



Pluralism in the Qur'an: Critical Analysis of Surah al-Baqarah 2: 62 Interpretation in Indonesia

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Abstract. Pluralism is an actual and interesting discussion to be examined both from the point of view and any discipline by world scholars, especially in Indonesia. There is basically a difference between Indonesian Muslim scholars in defining pluralism. Some interpret tolerance and others mean all religions equally. The problem arises from the definition of pluralism with all religions being the same. The proponents of Indonesian Muslim pluralism with the second meaning are guided by verses of the Qur'an one of which is often used is al-Baqarah 2: 62. According to their interpretation this verse is a concrete proof that the Qur'an recognizes the truth of all religions not just Islam Prophet Muhammad. Reviewing the arguments of pluralism in Indonesia based on the verse and criticizing its interpretation using descriptive-critical methods is a step taken in this article. Until finally found an answer, the proponents of pluralism in Indonesia misunderstood and interpreted the verse. The error arose, as it did not review the *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* verse and textually interpreted the verse. Such mistakes also occur when proponents of pluralism reveal supporting foundations as well as circumcision in human diversity and interpret the word *al-Islam* in the Qur'an.

Keywords: Pluralism · Indonesia · Qur'an · Critical analysis · al-Baqarah 2: 62

1 Introduction

Religious pluralism is an interesting study to discuss from time to time especially in contemporary times. This is because dogma and religion-based doctrine greatly affect harmony or division between mankind. This can be proven from the historical fact that religion is the driving wheel of violence and conflict as the case in Poso Indonesia, Middle East involving Muslims and non-Muslims. Experts and researchers agree that religious issues are the cause of prolonged conflict.

Because religion is the source of conflict as *maktub*, it arises with vigorous research on pluralism and tolerance in religion. Indonesian Muslim thinkers and researchers try to trace and explore the meaning of Qur'an verses that indicate pluralism. Various verses are interpreted to reinforce the argument that the Qur'an upholds pluralism.

Indonesian pluralism broadcasters make the verse as a strong basis for the truth of all religions from God's perspective. Ineportation of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and others is the right religion [1]. From this, the truth is not solely owned by the Religion of Islam. All people need is to do good and keep believing in God. Uniquely, such interpretations arise from Muslim scholars, especially in Indonesia and the insurgency in the present.

In this article, the author presents a critique of the interpretation of some verses of the Qur'an that are used as a basis by modern Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia in strengthening the legality of religious pluralism. Right in al-Baqarah 2: 62 which became a discussion in criticizing the interpretation. This discussion is urgent to be raised, because there is often a mistake in interpreting the verse.

2 Interpretation of Al-Baqarah 2: 62 and the Argumentation of Indonesian Pluralism

Various definitions of pluralism were presented by Indonesian researchers, but no similar definitions were found [2]. Some define pluralism with synonyms of tolerance. Others define all religions as true and none are superior to others. If that is meant by religious pluralism as the first definition, then there is no problem, because the Qur'an teaches tolerance. The problem arises when defining pluralism by the second definition and in this section al-Baqarah 2: 62 textually seems to support the argument.

Furthermore, looking at the interpretation of the verse from scattered articles and research, it can be concluded in favor of religious pluralism ideology. Al-Baqarah 2: 62 interpreted a message that promises the salvation of mankind while believing in God's oneness, believing in the last day, and always adorning oneself with virtue. Moreover, it is proof of Islam acknowledging the truth of the teachings of other religions. Islamic recognition of other religions is not due to socio-political, cultural, or civilizational elements. Even paradise is not reserved for Muslims, but other religions are also entitled to enter Paradise. This is because Islam is not a religion that emerged by itself, but emerged as the successor of the previous religion. Thus, it can be ascertained that there is a meeting point with the predecessor religions. This meeting point then provided the theological basis for his adherents to accept pluralism [3].

There are other interpretations linking the verse to the realm of human rights (HAM) which has been written by Allah and Allah acknowledges the existence of *salvific efficacy* through various paths. Thus, the essence of the verse is a demand for Muslims not to discriminate against minorities. The final conclusion of his interpretation is that Muslims are very inelegant when claiming other religions as heretical or false religions, because the Qur'an does not justify the truest Islam.

