

## **CALCULATING THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ISLAM**

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### **Abstract**

*The writing attempts to explore the philosophical meaning of the theological messages of Islam on religious freedom. The article do not study the empirical facts of religious freedom practiced by muslims today, but it scrutinizes the theological messages as written in the Qur'an and as showed by the real examples of the God's Messenger. Through understanding some Qur'anic verses, we will find that Islam strongly encourages the life of different religious people based on the value of freedom. Freedom intended to be a base of religious life is not freedom to do whatever someone wants, but freedom to respect and to protect one another among religious people who are different in religion and faith. This value of message of religious freedom was wonderfully performed in historical practices of the Prophet Muhammad puh. From the Islamic principles of religious freedom that can be underlined, the writing finally tries to elucidate its philosophical meaning. The messages of religious freedom in Islam contain the strong and deep philosophical meaning, because the establishment of religious freedom is based on the fundamental value of human freedom and on the freedom as the nature of life itself.*

*Tulisan ini mencoba menggali makna filosofis dari ajaran teologis Islam mengenai kebebasan beragama. Artikel ini tidak membahas fakta-fakta empiris kebebasan beragama yang diperlihatkan oleh orang-orang Islam dewasa ini, melainkan membahas ajaran-ajaran teologis seperti tertulis dalam al-Qur'an dan contoh nyata dan Rasulullah. Memahami beberapa ayat al-Qur'an, Islam tampak kuat mendorong kehidupan antar umat beda agama yang didasarkan pada nilai kebebasan. Kebebasan yang dijadikan basis hidup beragama, bukanlah kebebasan untuk melakukan apapun, melainkan kebebasan untuk saling menghargai dan saling melindungi. Nilai ajaran kebebasan beragama seperti ini dipraktekkan dalam kehidupan nyata Nabi Muhammad saw. Dari prinsip Islam mengenai kebebasan beragama yang bisa disimpulkan, tulisan ini pada akhirnya mencoba memaknainya secara filosofis. Ajaran kebebasan beragama dalam Islam sangat kuat kandungan filosofisnya, karena kebebasan beragama ditegakkan di atas prinsip nilai kebebasan manusia dan kebabasan sebagai hakikat dari kehidupan itu sendiri.*

**Keywords: religious freedom, human freedom, mutual respect**

## **A. Introduction**

Discussing religious freedom, of course not only the recognition of the existence of religions but also giving the liberty for religious people to exercise their rituals and worship, in Islamic perspective, can talk about it either in normative level or in empirical one. Normative level I mean is that of understanding religious freedom in terms of Islam as God's Message, as can be seen in the Holy Book, The Qur'an, and as-Sunnah or the Prophet Muhammad's Tradition, and what I mean with empirical level is the living Islam, i.e. Islam living in the reality. As God's Message, Islam has ideal comprehension of religious freedom, but as empirical facts, one community of muslim to another one from one limitation of space and time to another one can probably implement the ideally Islamic conception of religious freedom in the empirical reality, but can practice the religious freedom contrasting to its ideally Islamic conception as well.

The writer convinces that theologically, Islam respects, encourages, and guarantes religious freedom, but empirically, it should be recognized that not all muslims have implemented the attitudes and behaviours of being religious that tolerate, respect, and give the space of individuality for the differently religious people. In the paper, the writer intends to theologically trace the Qur'anic messages of religious freedom, and then to see the Prophet Muhammad's historical practices of religious freedom. Through the description of religious freedom, the writer tries to disclose its basic principles, and finally, to philosophically understand it.

## **B. Understanding Religious Freedom in Islamic Theology**

As have been affirmed that the normatively understanding of religious freedom in Islam can be done through the interpretation of the Qur'anic verses and of the Prophet's historical practices, in the passage, the writing will describe the Islamic conception of religious freedom based on the understanding of the related verses of the Qur'an and the Prophet's historical practices of it. From them, the writing tries to construct the philosophical significance of Islamic conception of religious freedom.

### **1. Religious Freedom in The Qur'an in the Conceptual Frame of Philosophical Understanding**

Source of all sources when we speak of the philosophy of religious freedom in Islam is the Qur'an, believed by muslims as the Revelation of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala. There are many verses of the Qur'an that directly and indirectly speak of religious freedom, but in this occasion, the writer quotes some of them denoting the substantial meaning of it. I begin with quoting Q.S. Al-Kafirun (109): 1-6 berikut:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ . لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ . وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ . وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ  
مَا عَبَدْتُمْ . وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ . لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

1. Say: O unbelievers! 2. I do not serve that which you serve,3. Nor do you serve Him Whom I serve:4. Nor am I going to serve that which you serve,5. Nor are you going to serve Him Whom I serve:6. You shall have your religion and I shall have my religion.

Asbab al-Nuzul (the local-historical context) of Q.S. Al-Kafirun (109): 1-6is the Makkah people's refutation of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings. These people were the Arab people of Makkah, the prayers of pagans. The strongest among them was the Quraisy tribe. Instead, they persuaded and invited the Prophet Muhammad p.u.h and his followers to pray what they prayed. Their persuasion and invitation were answered by the revelation of Q.S. Al-Kafirun (109): 1-6to the Prophet that its core message is in the last verse, that is, "For you your own religion and for me my own religion."

Your religion is your religion having Agamamu adalah agamamu yang memiliki sesembahan dan cara penyembahan sendiri, dan agamaku adalah agamaku yang juga memiliki sesembahan dan cara penyembahan sendiri. The verses affirm that Islam gives the recognition of the existence of the different religions, and, in the same time, invites to mutually give freedom in exercising the ritual and worship of each religious people in their own ways based on their own faith. In the historical reality, the Arabic-pagan people who did not like the Islamic teaching continuously forced and attacked against the Prophet Muhammad puh and his followers in order to returned to their ancestors' religion. These verses also affirms that the coercion of religion never show the mature religiosity. The mature religiosity should give freedom to whoever to accept the religion he or she wants to adhere due to his or her own conciousness, and not because of any coersion or intimidation. The goodness and maturity of being religious is determined by someone's awareness and sincerity of adhering a religion as his religion.

In another verse, The Qur'an make more clear the meaning of the verses of Q.S. Al-Kafirun (109).The verse is Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 256:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ  
فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

256. There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and

*believes in Allah he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.*

The verse teaches that Islam refutes the religious coercion. There cannot be a coercion of being religious. The very basic goal of being religious is to go through the right path of life in order to get a salvation both in the world and hereafter life. And this right path of life seems to be clear and distinct to human common sense compared to the opposite path. i.e., the wrong one of life being able to doom oneself to misery and torture of life. The very basic ground of a right religion is to pray God creating all of the existing beings or all of the existing creations, not to pray the creature or the created. Human common sense can easily accept this proposition. Instead, human mind cannot accept the proposition, creature or created prays another one.

