



# The Essence of Islam in the Discourse of Indigenous Islam and Puritan Islam in Indonesia through Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Hermeneutic Studies

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## Abstract:

*This paper studies the essence of Islam in the discourse of Puritan Islam and Indigenous Islam in Indonesia. The Muslim community in Indonesia is now fragmented into two distinct groups. The first group considers that the essence of Islam must follow Middle Eastern traditions in all its aspects. The second group considers that the essence of Islam must adapt to local traditions/cultures as long as it does not conflict with the holy text of the Qur'an and Sunnah of Muhammad SAW. The purpose of this research is to explore what the essence of Islam in Indonesia should be. The method used in this paper is a literature study through Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's hermeneutic approach with his ideas related to the reading of the Qur'an through the historical context and criticism of Quranic verses. The results of the study indicate that the essence of Indonesian Islam is Indigenous Islam because Islam should be able to synergize with all times and places and thus be able to have a dialectic with the plurality of culture and society so that Islam can be accepted by all, including Indonesian cultures that is different from the Middle Eastern culture.*

**Key Words:** Puritan Islam, Indigenous Islam, The Muslim Community, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd

## Abstrak:

*Tulisan ini merupakan studi mengenai esensi Islam dalam diskursus Islam Puritan dan Islam Pribumi yang ada di Indonesia. Masyarakat muslim di Indonesia kini terbagi menjadi dua kelompok berbeda. Kelompok pertama menganggap bahwa esensi Islam harus mengikuti tradisi Timur Tengah dalam semua aspeknya. Kelompok kedua menganggap bahwa esensi Islam harus menyesuaikan dengan tradisi/budaya setempat selama tidak bertentangan dengan teks suci al-Qur'an dan sunnah Nabi. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menggali tentang esensi dan wajah Islam di Indonesia yang seharusnya. Metode yang dipakai dalam tulisan ini adalah studi literatur melalui pendekatan hermeneutik Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd dengan gagasannya terkait dengan pembacaan kitab suci melalui konteks historis dan kritik teks Al-Qur'an. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa esensi Islam Indonesia adalah Islam Pribumi, karena agama Islam seharusnya dapat bersinergi dengan segala zaman dan tempat. Dengan demikian dapat berdialektika dengan pluralitas budaya dan masyarakatnya, sehingga Islam dapat diterima oleh seluruh bangsa, termasuk bangsa Indonesia dengan kebudayaannya sendiri yang berbeda dengan budaya Timur Tengah.*

**Kata Kunci:** Islam Puritan, Islam Pribumi, Masyarakat Muslim, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd

## INTRODUCTION

The diversity of ethnicity, race, and culture, including religion, is one of the identities of Indonesia as a pluralistic country inherited by migrants from the archipelago. Of course, the archipelago immigrants used to carry various identities and

styles, including Islam, which came after the archipelago already had such diversity. The permissive attitude of the area of origin of the Islamic preachers in the archipelago at that time, which acculturated the culture and locality of the archipelago with Islamic values, made Islam develop very quickly. Locality does not need to be assimilated but fused with various Islamic values by the preacher. Until now, the plurality of the Islamic world in terms of ethnic diversity to its culture in Indonesia is known more than in Europe and America, even since its first arrival in the archipelago around the 11th century, which was spread by traders from West India and the Arabian peninsula, mainly from Indonesia. Malabar and Gujarat regions (Farida, 2015).

Many historians have other opinions regarding where or who brought Islam to the archipelago, although some already have bright spots as described previously (Ghofur, 2011). Consensually, Islam is considered established by the people of the archipelago since the 13th century; two centuries after that, it continued to more excellent developments (Esposito, 2001). Of course, this significant development was caused by the attitude of the preachers toward local values in the archipelago, which tended to be accommodative and permissive thanks to the syncretism between Islam and Hinduism by West Indian traders at that time (Affandi, 1999). With this accommodative and permissive attitude, Islam can thrive in the archipelago (Farida, 2015).

