

## FINDING OUT THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FITRAH OF ISLAM TOWARD THE M. QURAISH SHIHAB'S THOUGHT

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### **Abstract**

*There are several primary questions which can lead to ask about the religious urgency related to the mankind's life. "Is it available for a man to escape from the existence of religion?" "Why does a man need a religion? Why should Islam be born as a religion?" These questions are answered by M. Quraish Shihab based on his commentary. He stated that to have a belief for a man is a nature. While the reason that brings Islam as a fitrah religion is, it is a belief which was brought by the last prophet: Muhammad (pbuh). The focus of this research is 'how is the authenticity of Islamic concept as the fitrah religion according to M. Quraish Shihab?' This study aimed to analyze the perspective of M. Quraish Shihab as a fitrah religion based on the Qur'an, which points out to take any information about the authenticity of concept about Islam as a natural religion. This research implements library research which applies hermeneutics method. The theory of Fazlur Rahman is used here, which strengthens to the double movement theory on tracking either the authenticity of the message or moral ideal as what outlined in Tafsir Al-Mishbab. Based on the research, it is concluded that the authentic meaning on the concept of Islam as a fitrah religion according to the Quraish Shihab is an exclusive belief and a positive behavior. All prophets are Muslims, but all humans alive after Prophet Muhammad should embrace Islam as part of their submission form to Allah by voluntary and peaceful ways. Non-Muslims should be persuasively*

*introduced to Islam. Because do not embrace Islam not only ignoring fitrah but also denying Muhammad as the last prophet. Nevertheless, M. Quraish Shihab considers it's important for Muslims to respect other religions in order to maintain social justice by living in peace, mutual understanding and cooperation without sacrificing their faith.*

*[Ada beberapa pertanyaan mendasar yang bisa diajukan tentang urgensi agama berkaitan dengan kehidupan manusia: bisakah manusia lepas dari agama? Mengapa mereka memeluk agama? Mengapa Islam harus menjadi agama? Pertanyaan-pertanyaan ini dijawab oleh Quraish Shihab dalam tafsirnya bahwa memeluk agama adalah fitrah, sedangkan Islam sebagai agama fitrah adalah ajaran Nabi Muhammad. Artikel ini berangkat dari kegelisahan intelektual: bagaimana makna autentik pada konsep Islam sebagai agama fitrah menurut M. Quraish Shihab? Dengan menggunakan pendekatan hermeneutika double movement-nya Fazlur Rahman artikel ini berusaha menganalisa argumen Quraish Shihab dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah tentang Islam sebagai agama fitrah dan makna autentik Islam dalam al-Qur'an. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa makna autentik konsep Islam sebagai agama fitrah menurut Quraish Shihab adalah keyakinan eksklusif dan perilaku positif. Semua nabi adalah Muslim, namun semua manusia yang hidup setelah Muhammad harus memeluk Islam sebagai bagian dari bentuk penyerahan mereka kepada Allah dengan jalan sukarela dan damai. Non-Muslim harus secara persuasif diperkenalkan dengan Islam. Sebab pilihan untuk tidak memeluk Islam bukan hanya bertentangan dengan fitrah, tetapi juga menolak Muhammad sebagai nabi akhir zaman. Kendati demikian, Quraish Shihab menganggap penting bagi umat Islam untuk tetap menghormati agama lain demi menjaga keadilan sosial dengan cara hidup dalam kedamaian, saling pengertian dan kerjasama tanpa harus mengorbankan imannya.*

**Keywords:** *Fitrah, Islam, Authenticity Meaning, Tafsir Al-Mishbah*

## Introduction

Religion is a fundamental part for mankind. It touches every corner of human life.<sup>1</sup> Besides, it takes an very honored place in life. Religion was born when a man born.<sup>2</sup> The presence of religion also engages the goal, the feeling and the wish of human kind who are trying to find out the meaning of life, something which cannot be offered by science. To this case, within a questioning tune, Quraish Shihab stated that, "Is it available for a man to put him down from the existence of belief?" "Is there any alternative solution to replace the religion?" This finding of the one of great *mufasir* in Indonesia here shows that human cannot be separated from religion.

Why should everyone have a belief? This question related to the reason, why a man must have a faith. William James, a psychologist of religion enlightens that as long as a man has a doubtfulness and expectation, he needs a religion (a vertical relationship to the God). That is why; fearfulness is one of the most important factor that leads a man to hold the religion. For James, either the doubtfulness or expectation is the reason why people needs to believe in God. Emphasizing on the James' argument, Quraish Shihab stated that plurality is a *fitrah*, something which is brought to the mankind since they have been born. As what stated in Qur'an, that "...[Adhere to] the *fitrah* of Allah upon which He has created all people..." (Q.S.al-Rum [30]: 30).<sup>3</sup>

Quraish Shihab explains uniquely about Islam as a religion of *fitrah*. According to him, the verse above is a witness of a religious *fitrah* of mankind. Indeed, there are a bunch of definitions about *fitrah* in the Qur'an. However, what is the content of the verse above is talking about

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<sup>1</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam, Agama, Sejarah dan Peradaban*, trans. Koes Adiwidjajanto (Surabaya: Risalah Gusti, 2003), p. 41-42.

