



Reinventing The Interpretation of *Taqiyya* Verse for Strengthening Religious Tolerance

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Abstract

Even though the teaching of *taqiyya* is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, this concept is often negatively connoted as a heretical doctrine of a particular group, especially the Shia. This study aims to explore the interpretation of the Qur'an commentators towards the *taqiyya* verse (Q.S. Āli Imrān [3]: 28) in order to formulate the concept of *taqiyya* which can be actualized for the benefit of religious life. By examining the interpretations of some Qur'an commentators from various Islamic sects and implementing the descriptive-analytical method, the study concluded that the interpretation of *taqiyya* verse is not only limited to life-threatening emergency situations among *kāfir ḥarbi*, but also considered to be practiced in Muslim relations with non-Muslims or fellow Muslims in ordinary situations. Thus, *taqiyya* can manifest two main components of tolerance; patience and endurance by hiding beliefs or understandings that have the potential to disrupt the unity and integrity of multicultural society.

Keywords:

Interpretation, Religious Tolerance, *Taqiyya*

Abstrak

Meskipun ajaran *taqiyyah* disebutkan secara eksplisit dalam al-Qur'an, konsep ini sering dikonotasikan sebagai suatu ajaran sesat yang ditudingkan kepada kelompok-kelompok tertentu terutama Syiah. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana ajaran *taqiyyah* tersebut dipahami oleh para mufasir untuk kemudian diformulasikan sebagai sebuah ajaran yang dapat diaktualisasikan dan memberikan kontribusi dalam kehidupan beragama. Dengan mengkaji penafsiran para sarjana dari berbagai sekte dan mengimplementasikan metode deskriptif-analitis, kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penafsiran terhadap ayat *taqiyyah* tidak semata-mata dibatasi pada kondisi darurat di tengah-tengah kalangan *kāfir ḥarbi* saja tetapi dapat dipertimbangkan untuk dipraktikkan di tengah masyarakat dalam kaitannya relasi dengan non-muslim ataupun sesama muslim pada kondisi biasa dalam rangka menjaga toleransi.

Dengan demikian, ajaran taqiyyah dapat memanifestasikan dua unsur utama dalam toleransi yaitu kesabaran dan ketahanan dengan menyembunyikan keyakinan atau pemahaman yang berpotensi mengganggu persatuan dan kesatuan dalam masyarakat yang multikultur.

Kata Kunci:

Tafsir, Toleransi Beragama, Taqiyya

Introduction

Adherents of various religions had practiced the doctrine of identity concealment to maintain their security when they were minorities or under certain conditions (Kippenberg & Stroumsa, 1995, p. 67). According to Van Parseun's theory, the practice of identity concealment developed by adherents of a particular religion or sect is a part of a cultural strategy which includes the identity and religious politics in order to hide one's identity in social interactions without having to eliminate their existence (Humaedi, 2012, p. 19). The point of the deal among the doctrine of religious concealment is its functions in maintaining the balance of religious life in the midst of human diversity.

In Islam, the concept of identity concealment is known as *taqiyya* (Kohlberg, 1975, p. 395). Explicitly, *taqiyya* is mentioned in the Qur'an in Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28. Because al-Qur'an is the main text of Islam in determining Islamic law both theological (*al-abkam al-'itiqadiyah*), juridical-practical (*al-abkam al-'amaliyyah*) and ethical (*al-abkam al-khuluqiyah*) ones (Khalaf, n.d., p. 33), the validity of *taqiyya* doctrine is recognized by various sects of Islam. The recognition of the existence of *taqiyya* can be traced through the interpretation of the scholars towards *taqiyya* verse, especially the interpretations that emphasized theological doctrines based on the sect's understanding of the commentators of each sect (Goldziher, 2010, pp. 316–320).

Even the *taqiyya* doctrine does exist in the Qur'an, it cannot be denied that the Shia are always blamed for the *taqiyya* doctrine because they are the most dominant Islamic sect in practicing *taqiyya* (Kohlberg, 1995, p. 345). Al-Syahrastani states that *taqiyya* is one of the heretical Shia doctrines from its various sub-sects, including Zaidiyyah, which is considered the closest Shi'a to the Sunnis (Syahrastani, n.d., p. 160). For the other sects, this *taqiyya* doctrine is judged as a threat because it supports Shia to develop their community in various forms without knowing their formal identity. The different understanding towards

taqiyya inhibits the internal reconciliation of Islam, especially between Sunni-Shi'a. For the Sunnis, *taqiyya* practiced by the Shia is a form of hypocrisy, inconsistency and misguidance (Azimi, 2020, p. 21). Therefore, it is reasonable enough that the Sunnis judged the tolerance of Shiis as mere *taqiyya*.

Furthermore, affecting the efforts of internal reconciliation, the doctrine of *taqiyya* is blamed by non-Muslims as the way of extremist communities in deceiving the West (Campbell, 2005, p. 67). Therefore, the strong emphasis on implementing doctrine is one of the reasons causing American international politics to consider Iran as the axis of evil (Humaedi, 2012, p. 19). Thus, *taqiyya* is considered as threat by the outsiders because of interfering with their interests.

