Understanding Social Aspects
of Religion and its Relevance
to the Relationship Between Religion and State

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Abstract — **Religion is believed to have given birth to many essential things in society. Religion cannot be separated from the theme of morality and society, both its function and essence. One of the important functions of religion in the life of society is related to its role in integrating social systems. One of them is about the relationship between religion and other social institutions, like state. This study uses qualitative methode with descriptive approach. Data obtained by literature review from books and other materials on the sociology of religion and the relationship between religion and state topics. The data were analyzed qualitatively with an explanative descriptive model. The result of this study is that the perfection of religion is determined by the existence of its social aspects. It is the social aspect that guarantees a high concern for human affairs. The more complete the teachings and social aspects of a religion, the higher its potential to serve the rights of humanity. The strength of the social aspect of religion is determined by several indicators, such as morality, collectivity, openness, solidarity, and humanity. The social aspect of religion has an important position for religion itself as well as for institutions other than itself, such as the state and other social institutions. The social aspect of religion marks the character of inclusiveness in itself and for its adherents. The social aspect of religion has an important contribution in building a harmonious, balanced and moderate relationship between religion and the state.**

Keywords — **social aspect, religion, religion and state, freedom of religion**

I. INTRODUCTION

A democratic state is characterized by a harmonious relationship between citizens and their government, which means that there is also a balance between rights and obligations. A democratic state must prove that it guarantees the expression of the rights and obligations of its citizens. Among the rights of citizens that must be guaranteed by the state is the right to religion in accordance with their beliefs. Therefore, the relationship between the state and religion is also one of the factors that play an important role in the implementation of the realization of the rights and obligations of citizens in a balanced manner.

Belief in religion is characterized by belief in God with rituals and special communication with Him. This behavior of religious believers is usually known as vertical relationship (habl min Allah). However, religion does not only regulate vertical relationships. Religion also teaches the form of relationships with fellow religious people, even towards the universe. This type of relationship is known as the horizontal relationship of religious people (habl min al-nas).

Sociologically, religion is an entity that is very fluid, flexible and not limited by private spaces. The private spaces of religion only appear when it comes to the interaction of religious beings with their God. But the private space is a much smaller proportion than the public space of religion. Public spaces provide opportunities for religious people to be able to interact more freely with fellow humans from any background. So actually, sociologically, religious people have a very open space to choose their own typology of religiosity.

In relation to religious actors in dealing with non-religious institutions, such as the state, various discourses and opinions will emerge. Differences in behavior and patterns of relationships give rise to at least three characteristics. First, the relationship pattern that is more concerned with the religious aspect; second, the relationship pattern that is more concerned with the state aspect; and third, the relationship pattern that chooses not to defeat one of them, but with an effort to compromise both. Religion in its social dimension requires greater attention and priority on giving space to the humanitarian vision aspect more than the religious vision.

This paper intends to describe the understanding of the social aspect of religion and criticize its role in creating a pattern of relationship between the state and religion in the context of democratization and religious freedom.

II. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Religion in Social Perspective

In this study, the understanding of religion is seen from its relationship with social life, mainly taken from the tradition of the sociology of religion, by quoting from sociologists. Emile Durkheim said, the phenomenon of religion is based on two basic categories, belief or belief and rite [1]. Belief, in Durkheim's language is states of opinion and consists of representations. While rites are a particular form of action [1]. Rites can be distinguished from other human practices only by looking at the special basis of the object. That special basis is expressed in "belief." Thus, only after defining belief can we define rite [1].

Religion, therefore, is more than just the idea of God and spirit, so it cannot be limited and defined solely in relation to these two. Everything related to beliefs and practices that have a connection with something sacred is what Durkheim calls religion. In this context, there is an interesting note from Durkheim that we can observe. He said that religion is different from magic [1]. According to him, if magic is an individual effort, while religion cannot be separated from the idea of a worship or moral community. In other words, the basic character of religion, in a sociological context, is the need for social institutions to legitimize the content of its doctrine.

Durkheim's familiar definition of religion is: "*unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden-beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them*" [1]. From the phenomenological tradition, Wilfred Cantwel Smith also said, religion always contains two factors that are different in type but equally dynamic, namely the historical "cumulative tradition" and personal human faith [2].

