# UNDERSTANDING THE RELIGION: A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

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### ABSTRACT

Philosophy is a knowledge of material and a way to investigate the real essence of universe. Whereas religion, according to J.G. Frazer, is a devotion to God who puts in order universal movement. When philosophy and religion are faced one and other, both of them are looked like something incompatible, even in factually they are completing each other. In order to have a better religion, someone needs to have his rationality in the way of understanding religion. And also, to control philosophy which is based on rationality, philosophy needs a religion guidance. Many people perceive that philosophy could not be in harmony with religion, since philosophy anchored its idea to the rationalistic-empiricism basics and religion based its idea to the transcendentally daîl of Supra Causa. Therefore, Emile Durkheim said, religion was a mystical paradigm where rationality. Even contrary, does religion order people to always "think"? And also, if people have a great rationality, people will realize that to achieve the balance of using, his rationality must be restrained and religion is the best restrainer, this was what al-Ghazali stated. So, actually, philosophy can strengthen the religious soul of people, since philosophy can interpret the universality of the daîîl, philosophy can systemize and definite religious order, philosophy can solve the new problem which is not stated in the daîîl, and of course philosophy also can be a tool to criticize a variety of unlogical religious ideology.

Key words: Philosophy, Religion advocacy

#### INTRODUCTION

The discourse about philosophy and religion at a glance, by most people, is always interpreted as something opposite, philosophy at the North Pole and religion at the South Pole. Philosophy in the way it works is based on reason, while religion is based on revelation. Therefore, philosophy is synonymous with the activity of thinking radically, and religion has a lot to do with "experience." Philosophy deals with something in order to see the measured truth, whether something is logical or not. In religion, studies are not always measured in terms of thinkable or un-thinkable, because religion is seen as something that comes from the supra logic (Thohir, 2011: 14-15).

These differences cause prolonged conflict between people who tend to think philosophically with people who think religiously, even though philosophy and religion have the same strong function for progress, both of which cannot be separated from human life.

In a simple hypothesis it is understood that there is a difference between religion and philosophy. The difference between philosophy and religion lies not in the field (material object), but lies in the way of investigating the field itself (formal object), according to H. Rasyidi (Rasyidi, 1965: 3). Philosophy is thinking, while religion is devoting oneself, religion has a lot to do with the heart, while philosophy has a lot to do with thought. Wiliem Temple, as quoted by Rasyidi, said that philosophy requires knowledge to understand, whereas religion requires knowledge to worship or serve(Al-Attas, 1981: 17-24). The subject of religion is not knowledge of God, but what is important is the human relationship with God (Subhi, 1969: 4).

What exactly is philosophy and religion? Are there complementary roles between the two? Is it true that philosophy cannot be combined with religion?

Through the method of comparison, after analyzing, the composer found that philosophy and religion can actually be united, philosophy can be used as a formal object (knife analysis) when conducting in-depth, systematic, and comprehensive studies of religion. Religion is a universal norm that contains teachings that must always be studied, even with a very rational philosophy. This must be done aside from the fact that religious studies do not experience stagnation, religion also instructs its followers to understand religion, and philosophy is one of the methods.

#### UNDERSTANDING THE PHILOSOPHY

One of Adadium's world of research and science is that the discovery of concepts about something begins with the knowledge of units. Each unit found is sorted, grouped according to similarities, differences, certain characteristics and so on. Based on the verified findings, people formulated a definition of something (Minhaji, 2009: 85-89). In the history of the development of human thought, philosophy also does not start from the definition, but begins with the activity of thinking about everything in depth (Hatta, 1994: 8). At first, the definition of philosophy is very simple and then refined by the person who comes next.

In etymology, philosophy comes from the Arabic word, philosophy, which comes from the Greek philosophia, from the root of the word philos which means love, and sophia which means knowledge, policy. So philosophia means love for wisdom or love for truth. People who love knowledge are called philosopher, in Arabic failasûf (Musthofa, 2004: 9). Lovers of knowledge are those who make knowledge their life goal.