After the fall of the New Order, various civil society organizations and contemporary Islamic movements emerged (Wahid, 2014), such as FPI (Islamic Defenders Front), MMI (Indonesian Mujahidin Council), to Salafi movements. From what was initially very limited by the New Order government, thanks to the 1998 reforms that brought down President Soeharto, it is now easier to find mobilization of Islamic groups into the public sphere (Singh & Qodir, 2015). Unfortunately, some Islamic groups have a unique vision and mission to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state. Jihadist movements of such Islamic groups are still alive today, although their challenges may be more significant due to socio-economic and political transformations (Alamsyah & Hadiz, 2016). The spirit brought by them is the purification of Islam into which the fundamentalism-extremist movement has entered. As a result, the purity of Islam at that point is known to be full of values contrary to the mission of tolerance and moderation. These groups with the puritanical spirit of Islam came to be known as Islamic Puritans.

Various movements with the spirit of purification of Islam in Indonesia are often associated with the Padri movement in the Minangkabau area in the 19th century, about a century later followed by the Islamic Association, Muhammadiyah, to Al-Irsyad (Jinan, 2008). Briefly reviewing the history of the Padri. Their enthusiasm comes from the movement to fight for Islamic values to indigenous peoples who often commit religious violations, such as fighting cocks to gambling. However, their movement has changed further, such as their politics of fighting against each other to dominate the Minangkabau area (Hati, 2018).

Each Puritan Islamic group has a different theme and target of the movement. According to Jinan (2008), there are at least four themes or references to the purification movement of Puritan Islamic actors. First, they think that Muslims have been hit by religious corruption, so they feel that the Islam they follow is not the "true" Islam.

Second, they think that religious figures have abused their power due to the influence of the thoughts of people from other religions. Third, to deal with things they consider dirty, Islam needs to return to the original teachings that are owed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. Fourth, the ideal religious reference is Islam of the Salaf generation, which took place in the first centuries of Islam.

The Puritan Islamic group was born with the idea that Islam needs to be revitalized by returning it to the time of the Prophet and cleansing it of all kinds of local values. If we examine the compatibility of the dream with the present, it will make no sense in response to this idea; non-puritan groups, which later became Indigenous Islam, considered locality an indelible feature. They also tend to uphold the values of religious moderation in the spirit of tolerance amid the plurality of Indonesian society.

This phenomenon disturbs the writer's academic anxiety to examine which one is the essence of Islam. Should Islam be oriented towards Middle Eastern traditions and culture with all its aspects, or should it be oriented towards local culture and locality? How should the relationship between Islam and local culture be? Is Islam living in Indonesia today by the essence of Islam?

Various previous studies have studied the characteristics and typology of Islam in Indonesia and the archipelago. Such as Farida (2015) and Zuhdi (2017), who explains the face of Islam in Indonesia based on the process of da'wah and the fusion of Muslims with localities; Susanto and Karimullah (2016), who explain the characteristics of Islam from the archipelago which are accommodative to the colors of the locality; to critical studies related to the acculturation of Islam with its culture such as Siregar's (2014), Burga (2019), to Putra (2020). The typology of the two types of Islamic groups has also been explained well, such as Jinan (2008), Wahyudi (2011), Fitriah (2013), Mu'ammarr (2016), Boenga (2020), and Thaib & Nusi (2021).

Based on the author's analysis, there is nothing that philosophically and sharply highlights the issue of the essence of Islam itself in the context of the dialectic between the directions of the movement and Islamic thought, especially by using the approach of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd as an Islamic figure which is relatively progressive in the world of Islamic thought. In fact, in the author's opinion, instead of agreeing with group fragmentation, it would be better if we seek consolidation that leads to a common postulation of understanding so that stability can be adequately realized. Therefore, through this paper, the author aims to find the essence of Islam through a study of literature and the approach of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The author's method in this paper is a literature study through the hermeneutical approach of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd. Abu Zayd's (2013) concept in describing his hermeneutic theory focuses on two things, namely the concept of the historicity of the Koran and the concept of criticism of the Koranic text (literary critics) (Naupal, 2019). The concept of the historicity of the Koran was compiled as the initial foundation of his hermeneutics, while the concept of criticism of the Koranic text he used as the primary analytical knife in his study of the text of the Koran. With the above understanding, interpreting the Qur'an is a starting point for eliminating the

absolutism that has long prevailed in the tradition of classical Qur'an interpretation of literalism (Naupal, 2019).