It is said that the cumulative tradition is the entire mass of open-ended objective data that constitutes the historical content of religious life in the past. The most concrete examples to illustrate cumulative tradition are buildings of worship, scriptures, theological systems, dance patterns, legal and other social institutions, conventions, moral codes, myths and so on. In other words, this cumulative tradition is something that can and does transfer from one person or generation to another and can be observed by historians. This cumulative tradition is of course a quite important aspect to see how far religion can function in a society. If cumulative tradition is a concrete picture of religion, personal faith is not. Personal faith is closely related to how it conceptualizes the Transcendent. If theology is part of traditions, then faith is outside, beyond theology, namely in the human heart.

Referring to Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes with their simple, but very philosophical formulation, said, religion is an explanation of the highest meaning in life. Usually religion contains four elements namely Creed, Code, Cult and Community-Structure or better known as the 4 C formulation [3]. Creed refers to the cognitive aspect of religion. Code (of behavior) or ethics includes all rules and customs or behaviors that are the embodiment of the code. While cult is a ceremony as a medium to communicate with creed. Community is a community that jointly carries out creed, code and cult [3].

In slightly different language, although there is much the same spirit, Meredith B. McGuire in 'Religion: The Social Context', says, religion contains four aspects [4]. First, religious belief. As Swidler and Mojzes said, this aspect is a cognitive aspect. With belief, humans make choices, interpret events and plan actions. Second, religious ritual. This aspect is related to symbolic actions that represent the meaning of religion. Ritual is an effective way to transform place and time. Ritual places such as mountains and temples can be transformed into locus of power and awe.

Nonetheless, the ritual aspect is indeed an interesting note in a religion. This is what prompted E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley to try to formulate ritual in three capacities [5]. According to them, rituals can be interpreted, first of all, in terms of performative expressions. Secondly, rituals can also be interpreted as informational communication. And finally, ritual is explained as a formal system of power and admiration [5].

Third, religious experience. According to McGuire, this aspect is the expression of all subjective involvement of the individual with the sacred [4]. Although the experience is essentially private, humans try to communicate it through expressions of belief and in rituals. Communal rituals become the setting for personal religious experience. Prayer, meditation, singing and dancing are shared settings for personal religious experience.

Fourth, religious community. Religious experience includes the awareness of belonging to a religious group. Rituals always remind individuals of this belonging, adding intensity to the sense of community [4]. The value of social definitions, classifications and conceptualizations of religion, including those of community, can be seen in their success in theorizing and explaining social phenomena [6].

Roland Robertson makes two distinctions in explaining the sociological definition of religion, nominal and real definition [6]. Nominal definitions are interesting because they can be tried out in a conceptual chart, more or less ignoring certain empirical issues. While the real definition is used in a very different way, namely in statements about the empirical world. Another sociological distinction Robertson uses to look at religion, namely functional and substantive definition. This form, although different from the nominal and real categories, has a continuity of meaning. According to Robertson, functional definitions in practice lead to nominal definitions, while substantive definitions tend to be real definitions.

A functional definition of religion is proposed as a criterion for identifying and classifying a function in which the phenomenon is described [6]. In certain contexts, functional definitions can go hand in hand with substantive functions. Hence, they should not be seen as two separate currents. An example can be seen in the explanation of communism. Communism can be identified as a religion because it can fulfill all the functions of religion [6]. In a lighter sense, communism has functions that are equivalent to religion. With this term, communism illustrates similar functions that are conventionally and intuitively understood as religion in non-communist societies. The functional-equivalence thesis is important because it combines substantive and functional elements. That is, communism is functionally, equivalent to religion, as a substantive definition [6].

In contrast to Robertson and Mc. Guire, George A. Lindbeck interprets religion as a cultural-linguistic system [7]. Religion, says Lindbeck, can be seen as a cultural and linguistic framework or medium that shapes all life and thought [7]. Like culture or language, religion is also a communal phenomenon that shapes individual subjectivity and even primarily a manifestation of that subjectivity. Language relates to the form of life, and culture has cognitive and behavioral dimensions, so it is with religious traditions. Doctrines, myths and cosmic stories, ethical guidelines, are integrally linked with ritual practices, the sentiments or experiences that foster them, the actions that recommend them, and the institutions that develop them [7].