The local-historical context of the verse is that after migration to Madinah (hijrah), the Anshar-muslims' people (the followers and, all at once, the helpers the religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad *puh*) realized that their children both female and male were still in their old faiths, that is, Jews and Christians. Their parents wanted to convert their children's old religion into the new one, i.e. the religion taught by the Prophet Muhammad *puh*. Even they forced their children to leave their old religion and to be Muslims. The children then met the Prophet and complained about this problem. As the answer, Allah sent down the Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 256 to the Prophet Muhammad *puh*. The verse says that Allah prohibits the parents to force their children to leave their old religion and to adhere the new one, i.e., Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the local-historical context of the verse, Islam strictly reminds Muslims not to coerce others, even our own children, to convert their old religion into our religion. Most of parents often misunderstand or wrongly consider their children as their property they can have them in their own ways, whereas both the children and parents are human beings who have desires, wills, and free choices. The children are indeed those of their parents, but the children can never be easily owned by their parents. If Islam says that there should not be the religious coercion even to our own children who have the different religion to our one, then there should not be the religious coercion to others who are not part of our family as well. However, the deep meaning we need to be underlined from the prohibition of Islam for parents who force their own children to be Muslims is a symbol or sign that someone who usually has a power tends to force the people he rules to follow what he holds as the true belief. Islam encourages everyone to accept the religious truth due to his own awareness and enlightenment. One's acceptance of a religious truth must

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<sup>1</sup>Ab Ja'far al-Thabar, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, Muhaqqiq: Ahmad Muhammad Syki, juz 5, (Muasasah al-Risalah, 2000), p. 407.

emerge from his own consciousness and willingness, not from external pressure, threat, and so on. Religiosity without consciousness is not pure religiosity. It is false one.

In another verse, i.e., Q.S. Yunus (10): 99 dan Q.S. Hud (11): 118, Di ayat yang lain, yaitu Q.S. Yunus (10): 99 dan Q.S. Hud (11): 118, we get information that Islam does not allow anyone to force people who are not muslims to follow Islam:

Q.S. Yunus (10): 99,

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعاً أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ  
حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

99. And if your Lord had pleased, surely all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them; will you then force men till they become believers?

Q.S. Hud (11): 118,

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ

118. And if your Lord had pleased He would certainly have made people a single nation, and they shall continue to differ.

From both verses we can take a sense that God Himself, who has the Absolute Power, gives freedom for human being in choosing a religion or in deciding his own religious faith. It was easy to God to please a single nation for all human beings. It was truly easy to God to will a single religion for all human beings. And, of course, it was highly easy to God to please all people to be a single community without any differences whether in term of skin colour, ethnicity, culture, language, tradition, or in term of philosophy of life. But, to be deeply thought, it would be “nothing” or “meaningless”, if all of us existing on the Allah’s earth believed in the same religion. I say “meaningless”, because if all human beings have the same religion, then actually the religiosity become no meaning at all. It is meaningless; everyone who wants to adhere or not to adhere religion automatically will be religious with the same religion. Wanting to be or not to be religious is the same thing, everyone will remain as he should be religious with the same religion. It means that there is no freedom, no choice, and no awareness for anyone to become religious. If all people have the same religion and the same religiosity, the religious life will no “taste”, because of no struggle to mutually race in spreading the goodness of life. Why must one struggle, all people have the same religion and the same conception of goodness, do not they.

When all human beings are the same people without any difference at all and all of them have the same viewpoint, the life will be meaningless as well, because the one's passion of being true human being is not relevant to be disclose, and this irrelevance occurs because all human beings have been pleased by God to be the same thing. Thus, the nowadays existing life as the human life facts with all differences is the best condition of life. The differences of religions and faiths precisely become the examinational sphere for every religious person to know his efforts to embody the life goodness in general and especially the harmony of religious life.

If a religious man forced his religion to others, he has injured the goodness of religious life and, in the same time, the goodness of religious life itself. No one who can be forced, oppressed, injured, etc., and no one who likes to be forced to follow a certain religion or faith. Because all human beings meet the same passion, that is, they do not want to be injured, repressed, humiliated, threatened, coerced, etc., the human freedom, given by God who is the Greatest Free Being, ontologically has the value of goodness. In the context of being religious, the statement is very relevant. If I want to freely determine my own religious faith, I must understand that other people also want to independently choose their own religious one. Therefore, it is clear that freedom in itself has been ontologically attributed as goodness. In regard to religious freedom, the best religious person is he who believe in his religion as the true faith without coercing it to others to adhere, but with preaching it to others and fully letting them to consciously accept or deny it.

Consequently, the religious communities, those who are the followers of the Books, whether they are Christians, Jews, Muslims, and other religious peoples, should set out the finding the equitable proposition (*kalimah sawā'*) that they shall not dissent. The *kalimah sawā'* is to only belief in and pray God who has created man and all other creatures, and in respect of being religious, they are not allowed to make "the new gods" as allied forces to God. One of "the new gods" can be people's idolization of a certain religious sect followed by justification that their religious sect is the only true faith and by forcing the other differently religious communities to adhere their religious faith. The statement is based on the Q.S. Ali Imran (3): 64,

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

64. Say: O followers of the Book! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate

*aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah; but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.*

The good religion is religion inviting people to accept its truth through their consciousness and freedom, not through oppressing and coercing. Therefore, the good religiosity should invite others, whoever there are and whatever their religion, to conduct the good things, to do a fair deal, and to give assistance. Islam, in the Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah (60): 8-9, encourages muslim to do well, to do a fair deal, and to give helping to others even they are not muslims, provided, they do not embattle muslims, and Islam also ask muslims not to dispel them:

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ . إِنَّمَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ .

8. *Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice.*

9. *Allah only forbids you respecting those who made war upon you on account of (your) religion, and drove you forth from your homes and backed up (others) in your expulsion, that you make friends with them, and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust.*

Philosophical meaning of the verses is very fundamental. All human beings have to mutually do good things, because everyone likes to accept the goodness. All of us have to do justice one another, because everyone likes to be justly and equally served. And all human beings have to help each other, because everyone likes to be helped when his life is in painful and difficult condition. The believers or religious people must also do these good things. Despite of the different religions and faiths, the different religious believers have to behave good, just, helpful each other. There is no good at all in anyone's action or any religious community's action to dislike, hate, underestimate, calumniate, dispel, or even war against on other people or other religious communities. The main message, despite of different religions and faiths, is that we must give priority to behave good, just, and helpful one another. It is because God has created men and made them males and females,



tribes, and nations, and the fundamental goal of the creation is that we should mutually know and recognize, and then we should mutually race in getting the moral quality and integrity as well as possible before God. We can understand from the following Q.S. Al-Hujurat (49): 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

13. O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.

The meaning of the verse is strengthened by other verses of the Qur'an:  
Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 148:

وَلِكُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّئُهَا فَاسْتَطَبُّوا الْحَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

148. And every one has a direction to which he should turn, therefore hasten to (do) good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all things.