On the other hand, the Shia believe that the *taqiyya* they practice is religious teaching which historically they can prove its existence in the history of the Prophet and Ali (Gleave, 2013, p. 421). Moreover, some of their figures state that *taqiyya* is one of the central teachings in religion. They declared *la din li man la taqiyyata lah* (there is no religion for people who do not practice the *taqiyya*) (Ayyasi, 2001, p. 297). The Shia claim that the teaching of *taqiyya* is a commandment of the Qur'an so that no Muslim can cancel or blame it (Kohlberg, 1975, p. 396). Their claim can be received because the legal basis for practicing *taqiyya* is indeed found in the Qur'an, which is agreed to be *mutawatir* (approved by many people in every generation) among Muslims. Not only Shi'ite commentators, but also the commentators of the Qur'an from various Islamic sects recognize the validity of the *taqiyya* teachings in the Qur'an (Tabari, 2000, p. 316). However, it is regrettable that the *taqiyya* developed by Shia is always be blamed by other sects because of different understandings towards it (Azimi, 2020, p. 21).

Unequivocally, some practices of *taqiyya* are legitimated in the Qur'an. An example is the story of Asiyah who disguised her faith while she was the wife of Pharaoh; the king who does not only disbelieve, but also crowns himself as a god (Al-Tahrim [66]:11) (Choerunissya, 2021, p. 3). Likewise is the Children of Israel's story, when they hid their identity during the Pharaoh's regime besides trying to have dialogue with the *kufr* regime (Q.S. Ghafir [40]: 28) (Baidlawi, 1998, p. 56). Furthermore, several verses of the Qur'an such as Q.S. Al-Nahl [16]: 106 were revealed as justifications for *taqiyya* events that were

performed by the companions of Prophet Muhammad like Ammar bin Yasir and the Muslims who were prevented from *hijrah* (immigrating) to Medina (Zuhayli, 1998, p. 240).

These such cases are mentioned in the Qur'an not in the context of blaming the subjects performing *taqiyya* but for emphasizing its permission and commending them for maintaining their faith in a strenuous situation. Therefore, the doctrine of *taqiyya* should be reread in a more relevant context and then developed to be a more actual concept in a multicultural world. Starting from the similarity point of the *taqiyya* namely its existence in the Qur'an, this article tries to study the interpretation of *taqiyya* verse from tafseer literature of various Islamic sects in order to formulate the beneficial interpretation of *taqiyya* verse for wider Islamic society. Differing from major *Taqiyya* studies focusing on the interpretation and understanding of *taqiyya*, this study emphasizes the similarities of those interpretation and understanding to strengthen society's unity. As Muslims believe that the existence of *tasyri'* of certain teachings expects benefits (*maslahat*) and maintains certain maqasid, *taqiyya* as a part of *tasyri' al-Islam* must contain such components of *maslahat*.

Mentioned explicitly in the Qur'an, the doctrine of *taqiyya* becomes an interesting object to be studied through exegetical literatures that present understanding from the most primary source in Islam, al-Qur'an. To get some balanced views, the researcher trace the interpretations of *taqiyya* verse from the commentators of various Islamic schools, including the Sunni, Shi'a, Mu'tazilite to Salafi/Wahhabi circles (who tend to be very frontal in rejecting the Shi'ites) (Rahman, 2020, p. 111). From the Sunni, the author traces the interpretation of the *taqiyya* verse in several popular commentaries, such as *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil Ay al-Qur'an* (Ibn Jarir al-Tabari), *Ma'alim al-Tanzil fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Al-Baghawi) *Mafatih al-Ghaib* (al-Razi), *al-Babr al-Muhit* (Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi) and *Tafsir Al-Manar* (Rashid Rida). From the Mu'tazilah, *Al-Kasysyaf 'an aqa'iq Ghavamid al-Tanzil* by Al-Zamakhsyari must be exact representation Mu'tazilite commentators (al-Fakih et al., 2021, p. 14). From the Shi'ites as the most dominant sect in voicing the *taqiyya* doctrine, some of their main commentaries will be studied, such as *Tafsir al-Mansub ila al-Imam Abi Muhammad al-Hasan bin 'Ali al-Askary*, *Tafsir al-Qummi*, *al-Tafsir by al-'Ayyasi*, *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an by al-Tabarsi*, and *Tafsir al-Mizan* written by al-Taba' Taba'i.

Some relevant studies about *taqiyya* have been conducted with various approaches such as *Some Imami-Shi'i Views on Taqiyya* by Etan Kohlberg, *"Taqiyya Cultural Strategy: The*

Dilemma of Concealing Identity in Shia Development” by M. Alie Humaedi and *Reimagining Taqiyya the “Narrative of the Four Pillars” and Strategies of Secrecy among the Isma’ilis of Central Asia* by Daniel Beben. These studies or other studies on *taqiyya* discuss it as a sect’s doctrine and how *taqiyya* was implemented in society (Beben, 2019, pp. 83–107). Although the understanding of certain groups of Muslims towards a particular concept in the Qur’an becomes a central point in developing a religious doctrine, the concept of *taqiyya* from the point of view of tafseer al-Qur’an that the researches examine has not been widely conducted. The authors only find at least two studies from the point of view of commentary, *Taqiyyah dalam Perspektif Syi’ah dan Sunni (Studi Tafsir Al-Mizan dan Tafsir Al-Asas fi al-Tafsir)* (Nadzirullzzat, 2017) and *Taqiyyah dalam Pandangan Mufassir Syi’i Klasik dan Kontemporer (Studi Kitab Tafsir Majma’ al-Bayan dan Tafsir al-Mizan)* (Multazam, 2018). Unfortunately, these two tend to be descriptive ones, there is no attempt to formulate an interpretation of the *taqiyya* verse that can be actualized for relevant religious life. Another study trying to link the concept of *taqiyya* with religious harmony is Ulya’s research entitled *Taqiyyah sebagai Peneguhan Harmoni dan Toleransi: Studi Aksiologi*. Based on her research on the practice of *taqiyya* in Banjaran Village, Bangsri District, Jepara, Ulya concluded that the Banjaran people apply *taqiyya* for adapting to their society so their existence is accepted without causing unrest and conflict in the society (Ulya, 2021, p. 342). Besides being a field study, Ulya’s research also does not examine *taqiyya* in the frame of Qur’anic interpretation. However, this research complements Ulya’s research because it tries to confirm whether the *taqiyya* carried out by the studied community by her as a form of tolerance is valid according to the scholars or not.

