

ESENSIA

Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin

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Haji in Sasak Community, Lombok, NTB**

Moh Soehadha

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Esensia Terindeks:



ESENSIA

Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin

Vol 18, No. 1, April 2017

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The **ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin** is an independent academic journal focusing on the sciences of the ushuluddin (principles of religion), published twice a year (April and October) by the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. It is a shared space to disseminate and publish the scholarly papers of those whose concern is the sciences of ushuluddin, such as, Kalam, Tasawuf, Islamic Philosophy, Tafsir, Hadith, Comparative Religion, Studies of Religion and Islamic Thoughts.

The **ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin** was launched in February, 2000 by the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. This journal was once accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia based on the Decree of the Directorate General of Higher Education, No. 52/DIKTI/Kep/2002.

Currently, The **ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin** has been accredited based on the Decree of the Director General of Research and Development Research and Development of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia, No. 36a/E/KPT/2016.

In order to improve the quality of the journal and incoming articles, since 2017, the **Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin** was heading to be an International Journal. Manuscripts submitted can be written either in English or Arabic. Please submit your manuscript via <http://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/ushuluddin/esensia>

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Claiming Abrogation of Pre-Islamic Religions; Contesting the Idea of Islam's Abrogation to Previous Religions

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Abstract

This paper discusses surah Āli 'Imrān [3]: 85 that is believed is not the abrogator of surah al-Baqarah [2]: 62. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 62 is an inclusive ayah that informs the evidence of acknowledgement of the al-Qur'an upon the safety of adherents of religions. All ayahs of the al-Qur'an are the selected revelations that are operative in its nature. In the case of contradiction, they should be contextually understood based on their socio-historical background, as it is stated in its criteria that the abrogation is only enforced upon ayahs on law, and not for informative ayahs (ikhbāriyyah). This research employs a research method mapping the pros and the cons of interpretation using qualitative analysis. In collecting data, this research applies library research of the commentary books from classic to modern-contemporary periods as primary sources with socio-historical approaches. It also incorporates uṣūl fiqh and hermeneutics theories to analyse the text. This research finds out that Islam which is prescribed to the prophet Muhammad cannot abrogate the existence of pre-Islamic religions. The abrogation of religions is conflicted with the reality of the continuity of the Prophet Muhammad's revelation. Islam is a religion of all prophets, and Islam that is prescribed to the prophet Muhammad is a continuation and a complementary to the legacies from previous religions. The idea of abrogating religions means to ignore part of the rules of an abrogation theory itself. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 106 is not a base for the abrogation of previous religions. This ayah suggests a supposition, not a necessity of the abrogation.

Keywords: Āli 'Imrān [3]: 85, al-Baqarah [2]: 106, the notion of abrogation of pre-Islamic religions.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mendiskusikan surat Āli 'Imrān [3]: 85 yang diyakini sebagai ayat yang tidak me-nasakh surat al-Baqarah [2]: 62. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 62 adalah ayat inklusif yang menginformasikan bukti pengakuan dari al-Qur'an atas keselamatan penganut agama-agama. Semua ayat al-Qur'an adalah wahyu yang dipilih yang beroperasi sesuai sifatnya. Dalam kasus kontradiksi, mereka harus dipahami secara kontekstual berdasarkan latar belakang sosio-historisnya, seperti yang dinyatakan dalam kriterianya bahwa abrogasi (*nasakh*) hanya diberlakukan pada ayat-ayat hukum, dan bukan untuk ayat-ayat informatif (*ikhbāriyyah*). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian pemetaan pro dan kontra penafsiran dengan menggunakan analisis kualitatif. Dalam mengumpulkan data, ia menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan dari beberapa kitab tafsir dari masa klasik hingga periode modern kontemporer, sebagai sumber utama dengan pendekatan sosio-historis. Ini juga menggabungkan teori ushul fiqh dan hermeneutika untuk menganalisis teks. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Islam yang diwahyukan kepada Nabi Muhammad tidak dapat me-nasakh/membatalkan keberadaan agama pra-Islam. Pembatalan agama bertentangan dengan realitas kontinuitas wahyu Nabi Muhammad SAW. Islam adalah agama semua nabi, dan Islam yang diturunkan kepada Nabi Muhammad adalah kelanjutan dan pelengkap warisan dari agama-agama sebelumnya. Gagasan untuk membatalkan agama berarti mengabaikan sebagian dari aturan dari teori abrogasi/*nasakh* itu sendiri. Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 106 bukanlah dasar untuk pembatalan agama-agama sebelumnya. Ia menunjukkan sebuah dugaan, bukan keniscayaan pembatalan.

