

FAZLUR RAHMAN'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE CONCEPT OF AN ISLAMIC STATE IN THE QUR'AN

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Abstract, Political differences between Islamic Traditionalists and Secular Modernists have resulted in massive progress in the landscape of Islamic political thought. This is highlighted by the formation of a third group, which differs from the traditionalist and secular perspectives on Islamic politics. Fazlur Rahman, who established himself as the neo-modernists' spokesperson, is one of the key figures in this category. This study aims to analyze Fazlur Rahman's view regarding the Islamic concept of the state, seems more inclined to argue that Islam neither commands nor teaches clearly about the constitutional system but acknowledges that there are a number of values and ethics in the Qur'an. Thus, the qualitative method will be employed in this work, along with a historical study approach gleaned from books, journals, and related publications. This study discovered that Fazlur Rahman's idea of an Islamic state seems to be a somewhat flexible formulation, not too stringent given specific circumstances. This type of formulation will avoid differences of opinion among Muslims, which can lead to the non-recognition of friendly countries as Islamic countries due to different visions, both due to differences in theological schools of thought and schools of law, as well as strategies for implementing and fostering them.

Keywords: Islamic state, Political thought, the Quran, Fazlur Rahman

A. INTRODUCTION

Western colonialism that befell the Islamic world in the 18th–20th centuries and the decline of Islamic politics, which was marked by the collapse of the Ottoman caliphate, did not always have negative consequences, but on the other hand, they have made Muslims able to reformulate themselves, including their Islamic political thoughts. In fact, the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire by the decision of the Turkish National Council in 1924³ was something that made Sunni politics reach its turning point. This event was the culmination of the 'fermentation' process among Muslims since the 18th century, and specifically in the field of Islamic political thought, it has led to an exciting debate that took place between traditionalist Islamic groups and secular Muslims⁴ to then promise to form a synthesis of their conflicting views.⁵

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³ Philip K. Hitti, *History of The Arabs; From the Earliest Times to the Present*, alih bahasa Cecep Lukman Yasin, dkk. (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu, 2010), 915.

⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, (Lahore: Ever Green Press, 1985), 13.

Differences in political views between Islamic traditionalists and their typology, who see that Islam is both a religion and a state (*al-Dīn wa al-Dawlah*) which in practice raises the urge to return to classical teachings and practices in state life,⁶ and the secular modernists, who hold fast that Islam is a religion that is not different from other religions, that is, it does not teach in detail about ways to regulate the life of the nation and state, have led to extraordinary developments in the map of modern and contemporary Islamic political thought.⁷

This is marked by the emergence of a third group, which is different from the tendency of traditionalist and secular groups to view Islamic politics. This typology rejects the extreme claims of traditionalists that Islam is a complete religion that regulates all affairs, including politics.⁸ But they also reject the second extreme claim, that Islam has nothing to do with politics. One of the main figures in this typology is Fazlur Rahman, who has proclaimed himself the spokesperson for the neo-modernists.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the data sources used are self-written works by Fazlur Rahman, such as *Major Themes of The Qur'ān, Islam and Modernity: On Intellectual Transformation*, and other works that elaborated on his thoughts, especially in the field of Islamic political thought. The data were collected through documentation. The collected data were considered documents, which were then read and understood to find necessary data based on the research problems in this study. After the necessary data were considered sufficient, they were systematized for further analysis. Further, the researcher conducted an interpretation of what is implied behind the data. If necessary, comparison with the results of research or the works of other thinkers was also carried out to provide a more in-depth interpretation. This was done in order to

⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam dan Modernitas Tentang Transformasi Intelektual*, alih bahasa Ahsin Mohammad, (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 2005), 130.

⁶ Achmad Jainuri, "Kata Pengantar" dalam Abdul Chalik, *Islam dan Kekuasaan: Dinamika Politik dan Perbuatan dalam Ruang Negara* (Yogyakarta: Interpena, 2012), vi.