With the descriptive-analytical method, this research will examine the interpretation data of the commentators on the *taqiyya* verse and then formulate a new *taqiyya* concept based on the existing interpretation. The process of formulating something new based on things that already existed before is called as the reinventing process (*Reinvent*, n.d.). Reinventing in the context of tafseer al-Qur’an corresponds to the reinterpretation process with emphasize on the exploratory-critical process of previous interpretations. The reinventing process of interpretation towards *taqiyya* is crucial to develop religious tolerance between internal Muslims and external relationships.

The Religious Tolerance and the Involvement of Interpretation towards Sacred Text

Human plurality in various aspects is a necessity that cannot be denied by any entity or group, including Muslims. The Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims illustrates that diversity and plurality are a form of *sunnatullah* that cannot be avoided. A phrase in the Qur'an expressing a condition of human similarity embracing a particular religion or belief is *ummah wabidah*. Al-Mawardi concludes in his *al-Nukat wa al-'Uyun*, which is known as a comparative exegesis, that the scholars' interpretation of *ummah wabidah* in the verse generally refers to two main meanings; *First*, *ummah wabidah* is interpreted as a situation that humans embrace only a particular religion on the whole earth, *Second*, *ummah wabidah* is understood that all humans embrace Islam only (Mawardi, n.d., p. 511). *Ummah wabidah* is found in ten verses of the Qur'an both in *makkiyyah* or *madaniyyah* chapters: Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 213, Q.S. al-Ma'idah [5]: 48, Q.S. al-Nahl [16]: 93, Q.S. Yunus [10]: 19, Q.S. Hud [11] 119, Q.S. al-Anbiya' [21]: 92, Q.S. al-Mu'minun [23]: 53, Q.S. al-Syura [42]: 8, Q.S. al-Zukhruf [42]: 33. Eight verses emphasize that creating humans in differences, especially differences in religion and religious understanding, is God's will.

If religious differences are approved as a necessity by Islam, Islam has to play a role in maintaining harmony in existing differences without commanding the religious exclusivism nor having ambitions to eliminate the existing plurality. Unfortunately, exclusive dogmatic reasoning (*al-'aql al-dughma'i al-mughblaq*) often arise from the manipulative codification stage toward Islamic teachings, especially the Qur'an (Masduqi, 2011, p. 50). Conservative views on religious teachings that are codified and eventually passed down to the next generations take root in religious attitudes full of exclusivity, stereotypes and suspicion towards other groups, especially minorities (Setyabudi, 2019, p. 572). This leads them forget that differences and plurality are part of the *sunnatullah*, which no one can oppose.

In maintaining harmony among the differences, tolerance is needed by all individuals and groups. Tolerance is derived from the Latin term *tolerare* and *tolerantia* (Setiani & Hermawan, 2021, p. 108) which implies leniency, enduring, suffering, forbearance and patience (Bakar, 2016, p. 123). Beginning from the history of philosophy, Socrates' dialogical technique embodies a spirit of tolerance as part of his pursuit for truth.

Socrates tolerates his interlocutors' pursuit of the truth wherever it may go in the early Platonic dialogues. Following this early development, tolerance matured to be an important component to end religious and political violence in the 20th century (*Toleration* | *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, n.d.).

From this etymological and historical meaning, Jay Newman states that tolerance refers to two primary meanings: acceptance and endurance. Acceptance implies receiving something different from personal beliefs or expectations, while endurance implies the ability to strengthen oneself in accepting something different for a long time. It differs from relativism, which believes that truth is relative to a thought. Relativism imply considering other's mistake as a potential truth in their system of thought while acceptance in tolerance frame is acknowledging that the other is not true but trying to endure in dealing with it (Newman, 1978, pp. 191–193).

Religious tolerance is formed on several aspects reinforcing and complementing each other: *First*, permitting others to perform worship according to their beliefs. *Second*, recognizing the existence of other entities as part of normal and reasonable multicultural differences. *Third*, respecting plurality of religions or sects. *Fourth*, allowing others' behavior or attitude to exist in a pluralistic social life. These aspects provide a clear boundary between tolerance and pluralism which according to Wainrigh and Alston, arises due to the diversity of experiences in translating the Divine (Susanti, 2017, p. 42). Because of previous limits of tolerance, being tolerant does not require someone to be pluralist. The understanding that tolerance requires pluralism causing a person to have a double standard of the moral choices (Moore, 2009, p. 246). Therefore, Newman asserts that to be tolerant, one does not have to justify other religions or other beliefs as truth. Not showing excessive reactions nor using his power to force or prohibit others for keeping doing what they believe is enough to be tolerant. If someone has used his power to prevent something based on illogical reasons, he can be considered intolerant (Newman, 1978, pp. 188–194). For example, a company leader rejects a job applicant in a secretary position just because he is a Christian or wears a headscarf considering that there is no relationship between secretary's job and religious choice.

