



**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**  
*with RELIGION and FAITH*  
*in the 21ST CENTURY*

# Understanding the Islamic Worldview of the Ottoman Empire in the History of Nusantara as an Educational Tool to Promote Peace and Harmony

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## INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, the young Muslim generation is exposed to globalization. Information within the internet is easier than ever to access. Indeed, the world is at our fingertips. Globalization has many dimensions in the 21st century. The challenges of global politics include the practice of governance and democracy in a world of diverse economic and social realities. As cultures meet, religions act and interact within core areas, along adjoining borders, and in far-flung diasporas. The encounter between religion and globalization is a crucial feature of our world. In the study of politics, a new awareness of religion is evident. In the global transformation that is occurring, religion is basic for the understanding of particular issues such as democracy and fundamentalism, conflict and

reconciliation, tolerance and public religion, standard and track-two diplomacy. Overarching aspects of an international system are intertwined with religion throughout history, up to the present. Likewise, religions are moulded by their political surroundings, locally and globally.<sup>1</sup>

One of the current problems facing young Muslim generations is combatting Islamophobia.<sup>2</sup> Hatred towards the religion of Islam has been notorious since the beginning of time. Islam teaches that we live in peace and harmony with people of different faiths, including Christians, Jews and others. Islam is a religion of peace – in theory, principles and praxis – that is against any form of oppression, discrimination, stereotypes, persecution and unjust killing of innocent souls.<sup>3</sup> However, there had been a massive surge of

hatred against Islam and its adherents in recent past. Since the post-9/11 U.S. attacks, over the years Islamophobia has not only been on the rise in the Americas, Australia, Europe, Asia and Africa, it has reached an intractable point and growing strongly in these continents.<sup>4</sup>

Chowdury argues that every problem that associated with Islam is made to construct the society's thinking of Islam.<sup>5</sup> In making this comment, it is understood that the prejudice against Muslim is arguably serves the intention of political and cultural interest. One of the leaders of Muslim world society is Indonesia. In fact, Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world with 85% of 230 million Muslim population.<sup>6</sup> With this background, several questions arouse, what are the historical aspects that made Indonesia such a super power in Islamic community? And how can the young Indonesian Muslim generations understand their history to help on promoting Islam as a peace religion (*Rahmatan Lil Alamien*).

Nusantara is a former name for Indonesia. This is because Indonesia got its independent on 17 August 1945, thus de facto and de jure of Indonesia is younger term than Nusantara. Nusantara comes from two Javanese words *Nusa* (island) and *Antara* (other). Different countries had different names for Nusantara. For instance, the Chinese people call the term "*Nan-hai*", which means the South Sea Islands, because China is in the northern hemisphere. The Indians call it "*Dwipantara*," which consists of the word "*dwipa*" which means island and between which means the spread of adjacent islands outside or across the territory of India. Meanwhile, Arabic calls it "*Jaza'ir al-Jawi*". It was different from the Japanese, calling it the name "To-Indo" which means East Indies.<sup>7</sup>

The Ottoman Empire was created by Turkish tribes in Anatolia (Asia Minor) that grew to be one of the most powerful states in the world during the 15th and 16th centuries. The Ottoman period spanned more

than 600 years and came to an end only in 1922 when it was replaced by the Turkish Republic and various successor states in South Eastern Europe and the Middle East. At its height, the empire encompassed most of south eastern Europe to the gates of Vienna, including present-day Hungary, the Balkan region, Greece, and parts of Ukraine; portions of the Middle East now occupied by Iraq, Syria, Israel, and Egypt; North Africa as far west as Algeria; and large parts of the Arabian Peninsula. The term Ottoman is a dynastic appellation derived from Osman I (Arabic: *Uthmān*), the nomadic Turkmen chief who founded both the dynasty and the empire for about 1300 years.<sup>8</sup>

