Hidayah in the Process of Conversion to Islam
in the Perspective of *Muallaf*

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Keywords:	**ABSTRACT**
Hidayah *Conversion* *to Islam* *Muallaf* *Ulema*	In islamic teachings, *Hidayah* (Divine Guidance) becomes a fundamental aspect as it determines a person's salvation, especially for it in the hereafter. The ulemas, through a deductive approach, formulate *hidayah* comprehensively based on textual evidence. On the other hand, *muallaf* feels the presence of *hidayah* in their spiritual journey through the process of conversion. Based on this background, this study was aimed to formulate the concept of *hidayah* from the perspective of *muallaf* and to compare it with the perspective of the ulemas. To address these issues, a qualitative approach was used in this study. The primary method of data collection was in-depth interviews conducted with ten *muallaf* from diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds. The findings of this research were as follows: *hidayah* comes illuminatively and requires sacrifice, Allah does not misguide humans but only provides guidance to them, and *hidayah* is a *terra incognita*. Furthermore, the results of comparing the perspectives of ulema and muallaf on hidayah were as follows: ulemas use a deductive-speculative approach, while *muallaf* use an inductive-empirical approach. The ulemas base their views on textual evidence, whereas *muallaf* rely on their psychological-spiritual experiences. Conceptually, the explanations provided by the ulemas regarding hidayah are more comprehensive and systematic, while the explanations by *muallaf* are simpler. In the aspect of Allah's will, *muallaf* believe that Allah does not misguide His believers, while ulemas hold a different view.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the important and fundamental aspects in Islam is *hidayah* (guidance). A person's level of Islamic faith heavily relies on *hidayah*. Without *hidayah*, one would not understand Islam, let alone embrace it. Essentially, a Muslim is in greater need of *hidayah* compared to any other needs, as explained in the *Syarh Aqidah ath-Thahawiyah* [1]. The Qur'an mentions the term related to *hidayah* repeatedly, with a total of 316 occurrences in various forms [2]. This demonstrates the significant position of *hidayah* in Islam.

At first glance, there may appear to be a contradiction *(ta'ārud})* between verses discussing hidayah and the freedom of choice granted to humans, or the absolute power of Allah and His justice, for example. However, such contradictions are impossible to exist within the Qur'an. For instance, in Surah al-Baqarah [2]:4, it is stated that the Qur'an is a guide for those who have faith, yet in verse 185 of the same Surah, it is explained that the Qur'an is a guide for all humanity, not just for those who have faith.

Furthermore, many verses explain that guidance and misguidance are the prerogative rights of Allah. Some of them are Surah Ar-Ra'd [13]:27, Surah Ibrahim [14]:4, and others. However, elsewhere it is explained that humans have the choice to follow *hidayah* on one hand, while on the other hand, they can reject it. It is precisely in this freedom of choice that the responsibility for their actions lies, as well as the justice of Allah. Verses explaining human freedom include Surah Al-Kahf [18]:29, Surah Yunus [10]:108, and others.

Meanwhile, other verses clarify that Allah will not wrong His believers. Thus, if Allah were to misguide His believers, it would seem that Allah is inconsistent with His own words. Some verses that explain this include Surah Ali Imran [3]:182, An-Nisa' [4]:40, and others.

When the ulemas interpret the above-mentioned verses, they try to synchronize them. However, it cannot be denied that they tend to emphasize the absolute will of Allah over human freedom of choice

and the justice of Allah. In other words, according to the ulemas, Allah has the right to guide His chosen believers and also to misguide those He desires. The implication is the inevitable trap of interpretation, where the emphasis is placed on the absolute will of Allah, thereby put the aspect of justice aside.

For example, when understanding Surah Al-Kahf [18]:29, which explicitly explains the freedom of choice for humans to believe or disbelieve, it ultimately points back to the will of Allah. Clearly, the verse leaves it to humans to make their own choices, each with its own consequences. Imam al-Qurtubi interpreted it more in terms of the absolute will of Allah. That is, if Allah wills for a person to believe, then he/she will believe, and if Allah wills for a person to be misguided, then he/she will be misguided *(predestination)* [3]. Such conceptual theological problems require adequate explanations, so that the interpretation does not fall into the trap of predestination or human's free will and free act.