Kata kunci: Āli 'Imrān [3]: 85, al-Baqarah [2]: 106, gagasan abrogasi agama-agama pra-Islam

Introduction

As the last treatise in the Semitic religion clump, teaching brought by Muhammad s.a.w armed with the Qur'an as a guidance for all human kinds (al-Baqarah [2]: 1-5). The Qur'an admits and respects previous religion scriptures, as stated in the Qur'an, surah al-A'lā [87], in the last verses: "Behold, this is really contained in earlier *Ṣuḥuf* (sheets), which is the sheet of Abraham and Moses". When Allāh SWT sent Muhammad to his ummah, one of his tasks is to justify previous prophets/apostles, (al-Ṣāffāt [37]: 37)¹. Islam admission over other religions does not stop there. In one of Islamic pillars of faith, which become the theological foundation of the religion, it is a mandatory for Moslems to believe all prophets and their scriptures (al-Baqarah [2]: 285).

Based on the statement above, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity essentially have something in a common in understanding a religion as a religion of peace which is based on the submission to the God. Moreover, these three Divine religions are often classified as one brotherhood, a family with different mothers.² As a treatise which is inherited by its predecessor start from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Isa (Jesus), Allah SWT passed down to these prophets, and also to Mohammed, as the successor of previous prophets to establish *al-dīn* and prohibit to contradict them (al-Syūrā [42]: 13). This phenomenon describes the continuity of Lord's treatise. These three religions are still in the same root that leads to the prophet Ibrāhīm as., which means in principle these three Abrahamic faiths can establish a strong emotional bond.³ As stated by Frithjof Schuon, a supernatural unity of these three major religions

¹ بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٣٧)

² الأنبياء إخوة لعلات أمهاتهم شقي ودينهم واحد Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il ibn Ibrāhīm al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*(Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, hadith ke: 3187, tt.), vol. 3, 255.

³ Jerald F. Dirks, *Abrahamic Faiths: Titik Temu dan Titik Seteru antara Islam, Kristen, dan Yahudi* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2006), 32.

is also referred to monotheism.⁴

The Qur'an inclusive response represents the reflection of parallel attitude in accepting the presence of other religions. This is also evidence of the Qur'an recognition in receiving the existence of other communities as a legitimate socio-religious group, its spirituality, legal norms, and socio-religious recognitions.⁵

This inclusiveness of the Qur'an is reflected in the refusal of the Qur'an to the exclusiveness and a truth claim as well as the truth claim attitude of Jewish and Christian (al-Baqarah [2]: 113), even claims connected to safety guarantee of eschatology (go to heaven) that belongs to it (al-Baqarah [2]: 111). According to Riyadi Hendar, these inclusiveness and truth claims outlook are resulted from their presumption as the chosen people, the only beloved of the God (al-Mā'idah [5]: 18) and who are more superior than the others (al-Baqarah [2]: 47, 122).⁶ This paper tries to explain the Qur'an's testimony through Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 62 which is an inclusive ayah that informs the evidence of acknowledgement of the al-Qur'an upon the safety of adherents of religions.

Abrahamic Religions

Based on this essential similarity, it is not surprised that Islam, Judaism and Christianity are often grouped as three Abrahamic religions.⁷ As described by Frithjof Schuon, monotheistic religion which at the beginning was a branch of Semitic religious groups, originating from Abraham, then evolved into two branches,

⁴ See, Frithjof Schuon, "The Problem of Sexuality," in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 11, No. 1. (Winter, 1977), 154.

⁵ Rene Guenon, (ed.) James R. Wetmore. *The Crisis of the Modern World Collected Works of Rene Guenon* (London: Sophia Perennis, 2001), 22-23.

⁶ Hendar Riyadi, *Beyond Pluralism, Ethics of the Qur'an about Religious Diversity* (Jakarta: RMBooks, 1st Edition, 2007), 91.

⁷ Reuven Firestone, "The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis" in *Journeys in Holy Lands* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 32.

namely Prophet Ishāq (Isaac) descendants and Prophet Ismā'īl (Ishmael) descendants. Schuon states further that monotheism takes the form of Jewish at Moses era. While Abraham religion started to fade away among descendants, Moses was the one who continued to develop the monotheism. Moses connected monotheism to the Isrā'īl, and this is the reason why it became his protector.