Kasdi in his research of *The Role of Walisongo in Developing Islam Nusantara Civilization* claims that the process of Islam entering Nusantara was not in one revolution. The spread of Islam was conducted gradually and peacefully.<sup>9</sup> These interactions of Muslim and the local people at that time, created the relationship dynamic in Nusantara. In fact, Kasdi argues that Walisongo (in the Quran, *wali* the terms mean protector) are the key of success on implementing the religion of Islam in Nusantara. *Walisongo* can be interpreted as nine trustees who are close to God. They were pilgrims sent from the Islamic Kingdom within the Middle East and Ottoman Empire to spread Islam. "*First, Walisongo First Period*. At the time of Sultan Muhammad 1 become Caliph of the Ottoman Empire; he asked the development of Islam to the traders from Gujarat. They told Sultan that there were two kingdoms in Java, namely Hindu Majapahit and Pajajaran".<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it can be seen that there is an influence of the Ottoman Empire in spreading Islam within Nusantara. Indeed, this is an *Islamic worldview* penetrated to the Nusantara's society and highly influenced the reason why Indonesia became the largest Muslim country in the world. With this understanding, this research is keen to find traces of cultural aspects of Turkish Uthmani in Nusantara's Muslim community that still remains today. Ultimately, the goal of the research is to shed light on the historical aspects of how Islam entered

Indonesia. Thus, it is hoped to bring awareness to the young Muslim generations of Indonesia and highlight the importance of learning our Islamic historical background. With this in mind, by learning the history, young Muslim generations are expected to promote Islam as a peaceful and harmonious religion (*Rahmatan Lil'Alamien*).

## RESEARCH METHOD

In order to discover the Islamic worldview of Turkish Uthmani (Ottoman Empire) in Nusantara's Islamic society, it is imperative to analyse the research through a qualitative method. With this method, there is a better understanding of the issues by focusing solely on the corpus and theoretical framework. Silverman argues that this is the best method of research with the help of comparing and adding data from every possible source.<sup>11</sup> This method should be applied with the appropriate approach by using related theory or concept to the unit of analysis. Allen celebrates the fact that a text is an artefact that stimulates meaning.<sup>12</sup> In making this claim, he urges us to emphasise those unique pieces of evidence within previous research, can be interpreted as a breakthrough analysis. Through this approach, this research is expected to gain a new perspective of the corpus that is often overlooked by the common norm. This is more likely because the approach is only focusing on the internal aspects of cultures. For instance, this is showcased in how the Turkish traces of cultures within the Javanese Islamic society where they commemorated the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Garebeg Maulud*). Furthermore, it can be seen by how the people dressed with a red kopiah (named as *Tarbus Turki*) or headpiece that reminisced of the colour of Turkish flag. Through this method, the analysis is expected to incorporate the concept of worldview to find answers to the research.

## HOW ISLAM ENTER TO NUSANTARA?

About the history of Islamic arrival into Nusantara Islands or Malay land, al-Attas wrote:

*"The starting point of the historians in their attempt to reconstruct the history of Islam in the Malay Archipelago was the "gagasan" (idea-pen) that Islam came via trade routes. Upon this obvious fact the conclusion was quickly drawn the traders brought and disseminated Islam in this part of the world".*<sup>13</sup>

The question that we should think it is about the way they arrive at their theories, their way of reasoning and analysis, their setting forth of premises and arrival at conclusions, their raising of problems and arrival at their solutions, their understanding of recondite matters of meaning, their raising of doubts and ambiguities and their insistence upon empirical facts.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in all their theories the taint of settled aversion towards Islam is always discernible.<sup>15</sup>

Many scholars argue there are at least six theories of how Islam spread in Nusantara.<sup>16</sup> Before Islam, Paganism, Hinduism and Buddhism were the most common due to the kingdom which was the Majapahit, also influenced by Hindu-Buddha. Almost all orientalist, such as Snouck Hurgronje, KP. Landon, Van leur, Winstedt, etc.,<sup>17</sup> trusted that the impact of Islam to the soul and to culture of the Nusantara citizens is just a bit little, small, a thin and flaking glaze. They want to claim that Islam is a negative part in the grow process of Nusantara. According to the arguments, they wanted to make a conclusion; that the impact of Islam in Nusantara it just a veneer over the indigenous culture of the Archipelago people.<sup>18</sup>