Abdul Moqsith Ghazali interpreted the verse, "Jews, Christians, Shabiah or other people who believe in God/God, the last day, and do righteous deeds, then they will not be wasted by God. They will be recompensed according to their faith and their efforts." [4]. Not much different from other Indonesian Muslim intellectual interpretations when interpreting the verse is more likely to be on textual understanding. As evidence Jalaluddin Rakhmat explained, "al-Baqarah 2: 62 it is quite clear that salvation at the last day can be achieved by all religions with regard to religion and life with the criteria of faith in

God, faith in the last day, and righteous deeds” [5]. The perspective of the Indonesian pluralism group in al-Baqarah 2: 62 and other verses that have a harmonious explanation become a proof that Islam recognizes the truth of other religions and potentially enters Paradise. Therefore, as a Muslim it is wrong to feel that he is the most righteous. Thus, pluralism is the teaching of Muslims that is directly sourced from the Qur'an.

Proponents of Indonesian pluralism reinforce their argument by dissecting the meaning of the phrase *al-Islām* in the Qur'an. In their opinion, phrase *al-Islām* in the al-Qur'an not limited to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, but has a broader meaning of submission and surrender. Even Ihdha Hani'atun Nisa' after interpreting the pronunciation of *al-Islām*, *al-Dīn*, and the interpretation of surah al-Māidah 5: 3, “according to textualist understanding tends to compare, underestimate even consider the wrong religion other than the religion it adheres to.” He further concluded using his personal thinking that it would be unfair for other religions to end up losing money in the hereafter. According to him, all religions are entitled to salvation for what they do during the course of their lives. This is based on the explanation of surah al-Baqarah 2: 62 [6].

Islamic universalism is also used by Nurcholish Madjid in dissecting the meaning of the word al-Islam. He explained that Islam is not only a religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad. Islam is the teaching of all the messengers of Allah. In principle, the goal of Islam is to teach submission, obedience, and submission to God. So, all religions are the same.

Another foundation raised by proponet of pluralism is god's destiny to create man with diversity. Referring to al-Ḥujurāt 49: 13, al-Māidah 5: 48, Yūnus 10: 99, Hūd 11: 118, and al-Shūrā 42: 8, according to their opinion, these verses show the particular difference in matters of religion being *sunnatullah*. Those who deny diversity indicate opposition to the power of Allah. God wants to compete with one another in doing good. The rest of God who becomes a Judge later in the last day.

The existence of *sunnatullah* and the will *irādah* of Allah in diversity leads them to the islamic religious thought brought by the Prophet Muhammad is not absolute in its truth. This is because Islam brought by the previous prophets who scattered after the death of the Prophet Muhammad is still justified. The emergence of the assumption of Islamic absolutism Muhammadism is no other cause is the narrowness of understanding and excessive doctrine.

3 *Sabab Al-Nuzūl* and the Meaning of Baqarah 2: 62 Mufasir Perspective

One of the steps that must be taken when dealing with verses of the Qur'an should first investigate the history of the cause of the revelation. The common mistake is that some people reveal verses of the Qur'an to support their arguments without seeing *sabab al-Nuzūl*. This step leads to misinterpretation of the Qur'an. Because of the urgency of the discussion of *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* in understanding the redaction of the Qur'an, it is no wonder that Muslim intellectuals both classical and modern emphasize this discipline. This is because by understanding in advance *sabab al-Nuzūl* verse can lead mufasir to reveal the purpose and purpose of the verse of the Qur'an in accordance with the purpose of the verse.

Given the urgency of knowing *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* in understanding the verses of the Qur'an and being one of the sources to understand it, it is urgent to display *sabab al-Nuzūl* from al-Baqarah 2: 62. Observers of the Qur'an and commentaries agree that the verse was revealed concerning one of the companions named Salmān al-Fārisī [7]. At that time, al-Fārisī came to the Prophet Muhammad and recounted the worship of the early people both from prayer, fasting, and believing in the coming of the Prophet Muhammad as the Prophet of the end times. After al-Fārisī recounted the goodness of the ancients, the Prophet responded that they were all members of hell. The Prophet Muhammad's answer was straightened again by Allah with the revelation of al-Baqarah 2: 62.