Many studies have been conducted in an attempt to comprehensively explain the concept of *hidayah*. They have been presented in the form of books and scientific articles. Some of them explain *hidayah* from the perspective of the Qur'an, as written by Suhemi [4], and there are also those written by Saladin [5]. Similar to these writings, there is a study conducted by Rustina N [6]. There are also discussions on *hidayah* in the context of *da'wah* (preachings) [7]. Meanwhile, Kailani attempts to explain the relationship between receiving *hidayah* and human behavior [8]. The aforementioned studies seek to explore the meaning of *hidayah* from various perspectives, excluding the perspective of individuals who converted to Islam (*muallaf*).

Studies on *muallaf* have also been extensively conducted. For example, *muallaf* has been examined from the perspective of empowerment through *zakat*. Some studies focus on the behavioral aspects and motivational factors during the conversion process [9]. Other studies analyze the process of converting to Islam from the perspective of Lewis R. Rambo's conversion theory [10].

The results of these studies on *hidayah* and *muallaf* indicated that this study can complement previous scientific research. This is because there is an academic gap that has not been comprehensively examined, namely the understanding of *hidayah* from the perspective of *muallaf*. Thus, the focus of this study was to understand how *muallaf* interpret hidayah based on their conversion experience to Islam.

By delving into the understanding of *hidayah* as experienced by individuals who converted to Islam (*muallaf*), this study was expected to formulate the concept of *hidayah* based on the empirical and emotional experiences of *muallaf*. Based on this background, the study recognized its urgency and aimed to explore new ways to discover the meaning of *hidayah* by comparing and combining the understanding of the ulemas with the experiences perceived by *muallaf*.

2. METHOD

Based on the location, this study was categorized as a field research. Based on the used approach, it was categorized as a qualitative study based on the assumption that the reality and events that occur in the world, which serve as the object of study for human behavior and social phenomena that are ideally viewed in various ways by different individuals.

Data were collected from a number of informants with diverse social, cultural, educational, and economic backgrounds, thus representing the diversity of *muallaf* from different backgrounds. Based on the education background, there is a wide range, from those with primary education to those who have completed higher education (post-graduate degree). Based on the professions, they include sellers, retired civil servants, lecturers, teachers, and other professions. Similarly, their economic backgrounds are also diverse. The main method of data collection was in-depth interviews.

Once collected and processed, the data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical methods. The descriptive-analytical method is based on the characteristics of the collected data, which tend to be in the form of words or images, and the research report contains quotations from the data as illustrations to support the presented findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study discussed and analyzed the perspectives of *muallaf* on hidayah of Islam as experienced during the process of conversion to Islam. However, conceptual studies on *hidayah* from the perspective of ulemas are still important to present as a theoretical basis for analyzing this theme. Therefore, before discussing the perspectives of *muallaf* on hidayah, the explanations of ulemas regarding hidayah would be presented first.

3.1. *Hidayah* According to Ulemas

      Hidayah is derived from the Arabic language and, according to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), *hidayah* is defined as guidance from Allah [11]. Meanwhile, *at-Ta'rifat* explains that *hidayah* refers to the signs that lead people to what they seek [12]. Quraish Shihab explains that *hidayah* means divine guidance given to every creature to have something or to fulfill their life needs. He further elaborates that *hidayah* has different levels. Firstly, it is instinctual. With instinct, every creature is guided to achieve what is intended and needed without going through a learning process. Secondly, it is through the senses. This is followed by the level of intellect, and the final level of *hidayah* is religious guidance [13].