In line with such a worldview, Islamic scholars try to set out some principles of Islamic tolerance. *First*, the purity of *aqidah* (*theological* belief) which is the main point of

religion. *Second*, the limit of religious tolerance is only to allow and provide a conducive atmosphere for adherents of other religions to practice their ritual and beliefs. *Third*, social relationships are established on the values of humanity without violating the theological provisions and Islamic law (Suryan, 2017, p. 192). In summary, active involvement in tolerating others' beliefs is only in the aspect of *mu'amalah*, not for *'aqidah* and *ibadah*.

For being tolerant, a person or community should be supported by following factors. *First*, the cultural-theological factor. How a theological doctrine of particular religion of a community manifested in their lives determines tolerance level among them. For this reason, advocacy on the importance of the theological doctrine of a religion in maintaining the harmony of a multicultural society is necessary. Therefore, this is the antithesis of Huntington's theory about the clash of civilizations. He argues that Muslims will not be able to develop an attitude of tolerance because Islamic doctrine fundamentally sets and limits all aspect of Muslim's live. Refusing Huntington's theory, Madjid argues that the lack of tolerance among Muslims is likely caused by their inability to understand and practice Islamic teaching well (Sumaktoyo, 2017, pp. 164–165). *Second*, institutional factors. How does a particular institution affect the level of tolerance around? The most represented in influencing tolerance is the state. How a country's attitude towards the religions in it dramatically affects the level of tolerance of its citizens. *Third*, psychological factors. For Sullivan and Transue, the three main variables of this factor are cognitive capacity (quality of education and political intelligence), threat perception and each individual's personal predisposition. People with an authoritarian and introverted personality will reject views opposing theirs (Hinckley, 2010, pp. 188–207).

Based on the above factors, a proper understanding of theological texts is very important in building religious tolerance, especially the holy book believed to be main source of inspiration for adherents of particular religion. Misinterpretation of religious texts becomes a factor to be intolerant. Frequently, the emergence of extremist schools in some religions is caused by a literal understanding towards the sacred texts. Conservatism and literalism then become the conceptual root of religious intolerance (Novalina et al., 2021, p. 339). In Islam, the emersion of the early extremist, *Khawarij*, was begun from wrong and textual interpretation of the Qur'an (Surah Al-Maidah [5]: 44). By referring to the verse, they voiced the slogan *la hukm illa lillah* as a justification to defy against two main groups of

Prophet's companion from both Ali's followers and Muawiyah's who accepted the attribution (Abdullah, 2016, p. 6). This political tragedy then continued to be a serious disunity problem of Muslims and the emergence of various sects such as Murji'ah, Shi'a, Mu'tazilah and Ahlussunnah. Every sect influences Islamic politics and theology dynamics at the following periods (Saniah & Sidik, 2020, p. 75; Umar, 2019, p. 39).

Critical Exploration of Scholars' Interpretation towards *Taqiyya* Verse

Some crucial points must be traced in understanding scholars' commentaries towards *taqiyya* verse are definition, the legal status of *taqiyya* in perspective of exegesis, eligibility requirements and classification of *taqiyya*.

Taqiyya is derived from *al-ittiqa'* which means to accept something but being wary of it. *Al-Ittiqa'* has another meaning to make a cover for keeping something away from any harm. This is as in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PUBH:

فليتق أحدكم النار ولو بشق تمرة

“One should protect himself from hell even with (giving) half of a dry date.” (Bukhari, 2002; Naisaburi, n.d.; Sijistani, n.d.).

In terminology, *taqiyya* means guarding oneself from harmful thing of others. Ibn al-Qayyim defines *taqiyya* as words of a person who contradicts his belief in the cause of guarding himself from particular danger (Jawziyyah, 1997, p. 1038). Ibn Hajar defines *taqiyya* as a prohibition to state certain beliefs (Asqalani, 1994, p. 314). Al-Mufid, a Shi'ite imam expressed a different definition that *taqiyya* is hiding the truth, covering up beliefs, and deceiving people from different groups (*mukhalifin*) because of the feared dangers both from a religious and worldly perspective. Furthermore, Murad al-Ansari defines *taqiyya* as protecting oneself from the dangers posed by others by showing while pretending an agreement/partiality with the enemy both in speech and deed (Khalifah, n.d., p. 16).

The only verse of the Qur'an that explicitly becomes the reference and the basis of the *taqiyya* existence in Islam is Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28.

Let not believers take disbelievers as allies rather than believers. Whoever [of you] does that has nothing with Allah, except when taking precaution against them in prudence. And Allah warns you of Himself, and to Allah is the [final] destination. (Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28) (“Quran Surah Ali ‘Imran 28 (Q.S. 3,” 2009).

Another verse frequently used in understanding *taqiyya* is Q.S. Al-Nahl [16]: 106.

Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief... except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment; (Q.S. al-Nahl [16]: 106) (“Quran Surah al-Nahl 106 (Q.S. 16,” 2009).

In Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28 the term *taqiyya* is not stated explicitly, but other *qira’at* read the verse *illa an tattaqu minhum taqiyyah* (Nuhhas, n.d., p. 383; Tabari, 2000, p. 317). Both reading *tuqab* and *taqiyya* have the same meaning because both of them are *masdar* form of *ittaqâ*, so that scholars reading *tuqab* or *taqiyya* acknowledge the existence of *taqiyya* doctrine through this verse. As for Q.S. Al-Nahl [16]: 106 explains some conditions permitting Moslems to practice *taqiyya* in the Q.S. Ali Imran [2]: 28. (Samarqandi, 1993, p. 258).