This footing means that truth is not singular and absolute based on earlier proposals/concepts. Thus, when we are dealing with the meaning of a "holy text" such as the Qur'an, we are not only presenting a literal meaning that already exists, but we must review various aspects, both internal and external, of the entire structure that surrounds it, so that the original meaning is that cannot be conveyed can be brought up – as in the semiotic approach. Through this method, the author seeks to explore the historical-philosophical meaning by prioritizing the context of socio-cultural reading to solve the problems of the discourse raised.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we will discuss two contradictory characteristics of Indonesian Islamic ideas: indigenous Islam and puritanical Islam. The discussion continues with the description of whether, to get the essence of Islam, Indonesian Muslims must be oriented to the traditions and culture of the Middle East with all its aspects or instead must be oriented to the local culture and locality. The discussion will be closed by critically examining the essence of religion in viewing Islam and culture. The contribution that the researcher wants to convey in this research is that Islam is a religion that *sālih likulli zamān wa makān*, so the essence of Islam universally is a religion that must preserve local culture with its original character but fill it with Islamic values, and thus Islam can be accepted by all human beings from various cultures and traditions. This type of Islam is found in indigenous Islam, where Islamic teachings are introduced to the general public of Muslims in Indonesia without having to destroy the local culture, but by Islamizing the local culture by filling it with Islamic elements.

### Puritan Islamic Ideas

Generally, the initiators and adherents of Puritan Islam use verse references in the Qur'an and are positioned in standard textual corridors, such as QS. 5 (Al-Maidah) verse 3, which reads, "Today I have perfected your religion, and I have completed My favor for you, and I have approved of Islam as your religion." Q.S 3 (Ali 'Imran) verse 19 reads, "Indeed the (true) religion with Allah is Islam" (Jinan, 2008). This verse shows the perfection of Islam, so Islam should not be added to any tradition or culture, either from Western culture or local culture.

According to Puritan Muslims, both western culture and local culture have marginalized Muslims and made Muslims farther away from the purity of Islam. They react to religious issues, such as liberalism, secularism, and pluralism. According to them, all of these are western products that contradict the text of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition, they also reacted to the democratic system, which was considered European-centric and unable to solve national problems. They demand the implementation of a caliphate system to solve socio-economic and political problems in a country with a Muslim majority population, including Indonesia. Although we cannot turn a blind eye to the benefits of Western influence on the Islamic world, such as the awareness of Muslims about their backwardness from the progress experienced by the Western world, Muslims should

follow their example to build progress in the Islamic world (Ruslan & Mawardi, 2019). However, this lag has even encouraged an apologetic attitude and suspicion of the Muslim community towards the treasures of Western civilization (Saleh, 2018).

Local culture is also hostile to puritanical Muslims because they are considered to have made Islamic teachings far from monotheism, and even Islamic teachings are trapped in superstition and heresy, so they need to be purified and cleaned of all elements that have polluted them. Puritans believe that Islam in Indonesia has been mixed with local culture, so the practice of Islam in Indonesia looks very accommodating, syncretic, and tends to be adaptive, such as believing in sacred people (wali) who have sacred qualities. The sacredness then resides in specific names, places, and objects. These are all considered superstitions and have deviated from the teachings of Islam.

So, Puritan Islam rejects all this diversity. Whereas in the context of life in Indonesia, these colors cannot be separated from the diversity of local cultures. Unfortunately, the diversity of local cultures is also rejected by Puritan Islam and is considered heresy (Rahmat, 2003). So, puritan Islamic groups, in addition to rejecting western culture, also reject local culture (Steenbrink in Hati (2018). To find a solution to all of this, they are passionate about establishing institutions, ranging from institutions of a socio-economic nature to education).