Philosophy means thinking. But not all thinking means philosophizing. All intelligent humans must think, but not all humans think are philosophers. According to Plato, Philosophy is knowledge about everything that exists (science that is interested in achieving original knowledge)(*Ibid*.: 10). Even more clearly, Aristotle defines philosophy as a science which includes truth, which contains metaphysics, logic, rhetoric, ethics, economics, politics and aesthetics (philosophy investigates the causes and principles of all things) (Ya'qub, 1991: 3). In the same sense, Thomas Hobes (1588-1679 AD) one of the British philosophers argued that philosophy is a science that explains the relationship of results and causes, or causes and results and therefore changes occur (Beekman, 1984: 14).

Meanwhile, according to Marcus Tulius Cicero, philosophy is the highest knowledge and the desire to get it (Musthofa, 2004: 10). R. Berling said that philosophy is thoughts that are freely inspired by the ratio of everything that arises from experiences (Beekman, 1984: 14). R. Berling said that philosophy is thoughts that are freely inspired by the ratio of everything that arises from experiences (Musthofa, 2004: 10).

With more clarity, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 AD) one of the German philosophers said philosophy is a basic science and the base of all knowledge that includes three issues: namely What can be known?, The answer: Metaphysics. What should be known? The answer: ethics. Where are our hopes? The answer: Religion. What is human? The answer is Anthropology (Suriasumantri, 1995: 25; Tafsir, 1994: 9; Musthofa, 2004: 10).

H. Hasbullah Bakry formulated that philosophy is the science that investigates everything deeply about God, the universe, and humans so as to produce knowledge of how it is essentially (Musthofa, 2004: 10-11).

From some of the terminology, the authors conclude that philosophy is the effort of humans with their intellect to understand radically, systematically, rationally, coherently, comprehensively about the nature of God, the nature of the universe, the nature of man and his attitude (Dardiri, 1986: 10-11).

# UNDERSTANDING THE RELIGION

The word "religion" comes from the Sankskrit language "a" which means no and "gam" which means to go, remain in place, inherited from generation to generation in human life (Nasution, 1979: 9; Bakhtiar, 1997: 10). It turns out that religion, for certain people, does have such properties, other than as a pattern of human life. Dick Hartoko called religion with religion, which is the study of the relationship between humans and the "Holy One" and that relationship was realized in worship (Ya'qub, 1991: 3). The word religion comes from the Latin relegere which means gathering, reading. Religion is indeed a collection of ways to serve God and all of these methods are collected in the scriptures that must be read. On the other hand the word religion comes from religare which means binding. Religious teachings do have a binding nature for humans (Nasution, 1979: 10). A religious person is still bound by the laws and rules set by religion.

Sidi Gazalba said that what is meant by the word relegere from the word religion implies caution. This caution is due in religion to there are strict norms and rules. In this religion the Romans had the assumption that humans must be careful of the Holy One and the Holy One (Gazalba, 1978: 100). The saints are believed to have good qualities and evil at the same time (*Ibid.*).

Religion is also the original human spiritual tendency associated with the universe, the value that encompasses everything, the ultimate meaning of the essence of it all. Religion looks for meanings and values that are totally different from everything that is known. That is why religion is not related to the holy. The holy is not necessarily God or gods. Thus a lot of beliefs that are usually called religious, in fact it does not deserve to be called religious because the relationship between humans and the holy is not yet clear. Modest religions and Buddhism in their original form, for example, consider the Holy One not God or gods. In religion no matter how the shape and nature there is always appreciation associated with the Holy (*Ibid.* 101).

Humans recognize the dependence on the Absolute or the Holy One that is lived as a control for humans. To get help from the Absolute man together to carry out certain teachings. So religion is the relationship between humans and the Holy One. In this case the sacred consists of various possibilities, which can be in the form of objects, energy, and can also take the form of a human person (Leaman, 1989: 183-188).

Besides that, in Arabic there is the word dîn which indicates the understanding of religion. The word dîn consists of the letters dal, yes, and nûn. From these letters, you can read it, which means debt (Abbas, 1984: 72) and by dîn which means religion and doomsday. All three meanings together indicate the existence of two different parties. The first party is higher, powerful, feared, and respected by the second party. In religion, God is the first party which is higher than humans. In debts, the debtor is certainly richer than the debtor. Likewise in the doomsday problem, God has doomsday, while humans are possessed and humans must submit to the Owner (Shihab, 1986: 35; Abbas, 1984: 72; Bakhtiar, 1997: 10-11).