Even though Muslims scholars agree about the existence of *taqiyya* doctrine in the Qur’an, this does not imply to the agreement of practicing *taqiyya*. On the one hand, some commentators argue that the doctrine of *taqiyya* could be applied in the early Islamic period only when the Muslims were still minority without any power among other religions or in society. As for now, when the number of Muslims has increased and there are many Muslim countries, *taqiyya* is no longer permitted. This opinion is supported by some narrations from Mu’adz bin Jabal and Mujahid and al-Hasan (Qurthubi, 1964, p. 57).

On the other hand, most commentators refused that *taqiyya* could be applied in the early Islamic period only. They state that *taqiyya* will remain until the last day. Like other commands in Qur’an, it must be allowed to be practiced under certain conditions. Furthermore, according to Rashid Rida, the absolute rejection of *taqiyya* tends to come from the fundamentalist or *khamarij* circles. They argue that nothing should be prioritized than defending their religion and truth (Ridha, 1367, p. 231).

Supporters of the second argumentation acknowledging the existence of *taqiyya* until today are not acquiescent to the choice of *taqiyya* implementation. They have different understanding whether implementing *taqiyya* in situations requiring it or defending the faith and truth by avoiding the *taqiyya*. The first opinion prefers *taqiyya* as the main alternative than taking a dangerous risk. If someone does not practice *taqiyya*, danger will befall him because practicing *taqiyya* does not violate religious boundaries because there is explicit

permission to doing so in the Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28. It is well known that taking a dangerous risk is prohibited in Islam, *la darar wa la dirar*.

Furthermore, Shi'ite commentators such as 'Ayyashi tend to consider *taqiyya* an obligation while quoting the narration of Ja'far al-Shadiq that the Prophet P.U.B.H said: "No religion for people who do not practice *taqiyya*" (Ayyasi, 2001, p. 297). Other commentators opposing the ones state that *taqiyya* is only a second choice for people who are in an emergency. If someone chooses to defend his belief and truth until being killed, it is considered better and more critical than doing *taqiyya* (Andalusi, 2000, p. 95).

After confirming that *taqiyya* is still allowed to be practiced according to most of Qur'anic commentators, the most important thing is scope of *taqiyya* application from the definitions above. Generally, according to Sunni and Shia, there is no fundamental difference in *taqiyya* definition. Both agree that *taqiyya* is hiding the truth/belief in the heart to avoid particular danger. One of the specific points is the element of "*mukhalifin*" in the definition proposed by Al-Mufid. *Al-mukhalifin* (People who differ/disagree) in this context are multi-interpreted. For Shi'a, *mukhalif* are not only people with different religions but also people who have different religious understandings. Ibn Babawaih who was known as *al-sadug* in Shi'a states that the faith of the *mukhalif* is invalid until they believe in al-Mahdi and the *imamah* (Babawaih, 1395, p. 18). Although it seems there is no significant difference, it implies that the component of "*mukhalifin*" in Shia definition towards *taqiyya* has its own understanding. *Mukhalifin* for them is a person who disagrees with their creed, including the Sunnis. Moreover, in the context of *taqiyya* permissibility, the Shia consider that *mukhalifin* from the Sunnis (so are other sects) are the same as non-Muslims (Khalifah, n.d., p. 17).

The differences in the definition of *taqiyya* above lead to two main questions concerning conditions and to whom *taqiyya* should be practiced with. Except those who do not argue that the existence of *taqiyya* is only for the early period of Islamic *da'wah*, most commentators agreed that situation allowing to practice *taqiyya* is fear or coercion among *kafir harbi* (non-Muslims who fight or attack Muslims) (Mudin et al., 2021, pp. 49–50). Some commentators specify the permission of *taqiyya* only towards *kafir harbi*, such as al-Tsa'labi and al-Baghawi by quoting the opinion of Sa'id bin Jubair. For them, the conditions allowing them to practice *taqiyya* are only when their lives are in danger

(Baghawi, 1997, pp. 26–27; Tsa’labi, 2002, p. 48). Meanwhile, other scholars have expanded the permissibility of *taqiyya* both in terms of conditions and objects. According to some commentators, several conditions are also considered to allow practicing *taqiyya*, such as maintaining harmonious family relations, avoiding conflicts with the authorities, saving oneself from pirates, avoiding problems with government etc. Although this frequently occurs among internal Muslims relationships, not a few commentators allow practicing *taqiyya* in these circumstances such as Ibn ‘ATiyyah (Andalusi, 2002, p. 419), Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi (Andalusi, 2000, pp. 95–96), al-Razi (Razi, 1420, p. 194), al-Maraghi (Maraghi, 1946, p. 196), Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi (Qasimi, 1998, p. 305), Rasyid Rida (Ridha, 1367, p. 231), Al-‘Ayyasi (‘Ayyasi, 2001, p. 26), and al-Thaba’ Thaba’i (Thaba’ Thaba’i, n.d., p. 163).