In general, they also position Islam as standard, eternal, and unchangeable (Farida, 2015); even though everything "social" can permanently be changed, even if there is no outside intervention, these changes can certainly occur from the outside. Consequently, Islam must be able to have a dialectic with reality and all the transformations that occurred during its time so as not to be lost by the changing times. Islam should not be defined through a single and unchanging meaning in textual interpretation; the proper method of interpretation must be a qibla to find the correct meaning. Therefore, apart from its connection with political and power issues, the ideal form of Islam imagined by the Puritan Islamic groups will never actually exist, except for Islam that lives in society (Farida, 2015).

Perhaps what makes it challenging to understand how the movement of puritan groups in Indonesia is because their movement is not organized even though their number has reached 13,000 people, and currently, this kind of movement has various forms and various goals (Mu'ammam, 2016). We can understand puritans as a belief that cannot be compromised or tolerant in seeing pluralism, so they cannot be dynamic (Wahyudi, 2011). They idolized the previous generations – from and with the Middle Eastern culture and its caliphate, who thought that locality and diversity would only destroy the authenticity of Islam, so it needed to be avoided (read: forbidden) to become *bid'ah*, *khurafat*, and endanger monotheism (Farida, 2015).

From the description above, the essence of Puritan Islam in its reading of the Qur'an and al-Hadith is to return to textual reading. It seems simple, but it is detrimental to Muslims. Such a thing would be a severe problem if it were to be implemented in Indonesia. Some consequences may be pretty dire for Islam itself. First, textual reading will make most groups – including those from the Islamic community-marginalized due to various incompatible traditions (salvation, for example). Second, this will undoubtedly make Islam in Indonesia (or elsewhere) experience obstacles in developing amid today's rapid progressivity. So, this corridor of understanding of Puritan Islam should be feared because the consequences are not only for people

outside Islam but also for the survival of Islam itself, especially in Indonesia.

More than that, Puritan Islam can also lead to an Islamism movement that can manifest into radicalism, conservatism, and even extremism in religion because the school of thought rejects reinterpretation of Islamic teachings liberally and progressively tends to maintain interpretations and social systems. Standard" (Van Bruinessen in Wahid, 2014). Their religious sect is rigid, strict, blames other groups, and tends to show a sinister face; in fact, they have tarnished the face of Islam, which is supposed to be tolerant, moderate, and more relaxed for others.

In Indonesia, Islam tends to be conservative or have a fundamentalist style of thought (Wahid, 2014). Later that conservative style reappeared. Several factors cause conservatism to re-emerge in Indonesia, among others, because the view of progressive Islam (such as JIL) is less attractive to most Indonesian Muslims, and over time the ideas fade, and at the time in Islam, to the strengthening of the influence of college alumni from The Middle East, which at the same time as the style of Middle Eastern-style Islam, is getting stronger into Indonesia (Wahid, 2014).

### **Indigenous Islamic Ideas**

In contrast to Puritan Islam, which tends to be rigid and cannot accept social change and its plurality, Indigenous Islam is very friendly with the cultural diversity that is the hallmark of the archipelago. Syam (2010) explains that Islamic locality resulted from the social construction of residents with an established culture and style when Islam came to their area. Therefore, this characteristic should be cared for with the richness of the locality that lives in it. On the other hand, so far, Indigenous Islam has always considered the various needs of local communities, especially in the formulation of religious laws, without having to change the core of Islamic laws (Farida, 2015). Islam in Indonesia cannot be equated with Islam in the Middle East. If 'Arabization' is forced, it is the same as giving up our own culture (Wahid, 2001).

Genealogically, Abdurrahman Wahid initiated Indigenous Islam in the late 80s (Rahmat, 2003). Esposito & Voll (2001) explained that we could understand Wahid's ideas in three pillars; among others, Islam must be able to make dialectics through endless formulations by adapting to the demands of modern life; Islam should not be made the state religion in Indonesia; and should not be an exclusive state ideology. Mun'im (2003) explained that the idea was inspired by the spirit of the predecessors, who were very permissive of the local culture during the da'wah process. Walisongo exemplified this attitude well during his preaching in Java from the 15th to the 16th century. Therefore, pluralist and democratic Islam is highly emphasized in the context of life in Indonesia, and Indigenous Islam has formulated it well.