From the root of the word, both din and religious, and religion, are defined in various expressions, including the recognition of the existence of human relations with supernatural powers that must be obeyed. EB Tylor, as quoted by Norman L. Geisler, said that "religion is a belief in a spiritual being. Furthermore, he distinguishes between the holy and the great. Tylor likens, if William Shakespeare enters the room, we will stand up, but if Jesus enters the room, we will kneel " (Geisler, 1974: 22). The first is an expression of admiration, while the second is obedience and worship.

J.G. Frazer argues that religion is worship of a force greater than humans, which is considered to govern and control the course of the universe (Hady, 1986: 6). According to Mehdi Hai'ri Yazdi, religion is the belief in the Absolute or the Absolute will as the highest concern (Yazdi, 1994: 169). Durkheim argues that religion is a supernatural that cannot be known and cannot be thought of by human reason alone. Strictly speaking, religion is a part of science that cannot be obtained with the power of thought alone(Durkheim, 2005:47-49 and 399-406).

Durkheim's opinion contains the truth, because supernatural problems cannot be explained through a rational approach. However, Durkheim's explanation is incomplete because religion is not only related to supernatural problems, but also relates to the nature of humans as physical and spiritual beings. With a more profane opinion, Auguste Comte said that religion is a human engineering at the primitive level or stage when humans have not yet been able to develop their rational capacity, whereas science is the ultimate and most sophisticated human achievement, focusing on the material world or the positive world (George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman, 2010: 15-20; Praja, 2002: xvi).

According to Saefuddin, religion is the most essential human need that is universal. Therefore, religion, according to him, is a spiritual awareness in which there is a reality outside the visible reality, namely that humans always expect His mercy, the guidance of His hands, which ontologism cannot be denied, even by even the most communist humans (Saefuddin, dkk., 1987: 47).

According to Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, religion is a system of human behavior and communication that is based on human relations with the unlimited secrets of power and occultation, in and around them, and thus gives meaning to his life and to the universe that surrounds it(Alisjahbana, 1992: 48).

Parsudi Suparlan specializes in the understanding of religion in a sociological context. According to him, religion is a system of beliefs adopted and actions embodied by a group or community in interpreting and responding to what is felt and believed to be magical and sacred. As a belief system, religion is different from belief systems or other isms, because the foundation of religious belief is on the sacred concept which is distinguished from the mundane with the supernatural or the supernatural which is the opposite of natural laws (Robeston (ed.), 1993: vi).

The many terminology about religion above shows that the complete definition of religion has not yet been reached and continues to grow along with the ongoing research on religion. However, there are at least some basic elements that can be deduced from the heterogeneity of the definition of religion, namely the supernatural problem, the existence of good relations with the supernatural power, the emotional response from humans (fear or feelings of love), and the existence of things that are purified, such as holy books and holy places (worship).

# PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

After knowing the understanding of philosophy and religion, the definition of religious philosophy is obtained from a combination of the two, namely as an attempt to discuss the main elements of religion in depth, thoroughly, systematically, logically and freely (Bakhtiar, 1997: 11-15).

Apart from that, Harun Nasution argued that religious philosophy is to think about the basics of religion according to free logic. This thinking is divided into two forms (Hammersma, 1990: 79 dan 81), namely: First, to discuss the foundations of religion analytically and critically without being bound to religious teachings, and without the aim of stating the truth of a religion. The second discusses the basics of religion analytically and critically with a view to stating the truth of a religious teaching or at least to explain that what religion teaches is not impossible and does not conflict with logic

(Nasution, 1979: 11). The basics of religion discussed include sending apostles, divinity, human spirits, eternity of life, human relations with God, the matter of evil, and life after death and others. Therefore, the understanding of religious philosophy is to think critically and analytically according to the logic of religion in depth to each of the foundations of that religion (Mustofa, 2004: 20-25).