As the commentators differ on the objects and conditions allowing *taqiyya*, they also differ on the form of *taqiyya* practice. By citing several narrations attributed to Ibn ‘Abbas, al-Dhahhak and Abu al-‘Aliyah, Al-Tabari states that *taqiyya* can only be practiced in oral expression, not with actions showing disbelief or harming Muslims (Thabari, 2000, p. 216). It implies that when someone is in a condition forcing him to practice *taqiyya*, he may say or state some falsehood that he actually denies in his heart, such as words that outwardly indicate disbelief, wickedness, etc. This opinion was chosen by Ibn ‘ATiyyah (Andalusi, 2002, p. 419), Al-Tsa’labi (Tsa’labi, 2002, p. 49), Al-Baghawi (Baghawi, 1997, p. 428), and Ibn Katsir (Dimasyqi, 2011, p. 30). Differing from this opinion, Al-Razi argues that *taqiyya* may be practiced both in words and physical actions that show approval and loyalty towards others’ truth or religion as long as the action does not harm others such as adultery, false witness, *qadzif al-mubshamat* (accusing others’ doing adultery), etc. (Razi, 1420, p. 194). This opinion was voiced by Rasyid Ridha in *al-Manar* (Ridha, 1367, p. 231), Al-Maraghi in his commentary (Maraghi, 1946), and the majority of Shia commentators such as Muhammad bin Hasan al-‘Askari (Askari, n.d., p. 600). The first opinion tends to be more textual in understanding historical backgrounds of the verse. The reason of the revelation of the *taqiyya* verse is only practicing *taqiyya* in oral expressions, while the second opinion prefers the substantial purpose (*maqashid*) of *taqiyya*, avoiding conflict or *madlarat*, so that legally unlawful actions (*haram*) become permitted in point of view of Islamic jurisprudence: *al-dharurat tubih al-mahdzurat* or *al-masyaqqah tujlib al-taysir*.

Etan Kohlberg's analysis shows that the dynamical views of Shi'ite commentators on *taqiyya* are affected by the position of Shi'ite political power, especially after the Buwaihid, Syafawid and Fathimiyah dynasties (Kohlberg, 1975, pp. 75–77). Tracing *taqiyya* concept from tafseer literatures, this study confirms Kohlberg's thesis. There are differences between the pre and post commentators of the three dynasties. Shia interpretations after the Buwaihid and Shafawid such as al-Tabarsi and al-Taba'Taba'i offered some leniencies in the legal status of *taqiyya*. They present many arguments that *taqiyya* can be mandatory/obligation in some conditions, while in other ones can be *sunnah*, *mubah* and *makruh* (Thabarsi, 2006, p. 155; Thaba'Thaba'i, n.d., pp. 357–359). This differs from the pre-Buwaihid and Shafawid Shi'a commentators such as al-Qummi, al-'Ayyashi and al-'Askari, which tend to be firm in allowing or commanding the practice of *taqiyya*. However, the Shia, with their different political conditions renders *taqiyya* practice and develops it in many contexts. This product of interpretation occurred because Shiites often becomes a minority in many Muslim areas.

Besides Shia, the interpretation of *taqiyya* verse from other theological schools of Islam, such as Sunnis, Mu'tazilah and modern commentators voicing the liberation of qur'anic interpretation from certain ideologies or schools are also dynamic. Not only limiting *taqiyya* in truly life-threatening amid non-Muslim pressure as happened in the case of 'Ammar bin Yasir, many commentators understand the concept of *taqiyya* in other contexts of protecting the Muslim person or community (Suyuthi, Jalal al-Din al-, 2000, p. 121). Such interpretations do not occur in urgent conditions, both from the ideological and political aspect of the interpreters. This shows that *taqiyya* doctrine is understood and approved by Muslim scholars with their various socio-political situations as a broad and complex concept which was not only limited in conflicts or interactions between Muslims and *kafir harbi*.

Reinterpreting *Taqiyya* Verse for Reinforcing Religious Tolerance

The verse becoming the legal standing of *taqiyya* doctrine in Islam is Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 8. Even *taqiyya* is not the main discussion of it, it closely relates to the concept of *mumalab al-kuffar* (choosing or taking unbelievers as *awliya*). The prohibition of taking unbelievers as *awliya*' is repeated 19 times in the Qur'an. As *fi'il (tawalla)*, it is found in six

verses: 24:11, 5:80, 11:52, 5:51, 9:23, and 60:9. These six verses discuss the prohibition of taking unbelievers, people of the scriptures (*ahl al-kitab*), and sinners (*mujrimin*) as guardians. As in *isim* form, term *waly* and *awliya'* (in singular and plural) are repeated 40 times in the Qur'an. 13 of them related to the prohibition of taking non-Muslims as guardians are found in 13 places: 4:89, 5:51, 8:72, 8:73, 10:71, 45:19, 4:89, 4:139, 4:144, 5:57, 5:81, 60:1 and Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28 that is associated with the teachings of *taqiyya*.

Etymologically, it is derived from *waliya-yali* which means close, or derived from *walla* whose meaning is to control, love and help (Asfahani, 2004, pp. 692–693). As for its *masdar* form, the word *walayah* tends to mean help while *wilayah* tends to mean power (Manzhur, 1994, p. 405). From this etymological meaning, Khâlid concluded that the scholars' interpretation of *wali* in the Qur'an refers to some following meanings: close friends, followers, helpers, protectors, relatives/family, rulers/authorities, someone/thing worshiped and leaders (Kolid dkk, 2021, pp. 43–45).