<sup>2</sup> Walter H. Capps, *Religious Studies The Making of a Discipline* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Qurasih Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 2000), p. 375-378; Interview transcription with Qurasih Shihab September 28, 2011.

the *fitrah* in belief. It does not talk about a *fitrah* which have a potential to every creature He creates. By this verse, again, Quraish Shihab declares that Qur'an underlines the existence of the *fitrah* for a mankind. Furthermore, by that *fitrah*, it focuses to the *fitrah* of religion which is needed to be maintained. That verse contains a command to maintain and improve what have been done by the Prophet Muhammad, that is taking the values of the belief, truly. That is what the content that verse as a *fitrah*, isn't it? That is what has been pointed out as the true religion, isn't it?<sup>4</sup> If engaging the religion is a *fitrah*, therefore the basic reason of a mankind to have a religion is caused by the nature to have the religion itself, inherent through the *fitrah*.

If following the premise of Quraish Shihab, a religion<sup>5</sup> which is purposed as a *fitrah* in this case is Islam, as what has been stated by Allah: "*Indeed, the religion on the sight of Allah is Islam...*" (QS. Ali-Imran [3]: 19). Quoted from al-Sya'rawī, Quraish Shihab declares that Islam is just not limited by the treatise of Muhammad only. Because, Islam is essentially is the subservience of creatures to the Creator for the precept which is brought by the messangers of God, which is supported by the uncommon miracle and trustable proofs. Hence, Quraish Shihab means Islam as a deed of "the surrender". Islam in this case, is a mean which is written by Allah and taught by the first Prophet Adam until the last Prophet, Muhammad. Therefore, Islam is a religion of the messangers of God. By that, the term "Muslim" is actually can be represented to each member of the previous messangers. This argument reflects that Quraish Shihab uncovers Islam both universally and inclusively.

However, when trying to be more practicable, Quraish Shihab seems understanding Islam as an exclusive identity. It can be seen, for

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<sup>4</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbāb: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, Vol. XI (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> The word (دين) *dīn* has several meanings, such as submission, obedience, calculation, and acknowledgement. This word also means religion, since in religion someone submits and obeys and also their deeds will be calculated of which they will be awarded and acknowledged. See M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbāb...*, p. 38-3.

example, when interpreting a saying of God, “*And whoever desires other than Islam as religion—never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.*” (Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 85).<sup>6</sup> Taken from Ibn Kathir, that verse based on Quraish Shihab contains a message that there is no other religion for Him and there is no accepted religion but Islam for Allah. It can be represented by obeying the messengers of God every time which is ended to the Prophet Muhammad pbuh. According to Quraish Shihab, there is no word “Islam” as a “name” for a religion but after this religion has been completed by the coming of the Prophet Muhammad. He mentions that by the presence of Muhammad, all the doors to Allah are closed but a single way which is directed by him. In another word, although other religions are regarded as Islam generally, yet the true one is Islam which was brought by Muhammad pbuh only. In this aspect, Quraish Shihab understands exclusively. Cause, a religion which is totally true for him is only Islam which was brought by Muhammad. That is why, whoever wants to see Allah after the coming of Muhammad, that man must take the lessons from Muhammad. The consequence is not only ignored by God if trying to find a religion but Islam, for him, it can be categorized into a conflicting attitude within the *fitrah* or normal instinct of a mankind.<sup>7</sup>

The chosen of the Quraish Shihab’s thought about the authenticity of Islam as a *fitrah* religion here is a focus in this research. Generally, it is put to several reasons as follow. *First*, Quraish Shihab who is well known as a master of *tafsir* in Indonesia, is one of *mufassir* of Qur’an from Indonesia who has a credibility from the education history compared to other *mufassir* of Indonesia. Therefore, his opus offers a novelty through the study of Qur’an which is improved in Indonesia.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbāb*, Vol. II..., p. 133-134; Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbāb*, Vol. XI..., p. 53-58; Quraish Shihab, *Lentera Hati: Kisah dan Hikmah Khidupan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), p. 52; Interview transcription with Quraish Shihab September 28, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Besides, he is recognized as a man who does not master about *dirayah* only, however he can reach *rinayah* for *tafsir*.<sup>9</sup> *Second*, for the contextual of Indonesian, Quraish Shihab's books which are written directed to not only for academicians, however which is also delighted through the society,<sup>10</sup> is a wanted books for Indonesian. Then, the investigation of his opus would bring benefit to rate how far is that books to be used as a literature for study of Islam, or ther would be any consideration which impacts to that works have either certain strenghts or weaknesses. *Third*, his exclusive arguments are interesting to be studied further.

The focus of this research is how is the authentic meaning or moral ideal message of Islamic concept as religion of *fitrah* according to Quraish Shihab based on *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*. The findings of this research can be a "foothold" of interfaith relationship in a dialogical Indonesia, avoiding absolute truth claims and intolerant attitudes toward adherents of other religions. In addition, the results of this study also bridge the understanding tension between exclusives and pluralists in the middle of heterogenous nations.