⁷ Syukran Kamil, "Peta Pemikiran Politik Islam Modern dan Kontemporer", *Jurnal Universitas Paramadina*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (September, 2003), 63.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

understand and formulate the concept of education, according to Fazlur Rahman, through a more objective and critical lens.⁹

This research relies on qualitative methodology with a historical approach to describe Fazlur Rahman's view on the Islamic concept of the state appears as being more likely to argue that Islam neither commands nor teaches explicitly about the constitutional system, but accepts that the Quran contains a variety of principles and ethics. Historical research is supposed to provide the link that connects the past to the present and can be passed through some stages, which are: looking for the phenomenon, developing the hypothesis, exploring the data, collecting the data, and writing the findings based on the interpretation of the provided evidence.¹⁰ In addition, the historical study expects to make people learn from the past, and history also gives perspective on the present and investigates the context and situation.¹¹ This study aims to highlight practical matters in the future, particularly in terms of the educational system and innovation, because the past and present will definitely affect the future.

C. BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY OF FAZLUR RAHMAN

Fazlur Rahman, a reformer who had a significant influence in the twentieth century, had numerous ideas about political Islam as well as the relation between religion and states in Islam according to the Qurān. He was successful in criticizing both Islamic and Western norms. Fazlur Rahman devised a strategy that could bring alternate solutions to current Muslims' challenges.

A Brief of Biographical and Educational Background

Fazlur Rahman was born on September 21, 1919, in Hazara (the Indian subcontinent), which is now northwest of Pakistan. Fazlur Rahman was born into a devout Muslim family.¹² With such a background in religious life, it is only natural that

⁹ Parisaktiana Fathonah, "Thoughts of Fazlur Rahman Education and Its Contribution to The Development of Islamic Education Teory", *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies*, Volume 3, Number 3, September-December 2018, 359-382. <https://ejournal.uinsaid.ac.id/index.php/dinika>

¹⁰ Lisa M. Given (2008), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (London: SAGE, 2008), 396.

¹¹ David W. Moore, E. Jennifer Monaghan, and Douglas K. Hartman, "Values of Literacy History," *Reading Research Quarterly* 32, No. 1, January 1997, 90-91. <https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.32.1.6>.

¹² Sutrisno, *Fazlur Rahman: Kajian terhadap Metode Epistemologi dan Sistem Pendidikan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006), 60.

when he was ten years old, he could memorize the Quran well.¹³ Living in a family belonging to the Hanafi school of thought, Fazlur Rahman has succeeded in opening his intellectual horizons and removing the barriers that limit the development of his beliefs.¹⁴

In 1933, Fazlur Rahman continued his education at a modern school in Lahore. Apart from taking formal education, Fazlur Rahman also received traditional teaching in Islamic studies from Maulana Sahabuddin, his own father.¹⁵ When he was fourteen, Fazlur Rahman started studying philosophy, Arabic, theology or Kalam, hadith, and Quranic Interpretation.¹⁶

After completing his secondary education, Fazlur Rahman then continued his education at Punjab University, Lahore, by concentrating on Arabic studies, and in 1940 he succeeded in obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree. Two years later, he successfully completed his Master's degree and earned its degree in the same field. In 1946, Fazlur Rahman left for England to continue his studies at Oxford University. Under the guidance of Professor Simon Van den Berg and HAR Gibb, Fazlur Rahman successfully completed his studies in 1949 and obtained a Ph.D. degree with a dissertation on Ibn Sina. Fazlur Rahman's dissertation was later published by Oxford University Press under the title *Avicenna's Psychology*. In 1959, Rahman finished editing Ibnu Sina's work, *Al-Nafs*, which was published by the same publisher under the title *Avecinna's De Anima*.¹⁷

During his education in the West, Fazlur Rahman took the time to learn various foreign languages. The languages he mastered include Latin, Greek, English, German, Turkish, Arabic, and Urdu. Mastery of these various languages really helped Fazlur Rahman in deepening and broadening his scientific horizons, especially in the field of Islamic studies, through searching various important Islamic literatures.

After completing his studies at Oxford University, Fazlur Rahman did not immediately return to Pakistan, which at that time had already separated from India,

¹³ Parisaktiana Fathonah, "Thoughts of Fazlur Rahman, 365.

¹⁴ Fazlur Rahman, An Autobiographical Note, dalam "*Journal of Islamic Research*", Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1990, 227.