By elaborating the physical and mental conditions of the subjects, from Q.S. Âli Imrân [3]: 28, Ibn 'Asyur classifies the *mumwalah al-kufr* into eight types (Asyur, 1984, pp. 217–220). *First*, a Muslim who takes a non-Muslim person or a non-Muslim group as an object whom he loves sincerely because of their inclination or interest to the *kufr* and hatred towards his Muslim fellows. This first type of *mumwalah* is characterized as the hypocrites and causes a person to fall into disbelief because *al-ridla bil kufr* *kufrun* (willing the disbelief is a form of disbelief). *Second*, a Muslim who takes the side of a non-Muslim who is overtly hostile to Islam because of relationship like brotherhood instead of willingness or inclination to the *kufr*. For Ibn 'Asyur, this type of *mumwalah* is unlawful and considered as major sin because of undermining the honor (*'izzah*) of the Islam like what was happened in the case of the revelation of the Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 118. *Third*, a Muslim who shows partiality to a group of non-Muslims who are not openly hostile to Islam like the Christians in the early days of Islam. According to al-Razi, this type of *mumwalah* is prohibited too but does not imply the status of *kufr* (Razi, 1420, p. 192). *Fourth*, a Muslim who sided with a group of non-Muslims to harm the Muslims, aiming to obtain personal benefits from this alignment, such as being a spy. This form of *mumwalah*, according to scholars, causes the subject to *murtad* or *kufr zindiq*, for which repentance is difficult to expect. *Fifth*, a Muslim who requested any help from non-Muslims for particular benefit of

Muslims, such as in a battle. Scholars differ on its permissibility. Some argue that it is permissible arguing with historical facts of cooperation between Muslim and non-Muslims troops at the time of the Prophet. Some insist on prohibiting such. *Sixth*, a Muslim who makes a non-Muslim his friend or guardian merely to maintain good interactions or kinship among them. This type of *muwalah* is not prohibited at all. Moreover, it is ordered by the Prophet as in the story of Asma who asked about the relationship he had to establish with his infidel family. *Seventh*, a Muslim who engages in worldly general interactions such as trade and work agreements. They are generally allowed as long as they follow the limit set in Islamic law (*fiqh*). *Eighth*, a Muslim shows his partiality to disbelievers because of avoiding a danger that will or may occur if he shows his opposite. This last type is explicitly mentioned in Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28 (Asyur, 1984, p. 220).

Ibn 'Asyur's interpretation of *taqiyya* verse is one of the most complexes in elaborating *muwalah* than other commentators. Three main aspects highlighted from his interpretation that becomes the attention/standard in determining legal status of *muwalah* are the intentional aspect, the aspect of the condition of non-Muslim domination over Muslims, and the beneficial aspect. As for the intentional aspect, one's sincere position in his relationship with non-Muslims becomes the emphasized point by most commentators. All types of *muwalah* mentioned by Ibn 'Ashr prohibit the siding with non-Muslim based on sincere willingness and love for their *kufr*. The second aspect is the condition of non-Muslim domination over Muslims, which determines how urgent and how far *muwalah* must be carried out, while the third aspect is the aspect of benefit and harm caused, such as practicing *muwalah* by participating in fighting or killing Muslims. It is always be prohibited even in an emergency.

From the three aspects, the intentional aspect is the most related to *taqiyya* which is understood as an act of showing partiality to something believed as wrong or *kufr*. As long as one's heart remains steadfast in the faith, pretending to show falsehood does not necessarily cause him to be claimed as holding signs of falsehood even *kufr* (Qummi, 2015, p. 150; Razi, 1420, p. 194). The intention of showing partiality to falsehood or *kufr* in general begins with two main motives: avoiding threats or conflicts and expecting particular *maslahah* (goodness). The scholars agreed the first motive although they differed in the level

of which threats or conflicts could be avoided with practicing *taqiyya*. Therefore, the mapping of *muwalah* proposed by Ibn ‘Asyur could be a theory helping to limit this permissibility. In some cases, avoiding conflict is not only limited to something treating one’s life, but also for protecting property, offspring, honors, or harmony from certain danger or conflict (Andalusi, 2000, p. 94).

Moreover, the determination of the conflict that should be avoided by practicing *taqiyya* has not to wait for problems to occur; predictions (*z'hann*) supported by logical arguments is enough for being reason to practice *taqiyya* (Andalusi, 2000, p. 95), such as showing partiality to government policies that are believed to be wrong in religious perspective. Being too frontal against policies which are actually on the limits of reasonableness and *khilafiyah* is worried to lead to particular conflict. At the same time, *taqiyya* which is allowed to be practiced, like some commentators explicitly mentioned about its validity can be choice in preventing such predicted conflict. This can be considered as respect to relativism of religious truth proposed by Nurcholish Madjid to maintain *ukhuwah islamiyyah* (Muslim brotherhood) (Setia, 2021, p. 119).

The second motive of practicing *taqiyya* is expecting certain *maslahah* for Muslims. In case, *muwalah* which is a manifestation of *taqiyya* practice becomes permissible as long as not crossing the intentional limits. Even, according to al-Maraghi, this kind of *taqiyya* is more permissible than the first motive which tends to be reactive (Maraghi, 1946, p. 126). In wider context, the permission to cooperate or make alliances is given in relationship with non-Islamic countries whose policies are not in favor of Muslims. As long as the intention for doing so is for the benefit of the people and maintaining the unity of the world instead of assisting them in oppressing Muslims, this kind of *taqiyya* is permitted or being lawful. In a smaller context, practicing *taqiyya* is also allowed towards biological relatives or neighbor by showing partiality to them like special greeting in religious holidays even though believing that it is forbidden. *Taqiyya* framing can be practiced in this condition because it expects benefits in maintaining family/neighborhood’s unity and harmony.

Furthermore, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims should not be established just for pleasantries and pretending to agree on things that are genuinely different. In establishing a good relationship, fostering mutual love between human beings based on the *ukhuwah insaniyyah* (*humanity* brotherhood) concept is also important, including

relationship among Muslims and non-Muslims. Concerning this point, Allah stated in the Qur'an:

Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah [60]: 7)

The object pronoun *kum* in this verse refers to early Muslim community in Mecca, while the next pronoun following *min*, namely *hum*, refers to the polytheists who hurt and expelled the Prophet and Muslims from Mecca (Samarqandi, 1993, p. 438). According to Rida, a conscientious person must understand that the relationship built based on love (*al-mawaddah*) between Muslims and non-Muslims is actually presupposed by this verse, thus it is not appropriate for a Muslim to hate non-Muslims absolutely, but the only must be hated is the *kufr* (*disbelief*) not disbelievers (Ridha, 1367, p. 230).