This study belongs to library research using hermeneutics method. Hermeneutics is as a method to understanding one's thought contained in the text particularly of *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*, whereas the theory used is double

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<sup>8</sup> Howard M. Federspiel, *Kajian Al-Qur'an di Indonesia dari Mahmud Yunus hingga Quraish Shihab*, trans. Tadjul Arifin (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), p. 295. This argument could further be debated yet since authority standard of Qur'an interpretation commonly relies on someone's capability and knowledge on the interpreter requirement including knowledge on prophet *hadis*, interpretation of *sahabat*, Arabic proficiency and the semantic context of the words in the Qur'an, so this argument is likely to be justified. See the requirement in Muḥammad Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāḥiṣ fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1988), p. 292.

<sup>9</sup> *Dirayah* is related to the theory and knowledge of *tafsir*, whereas *rinayah* knowlwdge of *tafsir* is the knowledge on itself either based on story from the Prophet or the following generations. This could happend since Quraish Shihab known majored at *Tafsir Hadis* since his undergraduate study to doctorate degree in al-Azhar University of Egypt. See Hamdani Anwar, "Telaah Kritis terhadap Tafsir Al-Mishbāh karya M. Quraish Shihab" *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, 2002, p. 170-171.

<sup>10</sup> Federspiel, *Kajian Al-Qur'an*..., p. 297-298.

movement theory of Fazlur Rahman. The double movement theory is employed to understand the authentic meaning of Islamic message as a *fitrah* religion of Quraish Shihab's thought in his *tafsir*.

### M. Quraish Shihab and his Works

Muhammad Quraish Shihab was born in Rappang, South Sulawesi, at February 16th 1944. His elementary school—*Sekolah Rakyat*—was done in Ujung Pandang, then his secondary school was continued within “*nyantri*” in the boarding house of Pesantren Darul Hadis al-Faqihyah,<sup>11</sup> under the guider al-Habib Abdul Qadir bin Ahmad Bilfaqih around more or less in two years.<sup>12</sup> It has a huge possibility whether that boarding house was a boarding house as a majority boarding house in Indonesia which basically teaches the precept of Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah and based on the conventional methodology. By this boarding house too, young Quraish Shihab got a present from his elder, an addition name of “Muhammad” in front of his own name. It was caused after regristration, Quraish Shihab just wrote a name Qurasih although a name from his parents also put Muhammad for him. He realizes that actually that name was just not taking with the name of his prophet, however, it was expected that he can represent both of the attitude and the precept of Prophet Muhammad to adhere him.<sup>13</sup>

Based on the genealogy, Quraish Shihab came from educated Arabian. His father, Abdurrahmad Shihab (1905-1986) was graduated from *Jami'atul Khair* Jakarta, an oldest institute of Islamic Education in Indonesia which strengthens about the concept of Islamic Modern. His father, besides a *muballigh*, he was also a professor on *tafsir*, and he was a president of university of IAIN Alauddin, and he contributed as a

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<sup>11</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Sunnah-Syi'ah Bergandengan Tangan, Mungkinkah? Kajian atas Konsep Ajaran dan Pemikiran* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), p. 3; M. Quraish Shihab, *Logika Agama* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), p. 20-22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22-23.



founder of University of Muslim Indonesia (UMI) in Ujung Pandang.<sup>14</sup>

Since his childhood, Quraish Shihab has struggled and loved through The Qur'an. In around 6-7 years, by his father's rule, he had to join any learning about Qur'an which was held by his own father every morning and evening, meanwhile in each opportunity, therefore, the seeds of love to Qur'an were grown. In 1958, by the scholarship of The Government of South Sulawesi, Quraish Shihab went to Cairo, Egypt to study and he was accepted in second *tsanawiyah* class. After years joining the education start from *tsanawiyah* till bachelor degree, finally Quraish Shihab got Lc title in 1967 on Tafsir Hadith department in Al-Azhar University, Cairo. Then he continued his study by taking magister degree in the similar department, *Hadith Tafsir*. Two years later, in 1969, he got MA title in the focus of Qur'an *tafsir* within a thesis entitled *Al-Ijāz al-Tasyrī'i li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.<sup>15</sup>

His choice to write a thesis about the miracle of Qur'an was based on his reading through the reality of Muslim which was observed by him. The idea about the miracle of Qur'an among Muslim, actually, by him, was drawn a pattern toward the understanding which cannot differentiate between which one belongs to the miracle and which one is the extraordinary. Those two things, by him were two different entities, however, it was often mixed meanwhile for the experts themselves. The miracles are not shown toward the Muslim whom have believed. The miracle is a proof to silence the opponents and strengthen their own argument. The miracle of Qur'an in this modernity is, by him when the experts of Qur'an are available to dig the instructions of Qur'an which can be used as an alternative to solve the problems among the society. This part is a challenge for Muslim moreover for the scholars which are

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<sup>14</sup> Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif: Menuju Sikap Terbuka dalam Beragama* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), p. vi; compare to Arief Subhan, "Menyatukan Kembali al-Qur'an dan Umat, Menguak Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab", *Ulumul Qur'an*, No. 5, Vol. 4, 1993, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an...*, p. 6; Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir...*, p. 80.



expected to have an ability to respond the problems which are raised from modern society and give solutions based on the instructions of Qur'an.<sup>16</sup> The concept of miracle is something which raises up progressively. Something which was considered as a miracle on different era and context might was just a privilege of Qur'an. The idea of miracle refers to the Arabic of Qur'an which based on Quraish Shihab is an example of this case.<sup>17</sup>