¹⁵ Ahmad Nabil Amir, "Fazlur Rahman dan Interpretasi Teks Al-Quran", *Journal of Qurān and Hadīth Studies*, Vo. 10, No. 2, Juli-Desember 2021, 245-255. <https://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/journal-of-quran-and-hadith>

¹⁶ Ibid., 81-82.

¹⁷ Sutrisno, *Fazlur Rahman: Kajian*, 62.

but he decided to stay there for a while. While living in England, Fazlur Rahman taught at Durham University. Then he moved to teach at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Canada, and served as Associate Professor of Philosophy until early 1960. While at Durham University, he successfully completed his original work, entitled *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy*.¹⁸

It was only about three years that Fazlur Rahman taught at McGill University, and finally, in early 1960, he had to return to Pakistan at the request of President Ayyub Khan to jointly develop his native country, Pakistan. Ayyub Khan's request to Fazlur Rahman aims to formulate an Islamic ideology for the State of Pakistan. Furthermore, in 1962, Fazlur Rahman was asked by Ayyub Khan to lead the Islamic Research Institute and become a member of the Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology.¹⁹

Fazlur Rahman's position caused a wide range of reactions, particularly among Traditional Islamists. The Traditional Islamists quickly opposed Fazlur Rahman's views. This is related to the philosophical debate as well as his educational background in the West.²⁰ Controversy in the Pakistani mass media regarding Fazlur Rahman's ideas lasted for approximately one year, which in the end led to a wave of mass demonstrations and a total strike in several areas of Pakistani territory in September 1968. According to Fazlur Rahman's thought reviewers, the rejection action was actually not aimed solely at his controversial thoughts but rather against Ayyub Khan's political power. Until finally, on September 5, 1968, Fazlur Rahman asked to resign from the leadership of the Islamic Research Institute, which was then granted by the President.²¹

Finally, at the end of 1969, Fazlur Rahaman left Pakistan to fulfill the offer of the University of California, Los Angeles. There, he was immediately appointed Professor of Islamic Thought. The subjects he teaches include: understanding the Qur'an; Islamic philosophy; Sufism; Islamic law; Islamic political thought; Islamic modernism; and studies of the thoughts of Islamic figures such as al-Ghazali, Shah

¹⁸ Ibid., 64.

¹⁹ Ebrahim Moosa, "Introduction", dalam Fazlur Rahman, *Revival and Reform In Islam*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000), 19.

²⁰ Taufik Adnan Amal, *Islam dan Tantangan Modernitas* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 104.

²¹ Ibid., 112.

Wali Allah, Muhammad Iqbal, and others. One of the reasons that made Fazlur Rahman decide to stay and teach in the West was his belief that the ideas he offered would not be accepted and developed in Pakistan. Apart from that, Fazlur Rahman wanted openness for various ideas and an atmosphere of healthy debate, which cannot be found in Pakistan.²²

While in Chicago, Fazlur Rahman devoted his whole life to the world of science, especially Islamic studies. Much of his life is spent in his private library in the basement of his house, which is located in Naperville, approximately 70 kilometers from the university where he teaches. Because of his consistency and sincerity towards the scientific world, Fazlur Rahman finally received recognition from international-scale scientific institutions. One of these recognitions came in 1983. At that time, he received Giorgio Levi Della Vida from Gustave E. von Grunebaum, Center for Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Los Angeles.

In the mid-1980s, the main character of Islamic neo-modernism experienced health problems, including diabetes and a heart attack. However, Fazlur Rahman's commitment to continue creating has never subsided. This is proven by his work entitled *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism* (published in 2000). Even though it was only published after he died, the work on it was carried out when his illness got worse with the help of his son. Finally, after being hospitalized in Chicago for some time, on July 26, 1988, the professor of Islamic thought at the University of Chicago died at the age of 69.²³

The Development of His Thought and Works

In brief, the development of Fazlur Rahman's thought can be mapped into three periods: First, the formation period (1950s decade); Second, the developmental period (60s decade); And third, the maturity period (70s until death).²⁴

In the first period (from the time Fazlur Rahman studied until before his return to Pakistan), there were at least three major works compiled by Fazlur Rahman, namely: *Avicenna's Psychology* (1952), *Avicenna's De Anima* (1959), and *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (1958).