The orientalist from Netherland as well as advisor of Dutch colony in Nusantara, namely Snouck Hurgronje (d. 1936), according to him, Islam arrived in Nusantara on the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, it happened after

the loss of the Abbasid Empire in Baghdad because of Mongolian aggression in 1258 CE. He wrote; “*Toen de Mongolenvorst Hoelagoe Khan in 1258 na Chr. Bagdad verwoestte, ... was de Islam langzaam aan begonnen, in de einlanden van den Oost-Indischen Archipel door te dringen*”.<sup>19</sup> Revealed that compared to Arabs, Indonesian trade relations with people Gujarat has taken place much earlier. He said: “*la religion du prophète arabe a été introduite dans l’Archipel par l’intermédiaire de l’Inde*.”<sup>20</sup> Otherwise, considering that the trade route went via Gujarat and Malabar, Snouck Hurgronje, D.J. Pijnappel and other concluded a South Indian origin.<sup>21</sup>

According to G.W.J. Drewes, Mazhab adhered to by Muslims in Indonesia and in Gujarat it has something in common, namely the Shafi’i. Maquette reinforces this theory with the results of his research on findings of tombstones in both Indonesia and Gujarat regions. He argues that there are similarities between the tombstones at Pasai with the tombstone of Sheikh Maulana Malik Ibrahim in Gresik with the tombstone at Cambay, Gujarat. Although this theory is weak and problematic, the theory is still accepted widely by the history writers about Indonesia studies, such as RA. Kern and Stapel, H.J. Van den Bergh, H. Kroeskamp, Prijohutomo, and I.P. Simadjoentak until Rosihan Anwar.<sup>22</sup>

Other theories are that Islam came to nusantara from Arab trader, or come from Bengala, or from Arabic *muballigh* (Islamic missionary),<sup>23</sup> or from Persia,<sup>24</sup> or from Egypt,<sup>25</sup> and the other theory said that Islam come from China.<sup>26</sup> So there are many theories here. The theory which talks about Islam coming to Nusantara from an Arab trader states that Islam in Indonesia comes from a direct source, namely the Arabs. This theory is supported by Buya HAMKA, Keyzer, M. Yunus Jamil, and Crawfurd. The basis for this theory is the annotation that states that in the 7th century, the Muslims were Arab already exist on the west coast of Sumatra. Apart from that, there are parallels the mahzab adopted by the Arabs and

Indonesia. Furthermore, the use of the title al-Malik on the kings of Samudra Pasai, according to the names of the Sultans in Egypt.

According to al-Attas, spreading of Islamic Dakwah into Nusantara is not a nonsense effort. The plan of Islamization of Nusantara was prepared from the 6<sup>th</sup> Century and become a ‘serious agenda’ by sophisticated strategy, in order for the citizens in Nusantara to accept the religion of Islam and assimilate with them. So, the spread of Islam by these Arab missionaries in the Malay World was **not** a haphazard matter, nor a disorganized sporadic affair carried on by *merchants* and *traders* and *port authorities*, or by Sufi orders whose roles have been exaggerated. It was a gradual process, but was planned and organized and executed in accordance with the timeliness of the situation.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, the arrival of Islam to Nusantara was directly from Mecca or Saudi. This process took place in the first century of Hijri or 7 century AD, when the Prophet was still alive. According to Sayed Naquib al-Attas, the arrival of Islam in Nusantara was since the 7 century AD. At that time, the people of Islam had a Cantonese village, which showed their excitement to see the high religious climate and administrative authority. They maintained the continuity of the township and the Islamic organizations in Kedah and Palembang.<sup>28</sup> Otherwise, Islam became a positive determinant for the Nusantara citizens. Islam’s arrival brought impact and encouraged progress and advancement of virtues, and a triumphant worldview, knowledge, culture and language.