For Yinger, cited by Komaruddin Amin said that the perfect religion must somehow be a social phenomenon [8]. Religion must be identified with the important fact that its beliefs also have an impact on human associations. Even death, Yinger says, is fundamentally not an individual crisis, but a group crisis [8]. In Joachim Wach's view, all religions, with their many variations, have three common expressions. Theoretically, religion is a belief system. Practically, religion is a system of worship. Sociologically, religion is nothing but a system of community relations [9]. Until these three aspects are fulfilled, a person may only be said to have religious tendencies or practice one element of religion, but not a "full religion." Although belief systems are at the heart of religion, ethnological and etymological clues suggest that religion as worship and a system of social relations are the most basic aspects [9]. "Belief" comes later and attempts to give coherence and meaning to worship and association.

The Relationship Between Religion and State

According to J. Philip as quoted by John Titaley, there are at least four types of state and religion relations as follows [10]:

1. Theocracy, which is a state life in which religious leaders or certain religious institutions control the life of the state through various state policies and wars for these purposes. Wogaman gives examples of this theocracy, among others, in the life of the ancient Hebrews, Tibetan traditionalism, the puritanical life of American colonialism, the early period of Mormonism in Utah, to some extent currently in Iran, medieval Catholicism, as well as modern Aman before Vatican II and Zionist Israel.
2. Eratianism, which is a state life in which political leaders have exploited religion for state purposes. This type is the opposite of the first type. It is called Eratianism because it follows the views of the German theologian Tomas Eratus. This type of state occurred in Japan with its Shintoism.
3. Chaotic Church-State separation, which is a state life in which there is a very strong separation between church and state. In certain cases religious life is not accepted at all or is strictly prohibited. Wogamen gives Unisoviet France and Albania.
4. Friendly Church-State separation; i.e. a state life in which there is a strict separation between religion and the state. For example the United States.

According to Masdar F. Masudi, the relationship between religion and the state has been a key factor in the history of human civilization. While it can bring great progress, it can also be catastrophic. It is related to the pattern of relationship in which the state reigns over religion or vice versa when the state separates from religion. In the second pattern, until now it has influenced the system of relations between the state and religion, namely the existence of a secular system. This system is considered the most appropriate model for modern life, where religion and the state must be separated by holding their respective jurisdictions. Religion is for personal matters, while the state is for political interests [11] [12].

The majority's view of the relationship between state and religion as above has raised the question of whether the system is relevant for all state systems universally. Seeing the development of secularism born from the West, which is a long history of the relationship between church and state, has made Islam introspect and criticize these developments.

In its development, it needs to be recognized that Islam has become divided in accepting this understanding, namely between those who reject and those who accept. Those who reject it are generally suspicious of things that come from the West. Meanwhile, those who accept it assume that like religion, everything is limited to private matters. If it is forced into the public domain, there will be disasters as happened in the West in medieval times [11].

To understand the context of secularism in the West and the context of Islam in the East, according to Masdar, it must be based on the following views and understandings [11]:

1. In the Western context, secularism is a mode of conflict resolution between the authority of state institutions on the one hand versus the authority of religious institutions within the church on the other. In Islam, this phenomenon does not occur as it did in medieval times in the West.
   In this case, it does not mean that authority does not exist, only that it is decentralized in such a way to individual figures (ulama) or to religious organizations that can differ in fatwas or even reject each other. Therefore, it is not found in the history of Islamic statehood, where the state (sultan) fully confronts religion (ulama).
2. In the context of the medieval West, secularism, which has the connotation of punishing religious authority and confining it to the private sphere, was justified. At that time, religion had become a dominative instrument for political and economic elites to maintain their dominance. At the same time, religion had lost its prophetic character as a defender of society, especially for the oppressed workers.
3. In the context of the birth of the modern state, there are some facts that should not be forgotten. In the West, the modern state was born or coincided with the impeachment movement against religious authority. In the East, including in Indonesia, the modern state was actually born out of religious fervor and heroism (martyrdom) to liberate the nation from the tyranny of the colonizer, which is the West.