Despite the important of this adaptation, which also consistent to the will of God, this action also resulted the restrictions in outward form, due to the tendency of specialization exists in every nation. Thus, it can be said that Judaism took over monotheism and made it as Israel's. As a result, since then Abraham's legacy in this form cannot be separated from all further adaptation, and of all rituals and social consequences contained in the law of Moses. From the side of fraternity, kinship, and friendship, according to Said Aqil Sirodj, Islam and Christianity are still in one breed (*trah*) of Abraham. Based on his opinion, Christianity was born as the celestial religions through Prophet Isa, while Islam through Prophet Muhammad. These two leaders would meet Abraham, if his genealogy traced, in which the Prophet Isa was the descendant of Prophet Ishāq, one of Prophet Abraham's son, which then demoted Banī Isrā'īl (Jews, children of Jacob). Meanwhile, Prophet Muhammad was the descendant of Ishmael, who was half-brother to Isaac, who then engendered the Arabs.⁸

All Celestial religions claim that their religion is the closest one to the faith (*millah*) of Ibrahim. If Gospel named them as righteous, the Qur'an calls them as the sincere and closes to the truth, 'the *ḥanīf*' (Āli 'Imrān [3]: 67-68). The claim of Abraham ownership as *patriarch* (Father of Monotheism) by Jews and Christians is problematic. Hence, the Qur'an offers

⁸ Said Aqil Sirodj, *Tasawuf Sebagai Kritik Sosial, Mengedepankan Islam sebagai Inspirasi, bukan Aspirasi* (Bandung: Mizan, Cet. I, 2006), 306.

solutions of this disputes sympathetically, that is by the pursuit for "the common platform" (*kalimah al-sawā'*) among them in a single formulation; "The religion of Abraham, which follows the Oneness of the God" (Āli 'Imrān [3]: 64). Siradj supports this statement by saying, "Essentially, there is a perfection in every religion, because it holds and carries Divine vision and mission related to the achievements of human perfection, both individually and socially." He states further that the emergence of any religion among community requires enlightenment so it can establish the ideal individual and *par excellence* society. Therefore, within this context, it can be concluded that there are no fundamental differences between religions. All religions have the right purpose to bring people to a higher quality level and to free the mankind from demoralization, due to mistakes in determining their ways.⁹ In short, all religions have a transformative power as a manifestation form of the prophetic mission, which holds closely into the religion existence.

For an instance, Christians emerged as reform efforts against irregularities which occur in Jewish religion. Here, Christianity also aims to conduct a radical revamping against chaos emerged in Jewish religion body. However, it turned out that Christianity went through a degradation process by mystifying the Jesus Christ. It means, according to Siradj, there is a deviation of monotheism elements in the religion which replaced by polytheism elements that can be seen in the attribution of humanitarian aspects (*nāsūt*) of Jesus with Diety aspects (*lahūt*).¹⁰

⁹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, edisi Indonesia, *Mencari Tuhan Sepanjang Zaman*. (terj.) Alouis Agus Nugroho (Bandung: Mizan, 2009), 6.

¹⁰ According to Grose, the phrase of 'Lord' toward Jesus is the expression of honor, he stated that "Lord", is the expression that show divinity. See the book review of "George B. Grose & Benyamin J. Hubbard, *The Abraham Connection: A Jew Cristian and Muslim in Dialog*," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, (Summer, 1996), 70.

This deflection of monotheism system in Christian is reprimanded by the Qur'an; that is the notion of trinity in their theology declared by Christians; God is one of the three (al-Mā'idah [5]: 17 and al-Nisā' [4]: 171). The word *kufr* in this verse uses the past tense (*fi'l māḍī*) to refer to an infidelity form to the principle that God is one of the three. In relation to this, there is no doubt that the presence of Islam brought by Prophet Muhammad also aims to accomplish any existing shortcomings in the previous religions. From a theological aspect, Islam strengthens monotheism by putting God free from any element of anthropomorphism and confirms the God as transcendent (*tanzīh*) substance. Islam also strengthens morality aspects by correcting moral deviations and puts a moral as a main foundation in self-enforcement both individual and society. This Islam's principle can be read in Prophet Muhammad statement that, "It is not that I am sent except to enhance the suitability of morals."¹¹