²² Ibid., 112.

²³ Ahmad Nabil Amir, "Fazlur Rahman, 148-149.

²⁴ Sutrisno, *Fazlur Rahman: Kajian*, 65.

The first two, namely Avicenna's *Psychology* (1952) and Avicenna's *De Anima* (1959), are translations and edits of the work of Avicenna. Meanwhile, the last one, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (1958), examines the differences in the Prophetic doctrine between the thoughts of philosophers and the understanding held by the orthodox. To trace the roots of Islamic philosophy, Fazlur Rahman took two famous philosophers as samples: Al-Farabi (870–950) and Ibn Sina (980–1037). He reviews the views of the two philosophers, particularly regarding Prophetic revelation at an intellectual level, the psychological processes of technical or imaginative revelation, the doctrine of miracles, and the concepts of al-Da'wah and al-Syari'ah.²⁵

To represent the views of the orthodox, Fazlur Rahman listened to the thoughts of Ibn Hazm, Al-Ghazali, Al-Syahrastani, Ibn Taimiyah, and Ibn Khaldun. From this tracking, Fazlur Rahman concludes that there is agreement among orthodox schools in rejecting the pure intellectualist approach of philosophers to the phenomenon of prophecy. The results of this investigation also led Fazlur Rahman to the conclusion that there is no fundamental difference between the positions of Muslim philosophers and orthodoxy.²⁶

In the period of development, namely since his return from England until before his departure to America (Pakistan period), he wrote a book entitled *Islamic Methodology in History* (1965). In this book, Fazlur Rahman shows at least two basic things, namely: First, the historical evolution of the development of the four basic principles (basic sources) of Islamic thought: the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijtihad, and Ijma'; And second, the actual role of these principles in the history of Islam itself. The second book that Fazlur Rahman wrote in this period was *Islam*, which presented a systemic reconstruction of the development of Islam over fourteen centuries.²⁷

In the last period, namely the Chicago era, Fazlur Rahman composed *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (1975), *Major Theme of the Qur'an* (1980), and *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (1982). If Fazlur Rahman's works in the first period are historical in nature, and in the second period they are both

²⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 135-145.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ahmad Syafii Ma'arif, "Sebuah: Fazlur Rahman, Al-Qur'an dan Pemikiran Islam", dalam Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, alih bahasa Ahsin Mohammad (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 2010), vi.

historical and interpretive (normative), then in the third period they seem more purely normative in nature. The last book that Rahman produced was *Health and Medicine in Islamic Tradition*.²⁸ If in the early and second periods Fazlur Rahman had not openly stated that he was directly involved in the renewal of Islamic thought, then in this third period he declared himself a neo-modernist spokesperson.²⁹

D. AN ISLAMIC STATE ACCORDING TO FAZLUR RAHMAN

In this contemporary era, it seems that there is a tendency for Islamic experts to differ in formulating how the concept of Islam relates to the state. The disparity of opinion appears to be inspired by the influence of Western hegemony in the Islamic world over the past decades. In dealing with this fact, three groups of thinkers emerged according to their ways of responding to the presence of the all-advanced West.

The first group does not want to recognize the superiority of the West and rejects it completely. In other words, they reject everything that come from the West. Thus, the people's needs must be seen in the teachings of their own religion. The second group was so amazed by the greatness of the West that they lost faith in their own religion. They often adopt something that comes from the West without seeing whether or not the teaching actually exists in their own religion. The third group recognizes the advantages of the West in certain matters and tries to take advantage of them, but still pays attention to the West's irregularities, which must be watched out for and then even forbidden to imitate.³⁰

Every Muslim community, as stated above, has formed its own pattern of responding to them by reformulating the definition of an Islamic state. In this problem, the thinking is divided into three groups of opinions. The first opinion states that Islam is a perfect and complete religion with arrangements for all aspects of human life, including matters of state life. Because of that, according to them, Muslims do not need to adopt the Western constitutional system. On the contrary, Muslims are urged

²⁸ This book attempts to capture the organic connection between Islam as a belief system and Islam as a human medical tradition. Fazlur Rahman, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition: Change and Identity*, alih bahasa Jaziar Radianti (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), 15.