Therefore, no wonder if we can find from the Qur'an some verses which assure that the believers of whatever religions who meet in three principles, i.e, belief in Allah or God who has created all existing things, belief in the Last Day in which everyone will be asked his responsibility of using his freedom to do good or bad things, and doing good deeds, will get salvation from God. The intended verses are as follow:

Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 62:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

62. Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.



Q.S. Al-Maidah (5): 69:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

69. *Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good-- they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.*

Some ulama said that both verses have been replaced by these two verses:  
Q.S. Ali Imran (3): 19,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

19. *Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam, and those to whom the Book had been given did not show opposition but after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves; and whoever disbelieves in the communications of Allah then surely Allah is quick in reckoning.*

and Q.S. Ali Imran (3): 85,

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

85. *And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers.*

But, some muslim thinkers did not agree with replacement of those two verses. Among them were Misrawi and Buya Hamka. Misrawi said, as quoted by Budi Munawar-Rahman, that the notion of the replacement of the verses by the other verses of the Qur'an should be considered as a method that cannot be maintained anymore, because it is impossible for anyone to erase and replace any verse of the Qur'an by another verse of the Qur'an, moreover those who do this method is human being who does not have capacity to do this.<sup>2</sup>Buya

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<sup>2</sup>Budhy Munawar Rachman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam, Sekularisme, Liberalisme dan Pluralisme Paradigma Baru Islam Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat [LSAF] dan Paramadina, 2010), p. 649; look also Zuhairi Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Toleransi: Inklusivisme, Pluralisme dan Multikulturalisme*, (Jakarta: Khazanah dan P3M, 2007), p. 311.

Hamka refuted the theory of erasement of the verses of the Qur'an by the two verses of the Surah of Ali Imran with his reasoning, "If said that these verses were erased and replaced by the Q.S. Ali Imran(3): 85, the what shall emerge is fanaticism; one can claim that he is a muslim, eventhough he never practise Islam. And the heaven is merely provided or given to us ..."<sup>3</sup>

According to Buya Hamka, an religious priest of Islam and well-known muslim thinker in Indonesia, the sense of the word al-Islam in the two verses of the Surah Ali Imran do not show the meaning of Islam in a narrow sense, but show it in broader sense, i.e., Islam as a value describing the true goodness which always promote and encourage the tolerant and peaceful life. The inference is reflected, for instance, in his own words, "Eventhough someone recognizes himself as a muslim, his parents are muslim as well, they live in the Islamic state, but if his reason and heart are not pure, there is no Allah inside, it contradicts to Islam in the substantial meaning."<sup>4</sup> In agreement with Hamka, the writer tends to understand Islam shown by Q.S. Ali Imran (3): 19 dan 85 as Islam in its substantial value, namely, Islam as universally good values: Islam encourages a muslim to pro-actively condition the peaceful life in which all people and all communities, believers or non-believers, can harmonize and love each other; to run the secure life in which they can mutually give a secure life and protect each other; and to embody the well-being life in which they can empower one another and mutually make welfare for all. As the word Islam shows the meaning. The word Islam stems from the word salam (salvation, safety), silm (peace), sulam (ladder, vehicle, rule), and aslam (self submission).<sup>5</sup> From these words, Islam is religion inviting and encouraging all people to create and keep the well-being and peaceful life both in the world and the Last Day. The meaning of goodness, love, prosperity, safety, justice, dignity, loyalty, and so on are included inside the sense of the well-being and peaceful life. All human beings, whatever their background – whether they differ in language, ethnicity, culture, social status, political party, religion, faith, colour, nations, etc. – want the goodness, welfare, justice,

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<sup>3</sup>Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Juz I, (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1994), p. 216-217.

<sup>4</sup>Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Juz III, p. 130-131.

<sup>5</sup>Referring to the meaning of the word, Muslim thinker, Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, showed the difference between Islam and other religions in term of the naming. Most of religions were named from the founder, the tribe, or the place. Zoroastrianism was taken from the name of founder, Zoroastre, Hinduism was named due to the place it emerged, that is, Hindustan, Buddhism came from the name of its founder, Buddha Gautama, the Jews was named from the name of tribe, Yahuzha, and Christian was named from the name of god, Jesus Christ. Whereas, Islam is named from substantial message of its mission contained in the sense of the word Islam itself.

safety, love, respect, and, in sort, salvation and peace. The salvation and peace do not get down from the sky without any reason. Both are a life value that continues to be discoursed, struggled, and embodied into the human life and the all creatures of the world. The best persons in the eyes of God is those who race to condition a system of life, either it is tradition, social order, culture, or politik, which makes someone easier to get the well-being and peaceful life. Those who is able to do this thing is people who submit themselves to the One God. In doing so, they have transcendentalize themselves beyond all narrow interests such as personal, collective, political, and ideological interests.

## 2. Learning the Religious Freedom from the Prophet Muhammad's Historical Practices

Speaking the religious freedom in the life of Prophet Muhammad puh is speaking his life with non-muslim religious communities during his life in Makkah and Madinah, both before and after he became the Prophet, and both he lived as citizen of Makkah under the Quraysh tribe's rule and as the political ruler of Madinah who had authority and power to control the common people of Madinah. Was there any consistency of his attitude, reasoning, and behaviour in regard to religious freedom in those some different conditions? If there was inconsistency, then his attitude, reasoning, and behaviour concerning religious freedom contrasted to the Qur'anic Messages. In his actually historical practices of religious freedom, as described below, we find out that his attitude, reasoning, and behaviour in respect of religious freedom showed a consistency containing a highly value of humanity His consistency is one of many proofs of his prophecy, and it was not possible that his historical practises of religious freedom contradicted to the Qur'anic messages. He is the truly living Qur'an, as "Aishah said, when she was asked by the Prophet's friends on his moral behaviour, that the Prophet Muhammad's moral behaviours are the Qur'anic ones. The main mission of the Prophet Muhammad puh sent to the world is to complete the good moral attitudes and deeds of human beings, including the good moral attitudes and deeds of religious people in the context of religious freedom. He is a perfect example for good morality for all human beings and for all conditions. He gives his great example that to live other people's morality, he lives himself as a personality with a highly valuable morality.