Pros and Cons of Abrogation

In interpreting the verses relating to a religious abrogation, there is no common understanding among the commentators (*mufasssir*); and they tend to keep their own interpretations. In *Nazariyyah al-Naskh fī al-Syarā'i' al-Samāwīyah*, Sya'bān Muḥammad Ismā'īl (born in 1939 AD) explained that the abrogation tradition also occurs not only in Islam (the Qur'an), but also arises in previous scriptures traditions: the New Testament (Gospel) removed many rules contained in the Old Testament (Torah), so did Torah that annulled a lot of previous traditions; ranging from Prophet Adam to Prophet Ibrahim teachings.¹²

¹¹ *Innamā bu'istu li-utammima ṣāliḥ al-akhlāq*. From Hadith Sa'īd bin Manṣūr of Abi Hurā'irah, see in Abū Abdillāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (http://al-Risālah, hadith number 8595, 2001), vol. 14, 513.

¹² Sya'bān Muḥammad Ismā'īl, *Nazariyyah al-Naskh fī al-Syarā'i' al-Samāwīyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Salam, 1988), 43-68. Ibn Kaṣīr explains that abrogation also carried out on the Syari'ah on previous scriptures, for example, the case

Thus, this *Naskh* polemic can be traced from commentators' differentiation of 'readings' toward verse 106 of Surah al-Baqarah [2],¹³ verse 101 of Surah al-Naḥl [16],¹⁴ and verse 39¹⁵ of Surah al-Ra'd [13] as the basic postulate of the existence of *naskh* in the Qur'an. Different from other commentators in interpreting this 'naskh verse' - Muhammad Husayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, defines *naskh* with *al-izhāb*'an al-'ayn, which means "eliminating from appearances."¹⁶ Meanwhile, for those who agree with this *naskh* theory, they define it as "abolishing." On the other hand, Ṭabāṭabā'ī agreed with the meaning of "eliminating", but the meaning goes further to "eliminate something from its *al-'ayn* characteristic", which means only one of its features that is missed, i.e. its appearance, while the other features remain.

From this point of view, there is a common understanding that can be identified as limitations and formulations of the problem, i.e. a polemic in understanding the concept of *al-naskh wa al-mansūkh*. Likewise, when the meaning of *naskh* is employed as an analysis tool in 'reading' theological issues, namely abrogation controversies against the teachings of pre-Islamic religions. The idea of abrogation has become a prolonged polemic that is still last until now. Therefore, this issue is important to study, so it can be used to reinforce and reinterpret

of the command to Adam to marry his daughter to his son, and then God forbid the incest wedding. Likewise, God justifies the various types of animals to Noah after the landing of the ship, then Allah remove the 'halal'. Formerly, incest wedding among the Children of Israel and their descendants were allowed, then canceled by the law and the scriptures. Also, the God allow Abraham sacrificing his son, then canceled before it was done. See, Ibn Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2005), vol. 1, 145.

¹³ مَا نَسَخَ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِخَهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّمَّا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (١٠٦)

¹⁴ وَإِذَا بَدَلْنَا آيَةً مَكَانَ آيَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنزِّلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (١٠١)

¹⁵ يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ (٣٩)

¹⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, 249-256.

some of the Qur'an 'statements', which valuing to religion adherents, and to see the interrelated relationship in a clump of Semitic religions, in interpreting al-Baqarah [2]: 106;

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا
أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (١٠٦)

The verse above is used as a reference to the *naskh* theory by classical scholars. However, Muhammad 'Abd al-Muta'al al-Jabrī (d. 1995 AD) does not use the verse as cancellation arguments between verses in the Qur'an/ Qur'an (Intra-Qur'anic *naskh*), instead he interpreted it as instructions of the elimination of pervious religions (extra-Qur'anic *naskh*). Al-Jabrī conclusion was based on the view of some classical commentators such as Tabarī (w. 256 H./270 M.), Ibn Kaṣīr (w. 774 H/1369 M), al-Nawawī (w. 1416 H.) and Sayyid Quṭb (w 1385 H.) which considered al-Baqarah [2]: 62 as a verse that is not applicable because it was abrogated by Āli 'Imrān [3]: 85, which they quoted from the narration of Ibn Abbās (d. 68 AH / 687 AD) in *Tafsīr al-Tabarī*:

حدثني المثنى قال، حدثنا أبو صالح قال، حدثني معاوية بن صالح، عن ابن أبي طلحة، عن ابن عباس قوله: (إن الذين آمنوا والذين هادوا والنصارى والصابئين) إلى قوله: (ولا هم يحزنون) . فأنزل الله تعالى بعد هذا: (وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ) [آل عمران: ٨٥]، وهذا الخبر يدل على أن ابن عباس كان يرى أن الله جل ثناؤه كان قد وعد من عمل صالحا - من اليهود والنصارى والصابئين - على عمله، في الآخرة الجنة، ثم نسخ ذلك بقوله: (ومن يبتغ غير الإسلام دينا فلن يقبل منه)¹⁷

¹⁷ See, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd, Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān* (Mesir: Dār al-Ma'arif, 2000), juz. 3, 337.

It is interesting that sometimes both groups, who pros and cons, justify their arguments using the same verse. The polemic of abrogation happened because of different interpretations in understanding the meaning of *naskh*. The first group argues that in terminological view *naskh* is a cancellation of laws specified the ealier by next established law. Meanwhile, the second group defines *naskh* as the end of previous law enforcement by law specified later. According to Quraisy Shihab, the latest opinion is classified as *muta'akhkhirīn* (the latest) Islamic scholars group, while the former is the opinion of the *mutaqaddimīn* (the older) Islamic scholars.¹⁸

In fact, both definitions are almost the same, and their difference will be visible if restricted by scope of *naskh*. According to *Mutaqaddimīn*, *naskh* includes general exceptions that are limited by specific exception, meaning explanations were coming later to the vague laws, and pricing conditions to the previous law that were not qualified yet. This group assumes that all kinds of Islamic law provision that cancel the law applied in the pre-Islamic era are part of *naskh*. This view is different from the opinion of *Muta'akhkhirīn* who stated that *naskh* limited to verses that canceled the law on the Qur'an. The concept mentioned by the *mutaqaddimīn* is referred as *al-takhṣīṣ* (the specialization) by the *mutaakhkhirīn*.

Yet, al-Jabrī point of view about religion abrogation was rejected by Murtaḍa Muṭahhari (d. 1979 CE), Nurcholish Madjid (d. 2005 CE), Huseyn Sayyed Fadlullah (d. 2010 CE), Abdulaziz Sachedina, and Gamal al-Banna. These contemporary Moslem leaders cite the views of their predecessors such as Sayyid Muḥammad Rasyīd Riḍā (d. 1935 CE), Muḥammad Husayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1981 CE), Mahmud Syaltūt (d. 1963 CE), Hamka (d. 1981 M.), and Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988 CE).

¹⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an; Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Masyarakat* (Bandung: Mizan, 2006), 144.

According to this second group, the arrival of Prophet Muhammad is to support, to strengthen, to realign, and to enhance the teachings of the previous prophets.¹⁹ As for Tabataba'i point of view, what is annulled by the Qur'an is not the basic teaching. He argues that in accordance with al-Baqarah [2]: 62; any person who holds tight his faith and do righteous deeds will be rewarded by God. This stance is supported by some scholars who claim that Muhammad is sent to accomplish the previous teachings, and did not do *naskh* on it.²⁰ Farid Esack, a South African Moslem scholar, reminded that messages of the holly book scribe (*Ahli Kitab*) in the Qur'an, talking about Jews and Christians should be seen in the context of the formative period of Mecca and Medina, and understood them within the framework of messages of the Qur'an itself as well as the general principles of moral teachings.²¹

Regarding this, the fundamental presence of Islam is to refine the previous religions, as stated by *Rasulullah* himself. He illustrated treatises he brought as the last bricks in building a house, as follows:

إن مثلى ومثل الأنبياء من قبلى كمثل رجل بنى
بيتا فأحسنه وأجمله إلا موضع لبنة من زاوية
فجعل الناس يطوفون به ويعجبون له ويقولون
هلا وضعت هذه اللبنة

"Behold, my parable with previous prophets is like someone who builds a house nicely and beautifully, but there were remaining bricks in the the corner of the house that were not asssembled yet. Everyone was curiously circled the house and said, "why those bricks are not asssembled? Then the Prophet said: 'I am that brick, I am the seal of the prophets.'"²²

¹⁹ 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'il ibn 'Umar Ibn Kašīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1998), vol. I, 103.

²⁰ Muhammad Husein Tabātabā'ī, *al-Mizān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-'Alamī li al-Maṭbū'āt, 2006), vo. 1, 193.