Based on such a paradigm, *taqiyya* is neither only for attempting to deceive the enemy nor maintaining the existence of certain religious groups/religious adherents, but also an effort to maintain the unity of humanity which is destined in human plurality. Furthermore, *taqiyya* could strengthen religious tolerance's main essence, including acceptance and endurance. In the context of acceptance, *taqiyya* for the minority is not only a manifestation of one's acceptance of the majority's differences but also a form of minority acceptance toward the existence of the majority group. Paradigm "minority as a threat" frequently believed among the figures of the majority group is a reflection of the distrust or weakness of the majority group in retaining their followers (Newman, 1978, pp. 190–191).

Elaborating *taqiyya* concept with Q.S. al-Mumtahanah [60]: 7 which presupposes a loving relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims while practicing *taqiyya* as part of tolerance could be the potential way to grow *al-mawaddah* (love) between groups who have different religious understandings or even adherents of different religions. Of course, in this case, *taqiyya* means *mujamalah* (flattery) without having to express *kufr* actions or words like in an emergency. Without *taqiyya* framed as a form of tolerance, *al-mawaddah* (love) between opposite groups will be more challenging to realize so that the unity of both internal adherents of a religion or external (with other religions) is getting further. From a missionary perspective, the growth of love through tolerance and partisanship is one way for people, both from Christians and other religions adherents, to receive the message of

salvation they must listen to. Without respect or love, a person or a community will be challenging to accept the truth conveyed by others. Likewise, the mission of Islamic preaching must be spread with love because *da'wah* is aimed to invite people to heaven and the forgiveness of Allah SWT. How can a preacher (*da'i*) preach well and sincerely to non-Muslims if his heart hates their *da'wah* object? Therefore, Ibn 'Abbas argues that attracting the sympathy and love of non-Muslims is important in preaching (Ashur, 1984, p. 151). *Taqiyya*, in this context, is an option to tolerate and gain sympathy from the object of *da'wah* (*mad'u*).

Taqiyya within the framework of tolerance can be developed in interactions towards people of other religions. In that case, *taqiyya* should be more potential to be developed in establishing the relationships among internal Muslims with their various sects, schools and understandings because basically, the differences among them must be less than differences across religions. The validity of *taqiyya* practice towards Muslim fellows has been recognized by several scholars, especially from the exegetes of both Sunnis, Shiites to Mutazilites. The extreme rejection of the teachings of *taqiyya* is one of the tendencies of the Kharijites who always reject existing differences, even though *taqiyya* is clearly and explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. Practicing *taqiyya* to fellow Muslims within the framework of tolerance can be manifested by following an opinion or activity which, according to his understanding or his school, is wrong. With the intention of avoiding conflict and creating the unity, this kind of tolerance with *taqiyya* can be considered lawful based on the development of the concept of *taqiyya* which a number of *mu'tabar* commentators has conveyed.

Conclusion

In the midst of the inevitable plurality, tolerance is necessary to maintain the harmony and unity. One of the dominant factors influencing tolerance is the understanding and interpretation of religious doctrine. Therefore, to create tolerant Muslims, the verses of the Qur'an must be well understood. *Taqiyya* is a part of Islamic teaching, which is often blamed on one of the Islamic school/sects even though the existence of the *taqiyya* doctrine is explicitly mentioned in the Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 28. The teachings mentioned in

the Qur'an should be positioned as compassionate to build human life, not only being a negative connotation towards certain groups.

Based on the interpretation of several scholars, *taqiyya* can be reformulated as an expression by someone contrary to his belief. Although at early Islamic history *taqiyya* emerged as a response to the emergency condition of minority Muslims under non-Muslim pressure, this verse was understood and developed by some commentators in a broader context. *Taqiyya* could also be practiced to both non-Muslims and Muslims with two main motives: avoiding conflict and realizing the harmony and unity of humanity which is presupposed in the Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah [60]:7. *Taqiyya* is a form of tolerance because it requires the subject to accept the others' differences (acceptance) that he actually denies. Endurance is another essential component of tolerance that can be found in practicing *taqiyya* because someone has to endure against the differences that he believes as wrong. Therefore, blaming *taqiyya* excessively and negative connotating of *taqiyya* teachings towards certain groups is inappropriate for following arguments; *First*, *taqiyya* is indeed recognized as valid Islamic doctrine by Islamic scholars based on the verses of the Qur'an, *Second*, *husn al-zan* (good assumption) towards fellow Muslims must take precedence over bad ones. When a person or a community is suspected of committing *taqiyya*, it must be reframed as a form of tolerance and effort to defend their beliefs among those who have different understandings from them. As for the idea that *taqiyya* is a threat to the majority group, it must be controlled well so it does not cause minority discrimination and intolerance actions.

The development of *taqiyya* concept by reconsidering its motivation, conditions and objects leads to the urgency of determining the hierarchy of *taqiyya*. Practicing *taqiyya* to fellow Muslims in normal conditions must be different from practicing it to non-Muslims in an emergency that requires someone to say or do an act of disbelief. Therefore, this research requires further studies to map the *taqiyya* hierarchy and typology based on objects, conditions and motivations in more detail and comprehensive analysis.

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