Karl Rahner elaborates further on religious philosophy. According to him, religious philosophy is a metaphysical anthropology which must be of the basic theology, namely humans as free persons who are certain to face God who might reveal themselves. Therefore, religious philosophy is an openness that is available and a willingness open to theology. Philosophy of religion cannot force theology and cannot determine its laws, but a religious philosopher does what a creature can hear when the Logos of God comes into the world. Rahner then emphasized the areas of theology and philosophy. Religious philosophy cannot reach the facts of revelation, only with theology the facts of revelation can be captured and understood (OFM, 1985: 90).

Furthermore, Rahner added that the philosophy of religion must show philosophically where religion arises in humans, what the value of such a religion is, and whether God exists or not. Religious philosophy that asks the nature of religion, according to Rahner, however, must come to the knowledge of a transcendent, absolute, and personal God (*Ibid.*).

According to C.D.Mulder, philosophy of religion is part of the philosophy of God. Divine philosophy includes a systematic philosophy which studies the cosmos, humans, and God (Hady, 1986: 8).

Geddes Mac Gregor stressed the discussion of religious philosophy must be distinguished between things that are interesting in religion and think about religion. The first is the activity of the heart, and the second is the activity of the mind. Furthermore Gregor

said that an intellectual approach to religion would not satisfy the heart, while the intellectual approach would only satisfy the mind (Gregor, 1960: 11).

In the definition presented by Gregor, there is a discernment between the activities of the heart and the mind. According to him, the power of reason as an explanation in analyzing religious teachings, and the power of the heart functions to satisfy the feelings of followers of religion.

# PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION; A COMPROMISTIC ANALYSIS

The relationship between philosophy and religion in history is sometimes close and good, and sometimes far and bad. There are times when religious leaders pioneered the development of philosophy. There are times when religious people feel threatened by the thoughts of philosophers who are critical and sharp. The philosophers themselves sometimes give the impression of being arrogant, knowledgeable, belittling revelations and simple faith of the people (Nasution, 1999: 30-31).

Sometimes clashes also occur, in which philosophers fall victim to the shortsightedness and hypocrisy of people in the name of religion. Socrates was forced to drink poison on charges of atheism when he instead tried to lead the young people of the city of Athens to a deeper religious appreciation (Russell, 2007: 111-123). Ibn Rushd's philosophy is considered to have deviated from the teachings of Islam, he was arrested, exiled and died in captivity (Rusyd, 2004: 284-289). Abelard (1079-1142) who tried to reconcile faith and knowledge experienced various persecutions. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the greatest Middle Eastern philosopher and theologian, was accused of being infidels for using the Aristotelian approach (which was accepted by medieval philosophers from Ibn Sina and Ibn Rusyd). Giordano Bruno was burned in 1600 in the middle of Rome. Whereas in modern times it is not uncommon for all philosophical thinking since the Auflklarung to be condemned as anti-religious and atheist (Rusyd, 2004: 27-37).

At the end of the 20th century, the situation began to change greatly. Both from the philosophy and from the religion. Philosophy increasingly realizes that the most basic human questions about the true origin, about the meaning of happiness, about the path of happiness, about basic human responsibilities, about the meaning of life, about whether life is based on a fundamental hope or actually without the most meaning can formulated and cleared of confusion, but cannot be answered. The openness of philosophy, including many Marxist philosophers, to religion has never been as great as it is today (Russell, 2007: 643-645).

On the other hand, religion, although slowly, begins to understand that secularization which is felt as a threat opens opportunities as well. If secularization means that what is worldly is cleansed of all worldly fog, so that the world is the world and God is God, and the two are not mixed, then secularization actually only confirms what has always been the basic belief in monotheism. Secularization then only means that religion can no longer rely on worldly power to carry its message, and it helps clear religion from suspicion that religion is actually just a legitimacy for a group of people to seek power in the world. Religion is freed to its spiritual and adid worldly essence (religion, is only a witness to the power of God who is worldly when practicing his duty does not use the means of power, coercion and worldly pressure (al-Attas, 1981: 18-26).