After went home several years in Indonesia and sat to several positions in Ujung Pandang in 1980, Quraish Shihab then came back to Egypt to take his doctoral program, within a dissertation entitled *Naẓm al-Durar li al-Biqā'iy Taḥqīq wa Dirāsah*, he succeeded the doctoral degree on 'Ilmu of Qur'an' within the yudisium *Summa Cum Laude* and he got an appreciation tier I. This one drives Quraish Shihab as the first of ASEAN society whom got the doctoral degree in Ilmu Qur'an from the university mentioned<sup>18</sup>

After turning back to Indonesia again, then Quraish Shihab was placed in the Faculty of Ushuluddin and at once, he taught in the Postgraduate of IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Besides, escorting the depth of knowledge and the modesty of his attitude, he, then was asked to take some important positions in the motherland. He served as the Chairman of the Central Indonesian Ulema Council (since 1984-1998), the member of Lajnah Pentashih Qur'an, Ministry of Religion (since 1989), the member of National Education Consideration (since 1989-1996),<sup>19</sup> the member of MPR RI (1982-1987, 1987-2002), the member of National Accreditation Board (1994-1998), The Director of Ulama Cadre MUI (1994-1997), the member of the National Research Council (1994-1998), the member of the BMI Syari'ah Council (1992-

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<sup>16</sup> Arief Subhan, "Tafsir yang Membumi", *Majalah Tsaqafah*, Vol. I, No. 3, 2003, p. 84; M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an...*, p. 111.

<sup>17</sup> Arief Subhan, "Tafsir yang Membumi...", p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Islah Gusmian, *Khaṣanah Tafsir ...*, p. 81.

<sup>19</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an...*, p. 6.

1999), the organizer of Association of Syari'ah Sciences, the organizer of Consortium of Religious Sciences Ministry of Education and Culture, The Assistant Chairperson of ICMI, The President University of IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Minister of Religion Development Cabinet VII in 1998 till that regime was subverted by the explosion of reformation in 1998, The director of The Study Center of Qur'an (PSQ) Jakarta, and other positions.<sup>20</sup> He also ever achieved Bintang Maha Putra from the government and he was involved through the scientific activities both at domestic and abroad.

Quraish Shihab includes to Indonesian's Ulama' which can be regarded as a very productive scientist. His talented skill in writing can be emerged from his opus which are spread out expansively. His productivity is more visible after he had come back from Al-Azhar University, Egypt, after finishing his doctoral program on the focus of the science of Qur'an. He realizes that by writing, a man can train, offer an idea and thought moreover influence the society.<sup>21</sup>

His opus, descriptively can be elucidated as follow: *Mahkota Tuntunan Ilahi Tafsir Surat Al-Fatihah, Membumikan al-Qur'an: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat, Lentera Hati: Kisah dan Hikmah Kehidupan, Rasionalitas al-Qur'an: Studi Kritis Tafsir al-Manar karya Muhammad Abdul dan M. Rasyid Ridha, Untaian Permata Buat Anakku Pesan al-Qur'an untuk Mempelai, Wawasan al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat, Mukjizat al-Qur'an, Sahur Bersama Quraish Shihab, Haji Bersama Quraish Shihab, Menyingkap Tabir Ilahi Asmaul Husna dalam Perspektif al-Qur'an, Fatwa-fatwa Seputar Ibadah Mahdah, Secercah Cahaya Ilahi: Hidup Bersama al-Qur'an, Yang Tersembunyi: Jin, Iblis, Syetan, dan Malaikat, Perjalanan Menuju Keabadian, kematian, Surga dan Ayat-ayat Tablil, Menjemput Maut, Mistik, Seks, dan Ibadah, Jilbab Pakaian Wanita Muslimah, Dia di Mana-*

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<sup>20</sup> Islah Gusmian, *Khasanah Tafsir..*, p. 81.

<sup>21</sup> When he pursued his undergraduate study (Lc.), exactly at the fifth semester, Quraish Shihab wrote "*Al-Khanatir*" which was then published by the title "*Logika Agama*".

*mana “Tangan” Tuhan dibalik Setiap Fenomena, Perempuan, 40 Hadits Qudsi Pilihan, Logika Agama, Menabur Pesan Ilahi al-Qur’an dan Dinamika Kehidupan Masyarakat, Sejarah dan ‘Ulum al-Qur’an, Tafsir Al-Mishbāh, Tafsir al-Lubab and many others.*

### Islam as a *Fitrah* Religion

The view of Quraish Shihab through the concept of Islam as a *fitrah* religion comes from his *tafsir* toward a verse ‘*Inna al-din ‘indallah al-Islam*’. By asserting the notion of Ibn Kathir, then Quraish Shihab reputes whether a verse contains a message of Allah that there is no religion in the side of and which can be accepted to Him but Islam, by following the messengers of God for every ways, and it was completed by the Prophet Muhammad pbuh.<sup>22</sup> For him, Islam is a religion of the messengers. The term Muslim is also used to the people of the previous messengers, that is why, —by citing the view of Mutawalli asy-Sya’rawi— Islam, noted by Quraish Shihab, is not just limited to the *risalah* of The Prophet Muhammad. However, Islam is a submission of the creatures to The Only God in the doctrine which was brought by the messengers, which also supported by the miracles and convinced evidences.