      On the other hand, Ibn al-Qayyim classifies *hidayah* into four groups. The first is *hidayah 'ām*, the second is *al-bayān* and *ad-dalālah*, the third is *at-taufīq* and *al-ilhām*, and the last is guidance in the afterlife to navigate the path to paradise [14]. *Hidayah 'ām* or general guidance is the guidance given by Allah to all creatures, enabling them to live their lives. *Al-bayān* and *ad-dalālah* are the guidance from Allah in the form of understanding, explanations in their general meanings. These are explanations of what is good and evil, right and wrong, brought by His messengers. According to him, to get the *al-bayān* and *ad-dalālah*, the presence of the messengers to humanity is absolutely necessary. On the other hand, *at-taufīq* and *al-ilhām* are Allah's guidance in a more specific sense. This refers to Allah's guidance given to those whom He desires, so that they understand and comprehend His teachings and subsequently follow and consistently practice them. Lastly, hidayah is understood as Allah's guidance to His believers, leading them to be able to navigate the path to paradise in the hereafter.

      Further, Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates on guidance in the sense of religious guidance of Islam, seen from different levels and sequences, as detailed below. He refers to these levels or sequences of guidance as *marātibul hidāyah*. Although referred to as a subtitle *marātibul hidāyah*, it can be broken down into ten sequences.

      The first sequence is *taklīm*, which means direct communication or speech from Allah to His believers without any intermediaries and in a state of wakefulness. This guidance occurred in the case of Prophet Moses, as described by Allah in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa [4]: 163. *Taklīm* is divided into two categories: direct communication without any intermediaries and communication

through intermediaries. The second sequence of guidance is revelation, which is specifically revealed to the prophets, as explained by Allah in Surah An-Nisā [4]: 126. Revelation is essentially a form of *taklīm*, but it is conveyed indirectly. The third sequence is guidance in the form of Allah by sending angels to the messengers to deliver divine messages or revelations. These three levels of guidance are specific to the prophets and will not occur for other humans. According to Ibn al-Qayyim, Prophet Muhammad experienced all three of these sequences.

The fourth sequence of guidance is *at-tahdīś*, which refers to a person's inner word that subsequently becomes a reality. *At-tahdīś* is the revelation meant for someone other than a prophet. An example of this is what happened to Umar ibn Khattab. The Prophet Muhammad stated in a hadith that among the nations before you were *muhaddiśūn* (recorders of hadith), and if there is a *muhaddits* in this nation, it is Umar ibn Khattab. Thus, *at-tahdīś* is guidance given by Allah to someone because of the purity of their soul, so whatever crosses their mind or inner word is true and then manifests in the physical realm.

The fifth sequence is *al-ifhām*, which is guidance from Allah given to someone, enabling them to understand specific intricate matters that others cannot comprehend. Ibn al-Qayyim provides examples of the complexity of certain Quranic verses that cannot be understood by most people but can be understood by specific individuals.

Next, the sixth sequence is *al-bayan al 'am*, which refers to a general explanation of right and wrong through evidence, proofs, and teachings. Ibn al-Qayyim states that this guidance is none other than Allah's arguments to humanity in general. Through this guidance in the form of *al-bayan al 'am*, He explains the relationship between actions and the consequences to be received. Allah will not impose any sanctions on human actions as long as this sixth sequence of guidance does not reach a specific community. This is explained by Allah in Surah At-Tawbah [9]: 115.

The *al-bayān al-'ām* is divided into two categories. Firstly, explanations through recitation and audibly conveyed verses (verses of the Quran), and secondly, explanations through observable signs. In other words, they are verses based on statements (*qauliyah*) and verses based on observed phenomena (*kauniyah*). The existence of this sixth sequence of guidance is a prerequisite for attaining Islamic

guidance. Without *al-bayān al-'ām*, it is impossible for someone to recognize Islam and, consequently, impossible to embrace Islam.

The seventh sequence is *al-bayān al-khās*. This guidance is absolutely necessary for someone to embrace Islam. The seventh guidance comes in the form of *al-'ināyah* and *at-taufīq* from Allah, as described in the Quran, Surah Al-Qasas [28]: 56.