Before he became the Prophet, the small Muhammad until his young time was an orphan. He lived with and under the protection of his grandfather, 'Abdul Muththalib. When he was young, he got along with the Christian priests and the religious leaders of Arabic paganism, and his grandfather was one of them. He was well-known as a clever, good, and wise young man who often gave assistancy in resolving conflict among the existing tribes of the

Arab. His conflict resolutions were considered by them as win-win solution for all. One day when the leaders of Arabic tribes existing at Makkah were fighting for each other to put the Hajar Aswad stone into the Ka'bah after it had been cleaned. Seeing the dispute, Muhammad released and spread his turban out on the earth, took and put the stone on the middle of it, and then he asked the leaders of the tribes to take hold of the edges of his turban and brought it to and put it into the Ka'bah. All leaders felt getting the mutually just treatment, and they felt happy. The young Muhammad often stated that what were prayed by the Makkah people was a wrong thing, and because of his saying, he got hard warning and threat from them. But these warning and threat had never been executed because of his grandfather's protection. Therefore, he never felt reluctant to state his deep debt of honor to one of great leaders of the Makkah paganism who was accidentally his grandfather as well.

Before migration (hijrah)<sup>6</sup> to Yatsrib or Madinah, the Prophet Muhammad *puh* had migrated his followers to a nation called Habasyah or often mentioned in the Western literature of that time Abyssinia. The nation was under the Christian rule. The king was known as a kind and wise man. His name was Negus or in Arabic word Najasyi. The prophet Muhammad *puh* had no choice in facing the Quraish's oppression. And the only choice was to migrate the followers to the nation of Abyssinia, because he knew that there was no culture respecting religious freedom in the regime of Quraish tribe. Moreover, the Quraish pagans even did embargo, threat, terror, and torturing outside the limits of sense of humanity in order to make the Prophet and his followers to give up and returned to their ancestors' religion.

There were two waves of the Muslims' migration to Abyssinia. In the first wave, the Prophet Muhammad *puh* migrated his fifteen followers consisting of eleven male Islamic believers and four female ones. They were the early followers of Islam. They stayed in Abyssinia for approximately two months, and after that, they returned to Makkah. They became the successful missionaries of Islam. Because of them, amount of the followers of Islam developed and increased more and more. The growth of the Prophet's followers that continuously developed made the pagans of the Quraish Makkah angrier and more dislike. This made sense of their hatred and hostility bigger and bigger to the Prophet Muhammad *puh* and his followers. This situation made the Prophet worry and anxious, and therefore, he asked some of his followers to migrate again to Abyssinia for the sake of their

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<sup>6</sup>Migration (Hijrah) means the movement from one place to another place. It can also have psychological meaning, that is, to move from a bad habit to good one. Hijrah, however, is the movement from a place practicing the bad social, political, and cultural behaviours of humanity to the good ones for the human freedom including the freedom of being different in religions and faiths. One who does hijrah called muhajir.

safety.. In the second wave of migration, the Prophet migrated a hundred and one male muslims and eighteen female muslims to Abyssinia.

The Prophet's endeavor to migrate his followers in the first wave was heard by the Quraish Makkah. The Quraish Makkah tried to run after them until Abyssinia, but they failed to catch them, because of the king Najashi's protection. The Quraish's leader then sent his delegation to the king Najashi. The delegation asked the king to dispel the muslim people out of his nation. Unfortunately, the king refuted it. Instead, he precisely allowed the Prophet's followers to stay in his nation, and moreover he gave the protection of security to them and gave them freedom to practice their religious faith and rituals. During their stay in Abyssinia, the king served them with good foods, drinks, and love.<sup>7</sup> The king gave the same services to the followers of Islam who migrated in second wave.<sup>8</sup>

This historical fact, before the Madinah people gave the Prophet authority and power to lead them, the Prophet Muhammad gave a good example that he yearned for a place, wherever it was, giving the protection based on the human reasons and giving the assurance of freedom of being different in religion and faith. After the first migration, the Prophet Muhammad built the friendship and brotherhood in name of humanity, not in the name of political interest, with the king Najashi and his people. Because of the brotherhood, the Prophet could easily send the second migration to Abyssinia. The king Najashi, in this historical event, had shown how a religious man accidentally being the king or the political ruler gave the good example of protecting the religious freedom. Good attitude in recognizing the religious difference and in giving the human freedom to practice religious faith and ritual had formed a good relationship between muslims and christians in one region of Africa in the early seventh century.

After becoming the Prophet, he was asked by the Anshar people of Madinah to migrate to Madinah. The prophet himself got the heavy threat from the pagan people of Arabic Quraish because of this migration. And when he was asked to migrate to Madinah, and because the Anshar people and the Madinah people inviting him convinced that the long conflict among the

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<sup>7</sup>Look Ibn Ishāq, *The Life Muhammad*, trans. Alfred Guillaume, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 146-155; see also K. Ali, *Sejarah Islam, Tarikh Pra Modern*, terj. Ghufuran A. Mashadi, (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 1996), p. 33-35.

<sup>8</sup>Ali Bulac, "Piagam Madinah" in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Wacana Islam Liberal: Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer tentang Isu-isu Global*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), p. 254-280, see also Budhy Munawar Rachman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam, Sekularisme, Liberalisme dan Pluralisme Paradigma Baru Islam Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat [LSAF] dan Paramadina, 2010), p. 672.

Madinah communities<sup>9</sup> would be handled by his great moral integrity, then he accepted their invitation to migrate to Madinah. bisa ditangani oleh kemuliaan akhlaq beliau, maka dia menyambut dengan baik.

According to Ali Bulac, Madinah of the time was a small state known by the state of Madinah. The state of Madinah was occupied by several communities with the different religious background. According to him, there were approximately 1,500 muslims, 4,000 jews, and 4,500 arabic paganists. Under the Prophet's rule, they could live in harmonious condition and they could freely practice their own religious faith and ritual.