From the differences in viewing the history of development as described above, the relationship between religion and state in the modern era in the East in general and in the Islamic world in particular, cannot simply be referred to the Western experience. However, this does not mean that secularism must be rejected outright. Thus, modeling a relationship based solely on secular or theocratic concerns is not appropriate. Apart from having a different history, positioning the definition of religion only in the private sphere and the state in the public sphere can contain its own mafsadah.

According to Masdar, in the internal teachings of Islam, there are provisions on the patterns of relations between religion and the state as follows [11]:

1. Teachings that are private, for example the matter of belief in Allah, belief in the last day and other matters related to beliefs that are diverse in nature, are included in private matters in which the state may not intervene.

2. In communal teachings, such as matters of worship, the state should not intervene by forcing its citizens to do something related to it. Including in this case the uniformity of holidays, then actually it is a misconception that must be ended.

3. Public teachings of Islam, such as those relating to *mu'amalah, jinayah, siyasah* and other matters relating to human relations, can result in a process of enrichment between religious law and the state. It cannot be said that in a national state, religious law cannot enrich the building of this public law. Even the colonial law is still carried by the state.

The implementation of religious law enrichment in the national state model certainly cannot necessarily be used as positive law. In this case, like customary law, religious law becomes raw material to be used as a source in determining policies that are fully submitted politically. According to Masdar, if Islamic law is to become part of public law, then there are two conditions that must be met. First, substantial requirements concerning the content of the law that must be oriented towards the public interest, not just certain groups. Second, procedural requirements mean that the law can convince the public reason to be accepted through the procedure of determining the law democratically and also agreed upon by the public [11].

Religious Freedom in the Democratic State

Islam as a religion that is *rahmatan lil'alamin* has the responsibility to adapt to the changing times. In this case, it includes the state system which is the basis of Muslim life. Speaking of the state system, according to Siti Musdah Mulia, in the history of Islamic development it has continued to change. This cannot be separated from the ever-changing government system [13].

Until now, the reference for the form of the Islamic state is when the Prophet Muhammad led Medina. Chiefdom (pre-state) Medina as the formulation of the Islamic state is ideologically normative needs to be tested again for its validity to be used as a textual reference that contains the consequences of the enactment of the laws created by the chiefdom of Medina for the states. One of the reasons is because the formation of the chiefdom of Medina was only based on the challenges of society in their time.

According to Musdah, the study of the relationship between religion and the state by contemporary political thinkers is divided into three patterns of thought, namely secularist, traditionalist and reformist patterns. The secularist pattern states that Islam is a religion that only regulates human relations with God so that in it there are no rules relating to state matters. Therefore, the rules of statehood are entirely human authority. This thinking gives birth to a form of state that separates political and religious affairs [13].

In contrast to the secularist model, the traditional pattern asserts that Islam is a complete religion, in which all rules are found, including rules relating to state life. Therefore, Muslims do not have to follow the West, but must return to the rules that have been determined in Islamic teachings. In this case, Islam has covered both religious and state affairs at once (*al Islam din wa daulah*). The consequence of this pattern is the obligation of Muslims to establish an Islamic state and implement shari'a in a *kaffah* manner [12].

In contrast to the two patterns above, reformists reject both extreme opinions. This pattern asserts that Islam is not merely a religion that regulates human relations with God, but also not a complete religion in other words regulates detailed matters, including grappling with statehood. Islam simply provides basic principles that can be guided by humans in regulating their behavior and relationships with fellow humans in the life of the state and society [13] [12].

In the Qur'an and Sunnah, there are no rules that directly refer to the rules of the state, there is only a set of ethical values that can be used as a basic guideline for regulating human behavior in life and relationships with others, which is also adequate to serve as a foundation for the management of state life. The set of ethical values in question are the principles of justice, honesty and responsibility, freedom, equality, brotherhood, pluralism, deliberation and social control. For those who choose this third pattern, they argue that there is no need to establish an Islamic state, nor is it necessary to formalize Islamic shari'a and positive forms of law. Rather, the most important thing is how to realize these ethical values. Therefore, according to Musdah, the Qur'anic demands regarding state life do not point to a particular model, but rather are left to the ijtihad of Muslims themselves [13].