In this case, both Islam oriented to liberal ideas such as liberal Islamic networks; traditional ones such as NU; Modern society such as Muhammadiyah has upheld the values of democracy and dialectics with society. The Islams in the coastal and inland areas also show similarities in terms of their dialectical efforts with the environment and the development of the times. Even though the competition between coastal Islam and Islam in the interior had occurred throughout the history of Javanese Islam, various transformations made this distinction no longer available (Syam, 2010).

Indonesia is a country with advanced race, language, and culture beyond European nations (Lawrence, 2004). In the Islamic world, many experts also argue that the face of Islam in Indonesia appears friendlier than those in the Middle East (Farida,

2015). Therefore, it is natural for Muslims in Indonesia to realize the many differences and the importance of unifying the understanding of Islam. Even though the early birth of Islam came from the Arabian Peninsula, the spread of Islamic values to various other regions could be colored by local elements (Ghofur, 2011).

The idea of indigenous Islam is essentially an effort to increase the confidence of Indonesian Muslims towards their culture because some Muslims have imitated Middle Eastern culture, for example, in terms of clothing. Indonesian Muslims feel it is more Islamic to wear a turban and robe than to wear blanks, batik, and trousers. Wahid considers this to be one of the effects of someone's feeling that their culture/tradition is inferior to that of the Arabs. Thus, later Indonesian Muslims will be uprooted from their culture and lose their identity (Wahid, 1989).

The reasoning for the indigenization of Islam tends to dialogue local traditions with Islamic teachings so that the two complement each other. Indigenization of Islam is an effort to reconcile Islam with cultural forces so that local culture does not disappear. Indigenization of Islam is not the Javanization and syncretization of Islam because this concept only considers local needs in formulating religious laws without changing the law itself (Wahid, 1983).

For Wahid, Indonesian Muslims must be able to maintain and preserve the original elements of Indonesia. Therefore, Indonesian Islam must be different from Islam in other places. In reforming Islam, he did not want to break old Indonesian and Islamic traditions. In line with that, Wahid considered Sunan Kalijaga as a hero who succeeded in adopting Javanese culture with Islam. The adoption of Javanese culture is reflected in its dress code - wearing Javanese clothes such as "blangkon" (Javanese men's batik headdress) and "beskap: (Javanese style men's jacket) instead of Arabic clothing, but also in the transmission of Islamic teachings. Sunan Kalijaga often uses an artistic and cultural approach through traditional songs as a medium for his da'wah. This was done to attract residents to Islam without feeling compelled. (Wahid, 2008).

Islam in Indonesia cannot be separated from the syncretic understanding through the da'wah carried out by the Wali Songo (Mun'im, 2003). Walisongo's da'wah communication pattern, for example. Instead of being forced and confrontational, they are trying to build an intercultural dialectic with the local community (Tajuddin, 2014). Of course, each variation of Islam and its locality will also produce a variety of religious ways of working. Islam is also not monolithic in any part of the world (Farida, 2015). Generally, Islamic groups can be classified namely traditionalists, modernists and neo-modernists, and Islamists (Ummah, 2012). Traditionalist Islamic groups are generally 'conventional' and blend in with local culture while still adhering to the source of their teachings, namely the Qur'an and al-Hadith. Modernist and neo-modernist Islamic groups are Islamic groups that have dialectic with modern worldview discourses, such as democracy, and nationalism, to global discourse and still stick to the Qur'an and al-Hadith. Meanwhile, the Islamist group is an Islamic group that supports the idea that Islam can become a political system in the nation and state (Wahid, 2014).