The eighth sequence is *al-ismā'*. *Al-ismā'* is none other than a person's ability to grasp the meaning and essence with their heart from the message brought by Allah's messengers. *Isma'* is divided into two categories: *isma'* against the words spoken, which is the task of the sense of hearing, and *isma'* against the true meaning of the spoken words, which is the task of the humans' intuition. Through the intuition towards the message's meaning, individuals can receive the message. This eighth guidance refers to various verses of the Quran, including Surah Al-Anfāl [8]: 23, Surah Fatir [35]: 22, Surah Al-Anbiyā` [21]: 2, and Surah Muhammad [47]: 16.

Kemudian yang kedelapan yaitu *al-ismā'*. Petunjuk Allah yang berupa *al-ismā'* ini tidak lain adalah kemampun seseorang untuk menangkap makna dan hakikat dengan hatinya dari risalah yang di bawa oleh utusan Allah. *Isma'* dibedakan menjadi dua yakni *isma'* terhadap kata yang diucapkan dan ini adalah tugas indera pendengaran. Sedangkan yang kedua adalah *isma'* terhadap hakikat makna dari kata yang diucapkan, dan ini adalah tugas dari hati manusia. Dengan pendengaran hati atau penyerapan makna risalah oleh hati, menjadikan manusia dapat menerima risalah tersebut. Hidayah kedelapan ini merujuk ayat-ayat al-Qur`an antara lain Q.S. Al-Anfāl [8]: 23, Q.S. Fatir [35]: 22, al-Anbiyā` [21]:2 dan Q.S. Muhammad [47]: 16.

Furthermore, there is a distinction between *al-ifhām* and *al-ismā'*. Isma' is a response to the call or invitation. Some people only listen to the invitation with their ears, while others continue to understand its meaning with their intuition to ultimately accept and embrace the truth they have perceived. Based on this, there are three levels of *isma'*: listening to the call with the sense of hearing *(simā' al-ażan)*, listening or understanding the meaning with the intuition *(simā' al-qalb)*, and listening in the sense of accepting what the intuition has perceived *(simā' al-qubūl wa al-ijābah)*.

Meanwhile, *al-ifhām* has a broader meaning and is not limited to responding to calls alone. It can encompass understanding what is read or observing various things. Ibn al-Qayyim's opinion on the

concept of *al-ifhām* emphasizes the inner activities of a person when actively studying and examining something, rather than merely responding to a call comes to him/her.

The ninth sequence is *al-ilhām*. This guidance in the form of divine inspiration is a gift from Allah upon a believer. *Ilham* or divine inspiration, in this context, can be understood as knowledge or the ability to perform something acquired illuminatively and the exact *kaifiyah* in acquiring it cannot be identified. The concept of *ilham* generally applies to both humans and other creatures. The divine inspiration given to animals is manifested in the form of instincts that enable them to survive in their environment.

The last is the guidance from Allah in the form of true dreams. Allah provides guidance to His believers through true and meaningful dreams *(ar-ruʽya as-s}ādiqah)*. In a hadith, it is explained that true dreams are one of the signs of prophethood.

That is the concept of guidance according to Ibn al-Qayyim. Based on the explanation above, the process of conversion to be a Muslim can be explained through the sequence of guidance mentioned. At least, it goes through the sixth and seventh levels of guidance, which are general *('ām)* dan specific (*khās*) guidance. General guidance *('ām)* refers to the teachings of Islam that reach *muallaf*, which can be explained through sociological processes. The encounter between non-Muslims and the teachings of Islam through various social interactions allows for an introduction to Islam, which can then lead to the process of receiving specific guidance (*khās*). Before reaching the specific guidance in the sense of receiving *taufīq* and *ināyah*, a *muallaf* will go through the processes of *ismā'* and *ifhām*. If one stops at sensory *ismā'* and then embraces Islam, it would be merely embracing Islam in nominal terms, or formally embracing Islam without undergoing significant theological and psychological changes.