They live together in brotherhood and harmony. They felt free to practice their faith and religion. They could do the kind of life in the state of Madinah, because the Prophet Muhammad puh along with all communities of Madinah made a social contract formulated in the form of the charter of political agreement, which in the nowadays modern society this was called a constitution. The agreement was called *Shahīfah al-Madīnah* popularly known as *Mitsāq al-Madīnah* in Indonesian usually called piagam Madinah. The word *Shahīfah* means page, paper, or gazette. Thus, *Shahīfah al-Madīnah* means the Madinah gazette. The word *mitsāq* means agreement or contract, and the combination of the word *mitsāq* and *al-Madīnah* means a social-political contract of the Madinah's people. In Europe, the theory of social-political contract was recognized since the seventeenth century by social-political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679 M), John Locke (1632 – 1704 M) and Jack Rousseau (1712-1778 M).<sup>10</sup>

The Madinah Charter was a social-political contract which the spirit is the building of a well and democratically civil society. The protection and assurance of religious freedom is merely one of the social-political agreements. Agree with Nurcholish Madjid that long before the West knew and practiced civil society, the Prophet Muhammad puh had implemented it in the Madinah state. the Prophet Muhammad puh built the society of Madinah with his great love and his spirit of conditioning a mutual support among the Madinah communities. Sense of togetherness to keep and support one another was the common ground of the Madinah's people either they were old, young,

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<sup>9</sup>At Madinah in that time there were three communities of jews, i.e. Bani Quraiza, Bani Nazhir, and Bani Qainuka. The first two groups of jews were in the side of the tribe of Auz, whereas the last group was in the side of the tribe of Khazraj. The two tribes were always involved in the long conflict and war rising insecurity for the people of Madinah. See K. Ali, *Sejarah Islam: Tarikh Pra Modern*, terj. Ghufan A. Mashadi, Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 1996), p. 45.

<sup>10</sup>Hansfink, *Social Philosophy*, (London and New York: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1981), p. 21-50, dan Charles A. Ellwood, *A History of Social Philosophy*, (New York: AMS Press, 1969), p. 116-137 and p. 198-215.

or poor and rich people.<sup>11</sup>The ethical values of society can be clearly seen in Mitsaq al-Madinah. According to Ibn Hisyām, the Charter of Madinah consists of 47 articles.<sup>12</sup>In Pulungan's opinion, the substantial values contained in the Charter of Madinah can be summarized into 14 principles:

1. the principle of collectivity,
2. the principle of unity and brotherhood,
3. the principle of equality,
4. the principle of liberty,
5. the principle of harmony among different religious people,
6. the principle of mutual help and defending the oppressed people,
7. the principle of social association and communication,
8. the principle of peaceful life,
9. the principle of defence,
10. the principle of dialogue,
11. the principle of justice,
12. the principle of law enforcement,
13. the principle of leadership,
14. the principle of moral integrity, development of good deeds and refutation of bad and evil ones.<sup>13</sup>

The religious freedom in the Charter of Madinah is clearly mentioned in article 25, but also related to another ones. The main regulation of religious freedom in the Charter of Madinah, signed by all communities of Yatsrib (the old name of Madinah; the Prophet changed it became Madīnah al-Nabiy), for K. Ali, is that "Muslims, Jews, and all citizens of Madinah are being free to have their own religion and faith, and their freedom in practicing each faith and ritual are protected by state. No one is allowed to interfere the affairs of other religion."<sup>14</sup>So clearly that the Prophet Muhammad with the Charter of Madinah was highly aware of the difference of religions and faiths, and he committed to protect the religious freedom in Madinah. Islam gives guarantee and protection of pluralism of religions and faiths. Islam does not merely recognize the existence of religions and faiths, but also guarantees and protects the freedom of the followers of each religion and faith to practice their beliefs and rituals.

The historical fact clearly shows that the Prophet Muhammad and his followers, or just say Islam, in that time really supported the harmonious life

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<sup>11</sup>Akram Diya' al-'Umari, *Madinah Society at the Time of the Prophet*, Trans. Huda Khattab, (USA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995), p. 79.

<sup>12</sup>It is a historian of classical Islam from Persian, Ibn Hisyām (w. 218 H) who completely writing text of Mitsaq al-Madīnah consisting of 47 articles in his work, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, read Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mālik Ibn Hisyām al-Mu'aqqirī, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad al-Liham, Jilid II, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2001 M/1421 H), p. 111-113. See also, Munawir Syadzali, *Islam dan Tata Negara, Ajaran, Sejarah, dan Pemikiran*, (Jakarta: UI Press, 1993), p. 10-15.

<sup>13</sup>J. Suyuthi Pulungan, *Prinsip-prinsip Pemerintahan dalam Piagam Madinah*, (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Islam dan Kemasyarakatan, 1996), p. 121.

<sup>14</sup>K. Ali, *Sejarah Islam; Tarikh Pra Modern...*, p. 46.



among different religious people. It also shows that when the Prophet Muhammad puh was trusted to be a ruler of the Madinah state, he consistently conditioned the religious freedom for each religious person or group of different religions and faiths. His consistency well accured, according to me, believing in the Prophet Muhammad's insight and pratice of religious freedom, because the religious freedom is an issue of universal humanaity, not an issue of the power of certain political group. It is because of the reason of universal humanity, the Prophet Muhammad puh always yearnfor a culture of life in which all different religious people are protected to practice their faiths and rituals. That was why the Prophet Muhammad puh consistently promoted, encouraged, and conditioned religious freedom to people he met both when he was still as an ordinary citizen under the rule of Makkan Quraish's power and when he was a ruler of the Madinah city who had power and authority to control others.

The consistency of the Prophet's invitation to mutually respect among the different religious communities by giving freedom to them to experience their religiosity continuesly went on in his historical life. In 628 CE had taken place the historical event concerning the Prophet's guarantee and granting of religious freedom for the christians community. At the foot of Moses mountain (Jabal Musa), or today properly at the Province of Sinai, Egypt, there is the Church of St. Chatherine. The church has been there since the fourth century, and the name was not the Church of St. Catherine. The church was wide worldly well-known, when a religious sister named St. Catherine denied to accept the judaic religion politically coerced by the jews power. Her refutation made the jews rulers very angry, and they condemned and killed her. She became martyr. Her resoluteness or firmness of heart is maintaining and holding her religiousfaith perpetuated as the name of the church. When the rule of Islam under the Prophet Muhammad came to the Egypt, the church's activaties of worship still went on. The christians' community of the church felt worry and anxious to the new power of Islam in Egypt. They were worry that the cruelty of the political power under the jews rule that ever happen to them would repeat again. Therefore they sent a delegation to the Prophet Muhammad puh. In 628 CE, a delegation from St. Catherine's Monastery came to Prophet Muhammed and requested his protection. The Prophet Muhammad puh responded by granting them a charter of rights.<sup>15</sup> This charter of the Prophet's protection of religious freedom for the christians community of the Church St. Catherine can be found in the article of A.

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<sup>15</sup>Ayang Utriza NWAY, "Islam dan Pluralisme di Indonesia: Pandangan Sejarah" dalam Abdul Hakim dan Yudi Latif (peny.), *Bayang-bayang Fanatisisme, Esai-esai untuk Mengenang Nurcholish Madjid*, (Jakarta: Pusat Studi Islam dan Kenegaraan (PSIK) Universitas Paramadina, 2007), p. 309-310.