²⁹ Sutrisno, *Fazlur Rahman: Kajian*, 83.

³⁰ Sukron Kamil, "Peta Pemikiran Politik, 64-65.

to return to their own Islamic constitutional system by following the example of the State formed by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the four Khulafā' al-Rāsyidīn.³¹

The second group argues that Islam is only a religion and has nothing to do with state issues. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent to the world only as an ordinary apostle, like the previous messengers, with the task of perfecting human morality. The Prophet SAW never got the task of establishing and heading a state. He never meant it himself.³²

The third group argues that Islam is not a complete religion either. However, they argue that there are a number of values and ethics that can be used as guidelines in the life of the state.³³

Thus, when Fazlur Rahman started to propose the concept of an Islamic state, a number of theories regarding an Islamic state were developed by a number of experts, as classified in the previous paragraphs. Below, Fazlur Rahman's thoughts regarding the form of the state will be explained from two aspects of the review, namely regarding the relation between religion and states in Islamic tradition and the definition of an Islamic state according to the Quran.

The Relation between Islam and State

Fazlur Rahman, although he did not clearly state his opinion regarding the Islamic concept of the state, seems more inclined to argue that Islam neither commands nor teaches clearly about the constitutional system but acknowledges that there are a number of values and ethics in the Qur'an. Even though the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) never declared himself to be the leader of the state, he made the state a tool for Islam to spread and develop the religion. However, Fazlur Rahman stated more firmly that religion and politics cannot be separated.³⁴

In another part, Fazlur Rahman can be seen stating that Islam commands that the problems of Muslims be handled through shura, or mutual consultation. As it is known, shura is one of Allah's commands to Muslims to solve their problems. Values and ethics in the form of shura have been used as the basis for administering the state

³¹ Sukron Kamil, *Pemikiran Politik Islam Tematik: Agama dan Negara, Demokrasi, Civil Society, Syariah dan HAM, Fundamentalisme, dan Antikorupsi* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2013), 26.

³² Ibid., 30.

³³ Ibid., 34.

³⁴ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, 337.

by Fazlur Rahman. Likewise, Fazlur Rahman argued that freedom to express opinions and constructive criticism directed at the government is considered a religious duty.³⁵

When Fazlur Rahman explained ethics in upholding sociopolitics, he used the verses of the Quran, Surah al-Hajj 40, and Āli ‘Imrān 110 as his foundation. To explain the necessity of creating justice and the attitude of being fair in administering the state, Fazlur Rahman has tried to quote verses from the Quran such as Surah al-Nisā’ 58 and al-Mā’idah 51. Fazlur Rahman has also pointed to the Quran Surah Al-Nisā’ 83 when explaining that the people are justified in criticizing the government but do not justify attitudes that are subversive and that can generate hatred and incite the people to overthrow the legitimate government in ways that are unconstitutional and by instilling feelings of despair in the people.

Fazlur Rahman, in another explanation, quotes verse 207 from the Surah al-Baqarah when explaining the international relations of an Islamic state, namely to create peace, and verse 13 from Surah Al-Maidah and verse 7 from Surah al-Tawbah to explain the obligation for an Islamic state to fulfill agreements that have been made in international relations. Then Fazlur Rahman referred to verse 12 and 13 of Surah al-Tawbah in explaining the prohibition to violate the agreement if the other parties do not violate unilaterally.³⁶

If one looks at it more closely, Fazlur Rahman himself is indeed deliberately and with full conviction trying to analyze state affairs based on the teachings of the Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman even tried to offend the opinions of Islamic jurists on this matter by looking at the practices of Islamic societies in the early period of Islam. In fact, he has comprehensively examined the basis of the birth of the Muslim community, its relationship with the Jewish-Christian group, and the formation of the Medina community (state) in a comprehensive manner by basing his starting point on the verses of the Qur'an and the history of the preaching of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).³⁷

³⁵ Hasbi Amiruddin, *Konsep Negara Islam Menurut Fazlur Rahman* (Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2006), 78.

³⁶ Fazlur Rahman, "Implementation of the Islamic Concept of State in Pakistani Milieu", *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1967), 206.

³⁷ Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Chicago: Bibiotheca Islamica, 1980), 92-103.