Nevertheless, in another side, Quraish Shihab interprets Islam more specific to the teaching of The Prophet Muhammad. The ex of The Ministry of Religion Republic Indonesia notes:<sup>23</sup>

“On the other hand, it was observed that in Qur’an, there cannot be found the term Islam as a name of religion but after this religion has been completed within the presence of The Prophet Muhammad. By what has been mentioned above, that is no mistaken if the word Islam on this verse (Q.S. Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 19) understood as a precept which was conveyed by The Prophet Muhammad, because, looked from either the review of the religion or sociologis, it was a name of the teaching which was delivered by The Prophet Muhammad and based on the *akidah Islamiyyah*, whosoever hears to this verse is demanded to believe the teaching which was brought by The Prophet Muhammad, even though

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<sup>22</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*..., p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39; Interview transcription with Quraish Shihab September 28, 2011.

along side of Allah, each religion which was taught by the messengers of God includes to Islam. Therefore, whosoever since the first messenger of God, Adam till the end of the universe does not believe their teaching, Allah does not admit it.”

By the presence of the Prophet Muhammad, according to Quraish Shihab, all the way to reach the God, Allah has been closed but the only way which comes from Muhammad. Even though alongside of God, each religion which was taken by the messengers of God is called as Islam, on the general understanding, whosoever does not believe what the messengers of God’s believe, and then Allah does not accept it.<sup>24</sup> Based on Quraish Shihab, it was a different thing when Islam which was introduced by Muhammad came. Whosoever tries to find Allah after the presence of Muhammad by believing in a religion but a *syaria* which was conveyed by Muhammad, then Allah does not take it, as one of His word: “And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam (Submission to Allah), it shall not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he shall be of the losers.”<sup>25</sup>

By this side, it can be seen clearly, how Quraish Shihab stats to emphasize the identity of Islam by purposing Islam exclusively to the precept which only was brought by The Prophet Muhammad. The conclusion is, it is based on his comprehension that in Qur’an, there is no word Islam which points out as the name of religion but after this religion has been completed by the presence of Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad is the final prophet of God which at once, he accomplishes the religion of Islam which was taught by the previous prophets. This one is called by Islam for the particular understanding.

Those two of categorizes of Islam for either general or typical understanding, are different one each other. Based on asy-Sya’rawi, the term “Islam” to the teaching of the prophets which by Quraish Shihab

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p 39.

<sup>25</sup> Q.S. Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 85; Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbāh...*, p 38. Interview transcription with Quraish Shihab September 28, 2011.

was mentioned as a “character”, meanwhile Islam for the specific meaning which was conveyed by The Prophet Muhammad has a special thing by that interconnected character, which was called at once as a “sign” and “name” for him.<sup>26</sup> It was caused by Allah does not demote another religion after The Prophet Muhammad. Next, that well known *ulama* from Egypt, as what cited by Quraish Shihab, puts forward that it has been established before the presence of Muhammad. A verse of God which was stated by The Prophet Ibrahim as., and was perpetuated in Qur’an declared that “...*He named you Muslims (submitters to Allah) before and in this (the Qur’an), ...*”<sup>27</sup> By that also, the other religion does not take this name as what Muslim does not name their religion within a name Muhammadanism.

The term of the religion of Islam by the specific definition, and also the naming process are not made by mankind which was associated to the religion of Masehi which was taken from the naming of Isa al-Masih, the religion of Budha was taken by the pioneer, Sidarta Buddha, and Jews which was born among the tribes which was known within the name of Yahuzha, then it named Jews.<sup>28</sup> The name of Islam for the religion of Muhammad was given by Allah himself.

By this, the term Islam as a *fitrah* religion according to Quraish Shihab is a primordial consciousness that a man knows whether the existence of God, recognizes the God, obeys and submits to The Only God because he realizes that it is a natural personality and at the same time, he believes what has been brought by the Prophet Muhammad.

The explanation which approaches to this meaning is, that the basic character of human, at once announces an impression of essential through the God’s will which was taught and done by the prophets.<sup>29</sup> By

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38-39.

<sup>27</sup> Q.S.al-Ĥajj [22]: 78.

<sup>28</sup> Suparman Syukur, *Epistemologi Islam Scholastik Pengaruhnya Pada Islam Modern* (Yogyakarta: IAIN Walisongo dan Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> Yasien Muhammad, *Insan yang Suci: Konsep Fitrah dalam Islam*, trans. Masyhur Abadi (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), p. 21.

this, Islam is also called by a *fitrah* religion, a religion which is matched to the natural character of human. Both the law and the precept are in a harmony within the tendency of the natural from the *fitrah* of a man to believe and to obey through the God.

### **The Position of Islam**

There are a lot of religions in the entire world, whether *samawi* religion or *'ard* religion. Those two kinds of religions are also divided into several branches, and each branch has a subsidiary. By the question above, the researcher tries to find out what kind of religion according the Qur'an which can be categorized into the true religion, something which is purity for a man, which impacts to a man who tries to find the other faith of that religion, tends to ignore his own natural?