²¹ Farid Esack, "Review Qur'an, Liberation, and Pluralism," in *Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol. 10 (1), (1999), 50-51.

²² Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il ibn Ibrāhīm al-Bukhārī,

Based on this narration, Sha'ban Isma'il Muhammad argues that Islam is not a stand-alone religion, but united as a further episod from the history of previous religions.²³ The statement of the Prophet, who later distinguished by "*labīnah*" hadith - is a picture of the Prophet's message position as a falsifies, not as a chain breaker of the continuity of the previous religions. Isma'il said that this is a strategy of Allah SWT, the Wise, to design the sustainability building of religions as a Divine creation, as an effort to educate religious people. One of His strategies in imposing Shari'a (*tasyrī'*) is not by delivering it directly, but gradually (*tadrīj*). This is the way, according to him, for religion adherents to avoid leaps and gaps in appreciating the teachings. Through this sequencing strategy, it is also expected to avoid stagnation (*tawaqquf*), regression or setback (*raj'at*) doctrine, and minimize paradox or conflicts between Shari'a between one religion and others. Thus, the relationship between different religions would give more spaces for a interlacing dialogue, supporting each other bonds (*ta'ānuq*), that sturdy and strong, towards the realization of perfection, harmony, and religious dynamic.²⁴

Allah emphasizes that the Qur'an was revealed to provide justification for some of the Torah and the Gospel, as well as partially corrected other teachings.²⁵ Allah sent Muhammad to justify the previous Prophets/Apostles (al-Šāffāt [37]: 37).²⁶ Muhammad was also sent with a scriptures (holy books) as a guide for all human beings (al-Baqarah [2]: 1-5). The citation of these scriptures also, as stated in

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, tt, hadits number 3535), 418.

²³ Sya'bān Muḥammad Ismā'il, *Naẓāriyyah al-Naskh*, 5

²⁴ Sya'bān Muḥammad Ismā'il in his book *Naẓāriyyah al-Naskh*, 5.

²⁵ Ruslani, *Masyarakat Kitab dan Dialog Antar Agama, Studi atas Pemikiran Mohammad Arkoen* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bintang Budaya, Cet. 1, 2000), 111.

²⁶ بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٣٧)

the Qur'an al-A'lā [87], ended by legitimacy of its existence, "Truthfully this is really contained in the former books, namely the book of Abraham and Moses." This verse is a proof, that the treatise brought by Mohammed represents the continuation of previous books.²⁷

Jerald F. Dirks states it is no coincidence that the three religions are in one group consistently in different conceptual schemes. Even each religion has a unique dogma and doctrine with respect to itself, each has a core that is essentially the same as the second core of other religions. Every religion claims to the same historical heritage in the prophetic tradition, although it may vary in interpreting specific historical prophetic events. Each religion also has a core of the same religious teachings and ethics, although it is different in some aspects related to specific doctrine and dogma.²⁸

These three largest religious treatise in the world; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, both genealogical-normative and biological-genetic, all boils down to Ibrahim. They all see Ibrahim as 'Father of Monotheists,' 'Father of Faithful people,' and as a 'hanīf' muslim (*hanīfan Muslima*). The adherents of these three religions also have an equal claim as the successor religion of Abraham, although in other occasions they are negated each other. Thus, Abraham has a unique position in the view of these three religions. The unique position of Abraham makes his *millah* is seen as a basic framework

²⁷ Jacques Waardenburg explained that opposition of Meccan who forced this new religion developed previous Prophet Stories and similarity propaganda of previous Prophets, the claims of God the revelation and absolute truth, the importance of conversion to face the end of the day, and jihad in the name of Tawhid to defend God. Including them who forced Muhammad to enter the weight of history, theology and social needed in his propaganda messages. See, Jacques Waardenburg, "Toward a Periodization of earliest Islam According to Its Relation with Other Religions" in *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 308.

²⁸ Frithjof Schuon, "Paradoxical Aspects of Sufism" in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 12, No. 3 & 4, (Summer-Autumn, 1978), 32.

that can be used as a reference in evaluating the diversity of the his claimants, either Jews, Christians, or Muslims.