However, if sensory *ismā'* leads a *muallaf* to reach the true *ismā'*, which is followed by the process of *ifhām* that opens up new insights into the teachings of Islam and motivates acceptance. After the process of *ifhām* that motivates the acceptance towards Islamic teachings, there is an essential element - according to Ibn al-Qayyim's explanation - that will lead someone to Islam, namely specific guidance (*khās*).

This specific guidance essentially determines whether someone embraces Islam or not. Whether someone embraces Islam or

not depends greatly on the divine assistance and enablement from Allah. Thus, according to Ibn al-Qayyim, the ultimate outcome of this explanation is that the conversion to be a Muslim is entirely dependent on this specific guidance (*khās)*. This is the normative theological perspective on the process of becoming a Muslim based on Ibn al-Qayyim's understanding of guidance.

Although Ibn al-Qayyim tries to synchronize between the absolute will of Allah with the freedom of human beings to choose between accepting or rejecting guidance *('ām)*, ultimately, he relies entirely on Allah for matters of guidance. With His absolute power, Allah will provide guidance *(ināyah* and *taufīq)* to whomever He wills and will misguide whomever He wills after sending messengers to humanity. The provision of guidance and misguidance is based on His magnificence and wisdom, according to Ibn al-Qayyim.

3.2. *Hidayah* in the Procees of Conversion to Islam

Studies on religious conversion have been extensively conducted by experts resulting in various theories. Some approached it from the aspect of contestation between religious groups [15]. Some discussions were focused on new approaches with regional studies in Africa [16]. Others concentrate on individual studies of conversion actors [17]. Meanwhile, some emphasized the use of comparative methods in the study of religious conversion within the context of medieval history [18].

Based on the existing literature review, this study adopted the theory of religious conversion as the basis for analyzing the conversion to Islam experienced by *muallaf*. The theory referred to is proposed by Lewis R. Rambo, who explains that the process of religious conversion goes through five stages as follows: context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences [19].

Context encompasses a broad panorama of dialectical and conflicting factors, each of which facilitates the process of conversion. Rambo distinguishes two types of context: macro- and micro-context. The macro-context refers to the broader social context, including political, economic, religious, and other policies. On the other hand, the micro-context involves family relationships, friendships, ethnicity, and other factors [20].

To obtain *hidayah*, a person cannot be detached from the context, particularly the social context that allows a convert to become

acquainted with Islam through social communication in society. This stage enables an individual to receive guidance in the sense of *isma' al-azan* (hearing through the senses), which later leads to *isma' al-qalb* (hearing through the intuition/heart).

The next stage is crisis, where a person experiences an internal crisis. This crisis is sometimes unrecognized or unknown for its origin. It can manifest as unanswered questions or a gap between the desired ideals and the reality of the adopted teachings.

Regarding the crisis stage, Ali Köse, citing Snow & Philips, distinguishes forms of tension that can cause a crisis in an individual's life, underlying the conversion process. The first is spiritual problems, such as a lack of meaning in life, living without clear purpose and direction, a sense of powerlessness, and poor self-image. The second is interpersonal problems, including marital issues, parenting issues during childhood, relationships with parents, and other interpersonal problems. The third is character problems, such as dependence on drugs, alcohol, and split personalities. The fourth is material problems, such as unemployment, job dissatisfaction, financial issues, and other material needs. The last is physical problems, which are related to a person's physical well-being, such as incurable diseases or chronic conditions [21].

This stage then leads an individual to search for a more fulfilling meaning, known as the quest stage. In the context of guidance, according to Ibn al-Qayyim, this quest stage is closer to the concept of *ifham*. *Ifham* emphasizes the internal activities of an individual when actively studying and examining things, such as comparing their previous religious understanding with their new religion.

The next stage is the encounter stage, where a *muallaf* encounters new sources of teachings, both in the form of reference books and personal sources. After the encounter stage, the next stage is interaction. In this stage, a *muallaf* engages in intensive interaction with individuals who are seen as representative figures, explaining what they seek to understand. The search for a religious teacher or mentor leads to the interaction stage, where there is more intense interaction with learning sources, both personal and literary, enabling *muallaf* to reach the guidance of *sima al-qalb* or comprehending the meanings with their intuition. This state then motivates a person to enter the next stage, which is commitment. When reaching the commitment stage, a *muallaf* enters the guidance of *sima' al-qubul wal*

ijabah. Entering this stage requires varying lengths of time, differing from one person to another.