The meaning of verse above is whoever believes in a prophet, then he who does not change his message, then believes in the prophet who came after him, then he is a survivor [8]. Ibn Kathīr asserts, "as 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib said, this verse is a news story that does not accept one's good deeds unless guided by Islamic law brought by the Prophet Muhammad after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. And as for him who believes in the Prophet, he is saved. However, after the Prophet Muhammad was sent, then all mankind must believe in the Prophet Muhammad. And there is no salvation in the Hereafter" [9].

More clearly al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abū Ḥātim detail that Jews could be said to have believed if they held to the Torah and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mūsā, until the coming of the Prophet 'Isā. After the arrival of the Prophet 'Isā, the Jews who kept the Torah and the sunnah of the Prophet Mūsā, they were classified as un-survived. Likewise with Christians, faith can be considered if principled with the Gospel and the Prophet 'Isā, until the coming of the Prophet Muhammad. If after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Christians remain principled with the Gospel and sharia of the Prophet 'Isā, then they are classified as people who do not survive [10].

The above *sabab al-Nuzūl* commentary can be understood against the background of the verse's descent, namely salmān al-Fārisī's question concerning the fate of the pre-religious followers of the Prophet Muhammad. Then the Qur'an gives the answer that the former people were in the category of survivors. On condition that it remains principled on the teachings of the prophet sent at that time. In addition, it must follow the changes in terms in line with the change of the prophet sent after. Regarding this verse, al-Rāzī gives three interpretational perspectives, 1) An explanation from Ibn 'Abbās that corresponds to the reason for the descent described above. 2) The explanation of Sufyān al-Thawzī which confirms that the word *āmanū* in the first part is interpreted by hypocrites who are limited to believing in the oral, but not to the heart. From this, al-Baqarah 2: 62 portrays the lost as hypocrites, Jews, Christians, and Ṣābi'īn. All of these people can be saved, if they return to the right faith. 3) The perspective of al-Mutakalimīn interprets those who believed in the Prophet Muhammad at that time and his faith was maintained, so he was classified as a survivor [11].

Sayyid Ṭanṭawī interprets faith and good works as determined by the true religion, so their faith and deeds are justified and rewarded. However, this worked for the ancients before the prophet Muhammad. If the group does not believe in the Prophet Muhammad after the prophet Muhammad, then his faith and deeds are unacceptable and not classified

as survivors. This is because the Islamic law brought by the Prophet Muhammad removes all previous shari'a [12].

'Amir 'Adnān al-Ḥāfi after conducting research on the arguments of mufasirs, reviewing the correlation of verses, and others ultimately concluded the adherents of all religions mentioned in al-Baqarah 2: 62 fall into the category of survivors. However, this salvation only works until the coming of the Prophet Muhammad and the followers of the religion have listened to the da'wah brought by the Prophet Muhammad. In this case, the concept of *taklif* in Islamic theology plays a role in the concept of *bulūgh al-Dakwah*. Therefore, at the end of the article he wrote explained that there are three groups of people who survived al-Baqarah 2: 62, namely: 1) people who believed in the religion believed and died before the death of the Prophet Muhammad, 2) people who believe in the religion that is believed and perfected by the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad, 3) people who believe in his religion without believing in the Prophet Muhammad because he does not know about the teachings of religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad. These three models remain in the category of survivors as a result of the correlation of the interpretation of al-Baqarah 2: 62 and al-Ḥajj 22: 17.

The result of the review of Muslim intellectual interpretation of al-Baqarah 2: 62 is the existence of various religions is a decision of Allah/*sunnatullah*. Nevertheless, among all the religions justified by Allah at the time of the prophet Muhammad's death until the end of time is the Religion of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad. This statement does not justify that the truest religion of the Prophet Muhammad and religion before the Prophet Muhammad is not true, but the previous religions are true, until the expiration of the validity of the religion. This is as explained in the word of Allah. al-Māidah 5: 48.