The Concept of an Islamic State

The following paragraph will explain what Fazlur Rahman means by an Islamic state. This needs to be clarified because different perspectives on an Islamic state have emerged among Muslims. First, opinions on whether an Islamic state exists, that is, if Islam teaches state matters or not. As previously stated, it has been divided into three opinions: those who firmly believe there is, those who believe there is none, and others who believe it is not taught totally and completely, such as by providing some values and state ethics.

Second, those who believe that there is an Islamic state. They are two kinds: both are those who believe that Islam is a religion and a state, and those who believe that an Islamic state must exist even though it is not a commandment in Islam but rather a necessity for the development or preservation of religion.³⁸

As explained by Ahmad Syafii Maarif in his book “*Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan*” (Islam and State Issues), the Quran never explicitly mentions an Islamic state. The same thing was also stated by Nurcholish Madjid. By deriving from a number of writings (A. Syafi'i Maarif, Amien Rais, Mr. Mohd Room, and his own letters to Mr. Mohd Room), he has concluded that there is no Islamic state. The provisions that exist in Islam, Fazlur Rahman, in contrast to A. Syafii Maarif and Nurcholish Madjid, without mentioning the basis from which, in writing several articles related to the Islamic state, he has named the Islamic State directly.³⁹

The problem of naming or mentioning an Islamic state for Muslims may only be a psychological factor. Islamic scholars such as Nurcholish Madjid and Syafi'i Maarif have gone through several historical experiences of Indonesian Muslims who have always been unlucky by expressing Islam in a straightforward manner in political matters, including matters of statehood. In the history of politics in Indonesia, political movements that smelled of religion (Islam) almost always faced power and even armed forces since the colonial period, during the independence period, during the old order, and even during the new order. Meanwhile, Fazlur Rahman, with the socio-political conditions faced in his country, does not have a psychological burden because

³⁸ Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, alih bahasa: Anas Mahyuddin (Bandung: Pustaka, 1995), 136-141.

³⁹ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan: Studi Tentang Percaturan dan Konstituante* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial, 1985), 23-35.

differences of opinion about it have not developed much, let alone differences that have come to the use of force of arms. The difference between Islamic groups and secular groups is not that big, perhaps because secular thinking is not very strong in Pakistan. The bigger problem is the difference in thinking between the fundamentalist and modernist groups, but both of these groups agree that there must be an Islamic State.⁴⁰

The problem now is what the Islamic State actually is. How do we define it? Is the Islamic State like the Turkish State, which is secular in nature and where religious issues are a personal matter for the ummah and may not be included in political institutions? As it is known, the majority of Turkey's population is now Muslim. The Turkish state for six hundred years under the Ottoman Turks was an Islamic state and even as the center of Islamic countries, namely the seat of the caliph. Then, in the 1920s, Mustafa Kamal changed the form of a monarchy into a republic, which was initially based on the Islamic religion; only in subsequent developments was the country changed to a secular state until now.⁴¹

As it is developing now, there are Islamic countries that have abandoned many of the Prophet's statehood concepts, such as the Egyptian state, but continue to include Islam as the state religion. Likewise, Iraq, which is democratic-socialist, even though it does not include the state religion, still makes Islamic law the spirit of the state. Another different model is Saudi Arabia, which is a monarchy whose king is not only a political leader but also a religious leader and uses Islamic law as the law that applies in his kingdom. The basic constitution of the kingdom is the Al-Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Pakistan calls its country the Islamic State, but it does not implement all Islamic teachings in its state practices. Malaysia, which also states that its state religion is Islam but has not yet seen the overall practice of Islamic religious teachings as state law.⁴²

Many opinions have developed in Islamic society that there is no country in the world today that is an Islamic country. Their reason is that no country that has named itself an Islamic state is capable of implementing all Islamic teachings, especially the law of cutting off the hands of thieves and the law of stoning adulterers. Indeed, as in

⁴⁰ Hasbi Amiruddin, *Konsep Negara*, 81.

⁴¹ Abdul Chalik, *Islam dan Kekuasaan*, 82.

⁴² Hasbi Amiruddin, *Konsep Negara*, 83.