Zahoor dan Z. Huq, "Prophet Muhammad's Charter of Privileges to Christians: Letter to the Monks of Saint Catherine Monastery" in Syed Hashim, *Islam and Pluralism*, paper presented in the seminar at the University of Chicago, April 26, 1998. The content of the Prophet Muhammad's charter of privileges to Christians, as quoted by Ayang Utriza, are the following,

"This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them.

Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by God! I hold out against anything that displeases them.

No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses.

Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate.

No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants.

No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world)."<sup>16</sup>

The attitudes and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad himself to non-muslim people, both Jews and Christian people, were very kind and showed his intimately and warm relationship to them. From the hadiths, we can find out the stories on his relationship to the Jews and Christians both in day life as their neighbour and in welcoming the religious priests of them. For instance, the Prophet ever welcomed the coming of Christians' delegation of Najran. They intended to visit the Prophet for the sake of a friendship. In his house which was small and simple located beside the Mosque of Madinah, the Prophet received them with friendly, intimately and warm welcoming. The Prophet released his caftan (Jubah), spread it on the earth, and asked them to sit down on it. They felt honorable with this kind of welcoming. To respect the Prophet, they came by wearing their formally religious caftans, because for them the meeting was a formal meeting. They seemed to be not comfortable

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<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 310-311.

and hard to move because of their formally religious caftan, and the Prophet realized it. Then the Prophet asked them to release their caftan, and they felt more free comfort, and being informal in making the communication to him. When the time of praying came, they could not meet any church in Madinah, and then the Prophet pleased them to pray in the Mosque.<sup>17</sup>

In a hadith narrated by Bukhari from Aslam, he told that the Prophet's friend, Umar Ibn Khaththab r.a., who was also the Khalifah or the second islamic state's ruler, received the old christian female. She intended to stay in the Khalifah's home because of her homeless and having nothing. The Khalifah received and gave her a room of his home. He also gave her food and drink everyday. He knew that her religion was christian, and he never forced her to covert into Islam. But, he ever asked her with the question, did not you want to follow Islam, and she gave the answer that she wanted to die in her old religion. Hearing the answer, the Khalifah Umar ibn Khaththab gave his warm smile, and remained to serve her well. He remained to give her food and drink as used to do.<sup>18</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad's social relations to the jews of Madinah as his neighbour were very intimate and friendly. When the Prophet slaughtered a goat to feed his family, he asked one of his companion to give some of its meat to his jewish neighbour.<sup>19</sup> Even the Prophet ever owed money to a well-known jewish priest, Zaid ibn Sana'ah. Two days before the time of paying, he saw the Prophet Muhammad puh and his companions bringing a human corpse. Then he came close to the Prophet, and pulled him so strong that he fell down to the earth. He abused the Prophet verbally, "Muhammad! Did not you want to pay your debt? For the sake of God, you the family of 'Abdul Muththalib were indeed people who like to postpone paying of debt!" Seeing and hearing this occurence, Umar ibn al-Khaththab was so angry and intended to beat him, but the Prophet prohibited him. While smiling He saw Umar and said, "Umar, I and he needed onother thing than you did. You should ask me to well pay him my debt and aske him to politely behave. Went Umarto our other companions, and then paid his right adn gave him some palms as the addition. Accepting the addition, Zaid bin Sana'ah asked Umar, what was it? Umar answered, the Messenger of Allah ordered me to give the addition as the replacement of the dispute. 'Did you keow me, Umar?' Umar answered, 'no'. 'I was Zaid ibn Sana'ah', the jew said, and Umar said, 'oh you were the well-known jewish priest, how dare were you to treat the Prophetso crudely?' Zaid bin Sana'ah answered, "oh Umar, I have known the signs of his true propcecy

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<sup>17</sup>As quoted by Humaidi Tatapangarsa, *Al-Akhlaq al-Karimah, Akhlaq yang Mulia*, (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional PTE Ltd., t.t), p. 173-174.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 173.

from his face, except two things, i.e., his patience always preceded his firmness of action, and the worse he treated, the bigger he gave forgiveness. Hi Umar, I witnessed that Allah is my God and Muhammad as my Prophet and His Messenger. I stated right now that I gave a half of my wealth to Allah as my alms to assist the Prophet Muhammad's followers, and I had a lot of properties."<sup>20</sup>

In his messages to his companions who were going to war, one of the messages that Abu Bakr as-Siddiq imitated it as well was that the Messenger of Allah gave a message that all of you would pass the human group who lived and served themselves to the churches. If you passed them, let the priests and did not annoy and bother them.<sup>21</sup>

After the event of Fathal-Makkah, when the Prophet Muhammad returned to rule the Makkah, and the peaceful life occurred in the Makkah, he did not show a vengeance at all to the people of Makkah including those who were not Muslims. The prophet gave fully freedom to whoever he was and whatever his religion and faith to keep living in Makkah with new hopes. After the independence of Makkah, the Prophet Muhammad often sent his delegations to the kings around the Arab to join with Islam. If they denied to join, he invited them to gather together with Pax Islamica, a kind of international regulation of peace under which all human beings got a freedom to deliver ideas, and all of them were given freedom to believe in a religious truth and to be convinced of a religious truth; and gathered together, even different in religions and faiths, to keep the political, social, economical, cultural, and military stability and security. Among those who accepted the Prophet's delegations, some of them accepted them with a warm and well welcoming, but some others accepted them with crude refutation, even followed by killing them. Among those who well responded were the king of Byzantine, the Egypt's ruler, and the king of Abyssinia; and among those who worse responded were the king of Persian, and the tribes' leaders of the northern peninsula of Arab.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>As quoted by Ahmad Rofi' Usmani, *Pesan dari Makkah & Madinah*, (Bandung: Mizania, 2008), p. 253-255.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>22</sup>Lihat Muhammad Husain Haikal, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. Isma'il R. Al-Fārūqī, (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1396/1976), p. 338-339; look as well Isma'il R. Al-Fārūqī and Lois Lamyā Al-Fārūqī, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, (New York & London: Macmillan Publishing Company, Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1986), p. 138-139.

### C. Philosophical Significance of the Concept of Religious Freedom in Islam

A Germany philosopher, Immanuel Kant, made the differentiation of two philosophical concepts of the existence of a thing. A thing is always caught by human consciousness in two faces, i.e., thing in itself (noumena) and thing in everyone's space and time or in human rationality and experience (phenomena). Noumenadescribes the existence of a thing as an independent being. Thing in itself is thing in its full being. Whereas, phenomenadescribes that the existence of a thing in relatively human perception because of his limitedness in space and time, and in turn, in that of his rationality and experience. The different rationality and experience can result in the different understandings of a thing, although the thing people percept is the same thing.<sup>23</sup>

Referring to the Kant's philosophical conception, discussing the religious freedom of in islamic theology's perspective should be differentiated between the word Islam and the word muslim. Hence, it should be differentiated between Islam in HimselmandIslam in Muslim's thought and experience. Islam in Himselcontains the meaning of Islamic Messages in Its "Original meaning" which its truth is substantial or transcendental in nature. Whereas, Islam in Muslim's thought and experiencecan have the meaning whether it meets the substantial meaning or not, because of the different ways of understanding Islam, and because the different intellectual capacity and experince among its readers.