In contrast to this view, according to Muammar Ramadhan, the relationship between Islam and the state is divided into Islamic views of the state madhhab and non-state madhhab. According to him, the diversity of religious understanding and interpretation in Islam has caused many victims, where politically the teachings of a madzhab become a tool of legitimizing power. For example, in the case of the caliphate of al-Makmun who made the Mu'tazilah madhhab the official state madhhab, so there was what is called *mihnah*. According to him, the above ideas gave birth to liberal and literal Islam with their respective ideas. Literal Islam carries an extreme and exclusive Islamic idea, namely that Islamic truth can only be known through the text of the holy book. In contrast, liberal Islam carries the idea of bringing back tradition for the sake of modernity. Liberal Islam also criticizes indigenous and revivalist Islamic traditions as suffering from backwardness that prevents Islam from enjoying the fruits of modernity such as economic, social, cultural and other advances [14].

In its development, the relationship between the State and religion in the majority political system is a democratic government. In this case, it turns out that Muslim thinkers are still debating about democracy in all its forms. In general, these thinkers agree that Islam has regulated democracy, as found in verses of the Qur'an and political history that is not only based on theocracy. However, the question now is to what extent we recognize democracy and which form of democracy is preferred [15].

When Islam has agreed with the model of democracy that can open the tap for freedom of human rights, the next problem is how far Islam views human rights, especially in guaranteeing freedom of religion or belief? Although it is not denied, even in the theocracy model, the protection of human rights can still be implemented.

Refers to religious freedom in Islam, it must be returned to the great dogma of its teachings which includes human relations with God and human relations with humans. In practice, there are many who practice both in an unbalanced and non-contextual manner. Sometimes, the horizontal relationship is covered by vertical matters, as a result the human dimension which is a reflection of the horizontal aspect gets less attention. Finally, the face of Islam in public life seems inhumane, which always makes religion a means of satisfying God [13].

In the teachings of Islam, the main doctrine is the teaching of the monotheism of God, namely that there is only one creator, namely Allah. Therefore, only God must be worshiped and glorified. In relation to human relations with humans, as creatures created perfectly, it is a necessity if humans respect and tolerate each other without distinguishing race, ethnicity, religion, skin color, language, gender and other primordial ties.

The relationship between humans and humans has been exemplified by the prophet when leading the people of Medina. The Prophet has provided the principles of equality and respect for humans. In the heterogeneous society of Medina as stated in the Medina charter, five basics were agreed upon for social life, namely: brotherhood in Islam, the principle of mutual help and protection, the principle of protecting the persecuted and the most important principle is the principle of freedom of religion. These principles are rooted in Quranic verses such as QS. Al-Baqarah, 2:256 (no compulsion in religion); al-Kafirun, 1-6 (recognition of religious pluralism); Yunus, 99 (prohibition of forcing adherents of other religions to embrace Islam); Ali Imran, 64 (appeal to the people of the book to find common ground and reach *kalimatun sawa'*); and al-Mumtahanah, 8-9 (advice to do good, be fair, and help non-Muslims who are not hostile and do not expel them).

III. CONCLUSION

From a social perspective, the discussion of religion is linked to other phenomena such as structure, economy and social solidarity. The relationship between religion and other social institutions is what gives rise to various hypotheses about the influence between these elements. Religion is believed to have given birth to many essential things in society. Religion cannot be separated from the theme of morality and society, both its function and essence. One of the important functions of religion in the life of society is related to its role in integrating social systems.

The perfection of religion is determined by the existence of its social aspects. It is the social aspect that guarantees a high concern for human affairs. The more complete the teachings and social aspects of a religion, the higher its potential to serve the rights of humanity. The strength of the social aspect of religion is determined by several indicators, such as morality, collectivity, openness, solidarity, and humanity.

The social aspect of religion has an important position for religion itself as well as for institutions other than itself, such as the state and other social institutions. The social aspect of religion marks the character of inclusiveness in itself and for its adherents. The social aspect of religion has an important contribution in building a harmonious, balanced and moderate relationship between religion and the state.

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