This part be started by the view which comes from a skilled man from Iran, Thabathaba'i. For him, the pure religion which must be followed is a religion which is appropriate to the characters of the nature. Therefore, a religion which becomes the *fitrah* is a religion where the rules supports a man to turn back to his own character as a natural creature, which is grows and flourishes regularly till he produces a useful product, therefore getting and giving happiness.<sup>30</sup> By this, the religion which is claimed by Thabathaba'i is Islam, that is a religion which is believed and implemented by The Prophet Nuh, Ibrahim as and the other prophets. That is the religion which is convenient to the *fitrah*, nature and the character of human.

The religion of Islam which is matched to the *fitrah* of human has an obvious basic by looking how this religion was chosen by the prophets as what mentioned by Qur'an. According to Qur'an, the first man who mentioned the religion of God within the name Islam, meanwhile the followers as Muslim was The Prophet Ibrahim. The pronouncing of the term Islam contained in Ibrahim's struggle in carrying the command of

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<sup>30</sup> Waryono Abdul Ghafur, *Millah Ibrahim dalam Al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Yogyakarta: Seksi Akademik UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2008) p. 180.

God. As what explained by Qur'an, Ibrahim, was instructed by God to complete the three tough commands. Those are preaching through the peoples to believe in just one God; to slaughter his own son, Ismail; and to rebuild Ka'bah with Ismail. However, there is an interesting improvement when the Prophet Ibrahim, was commanded to slaughter his own son and build the Ka'bah. It was the beginning to use the term Islam and Muslim. It was gotten after the Prophet Ibrahim, prayed to Allah to make himself and his son Ismail as as the two first men whom applied Islam (obey and submit). At the similar moment, Ibrahim, and Ismail, got the predicate as Muslim. After finishing those commands, Ibrahim, prayed to make his son and himself be "the men who obeyed and submitted (Islam) through the God." The praying of Ibrahim, to be a Muslim was: *Rabbānā waj'alnā muslimaini laka wa min dzurriyyatinā ummatan muslimatan laka*'. As what has been known, that the supplication of Ibrahim, was stated after he completes all of the commands of God, starting from preaching to the peoples within a risk that is being driven away from his own motherland, to slaughter his only and beloved son till to build *baitullah* with Ismail. At that moment, the building was destroyed and formless. Islam is what as was expected by Ibrahim, or being a Muslim as like that. Whereas since beginning, it has obeyed and submitted all the commands of God.

By this, it is needed to look back—as what has mentioned before—the process of the long journey of Ibrahim, passed a lot of trials and completed several obligations as tests. After passed facing those all tests, then he got a predicate of Muslim as what he ordered. Meanwhile, he got an additional command to be Islam, that is to obey and surrendered. When Allah told to Ibrahim: "Such was Ibrahim that when his Lord said to him: "Submit," he said: "I have submitted to the Lord of the Universe." That answer was just not stating that he was just submissive man, however, through the entire of the world submit and obey Him, because Allah is the God of the universe. Their submissions are vary.



There can be found voluntarily obeying Allah without any other choices, there also can be found them, whom believe voluntarily although there found other options. The obeyed one as what The Prophet Ibrahim as and his followers; meanwhile the unobeyed are unbelievers. However, that was just temporary, just a while when they live in the world. After their soul come back to the place of origin, they must be obey and submit. What had happened to Fir'aun is a concrete example that in his last breathe, he mentioned that there is no god but The God of the entire world whom commands and asks both Prophet Musa and Prophet Harun as to preach into *Taubid*. Hence, all of the entire of the world and each inch in it submit and obey Him. Because Allah is the only God which represents the obedience, it is reasonable if The Prophet Ibrahim a very obedient man committed this teaching to his offsprings, including *Bani* Israel where since on the period of The Prophet Muhammad till today, in part of them do not believe and obey to Allah.<sup>31</sup>

The obedient of Ibrahim was not just for him. He taught and committed his teaching to his sons, then continued to the next generation. When Ibrahim stated: "My children! Behold, Allah has chosen this religion for you. Remain till death in submission (to Allah)."<sup>32</sup> The meaning is, the religion of Islam which has a *taubid* teaching, obeying attitude and also submission. This verse signs that there are many religions and beliefs which are known by man, however, for this one, that is the main point is a totality in submitting to God, is the one which is approved and chosen by Him. That is why, Ibrahim, orders to stay in this religion and never leave it for an inch, never die but in submitting of Him, that it approaching the religion of Islam. That is why, whenever, when the death come, this verse strengthen that everything must still believe in it.<sup>33</sup>

The testatement of the Prophet Ibrahim, did not just stop to his sons, however, it was continued to the next generations. For this case,

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<sup>31</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbbāb*..., p. 311-312.

<sup>32</sup> Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 132

<sup>33</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbbāb*..., Vol. I, p. 313.

Qur'an perpetuates the saying of Yakub as to his sons, right when he almost left this world. The Prophet Yakub, stated: "To what will you worship after I left?" They answered: "We (are and will) worship to your God and The God of your elder, Ibrahim, Ismail and Ishaq, that is The only God and we only submit and obey to Him".<sup>34</sup> On the record of Qur'an above, The Prophet Yakub, used term 'to what' not 'to whom'. It is caused by that term can cover the matters and anything which is broader from what can be reached by the term 'to whom'. The question of The Prophet Yakub which used the term 'to what' then finds the relevance that among his descents, Bani Israel on the next era worship to unminded creature, that is cow, or moreover the exact one is a statue of cow.