As it is well known that the teachings of the people of the Prophet Mūsā were erased by the coming of the Prophet 'Isā and the teachings of the Prophet 'Isā were erased by the coming of the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, there is no religion that is safe and true since the removal of the Prophet Muhammad other than the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad, because the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad erased all previous teachings. Therefore, it is no exaggeration if the mufasir al-Qur'an when interpreting al-Baqarah 2: 62 decided that the validity of the truth and salvation of other religions only applies at that time and has not occurred since the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

4 Misinterpretation of Pluralism Adherents

There are basically three errors when interpreting the word of Allah Q.S al-Baqarah 2: 62 namely: textualist, connecting *the sunnatullah* who created man with diversity, and the meaning of the word *al-Islām* in the Qur'an. These three mistakes lead to the understanding that all religions are safe and justified by God through the Qur'an. If repeated from the three errors as follows:

4.1 Textual Understanding

Textual understanding in interpreting al-Baqarah 2: 62 which leads to the understanding of all true religions while still believing in God, doing good, and believing with the

end. Proponents of pluralism interpret surah al-Baqarah with a textual interpretation. Interpretation that departs regardless of other supporting elements in understanding the redaction of the Qur'ān. Whereas when viewed from the supporting elements in interpreting the Qur'ān especially about *asbāb al-Nuzūl*, then it is clearly seen the position and condition of the verse is revealed.

It is a big mistake to interpret a verse of the Qur'ān without first reviewing *asbāb al-Nuzūl*. This is because *asbāb al-Nuzūl* in understanding the Qur'ān is something very fundamental [13]. Al-Wāḥidī, al-Suyūṭī, Ibn Daqīq al-'Id, and other scholars agreed on the urgency of *asbāb al-Nuzūl* in understanding the verses of the Qur'ān, not even excessive if al-Wāḥidī gave information, one could not possibly interpret the verses of the Qur'ān that have *asbāb al-Nuzūl* without guided to the *asbāb al-Nuzūl* verses in question.

On the other hand, the proponents of pluralism do not pay attention to the function of *Makkī Madanī* in collaboration between *verses* in interpreting. Mixing between *makkī* and *Madanī verses* in their interpretations only to reinforce their interpretation.

From this it is no exaggeration to state that the interpretation of pluralism advocates interprets the verses of the Qur'ān according to its own wishes in order to strengthen its argument.

4.2 Sunatullah About Human Diversity

There is basically nothing wrong with their argument about diversity is *sunnatullah* and there is also no argument that it is not just Islam Muhammadism that is true. However, the mistake of their thinking *sunnatullah* in religious diversity indicates the recognition of God to the truth of all religions that exist after the disso quit of the Prophet Muhammad. Recognizing diversity does not mean justifying all the diversity, but rather as a sign that the teachings in the Qur'ān This is because God created man with logic. When this logic is used, then faith in islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad can appear. This is an understanding of the surah Yūnus never impose the will of others after the completion of da'wah. This is because Allah created man with logic. When this logic is used, then faith in Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad can appear. This is an understanding of surah Yūnus 10: 99 after reviewing in verse 101 [14].

The misinterpretation of the adherent of pluralism in this case is the imperfection in the recitation of verses of the Qur'ān. They forget the study of *tanāsub ayāt* in the Qur'ān. Interpreting verses of the Qur'ān in pieces that ultimately plunges them into displacement in their interpretation. Allah does not want all mankind in one sharia, does not mean That Allah recognizes the truth of all religions, but the purpose of the editorial is that Allah wants a change of sharia from one prophet to another, to the end of the prophets, namely the Prophet Muhammad. God equips man with logic, so that man can choose right and wrong. The truth is that following the Qur'ān does not follow the previous books without denying before the existence of the Qur'ān there has been a book of *al-Samāwī* that first directed mankind on the right path.