In addition to the reasoning of indigenizing Islam as an effort to harmonize the teachings of Islam with Indonesian culture, the reasoning for indigenization of Islam is also intended so that Indonesian Muslims distance themselves from the idea of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia (*Khilafah Islamiyah*). Wahid also demanded that Indonesian Muslims accept Pancasila as the sole basis for all social and political



organizations, including religious organizations. The reason is that Pancasila is extracted from the roots of Indonesian culture. This was Wahid's attempt to formulate a distinctly Indonesian Islam that was free from the influence of the Islamic puritan movement that wanted Indonesia to become an Islamic state. This concept, namely accepting Pancasila as the basis for the ideology of the nation and state, and not Islam, is an effort to maintain the integrity of a pluralistic Indonesian society. After considering contextual factors, including awareness of law and justice for all people, Wahid harmonized the message of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* by making Pancasila the basis of national and state life that upholds human values within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

### **Finding the Essence of Islam in the Perspective of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd**

In searching for the essence of Islam, Lee in Jinan (2008) mentions several models, such as; 1) radical Islam; 2) philosophical Islam that is oriented to Iqbal's thoughts; 3) critical Islam that is oriented to Arkoun; to 4) revolutionary Islam that promotes liberation and rejects mainstream Islamic discourse which tends to be oppressive in some places, such as during the reign of the Shah's regime, which commodified the ulama to make religious justifications for their policies (Nugroho, 2014). In this paper, the author wants to explain the essence of Islam in the context of Indonesian Islam, whether it is Puritan Islam or Indigenous Islam.

Dialectics is an effort to find the proper understanding by opening oneself up to claims that may contradict each other. While arguing is imposing the will on the understanding that we think is correct so that other people can accept it. Dialectics is also different from apologetics, which is trying to protect something whose truth we have believed in by returning it to God's verses. Dialectics is a search and approach to authentic truth (Baggini & Fosl, 2010).

To help unravel the essence of Islam between the tensions of the puritanism movement and the Indigenous Islamic group, we will present the method offered by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, a Muslim thinker who was born into a religious family in Tanta, Egypt, on July 10, 1943. Thanks to his genius and his family's religious education. He became a chanter and memorized the Qur'an, even able to tell the entire contents at the age of 8 years (Maftukhin, 2010; Imron, 2010). He introduced his historical and critical reasoning in interpreting the text of the Qur'an so that the Qur'an should not be understood literally.

The criticism and historicism used as the basis in Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's (2018) hermeneutics are understandings that explain that there are no permanent essential elements in the text because the text has a socio-historical essence. It says: "There are no permanently essential elements in texts, but every reading, in the socio-historical sense, has its essence that it discovers in the text. Religious discourse agrees with a part of what is now under discussion, even if it expresses it in its special language, which is a reiteration of the language of early Muslims —a fact that has a significance that we will analyze later."

What is permanent from a "sacred text" is only the side of its pronunciation and the nature of its revelation, which is indeed sacred. Meanwhile, understanding of the text is, of course, always moving due to the interaction of the human mind with it, which makes the text a text of knowledge (Zaid, 2003), -which should not run out of



time. Therefore, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's hermeneutical ideas may contradict the textual reading method.

There are various structures surrounding the text that we should pay attention to, including the cultural contexts within the text and that of the interpreter. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's idea is to separate the text and its understanding in two different corridors. The sacred text – for Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, lives with a sacredness that has not changed historically based on space and time at the time it was revealed. However, understanding the text based on human effort is a necessity and is not static because understanding all people seems almost impossible to achieve with differences in time and place (Afrizal, 2016).

Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's idea is logical and rational (Subchi, 2019) because the interpretation of the Qur'an is no longer placed as a text with static and absolute truth but always has a dialectic with humanity and local culture. Furthermore, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (2013) explained that the process of the revelation of the Qur'an to Jibril was not in the form of explicit language but in the form of a collection of meanings that were then communicated to Muhammad in Arabic. So, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd understood the process of the revelation of the Qur'an as a two-way "communication" process. When Allah SWT revealed revelation, he could not ignore the environment of the Prophet Muhammad, namely the 7th century AD Arab culture. Therefore, the text cannot be separated from the surrounding conditions. The verse of the Qur'an (Surah al-Syu'ra, for example), which mentions that the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, shows that the text of the Qur'an cannot be separated from cultural texts, so it must be understood with a cultural approach to history that surrounds it.