By what has been done and then achieved by Abraham above then it can be stated that for the people who feels and assumes that he is a Muslim, uphold Islamic values and teachings are the demand. Those values directed all of his activities physic and mind only to God, the values which made a man would never escape from His calling to exactly submit and obey Him. Fazlurrahman al-Anshari, as what cited by Quraish Shihab stated that "The Oneness of God is not a concept among other concepts, however it is a complete principles which emerges through all dimension which set the whole fundamental treasure of faith and human action."<sup>35</sup> According to Quraish Shihab, the singleness contains one main core in the center one, and a number of unicentric orbits around it. In those orbits, the principle of unity manifests itself for different levels.

From the oneness of God, and to His oneness, other entities shines, such as the unity of the universe in the creation, existence and purpose, unity of life of the world and the hereafter, natural and supernatural unity, unity of knowledge in various disciplines with deeds, unity of faith and ratio, the unity of the origin of mankind, and other unities.<sup>36</sup>

Those values was internalized and done by Ibrahim through his

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<sup>34</sup> Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 123.

<sup>35</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan...*, p. 249.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249-250.

followes, his obeyed descents to his testatement, which always obey through their God. Those values then appear among the Arabic society which came from the last prophet, Muhammad. These values inspire the change of the worlf. By the barren city, Mecca, throughout the world, changed the way of thinking, attitude, behavior, and the mankind's scheme of life. This is the model and the captured from the attitude of being Islam which is displayed by Qur'an to be followed by the exemplary through Ibrahim's figure. By this, it has been clear that the model of being Islam as what has been exampled by The Prophet Ibrahim is being Islam within the whole of soul and body by obeying and submitting throught the certainty of Allah. By that, it has been clear the statement of Q.S. Ali Imrān [3]: 19, which mentioned that the only religion which is accepted by God is Islam.

## Requirements

Because of Islam is a religion which is appropriate to the *fitrah*, therefore it is needed several requirements to qualify that this truly religion can be put into the doers. Among the requirements are following the messangers of God every time till find to the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>37</sup> This one can be seen by the teachings of the first man who used the term Islam, he is Ibrahim the father of monotheism religions. Besides, the Prophet Muhammad was stated as the truest follower of the religion which was worshiped and followed by his ancencors, Ibrahim.

This thing related to the *tafsir* of the saying of Allah, *millata abīkum Ibrāhīm*. There can be found an interpretation that, in the meaning of the religion of Islam which was delivered by the Porphet Muhammad, and there is narrowness in it, is similar to the basic and principles with *millah Ibrāhīm*, that is *tauhid*, the appropriateness within *fitrah*, moderation, upholding the right and justices, the kindness and others. Ibnu 'Asyur understands the cut of that verse as a praise to the teaching of the religion

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

of Islam, and as a stimulation to believe it, because Islam is a religion which was brought by two great prophets, The Prophet Muhammad and The Prophet Ibrahim—and this—by him—is a specific characteristic of the religion of Islam which was taught by The Prophet Muhammad.<sup>38</sup> That idea is prefer to be chosen by Quraish Shihab.<sup>39</sup>

By Quraish Shihab, a man who is being Islam is appropriate to the *fitrah* purity which was bestowed by Allah to them. Their submission is proven by following the provisions given by God through a sharia system of religion. Meanwhile the entity of being Islam for the entire universe is as what has been mentioned by many verses, that is following the provision and the system which has been set for the whole world.

Furthermore, why the mankind, after the presence of The Prophet Muhammad should refer to and follow the teaching of Islam which was recognized by The Prophet Muhammad? This is caused by, stated by Quraish Shihab, besides Islam is a rational religion, balance, not extreme, and admitting all of the messengers of God through the mankind and the whole of period, then, because on other religion, there are a lot of deviations from the what has been taught by the messangers of God.<sup>40</sup> There can be found the difference about religion and the truest teaching, even people who discord are the followers of the messangers of God. Actually, the prophets and the messangers neither are wrong nor remiss to explain that religion to their followers, because there is no disagreement the people who have bring the Bible, for one condition or time, but after the presence of the knowledge to them. Therefore, if it happens, why do they have different arguments? Of course there can be found the causes.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibn Asyūr, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*..., p. 350.

<sup>39</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsīr al-Mishbāh*..., Vol. IX, p. 133.

<sup>40</sup> The Qur'an states, "do you still expect that they would believe in you, even some of them have heard Allah's word, then they change after they understand it, and they recognize it?" according to Shihab, the information in this verse is in line and suits His word asserting that they knew Muhammad pbuh they they hid the truth even if they recognized it. See Shihab, *Tafsīr al-Mishbāh*..., Vol. I, p. 235-236; Interview transcription with Quraish Shihab September 28, 2011.

According to Quraish Shihab, they have different argument because of the existence of malice among them. That is not a malice of them within the other one, however it is about one group to the other one.<sup>41</sup>

As a solution from that diversion, God sent Islam which is special brought by The Prophet Muhammad that is used as the generation, rectifier, corrector, completer and finalization of the religions of Ibrahim, moreover for the religions which have diversion above, and it drives the Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet which must be believed by all of mankind till whom the *bidayah* has touched their heart.