## **THE MEANING OF ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW: A SEMINAL CONCEPT TO BUILD PEACE, UNITY AND SOLIDARITY**

*Worldview* can be said as a person’s belief and thoughts that function as the principle or motor for

all human behaviour. So worldview is a neutral term that can be applied to various religious nominations, beliefs, or others, because it is the dominant factor in humans, which is the driving force and foundation for all activities of human life.<sup>29</sup> So consequently, every concept or theory that arises from someone with a certain worldview will automatically reflect the structure of knowledge.<sup>30</sup> Included in this study, the authors use an Islamic worldview approach.

In the Islamic worldview, the central or core concept which permeates all aspects of life is *Tawhid* or the unity of God. To be a Muslim is to believe in the Oneness of God (Qur'an 112:1- 4) and to have God constantly present in one's life. There is first and foremost an ontological demarcation between God and everything else. To the Muslim, God talks of Himself in the Holy Qur'an as the One God who has no partners (Qur'an 17:111; 112:1); the God who is living, eternal, self-subsisting (Qur'an 3:2; 112:2); the God who created all other creations (Qur'an 6:12- 14) with the sole purpose of worshipping Him (Qur'an 7:54; 24:41; 51:56); the God who created man as the best of creations and gave him knowledge (Qur'an 2:30; 96:4-5); the God who created the universe in perfect order (Qur'an 13:2-4); the God who is the Cherisher, the Sustainer, the Gracious, the Merciful, the Omnipotent, Omniscient, the Owner of everything.<sup>31</sup>

This is important in seeing the "phenomenon" of the emergence of other natural views which of course will be different from the Islamic worldview.<sup>32</sup> The understanding and view of Muslims on the matter of the 'existence' of the two worlds is important, as they see the realities and realities of truth. So, if there are some Muslims who are influenced by the Western worldview, Christians, or Jews, and also others. So the view and understanding will automatically be different and contrary to the Islamic worldview, even though outwardly the religion he embraces is still Islam. That is the importance of a worldview (view

of nature) that can show whether his thoughts and attitudes still refer to the Islamic worldview or not. The Islamic worldview is not only limited to the physical world or good human involvement from social, political, cultural, and historical aspects only, but must also include aspects of the hereafter (*ukbrawiyyah*). Because, this aspect of the world must be closely related to the hereafter, and this aspect must be placed as the goal and the foundation of our life in this world so that it can guard the intentions and perspectives of Muslims and mankind as a whole.<sup>33</sup> This is as defined by S.M.N. al-Attas as follows,

*"The worldview of Islam is not merely the mind's view of the physical world and man's historical, social, political and cultural involvement in it. It is not based upon philosophical speculation formulated mainly from observation of the data of sensible experience, the world of created things... Thus, what is meant by 'worldview' according to the perspective of Islam is the vision of reality and truth that appears before our mind's eye revealing what existence is all about; for it is the world of existence in its totality that Islam is projecting. In other world, it is ru'yah al-Islam li al-Wujud."<sup>34</sup>*

In this way, this view of the Islamic world becomes the basis or foundation and guide of the Muslims' point of view in studying, understanding and seeing everything. Epistemology and metaphysically, the result of the description and interpretation of the facts or everything become an "identity that is in line" with the worldview or view of the Islamic world. As defined by Professor al-Attas above, namely "*the vision of reality and truth that appears before our mind's eye revealing what existence is all about*".

Briefly, to show clearly the obvious differences between the Islamic worldview and the West, we can look at the table taken from Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi below.