It should be emphasized that the reasoning for why the Qur'an has become a cultural product is because the text reflects space and time as it grows. By being handed down to Arab society – also using the Arabic language indirectly, various Arab cultural paradigms have significantly contributed to the formation of texts and teachings. Thus, reason in interpreting the Qur'an becomes important while still emphasizing the text as a historical phenomenon with a particular context (Hamdani, 2016).

In the corridor of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's interpretation, it seems that he is trying to map out what can be studied scientifically and which is not scientific. The mapping may also be caused by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's limitation on the modern definition of the text. Meanwhile, in the context of textual needs, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd divides it into "primary text" (for the Qur'an) and "secondary text" (such as the hadith of Muhammad and the views of religious leaders) as a complement (Arifin et al., 2019). Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (2018) also explains that independent reasoning must be limited to general principles in order to be still able to regulate all life and thought; he said: "By focusing on the idea that texts should govern all aspects of life and thought, and by declaring that independent reasoning must be confined to practical applications rather than general principles, and secondary texts (hadīths) rather than the primary text (the Quran). Religious discourse helps to restrict both text and the real world."

Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd does not deny God's authorship but tries to limit the discussion within the corridor of theological and mythological studies (Hamdani, 2016). In the author's opinion, he came up with this distinction because, according to him, the metaphysical meaning of the original "sacred text" cannot be understood

through the book's print that is lived by the community with socio-cultural dynamics. According to Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, this position in interpreting the Qur'an is needed so that humans can gain space from the constraints of the text in order to achieve an understanding that is applicable, not always mystical, and can be used in all situations (Arifin et al., 2019). By prioritizing this scientific objectivity, the Qur'an is not considered a mere mythological textbook, especially among people of other religions (Hamdani, 2016).

Based on the background and main ideas offered by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, we can understand that the creation of the Arabic text was strongly influenced by various aspects of the culture and society at that time when the Qur'an was created or "revealed." While related to language and a set of signs used, it certainly reflects the social conditions and general structure that worked at that time (Imron, 2010). Therefore, the method offered by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd requires us to look at socio-cultural to limit the subjective idealism of interpreters so that a holistic understanding can be pursued.

Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's method of interpretation is based on the concepts of "tafsir" and "origin" (read: interpretation and ta'wil), which must be given a distinction so that the meaning built on the grammatical basis of the text and its historical context can be revealed (Hamdani, 2016). These contexts are also not limited to external and socio-cultural contexts; internal matters, readings, and linguistics must also be considered in extracting meaning. Imron (2010) explains that the grammatical meanings we get from literal reading and socio-cultural meanings are closely related and follow each other. We can also use this idea or method as a critique of various literal readings – which have the potential for extremism and mitigation so that more people do not commodify the text for various purposes (Naupal, 2019). Thus, through the interpretation method of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, we are expected to determine the significance of the text to the historical facts that live in the structure of the text so that we can find the implicit historical contextualization.

Still, in Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's idea, at this point, we can see the fact that contextual reality and text synergize with each other. Arabic, which is used as the language of the Qur'anic text ranging from phonology, vocabulary, morphology, and syntax to semantics which may be considered to have its specialties, cannot be separated from being a product of space and time when the Prophet Muhammad lived. Therefore, all forms of ideas and content in every sacred text must be able to have a dialectic with reality, all of which are cultural products. This means that if we return to the dialectic of the essence of Islam, we need to emphasize how the interpretive paradigm of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd works to solve this problem.

Indigenous Islam essentially imitates the concepts of nationality at the time of the Prophet, his companions, and later caliphs. At the time of the Prophet, the Medina community, which was managed and led by the Prophet Muhammad, was, in fact, not a homogeneous society with the same type of ethnicity, culture, and character. The condition of Medina at that time was not much different from the conditions of pluralism in Indonesia with its various ethnicities, cultures, and religions (Muliadi, 2012). Our self-disclosure to plurality opens our horizons and enriches our virtues in determining attitudes with a moral orientation based on religion. If we return to Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, this attitude is needed as a dialectic process in our socio-cultural context. If we believe that Islam – the Qur'an in particular, will not be timeless, then

Islam must also be able to have a dialectic with the conditions and changing times. This does not mean that the entire meaning and value of Islam, or even the existence of God in Islam, can be negated by the progressive development of the times.