### Consequence

The logical consequence by the perspective that only Islamic religion which was taught by The Prophet Muhammad pbuh as the truest one is a concept which believes that another worshippers that do not obey and supplicate to God as what has been taught by Islam means that their worships are useless. The declining of the worship impacts to there is no guarantee of being safe in the next life, hereafter. Because of their worships are not accepted, therefore, the only one way to safe them is by persuasively spreading Islam to invite and bring them to get in on Islam which has been brought by the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>42</sup> It is a religion where the precept is matched to the natural characteristics of human which loves the aesthetics, kindness and truth.<sup>43</sup> The only way to safe them is by recognizing Islam to them, so that they believe in Islam and implement Islam correctly.

By this view, Quraish Shihab strengthens whether a man who is trying to find out other religion but Islam, he is not only rejected by Allah, however, he applies something contrast to his own *fitrah*. Because, by him, a man is actually a creature who has a natural belief in a religion.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 39-40. Interview transcription with M. Quraish Shihab September 28, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Interview transcription with Quraish Shihab September 28, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

Meanwhile a religion which becomes one of the purity of a man is Islam which was completed, brought by the Prophet Muhammad, because of the presence of the prophet was the last prophet as the completor of the *risalah* which has taught by the previous prophets.

Although the truth about religion which must be believed by somebody is exclusive enough, yet Quraish Shihab “submit it up to The only God to make a decision on the judgment day, whose religion is approved by Him and whose religion is wrong, then let us put it all to Allah for every final result, who will be granted peace and paradise, and who will be fear and sad.”<sup>44</sup>

In the context of responding and attitude, the argument of Quraish Shihab is more open minded that exclusive manner, because he appreciates the presence of non-Muslim, and put it all totally to the authority of God. The view of Quraish Shihab above: Another side declines the similarity and the equality of all of the religions, for another side, he also offers his argument and evaluation exclusively; for this part, he has a positive deed. Stated by exclusive thought, because of Quraish Shihab rejects the equality of all religions, because for *akidah* side, Jews and Christian for him, are different with Islam; and declared as applying positive argument because Quraish Shihab does not execute them, and he puts it up totality about their status to the authority of God. It can be stated that Shihab thinks exclusively and responds it positively.

The exclusiveness and positiveness think of Shihab keep both positive and negative potentions throught the harmony of divergenity of beliefs among people. Here, there can be taken the relevancy of his thoughts. By Shihab, Muslim must live peacefully among them, moreober peace by him is something a must.<sup>45</sup> Quraish Shihab evaluates, life peacefully can be implemented by giving the status of non-Muslim

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<sup>44</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbbāb*..., Vol. I, p. 216.

<sup>45</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbbāb*..., Vol. I, p. 216. Ahmad Zainal Abidin,” Pluralitas Agama dalam Tafsir al-Qur’an: Konsep Ahl al-Kitab dalam Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab”, *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Hadis*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2006, p. 215.

through the authority of God totally. Meanwhile the negative impact is, that all of the religions are not equal which means that there can be classified a religion which is matched to the *fitrah* and there is a religion which does not belong to the *fitrah*. It can affects to falling down throught the exclusive attitudes which contains the potentions of underestimating, judging or condemning other religions. Then, this potention can burn up the flame of hostility and the wrangle if it is wrapped to political, economic and other certain importance.

Directed by both the scheme of exclusive thinking and positive attitude according to Quraish Shihab, life among different beliefs in Indonesia still have a possibility to create peaceful life. Because, by thinking exclusively about the belief of religion without exclusive thought, the life among society would be still peacefully. The Muslim society still can make a relationship through non-Muslim although they do not get dialogue actively and making a cooperation with them moreover to solve the problems which are raised from their society. By implementing positive attitude, there will no claimity of mine is the truth and salvation absolutely on action. As known, chaos of life among divergent beliefs in Indonesia often came to the blasphemy of religion, and claiming of the truth at the level of phisical action. If the last one has happened, then people can not life in peace, harmony and side by side constructively.

## **Conclusion**

The authentic value or ideal morality which raised up by the thought of Quraish Shihab about Islam as a *fitrah* religion on his *tafsir* is believing exclusively and making a positive deed. After classing Islam through two categories: Islam in general as what has been taught by the messangers of God which drives to the precept of submission totality to Allah; and Islam in specific as a teaching and a particular identity of the followers of Muhammad, Quraish Shihab concludes that the only religion which covers the natural of human is Islam, on specific



definition, which has been brought by the Prophet Muhammad pbuh. The consequences, whoever tries to find out another religion but Islam which is taught by the Prophet Muhammad, for Quraish Shihab, he is finding out something which is not appropriate to his own *fitrah*. On the faith, Quraish Shihab emphasizes the significance of *tauhid* principle or monotheism. He declines the equality of all religions and claims that by believing Islam version Muhammad pbuh only a man can be safe. The previous religions have been disorted from what has been taught by the messangers of God. Meanwhile, for the attitude among non Muslim, he applies positively because of he emphasizes the principle of social justice which becomes the primary principle in Islam. He selects to put it totally to God for determining the status of salvation of them next time in after life, for a peaceful life among society, dialogues and cooperating in all ways.

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