ASPECTS OF DIFFERENCE	ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW	WESTERN WORLDVIEW
1. Principle	Tawhid	Dicotomy
2. Basics	Revelation, Hadith, intellect, experience and intuition	Ratio, philosophical speculation
3. Characteristics	Authenticity and finality	Rational, open and always changing
4. The meaning of reality	Based on metaphysical studies	Social, cultural, and empirical views
5. Object of study	Something that is visible and invisible	Values in society

## MAPPING THE HISTORICAL ROOTS RELATIONS BETWEEN OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND NUSANTARA: A LESSON FOR COOPERATION, PEACE AND HARMONY

Islam is a religion of tolerance wherever it is embraced, and the tolerant spirit will reside in the souls of the followers of this religion. According to Meirison, Turkish people who have long embraced Islam along with the conquest carried out by the second caliphate Umar bin Khattab in 641 AD. The Ottoman society is a multi-ethnic and diverse religious community, Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Jews were living in peace. That's the proof of the practice of the Islamic worldview. The question is whether religious tolerance practiced by the Ottoman Turks is in line with Islamic teachings, after the existence of a foreign capitulation agreement, the lives of minority groups are more prosperous than the Muslims. Freedom to apply the law following the teachings of each religion, tax breaks. The Jewish migration in 1877 from Kazan, Bukhara, and central Asia had flooded the Anatolian region. Minority groups such as Jews were barred from entering the country of Hijaz (present-day Saudi Arabia) and are prohibited from establishing a Palestinian state because of a long-standing agreement since the time of the Prophet and Umar bin Khattab with Christian Palestine<sup>35</sup>

Through his article entitled "*Rum and Java: the Vicissitudes of Documenting a Long-Distance*

*Relationship*", Anthony Reid elaborates Long experience in tracing the relationship between the Ottoman State and the Southeast Asia. Reid describes almost all Malay sources, Europe and Turkey, which recorded the relations between the Ottomans and Southeast Asia.

The Ottoman Empire was a late medieval political power that formed in the late Middle Ages. Originally they were one from a nomadic tribal group (*beylik*) in Central Asia who did resistance to Mongol and Byzantine expansion in 1260-1300.<sup>36</sup>

Osman Gazi is one of the surviving *beylik* leaders in the midst of political upheaval able to become the leader of the beylik others so that Osman Gazi's beylik became bigger and more influential. With the weakening of Mongol control between 1299-1301, Osman Gazi and other beylik expanded, one of which conquers the city Byzantine landmark, Iznik, in 1302.<sup>37</sup> After that, the Ottomans were able to organize the country better, in particular after the 1453 conquest of Constantinople. It can be said between years 1300-1600, the Ottomans expanded into the Balkans, the Mediterranean, Arabia to the Hindian Ocean.

According to Anthony Reid, the 16th century is the important starting point, because the Ottoman empire began to expand into the Ocean Indies. Even throughout the 16th century, the Ottomans had bought Spices from Indonesia and India.<sup>38</sup> However, the presence of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean gave both blessings threat. Of course the threat was

trade disruption, however the advantage for the Ottomans was that the presence of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean has made Muslim countries in the Ocean Indies recognized the authority of the caliphate institution which was then claimed by the Ottoman Empire.<sup>39</sup>

Although the relations between the Ottoman State and Aceh ended at the beginning of the 17th Century,<sup>40</sup> but that does not mean economic and cultural relations end. In the article entitled “*The Economic Relationship between Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia in the Seventeenth Century*”, A.C.S. Peacock argues that many Ottoman consumers were aware of goods they consume, such as pepper and cloves from Southeast Asia. This increases their interest in Southeast Asia. The Ottomans also exported Turkish clothing and carpets, which, according to Hikayat Aceh, were consumed by the sultan of Aceh. Thanks to the economic relationship, many intellectuals from the Ottoman Empire were interested in Southeast Asia.<sup>41</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Spreading of Islamic *Dakwah* into Nusantara is not a non-sense effort. The plan of Islamization of Nusantara was prepared since the 6<sup>th</sup> Century and become a ‘serious agenda’ by sophisticated strategy, in order to the citizen in Nusantara can accept the religion of Islam and can assimilate with them. So, the spread of Islam by these Arab missionaries in the Malay World was **not** a haphazard matter, a disorganized sporadic affair carried on by *merchants* and *traders* and *port authorities*, and even by Sufi orders whose role have been exaggerated. It was a gradual process, but it was planned and organized and executed in accordance with the timeliness of the situation.