In line with Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's idea, Abdurrahman Wahid also considers that exoteric (formality of worship) in Indonesia should not be highlighted so as not to encourage antipathy and group exclusivity. For him, such glorification, especially in the formal aspect, will only make things easier to manipulate and deny, just like the history of the rift of Javanese kings who commodified Islam for their power (Abidin, 2012). Islam must be understood as a legal religion that is democratic, able to accommodate and blend in all levels of society and the culture that works in it.

Perfection in Islam must be understood to continue the process and have a dialectic with anyone. Movements and ideas that ultimately want to encourage a change to "Islamize" even in institutions will dwarf the perfection of Islam. Therefore, we do not need to protect Islam or purify it using a certain Qibla because it will always be able to have a dialectic with other people, especially in responding to the socio-cultural plurality in this archipelago.

On the other hand, if we position ourselves as stubborn people and believe in the direction of Islam based on geographical references and classical events at that time, the social life and environment between Islam in the Middle East region and Islam living in Indonesia are different. The territory of the archipelago is filled with immigrants. If we refer to the order of who came first, Islam may not have a place if it cannot acculturate with the old culture. Until now, various historical relics, Borobudur Temple, for example, can still exist and are well maintained. This kind of thing cannot be guaranteed if it is positioned in other countries, especially in the Middle East region, due to differences in the process of entering Islam which is indeed different. In Islam in the Middle East region, most stories tell the tragedy of war and the destruction of statues that are considered misleading. Meanwhile, Islam in the archipelago is present in a 'transactional' manner by local people, who are Hindus or Buddhists, for theists.

Based on the discussion results, we can see that the thesis built by Puritan Islam is not correct, especially if we relate it to the claim that the Qur'an and Islam will not sink and disappear due to changing times. Thus, the essence of Islamic purity exists universally as Islam always has a dialect with the environment and society. As a religion that accommodates law at all levels of society and is fair to everyone and timeless, Islam cannot close its eyes and deny the existence of a culture that synergizes with it. The Muslim community must understand that various traditions and cultures have worked everywhere religion is practiced. The essence of Islamic purity can be found in zoned areas, with various characteristics of each region, depending on the needs of the environment and society.

Based on the previous elaboration, we can at least map out the paradigm of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's interpretation as follows; 1) that the Qur'an, in addition to the sacred text, is also a linguistic text that is closely related to cultural and historical aspects; 2) therefore, to study the Qur'an requires an approach that pays attention to these aspects; 3) then, the essence of Indonesian Islam is essentially Indigenous Islam, not puritanical Islam, because it is Indigenous Islam that can accommodate historical aspects and can keep up with the times, as is often expressed by "*Al-Islam sālihun li kulli zamān wa makān*".

## CONCLUSION

The permissive attitude of Islamic preachers in the archipelago, which was accommodative to the socio-cultural values of the people of its time, made Islam develop very quickly. Unfortunately, various periodic events make Islam fragmented. Some people think that Islam in Indonesia is as it should be because it requires a synergy between culture and religion. Others consider that the colors in the Islamic world today are a setback and must be returned to the prophet's time. The movement arose because the reading of Islam (read: the Qur'an) did not prioritize context, so the implied meaning might not be adequately understood. The essence of Islam, which should be able to continue to process with the outside world, stops at that point.

Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's hermeneutic approach – as a method and solution in this paper, offers a method of reading sacred and religious texts that recognizes the socio-cultural context. The results of the discussion show that the essence of Indonesian Islam is through the indigenization of Islam because Islam can synergize with culture. Indigenous Islam should be an example and the basis for how to be a proper Muslim amid plurality and changing times, especially in Indonesia. Islam must be able to continue to have a dialect with the outside world, especially the locality and colors that exist in society, which have been rooted since Indonesia was still an archipelago. Islam must be understood as a religion that can continue to process with the environment. Thus it will not be timeless to changing times.

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