Based on this understanding, according to Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005 AD), the meaning of *al-Islām* is a resignation to God, not as an institution. Religious without attitude of religious resignation to God is false, because the core of true religion is submission to God the Almighty. In this view, all religions before the Prophet Muhammad period is also called "*al-Islām*".²⁹ A leading expert of classic interpretation of the *tābi'īn*, al-Ṭabārī (d. 310 H), cites the opinion of Qatāda, who stated that, "There is only one religion, but different in Syari'a". As it is also noticed the God's words in QS. al-Mā'idah [5]: 48. According to al-Ṭabārī (d. 310 H), the verse can be understood clearly that each people has been set path or rules (*sabīl*)³⁰ and tradition (*sunnah*) diversely. As the Torah establishes its own law, the Gospel was thus establishing the Sharia itself. Here, God justifies what He wills and also forbids what He wills. This view is to find out who obey and who disobeys Him. However, "*al-dīn*" which He accepted is the belief that receives the oneness of God as the teachings brought by His Apostles.³¹

All of those "resigned" religion adherents (of all faiths) have an equal position before God, as long as they are faithful to the God, faithful to the end of the day, and do good deeds. If all

²⁹ Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban, Sebuah Telaah Kritis tentang Masalah Keimanan, Kemanusiaan, dan Kemoderenan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 1992), 427. Compare to Muhammad Sayyid Tantawī, Sayyid Ṭantāwī, *Hāzā Huwa al-Islām, fī Daw-i Hadīṣ Jibrīl* (Cairo: al-Azhar al-Syarīf, Silsilah al-Buḥūs al-Islāmiyyah, Section I, 2003: 27). See also the meaning of "Islam" according to al-Ṭabārī, al-Ṭabārī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 3, 212:

وكذلك الإسلام، وهو الانقياد بالتدليل والخشوع، والفعل منه

³⁰ According to Nurcholish, terms like; *sabīl*, *ṣiraṭ*, *shari'ah*, *minhaj*, *mansak* all of them means the "road", and represents the metaphors that prove that Islam is the way to God's favor with all His natures. Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, xx.

³¹ Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabārī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āyī al-Qur'ān* (Mesir: Muṣṭafa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1968), vol. 6, 269-272.

these requirements are fulfilled, they will get a reward in the form of a guarantee of eschatology (a safety in the form of paradise) in the Hereafter, as the revelation of God in al-Baqarah [2]: 62.

The Polemic of Interpretation

In relation to differences in interpretation, it is undeniable that there is a subjective influence of commentators. It is caused by the different understanding level of the commentators in interpreting the Qur'an texts, their mastery in various disciplines, or their social backgrounds. This is, according to Amina Wadud, is a proof that there is no single method of interpretation that is truly objective. There always can be found a subjective expression of a commentator which makes the interpretation does not reflect the intention of the text itself.³²

It is no doubt that the text of the Qur'an is *debatable*, and even multi-interpretations. The readers always intend to quote and interpret it, and these are reasons why many commentators, books, and also a variety of praises and blasphemy emerged in this area. At the same time, there is always a desire to go back and to stand under its protection. Abdullah Darrāz as quoted by Quraish Shihab, wrote: "If you read the Qur'an, the meaning will be clear in front of you. But if you read it again, you'll find also other meanings that are different from previous meanings, and so on, until you (may) find a sentence or a word that has a variety of meanings; all of them true or probably true. (Verses of the Qur'an) are like diamonds, each emitting light of different angles with what is emanating from other corners. And it is not impossible, if you allow other people look at it, then they will see more than what you see."³³

³² Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, (terj.) Khoiruddin Nasution, *Qur'an menurut Perempuan; Membaca Kembali al-Qur'an dengan Semangat Keadilan* (Jakarta: PT. Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2006), 16.

³³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 16.

Conclusion

This study finds out that al-Baqarah [2]: 106 which has become a main argument of *internal-Qur'anic naskh* can not be served as a justification on abolition of pre-Islamic religions (*external-Qur'anic naskh*), as *naskh* interpretation from Muhammad 'Abd al-Muta'āl al-Jabri (d. 1995 CE). The assumption about the presence of religion abrogation means denying some rules from the *naskh* theory itself. The verse only brings forward suppositions, not submission of *naskh*. The entire verses of the Qur'an remains valid, even if there is an opposition it should be understood proportionally based on the socio-historical conditions, not by abolishing verses (*intra-Qur'anic naskh*). The verses in the Qur'an is the selected revelations that is the best teaching for its people, thus the elimination of verses means refusing the best teachings of the religion.

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ISSN 1411-3775 (P)



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