The union of religion and philosophy is inevitable. That can be seen in, first, one of the problems faced by every revealed religion is the problem of interpretation. That is, the text of revelation which is the Word of God has always and automatically formulated in the language of the world. But the whole meaning and meaning of human language is never one hundred percent certain. That is why we experience so-called misunderstanding so often. That also applies to the language of revelation. Almost every sentence there is a possibility of misinterpretation (Cox, 1965: 2). Therefore adherents of the same religion are often still quite different in their understanding of the content and meaning of revelation. In other words, we are never one hundred percent certain that our understanding of God's intentions revealed in the text of revelation is correct, indeed that is God's purpose (Asy'arie, 2002: 31-37).

Therefore, every revealed religion has a way to deal with the problem. Islam, for example, regarding ijmâ 'and qiyâs. Now, in such a human endeavor, to understand God's revelation appropriately, to reach agreement on the meaning of one part of the revelation, philosophy can only help. Because it is clear that the answer to that question must be given using reason (the question of the meaning of revelation cannot be solved by searching for the answer in revelation alone, because then the same question will reappear, and so on). Because philosophy is the art of using reason appropriately and responsibly, philosophy can help religion in ascertaining the meaning of its revelation (Mustofa, 2004: 18-20).

Second, specifically, philosophy has always and has provided services to science that tries to systematize, correct and ensure religious teachings based on revelation, namely theology. So traditionally-very disliked by philosophers-called ancilla theologiae (servants of theology). Theology itself requires certain understandings and methods, and those understandings and methods are automatically drawn from philosophy. For example, the problem of determining God and human freedom (the problem of free will) can only be discussed using philosophical thinking. The same thing also applies to the "theodicea" problem, the question of how God, who is both Most Good and Omnipotent, can allow suffering and sin to continue (whereas he certainly can prevent it). Likewise Christology (Christian theology of Jesus Christ) uses Greek philosophical understandings in an effort to unite belief in the nature of Jesus Christ with the belief that God is only one (Asy'arie, 2002: 30-37).

Third, philosophy can help religion in dealing with new problems, meaning that problems which at the time of revelation were revealed did not yet exist and were not discussed directly in revelation. That is especially relevant in the area of morality. For example IVF problems or kidney transplantation. How do people take a stand on these two possibilities: Can or not? How in this case he bases himself on his religion, even though in the Scriptures of his religion, the two problems were never discussed? The

Philosophy can also help formulate critical questions that arouse religion, by referring to the results of science and ideologies of our time, for example in the teachings of evolution or in feminism (Bakhtiar, 1997: 1-16).

The fourth service that philosophy can provide to religion is given through its critical function. One of the tasks of philosophy is ideological criticism. The point is as follows. Society, especially post-traditional society, is under a burst of all kinds of views, beliefs, religions, streams, ideologies, and beliefs. All of these views have one thing in common: They tell the community how he must live, behave and act. Philosophy analyzes the ideological claims critically, questions its basis, shows its implications, unmasks the interests that may be behind it (Nasution, 1979: 10; Bakhtiar, 1997: 1-16).

Ideological criticism is needed by religion in two directions. First is the views of rivals, especially those that want to damage honest, pious and responsible attitudes. Philosophy does not merely condemn what is not in accordance with our own views, but uses rational argument. Religion should face rival ideologies not merely dogmatically, so it is only because of other opinions, but based on objective arguments and can also be understood by outsiders (*Ibid.*).

The second direction concerns his own religion. Philosophy can be questioned, whether something that is said by religious adherents as contained in the revelations of God, indeed including that revelation. So, philosophy can be a tool to free religious teachings from ideological elements that demand something that is not actually contained in the revelation, but only based on a subjective interpretation. Then philosophy helps the renewal of religion. Faced with the challenges of the times, religion is not just adjusting itself, but exploring the answer by turning back to what was actually revealed by God (Seyyed Hossein Nasr dan Oliver Leaman (ed.), 2003: 36-38).