4.3 The Meaning of Al-Islām in Al-Qur'ān

Classical and modern mufasir agree that Islam is not just a religion carried by the Prophet Muhammad. All the previous Prophets were also Muslims. This can be proven from al-Alūsī's explanation when interpreting Ali 'Imārān 3: 67, "This verse is proof that Judaism and Christianity are not religions justified by God. Only Islam is a religion that is justified by Allah in the Qur'an, although Islam is not limited to the teachings of religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad" [15]. Thus, no religion is justified other than Islam. However, what needs to be considered again is the elimination of the condition when the prophet with a new treatise. The removal of sharia is valid until the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad. In the end, the Treatise of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad is the last Islamic treatise that there is no removal. This is illustrated when understanding al-Māidah 5: 3 and al-An'ām 6: 115.

With the abolition of the minutes of the previous prophets, it can be ascertained that Islam brought by the previous prophet does not work and that is determined and justified is Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, it is no exaggeration if Muslim intellectuals give limits to the pronunciation of *al-Islām*, "Islam is the religion of the prophets sent by Allah, but *al-Islām* became a special name for the treatise brought by the Prophet Muhammad."

It is surprising that adherent of The Indonesian pluralism argument in interpreting the pronunciation of *al-Islām* neglect or even do not know the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad regarding the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad that erased all the teachings of the previous prophet. As narrated by Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ قَالَ أَنْبَأَنَا سُفْيَانُ عَنْ جَابِرٍ عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ قَالَ جَاءَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي مَرَرْتُ بِأَخٍ لِي مِنْ بَنِي فَرِيظَةَ فَكَتَبَ لِي جِوَامِعَ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ أَلَا أَعْرِضُهَا عَلَيْكَ قَالَ فَتَغَيَّرَ وَجْهُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ أَلَا تَرَى مَا يَوْجُهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ عُمَرُ رَضِينَا بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَسُولًا قَالَ فَسُرِّيَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ قَالَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَوْ أَصْبَحَ فِيكُمْ مُوسَى ثُمَّ اتَّبَعْتُمُوهُ وَتَرَكْتُمُونِي لَضَلَلْتُمْ إِيَّكُمْ حَظِي مِنَ الْأُمَّمِ وَأَنَا حَظُّكُمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ.

In addition to the above history there are many histories that explain that what is meant from Ali 'Imrān 3: 19, 85, and al-Māidah 5: 3 is the religion of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad not the Religion of Islam brought by the previous prophets. If the proponents of pluralism do not accept the hadith, then there is another verse that explains that *al-Islām* in the Qur'an is an Islamic law brought by the Prophet Muhammad. It is located in al-A'rāf 7: 158. And we have sent it down to you before you, and you are not unaware. From this verse also, Yaqu'ān Sāmī Muḥammad explains that salvation will not be obtained by other than followers of Islamic teachings brought by Prophet Muhammad [16]. So where does the argument of the proponents of pluralism justify all religions based on the verses of the Qur'an? Forcing themselves to interpret the Qur'an is what they do.

If we look at the substantive meaning of al-Islām, then it can be understood from the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad narrated by al-Bukhārī:

حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنَا حَنْظَلَةُ بْنُ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، عَنْ
عُكْرَمَةَ بْنِ خَالِدٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَالْحَجِّ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ ".

Muhammad Ateen explains that what is meant by *al-Islām* is to testify Allah is God and the Prophet Muhammad is His messenger. Not only that, but it includes prayer, zakat, Hajj, and Ramadan fasting. Ateen further suggests that *al-Islām* if interpreted globally is everything that comes from the Prophet Muhammad.

5 Conclusion

The above commentary can be concluded that Q.S. al-Baqarah 2: 62 which serves as a basis for strengthening the argument of pluralism with the meaning of all religions equally and equally likely to survive at the end of the day, is a misinterpretation. The fatal error in interpreting is not to review the reason for the revelation of the verse, textual, hastily concluding a verse without looking at *munāsabah*, and *Makkī Madanī*. On the other hand, mistakes also occur when interpreting other supporting verses such as verses that discuss about *circumcision* in creating various people and interpreting the pronunciation of *al-Islām* with the meaning of narrow understanding regardless of its substantive meaning. This is clearly contrary to the Arabic language rules set by the Arabic scholars. Thus, the argument of supporting pluralism cannot be justified and has no solid foundation.

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