Pakistan during the leadership of Zia ul-Haq, it was announced that Islamic law would take effect on at least four things, namely: drinking, adultery, theft and robbery, and Qadaf (the false accusation that someone is committing acts of prostitution). But this has never been consistently established. Others reasoned that even though they have named their country an Islamic state, the practice of governance, especially in political matters, has not yet shown Islamic colors.

Fazlur Rahman did not make countries where the majority of the population is Muslim or at least their own citizens claim their country as an Islamic state as the Islamic state that he formulated, nor did he make strict conditions the definition of an Islamic state. According to Fazlur Rahman, the Islamic State is an organization formed by the Muslim community in order to fulfill their wishes and not for other interests. It can be explained that the purpose of "their desire" here is to carry out God's will as stated in God's revelation. From this formulation, it can be seen that Fazlur Rahman's idea regarding the definition of an Islamic State has something to do with the history of the formation of the Pakistani state on the basis of the desire of Muslims who want to establish their own state separate from India, which is predominantly Hindu.⁴³

With this definition of an Islamic state, there will be no loss of recognition for a Shi'ite country, for example, Iran. Because the country also continues to recognize Allah SWT with His revelations of the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The difference with Sunni teachings is only in their belief that Imamah is one of the fundamental teachings of Islam (Ushuluddin). According to them, one's beliefs can never be perfect without acknowledging that priesthood.⁴⁴

So it can be said that an Islamic state, according to Fazlur Rahman, is a state established or inhabited by Muslims in order to fulfill their desire to carry out Allah's commands through His revelation. Regarding the implementation of the state administration, Fazlur Rahman does not format it rigidly, but the most important element that must be considered is shura as the basis. The existence of this shura institution certainly requires the consent of all competent parties. Thus, it is very possible that one Islamic country and another Islamic country will have different

⁴³ Ibid., 84.

⁴⁴ Muhammad bin Abdul Karim al-Syahrastani, *Al Milal wa Al Nihal*, alih bahasa Asywadie Syukur (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 2003), 138.

implementations of Islamic Shari'ah because it depends on the results of the *ijtihad* of the *mujtahids* in the country concerned.⁴⁵

E. CONCLUSION

Looking at Fazlur Rahman's writings on statehood, he seems to conclude that the Qur'an has taught some ethics and values in the life of the nation for mankind. This can be seen from the presentation: every time explaining how the people should act and ethics in relation to the life of the state, always use the guidelines of the verses of the Qur'an. However, in all aspects, it is not connected with the verse, especially in relation to the suggestion to establish an Islamic state, who will lead the country, and so on.

This view is considered understandable because the Quran does not provide a definite and strict pattern of state theory that must be followed by Muslims in various countries. Al-Qur'an, according to Fazlur Rahman, is, in principle, an ethical guide for humans, not a political guidebook. Apart from that, it has become the *Sunnatullah* of the world, which continues to develop. In line with that, human thinking continues to develop, which causes the institutions it creates to change as well.

The flexibility given by the Qur'an to this problem will make it easier for humans to build institutions that are in line with the times. Because of that, we see Fazlur Rahman trying to refer to Islamic history in relation to the system of appointing state leaders and the accountability of a head of state. In this case, Fazlur Rahman tends to make the event of Abu Bakr's appointment as the first caliph of the *Khulafā al-Rāsyidīn* and his speech about its format.

However, the definition of an Islamic state made by Fazlur Rahman seems to be a rather flexible formulation, not so strict with certain conditions. Perhaps this was deliberately formulated by Fazlur Rahman so that Muslims would not be too rigid in formulating an Islamic state and would not find it too difficult to fulfill their aspirations to build the country they wanted. This kind of formulation will also avoid differences of opinion between one group of Muslims and other groups of Muslims, which can lead to the non-recognition of friendly countries as Islamic countries

⁴⁵ Hasbi Amiruddin, *Konsep Negara*, 85.

because of different visions, both due to differences in theological schools of thought and schools of law, as well as strategies for implementing and fostering them.

This is also very possible due to the growing fact that so many Muslims call their country an Islamic country, either by naming it directly on the name of the country or without naming their country as an Islamic country but listing their country's religion as Islam, or at least there is a desire to even try to implement Islamic teachings as the desire of its people as Servants of Allah SWT.

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