Regarding the dichotomy of religion and philosophy and the relationship between the two thinkers are divided into three groups: the first group, the view that between the two there is a harmony relationship and there is no conflict at all. The second group, sees that philosophy is contrary to religion and has no compatibility at all. The third group, which tends to be moderate, is the substance of the idea is that in some cases and problems there is harmony between religion and philosophy in which philosophical rules can be applied to understand, interpret and interpret religious teachings (Mustofa, 2004: 14-20; Asy'arie, 2002: 30-37).

Anselm in his philosophical treatise entitled "Proslogion" revealed an interesting sentence that read: I have faith in order to know. If we turn this sentence back into: if I don't believe, then I can't know. It is undeniable that Anselm believes that religious faith is a powerful source of motivation and trigger to encourage someone to conduct in-depth research and study of doctrinal teachings of religion, furthermore, faith as a source of inspiration for the birth of various sciences and knowledge. The perfection of faith and the depth of one's religious understanding is directly proportional to their rational understanding of religious teachings, the deeper and higher the rational understanding, the more perfect the faith and the stronger the appreciation of religious teachings. Humans need rationalization in all aspects of their lives, including in the doctrines of their faith, because reason and ratio are the essence and substance of human beings, both of which are impossible to be separated from human form, even humans become humans because of reason and reason. Benchmark of human perfection is reason and rational understanding. Intellect is the essence of man and therefore religion is revealed to mankind to perfect its nature. Acceptance, surrender and absolute obedience to the sacred teachings of religion is very directly proportional to the rationalization of the substance and essence of religious teachings (Baihaqi, tt. 28).

The substance of all religious teachings is the belief and belief in the existence of God, while the existence of God can only be proven logically using the rules of reason (read: philosophical rules) and not through the mediation of religious teachings themselves. Although both reason and religion are God's creations, because internal reason exists in all humans and no one denies it, while the existence of external religious teachings is not accepted by all humans.

Thus, only we can make arguments and arguments for the existence of God and not the teachings of religion. Someone who does not believe in the form of God, then what is the meaning of religion for him. We assume that the doctrinal teachings of religion are God's creations, while the existence of the Creator has not been proven and the recognition of His perfect attributes, thus it is very likely that the "God's creation" is actually "the creation of other creatures" and this creature is more perfect than humans (as humans are more perfect than animals and other natural creatures). Then how can we be sure that all religious teachings are from God. Although we accept the existence of God with faith and confirm that all religious teachings originate from Him, but how can we answer the question that is God still alive? Why aren't prophets and messengers now carrying new religions? And there are many more questions like that which can only be solved by the rules of reason. Based on this perspective, reason is a basic and absolute condition for one's diversity, and this is the secret of the phrase that reads: There is no religion for the unreasonable (*Ibid.* 29-31; Fisher, 2002: 149-156).

Amiri views that reason essentially follows and obeys God's commands. In another part of the book, reason is categorized as the proof and proof of God, it states that the degree of reason when compared to the soul is the same as the power of vision when connected with the eye. 'Amiri, in the book as-sa'âdah wa al-isâd, also alludes to the relationship of mind, soul and material nature, he said, "The soul benefits from the mind and channels the benefits to the material nature. Intellect is the glory and honor of the soul and the soul is servant of reason. When the soul serves reason, the soul will appear holiness and light and when it leaves reason will appear darkness and defilement. Thus, ignorance will appear and have an effect on destruction and disobedience "('Amiri, tt. 180).

Amiri assumed that a sensible soul had the worthiness to become the caliph of God. According to him, someone who has a soul that is illuminated by reason deserves to be the caliph of God who regulates, manages and builds this realm, and in the non-material realm occupies a noble and high position. This soul, from the side of the body relates to the lower realms (matter) and from the dimensions of reason related to the higher realms. In other words, the Khalifah of God is the substance of his form which has the highest spiritual and spiritual position and is also related to the lowest physical degree, this existence is nothing but something that connects and combines the two realms (Connolly, 2002: 1-11).

#### CONCLUSION

Religion and philosophy cannot be contradicted at all, in fact, they can complement each other. Philosophy can be used to understand the "hidden" side of religion, and religion can function as a controller of rationality.

If philosophy discusses the existence in nature and the final destination of the journey is all that is willing, then religion can offer important assumptions as subjects of philosophical research and study.

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