. 184).

As a scientist and legal expert, Iqbal was not only engaged in academics and devoted himself to his profession as a lawyer, but he also actively involved in politics, even in 1930 Iqbal was elected President of the Muslim League. In 1932, he was appointed as a member of the delegation to the Round Table conference in London to form an Indian state constitution. In 1933 Iqbal was invited to Afghanistan to discuss the establishment of Kabul University. And in 1932 Iqbal also attended the Islamic Conference held in Jerusalem. Five years after Iqbal was invited to Afghanistan on 21 April 1938, Iqbal passed away (Hawi, 2016, p. 243).

The Views of Iqbal on Religion, State and Nationalism

Iqbal was not only a scholar but also a poet, a politician and a thinker. In his capacity as a thinker, Iqbal had seen the various weaknesses of Indian Muslims. For
those reason, Iqbal proposed concepts or ideas which at that time were seen as an advanced step of reform (Mujahid, 1977; Hassan, 1983).

As a politician when he was elected to the Punjab legislature and in 1930 was elected President of the Muslim League, Iqbal initially accepted the concept of Indian nationalism whose people consisted of groups of Hindus and Muslims. This nationalism was formed on the basis of the cultural background of India. Iqbal's views are thus reflected in the poems that support Indian unity and independence and call for Muslims to join hands and shoulder to shoulder with Hindus in Indian homeland (Maitre, 1989).

In this case, Iqbal still shows his attitude as a nationalist loyal to India as his homeland regardless of the background of religious differences held by the people of India. But Iqbal's nationalism attitude in subsequent development undergoes a change, especially after he learned and was acquainted with nationalism in the West. The idea of nationalism that once formed the basis of the struggle for the formation of an independent India was dismissed, for in the nationalism that existed in the West it contained materialism and atheism both of which posed a threat to humanity. Indian nationalism that includes Muslims and Hindus according to him is a good idea but difficult to implement. Iqbal therefore worries and suspects that behind Indian nationalism is hidden the concept of Hinduism in a new form. This fact in accordance with Iqbal must be considered, therefore the demand of Muslims to have the state is a natural thing (Morgan, 1986).

The desire to establish their own state for the Indian Muslims separated from Hindus is based on the bond of religion and belief. This was first promulgated by Iqbal in his address as President of the Muslim League on 29 December 1930. Iqbal expressed the hope of seeing Punjab, the North West frontier province, Sind and Balukhistan being one in a single state, having self-government within or outside the British empire. The establishment of a consolidated North West Muslim state as the ultimate goal of the Muslims, at least for North West Indian Muslims (Iqbal, 1934).

Iqbal's understanding of an Islamic state based on religious beliefs that aims to get freedom, equality and brotherhood, is very logical. This idea gained strong support from a very influential Muslim politician, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (who acknowledged that the notion of Pakistani State was adopted from Iqbal), was even supported by a Hindu majority who was in a desperate position in the face of England (Hawi, 2016, p. 245). Iqbal's central understanding of equality and brotherhood comes to the conclusion that democracy is the most important political aspiration in Islam. Therefore, this form of government makes it possible for human freedom to develop all the possibilities of its nature, while limiting its freedom to the interests of society. The success of a democratic system depends only on the willingness of members who are always subject to the law of God. To realize these goals required the guidance of a great leader. Unfortunately, Iqbal does not explain how the leader will gain power in a modern state (Fauzi, 1992, p. 131).

The view of democracy leads to its nationalist attitude. He opposed nationalism as understood in Europe, not because it was allowed to flourish in India and subtract material benefits for Muslims, but because it sees in it it embodied the seeds of atheistic
materialism as the greatest danger to mankind today. Patriotism is a blessing that has a place in the human moral life. For Iqbal, nationalism about the Islamic world creates a special meaning because Islam is a minority in India. He had doubted nationalism could be realized because of the religious ideal in Islam which is related to the social structure (Khuzai, 2003, 186).

The social structure of Islam includes state, law and shari’a. Any nationalism that opposes Islamic social solidarity and life is unacceptable. Islam can accept the boundaries that separate one region from another and can accept the differences of the nation just to make it easier about their peer relations. The boundaries and differences of the nation should not narrow the horizon of the social view of Muslims. The Islamic world is a family family consisting of the republics. Thus, Iqbal is not a nationalist in a narrow sense, but a Pan-Islamist. Not everyone agrees with the idea of Iqbal nationalism, which rejects such as Abu Hasan Ali Nadwi and Al-Mawdudi, and most scholars in India argue that nationalism and Islam are two opposing ideologies. Nationalism acts as a particularism opposed to Islamic universalism, regardless of the form of nationalism. While Abdul Kalam Azad, more wanted ‘Composite Nationalism’, consists of Hindu society in India (Rahman, 1985, pp. 57-58).

Despite the different reasons, Azad later agreed with Nadwi and Mawdudi and most scholars opposed the formation of Pakistan as a separate Muslim state and until the end of his life Azad joined Indian nationalism. With the affirmation of Iqbal it is clear that he is not a nationalist in a narrow sense but rather a Pan-Islamist. The form of the republic according to Iqbal is not only totally in line with the teachings of Islam, because the khilafah should not be centered on one person but also can be distributed to an institution or assembly consisting of selected people, the republic has become a necessity considering the new forces from the Islamic world (Hawi, 2016, p. 247).

The idea of Iqbal is ‘Islamic dynamism’. It encouragement against Muslims to move further and not to remain silent. For iqbal, this is the essence of life while the law of life is created. Iqbal called the Muslims to wake up and create a new world. He mentioned that an active and creative person although non Muslim is better than a sleeping Muslim. Iqbal also had a distinctive political outlook, persistent against nationalism that promotes ethnic sentiments. For him, the human personality will grow up and mature in a free environment and away from the sentiments of nationalism (Hawi, 2016, p. 248).

Although Iqbal had devoted most of his thinking to understanding the political theories of Islamic societies and has expressed Pan-Islamism, Iqbal realized that the situation of the ages necessitates adaptation and Muslims have to set short and long-term goals:

1) Every Muslim nation must gain independence, take care of itself and raise its own house which will make it possess the strength necessary to carry out that purpose.
2) Gather together and form a strong one consisting of republics with a unifying bond that is spiritual Islam (Iqbal, 1934).
The principle of Iqbal between Islam, politics and religion are inseparable, because state and religion are two separate ones. It is with this self-awakening movement that Iqbal can break the spirit of his people to rise from the current slump. He returned the spirit that once felt his glory by Muslims (Vahid, 1964, p. 60).

CONCLUSION

The relationship between religion, state and nationalism based on the thinking of the two figures discussed in this paper can be concluded that Hasyim Asyari finally when ahead of independence more prioritizes Islam as the ethical value to build nationalism and state otherwise Muhammad Iqbal tends to make Islam the main principle in raising state and nationalism. Hasyim's view of nationalism strengthened with the fatwa of Jihad's resolution on October 1945 and influenced the formation of a nation-state. Despite its predominantly Muslim state, after proclamation he did not impose Indonesia as an Islamic state. It is different from Iqbal's idea which the establishment of Islamic state as a form of Muslim solidarity (ukhuwah Islamiyah). This idea tends to potentially eliminate the nature of tolerance to the nation and other religions. His view contradicts the assertion that Islam is a doctrine that knows no boundaries of race, religion, and geography, but contains universal principles. However, the idea of Iqbal is ultimately able to be realized with the establishment of a Pakistani Islamic Republic which was previously part of the Indian state.

REFERENCES