Religious freedom that has been explained is religious freedom of Islamic theology, in terms of the normativities of the Qur'an and the historical practices of the Prophet Muhammad puh – although in the limit of writer's understanding. Since the Prophet's morality is the Qur'anic one, the Prophet Muhammad's historical practicesof Islam definitely decrbe Islam in Itself, or Islam in the God's mind, living in its reality—it has to be differentiated from the muslims' historical practicesof Islam that cannot be claimed depictingIslam in Itself, but just depicting Islam in the muslims' limitedness of space and time. Therefore, Islam in general, including religious freedom in Islam, in the historical pratices of muslims may be in accordance or not with the substantial comprehension of the truely Islamic messages and Islam in the Prophet's historical practices.

The religious freedom in Islam, as has been described, is highly guaranteed and granted by Islam. In reverse, the religious freedom in

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<sup>23</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J.M.D. Miklejohn, (New York: Prometheus Books, 1990), h. 158; see also Justus Hartnack, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, trans. M. Holmer Hartshorne, (New York: an Original Harbinger Book, Inc., 1967), p. 89-90.

muslims' practices probably may describe or may not describe the mutual respect of the different religious communities. To know whether their attitudes and behaviours in practicing their religiosity contrasted to religious freedom or not in Islamic perspective, the tool of analysis is the Islamic conception of religious freedom as has been explained previously both through the Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's historical practices of religious freedom..

From the previous explanation of the religious freedom in Islam, I can underline the basic principles of the guarantee of religious freedom in Islam as follows:

1. Freedom is God's gift to human beings valued goodness.
2. Something good has been clear and something bad has also been clear in human common sense or reason.
3. Coercion is something contrary to the good, because it is the opposite of freedom, and moreover coercion indicates a far hatred of religious values.
4. Diversity of religions and faiths is God's will. Different religious people can show their qualities of religiosity amongst diversity of religions and faiths. When one of them did the religious coercion, he has automatically performed the negativity of religiosity,
5. In religious freedom, a religious person or community allows to deliver the religious truth as he or community believes in, in one side, but in other side, he or the religious community has already been convinced by the religious truth of others. The acceptance or the refutation of the religious truth should be based on individual's awareness and free choice.
6. In public sphere, all of us, individually or collectively, have to agree the common rule of the assurance of religious freedom for all. The transgression of the common rule is the betrayal of the dignity of humanity.
7. The guarantee of religious freedom should be politically given by state formulated in the formally state constitution which the rules are not discriminative, and culturally by society reflected in the socially religious communities behaving respectful one another and helping one another in their day life.
8. Religious freedom is very basically human right, everyone, whoever he is and whatever his religion and faith, who condition and protecting as well as encouraging the religious freedom, he has practiced value of freedom as the goodness in God's will.

It is the principles of religious freedom in the Islamic theology that can conceptually be used as a tool of analysis to measure whether the attitudes and

deeds of certain muslim, both individually and collectively, in understanding and practicing the religious freedom are correct or not. Surely, the muslims' actions keeping the security and convenience of being religious for different people with different religions and faiths describe the good practices of religious freedom. They are in accordance to the Islamic principles of religious freedom. But, if muslims do the contrasting deeds, they describe the wrong practices of religious freedom.

Religious freedom cannot ontologically be apart from human freedom, even human freedom is the basic foundation of religious freedom. Freedom itself in the world of philosophy can get many meanings. The writing tries to represent three meaning of freedom, namely, rational freedom, existential freedom, and social freedom. One of philosophers who offered the first meaning of religious was René Descartes. Philosophers who gave the second meaning of freedom were the existentialistic philosophers. And One of philosophers who offered the third meaning of freedom was John Stuart Mill.

Descartes was known as the founding father of rationalism in the Western philosophy. He tried to liberate the human existence from all forms of human limitation in knowing everything from his own thinking. Man is always forced to accept the truth of the political and religious rulers of the European society of medieval century. He then contemplated to think of human existence, does he exist or not. He was aware that human exists when think. Thinking to doubt all truth claims of thing that are forced from outside have given him a consciousness that he is thinking. And when he is conscious that he is thinking, he is conscious that he is or he exists. Man thinks therefore he is. In Descartes' saying, I think therefore I am. With this consciousness he found "subjectivity" of human existence. Subjectivity he means is that human being is not an object of knowledge and an object of the world anymore, but he is a subject of knowledge and the world. He is a rational-free being.<sup>24</sup> Descartes, in other words, had offered the concept of rational freedom. The basic tendency of human being to use his thought indicates that human being individually is a free or independent being.

Existentialists affirms that man is existentially free, independent. The well-known slogan of existentialism is that existence precedes essence, or the

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<sup>24</sup>René Descartes, "Meditations I and II", in John R. Burr and Milton Goldinger (eds.), *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, (New York, London: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1980), p. 279, 378. See also, Thérèse-Anne Druart, "The Soul and Body Problem: Avicenna and Descartes", in Thérèse-Anne Druart (ed.), *Arabic Philosophy and the West, Continuity and Interaction*, (Washington: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1988), p. 30, and read as well Arthur W. Collins, *Thought and Nature, Studies in Rationalist Philosophy*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), p. 31-32.



human existence come before the concepts of human being and of the world in general. The concept or thought is product of human existence, and hence, the concept cannot limit human existence. The human freedom is fundamental to the meaning of human life. It is not possible to speak the meaning of human life if human existence is not understood as the free being. It is this ontological consciousness that leads existentialist to formulate the understanding of human freedom.<sup>25</sup> Human freedom is formulated as the most valuable property owned by every individual, and it cannot be withdrawn from human existence. An existentialist using the existentialistic philosophy of human freedom to convince people concerning the importance of religious freedom for religious individuals and for the true meaning of religiosity is Søren Kierkegaard. Being religious should grow from inside the existential consciousness of a religious individual. Religiosity cannot be formalized, standardized, and made uniform as the formally state religion, because being religious is individual's free choice.<sup>26</sup>