The historical roots relations between Ottoman Empire and Nusantara (Southeast Asia) is full of

harmony, prosperity cooperation, peace and tolerance; especially toward conquered territories that are allowed to implement customary law without any changes. Even with Turkey’s excessive tolerance has come out of the Islamic Sharia corridor, which provides legal immunity against foreign citizens and minority groups under it. And has distorted Islamic law, such as some *hudud* laws such as theft can be replaced with fines, marriages are taxed and others.<sup>42</sup> Each Muslim who has a good *Islamic worldview* understanding will help non-Muslims when affliction and adversity are fair in applying the law. Muslims must treat people with different opinions and beliefs in the right way.<sup>43</sup>

No doubt, although Muslims still show tolerance even though the other religions have been the persecutors of Muslims residing in all parts of the world.<sup>44</sup> Even Muslims are suspected and accused of being a mastermind of terrorists; Vogel denies it:

1. First World War 17 million killed, caused by non-Muslims.
2. Second World War 50-55 million killed, caused by non-Muslims.
3. Nagasaki atomic bomb 200 thousand killed, caused by non-Muslims.
4. War in Vietnam over 5 million killed, caused by non-Muslims.
5. War in Bosnia/Kosovo more than 500 thousand killed, caused by non-Muslims.
6. The war in Iraq has so far 1.2 million dead and caused non-Muslims.
7. Mass slaughter in Afghanistan, Burma, also caused by non-Muslims.
8. Muslims slaughtered in the city Christ church.

We will get the best picture of the tolerance of Islam in the personality of Rasulullah (pbuh) at the time of the conquest of Makkah. When the prophet said to the inhabitants of the city of Makkah, We got a real manifestation of this Islamic tolerance who have committed and cussing to the faith of him, “What shall I do against you? “Thou art a gracious and gracious brother, and our glorious son, the Prophet said,” God’s Salawat and his salvation is upon him, “and he says go you freely wherever thou wilt.” This is an authentic form of *tasamuh* (tolerance) that is forgiving when one can avenge the wrongdoing that was made against him. Islam is a religion that invites the noble attitude; forgive both Muslims and non-Muslims when Muslims can retaliate for all the wrongdoing. This is a glorious honor, and God said: “*And it is not equally good and evil. Deny it (the evil) in a better way, and then suddenly a person between you and between him is resentment as if he has become a very faithful friend*”.<sup>45</sup> Such tolerance and composure gave to a minority group that is in a state of precarious, even a minority group that has always disrupted the political and economic stability of the Ottoman. The Hijra continued until the time of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The decree of the Caliph (the word) was issued by Yavuz (the Sultan of Salim I) about the church in Saint Catherina in Egypt (Mount Sinai), which has been an explicit law concerning its religious and ritual freedom. In this word, there is the Sultan’s decree as follows:<sup>46</sup>

1. Freedom of domicile for pastors and no intervention for the religious activities they do.
2. We are safeguarding the unique treasures of the church-owned and guaranteed smooth logistics for the church.
3. Write-off 10% tax or other taxes for pastors and all church employees.
4. Tax removal on the logistics objects required by the church from the Muslim country and neighbouring countries.

5. The granting of permission to the Christian leaders for the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and no intervention in the matter is absolute when the city is considered sacred in their religion.
6. Assurance of the burial of the priest’s bodies and their followers to be buried well.
7. If the other party has wrongdoing these priests, then the local government should quickly settle without harming their rights in the least.

Otherwise, by knowing the details of the history of the nation itself, the younger generation of Islam, especially the youth of Islamic organizations in Indonesia, have a great opportunity to become agents of peace and change for the better future. As stated by Leopold Weiss in his book “Islam in the Crossroad,” Muslims will not move forward and rise from adversity, as long as the younger generation of Islam does not have pride in its glorious past history. Thus, knowing history is absolutely necessary to design a bright future!

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