John Stuart Mill discussed freedom or liberty not as rational freedom or not also as existential freedom, but as social freedom. In social life, there is mutual relationship between individual and society. He wanted to search the limits of liberty that are allowed to be performed by society upon individuals as its members. Society can limit individual behaviours considered as ones that can injure or even damage the interests of other individuals, but society cannot be allowed to limit their individual rights to obtain their interests and happiness including their right to choose their own faith or religion. Thereby, social liberty is limited by the basically human rights, i.e. especially human right to be able to embody their well-being life. Society is responsible to make it easier for every individual.<sup>27</sup>

Through the three philosophies of freedom, the doctrine of religious freedom in Islam can be counted its philosophical meaning. This effort is began with the following description. If we see the robots played by anyone, and we imagine ourselves as those robots, indeed we are moving and producing a sound, but actually we have no any consciousness of the meaning of our movements and sounds. It seems that we are living, but actually we are

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<sup>25</sup>Richard Paul Janaro, *Philosophy Something to Believe in*, (California: A Division of Benziger Bruce & Glencoe Inc., 1975), p. 303, see also W. Eugene Hedley, *Freedom, Inquiry and Language*, (Pennsylvania: International Textbook Company, 1968), h. 18, Vincent Martin O.P., *Existentialism Soren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus*, (Washington: The Thomist Press, 1962), p. 42.

<sup>26</sup>Alim Roswanto, "Menjadi Diri Sendiri dalam Eksistensialisme Religius Soren Kierkegaard", (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2008), p. 35, 101.

<sup>27</sup>John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, edited with introduction by Gertrude Himmelfarb, reprinted, (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 110-119, and 141-161.

death things, because we have no initiative, refutation, desire, passion, etc., in short, we have no freedom.

In real life, not in imaginative one, we are not robots and death things, but we are human being. Human being, different from death things, is life. If human being lives without freedom, we do not deserve to call him human being. We call him human being, but he seems to be a death thing that has no choice, uniqueness, and so on. It seems to be meaningless when we talk about human life without freedom or liberty.

The substance of life in Islamic perspective, according to me, is philosophically freedom itself. The life is freedom, and the freedom is life. Life and freedom are two things that can be mutually interchangeable. Freedom and life are the highest values among the existing values of the life. In the ethical sphere, human freedom should be under the direction of the Ultimately Good and Free Being, i.e., Allah. That is why the substance of life is freedom.

Since freedom is the nature of life, no freedom, there will be no life; no freedom, the life is meaningless. The living human is the free human loving freedom and performing his freedom with remaining to give the sphere of freedom for others. Only in doing so, the soul of every human being becomes more pure and fully respectful. The more the human soul becomes pure and fully respectful, the more his soul becomes free, and the more he becomes free. In reverse, the more the human soul becomes passionate to coerce others to be what he wants, the more his soul becomes dirty and narrow in treating others. Rather, all human beings only want to be forced to be one thing, i.e., to be a free being freeing the other beings. Thus, the life without freedom is similar to death, and human being without freedom is similar to stone.

Being religious is a living activity living the valuable life. Similar to the nature of life, since being religious is a choice and a living activity, it cannot be without freedom. The substance of the living religion is religion giving freedom for human to have and perform his religiosity. Being religious without religious freedom is not but to adhere the death religion.

The philosophical viewpoint of freedom and religious freedom summarizes three viewpoints of freedom in philosophy as explained previously, i.e., rational, existential and social freedom. Every human is a subject or a creator of the world, a conscious-free self, and a self who is not wanted to be oppressed by any power outside him. He just wants to be directed to the good things, and to be lead into his liberty to exist.

This philosophical view is deliberately elaborated to show whether the understanding of human freedom in the Islamic theology's perspective substantially affirms Islam as religion living and enlightening religious freedom and human freedom or not. If the answer is yes, it means that Islam is a living and enlightening religion, and if the answer is no, it means that Islam

is not living an enlightening religion, Islam is a death religion. And the Islamic theology's insight of religious freedom as explained and analysed previously clearly and distinctly asserts that Islam is a living and enlightening religion living and enlightening the living and freeing religiosity, that is not "allergy" to the issue of religious diversity and pluralism. Islam obviously teaches that religion should be adhered not because of coercion and oppression, but because of consciousness emerged from inside the soul and hearth of religious person. It is an important spiritual value, and hence, the human freedom to choice, to determine, and to have a religion or faith he wants has to be respected and given the space. Thus, the Islamic theology's view of religious freedom is in line with both the philosophy of human freedom and the philosophy of religious freedom.

The strong impression that I can underline from the philosophical significance of the Islamic theology of religious freedom is that freedom is the substance of life because it comes from the Ultimately Free Self. God as the Ultimately Free Self wills freedom as the substance of life from which to become true human being should become a free self. And to experience the true religiosity should become a freely religious self. Being religious cannot be forced both by individual and society, and both by culture and state. Therefore, it is obvious that in Islam, the religious freedom is only established on the base of the human freedom, and both cannot be socially, culturally, and politically coerced. All forms of social, cultural, and political limitation negating and eliminating the religious freedom is not in accordance to the spirit of the Islamic messages on the religious freedom.

#### **D. Conclusion**

From the previous description of the philosophical meaning of religious freedom in Islam, I can conclude that Islam is religion highly respecting religious freedom. Islam does not just recognize the existence of the different religion and faiths, but also give a sphere of freedom for religious people to practice their belief and ritual in public sphere as they want, provided they do not perform the religious deformation against other religion and faith. In Islamic messages, it is realized that being religious is a thing that cannot be forced by power, even state has no right to force any religion or faith to its citizens. Religious freedom is a pillar of *al-karomah al-insaniyah* or human rights.

We can read philosophically that the religious freedom recommended by Islam is based on human freedom. From the angle of Descartes' philosophy, man is the subject of knowledge and the creator of the world. Man is the free subject of reality, and the giving of a free space to think is the true respect of human existence. Through his thought, man can determine his

choice and action without any coercion. Islam philosophically shows a message that the assurance of religious freedom is a mirror of the guarantee of human freedom. The theme of human freedom strongly emphasized in existentialism is also impressed in Islamic messages of religious freedom. Human existence only has meaning in his freedom and consciousness. To mutually give the sphere of space of freedom in the boundaries of good morality, or to mutually give the space of freedom based on peacebuilding, is one of the basic principles of Islamic messages. In accordance to the philosophical spirit of existentialism, Islam also sees the human freedom of willing to determine and to choose a religion and faith as a fundamental value. Therefore, this value relates to the concept of social freedom concerning human's religious freedom as well. Society cannot limit and even force the choice of a religion or a faith to individuals of its citizens. Society, or even state, can only govern and condition the people's religiosity so as to their religious freedom do not result in the deformation of religion.

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