The final stage of the conversion process is consequences. It is a stage where a convert faces various consequences, whether from family, friends, or institutions. In other words, this stage represents the phase where religious conversion brings about psychological, theological, and social effects or impacts. These effects extend to the *muallaf* themselves, their close relationships, and the broader society. The explanation above illustrates how guidance is received by a *muallaf* from the perspective of Lewis R. Rambo's conversion stages.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of guidance according to Ibn al-Qayyim, the process of converting to Islam can be explained through the following stages. A *muallaf* goes through at least the sixth and seventh levels of guidance, known as *'ām* and *khās.'Ām* guidance refers to the teachings of Islam that reach a *muallaf* and can be explained through sociological processes. The encounter between non-Muslims and the teachings of Islam through various social interactions allows for the introduction of Islam to them, which then continues to the process of acquiring *khās* guidance. Before reaching *khās* guidance, meaning receiving *taufīq* and *ināyah*, a *muallaf* must go through the stages of *ismā'* and *ifhām*. If one only stops at sensory *ismā'* and then embraces Islam, he/she remains as nominal Islam. Although formally converting to Islam, the individual's theological and psychological state remains as he/she was before embracing Islam.

If sensory *ismā'* leads a *muallaf* to the real *isma'*, the next process is receiving guidance in the form of comprehension (*ifhām*), which opens up new perspectives on Islamic teachings, motivating him/her to accept it. After the process of *ifhām*, which allows the acceptance of Islamic teachings, there is one essential aspect according to Ibn al-Qayyim that leads someone to embrace Islam, namely *khās* guidance.

Khās guidance is what fundamentally determines whether someone embraces Islam or not. It depends entirely on the *aufīq* dan *ināyah* from Allah. Thus, based on Ibn al-Qayyim's explanation, the conversion to be a Muslim ultimately relies entirely on this guidance. Therefore, this is the process of becoming a Muslim, from a normative theological perspective, based on Ibn al-Qayyim's views on guidance.

Although Ibn al-Qayyim attempted to synchronize the absolute will of Allah with human freedom to choose between accepting or

rejecting *hidayah ('ām)*, in the end, he completely relied on Allah for *hidayah*. With His absolute power, Allah will guide *(ināyah* and *taufīq)* whoever He desires and misguide whoever He desires after the coming of the Prophet to humanity. The granting of guidance and misguidance is based on His greatness and wisdom, as Ibn al-Qayyim described.

3.3. *Hidayah*: Perspectives of the Ulemas

In this section, the concept of guidance (*hidayah*) will be discussed based on the perspectives of *muallaf*. Before going further into the discussion, it is necessary to briefly explain the meaning of *muallaf* in this study. Scholars have provided various explanations for the term *muallaf*. The root word of *muallaf* is "*alifa*," which means taming [22]. Linguistically, *muallaf* refers to something that needs to be tamed or softened. In this study, *muallaf* refers to non-Muslims who embrace Islam, regardless of their backgrounds or reasons. This definition is explained by Az-Zuhri as quoted by Imam ath-Tabari [23].

The perspective of *muallaf* on *hidayah* in this context is the result of an analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with them. It should be noted that the *muallaf* did not present a systematic formulation of *hidayah* starting from conceptual explanations to its details. However, based on the information gathered during the data collection process, a more coherent formulation of *hidayah* according to their comprehension can be formulated.

In general, *muallaf* interpret *hidayah* in a similar manner to what have been presented by the ulemas, namely, *hidayah* is guidance that comes from Allah to them, leading them to embrace Islam. Within this guidance, there is something that cannot be consciously explained or rationalized as to why it happens. Thus, in *hidayah*, there is something they find difficult to explain but can be felt as a presence in an illuminative manner.

The following describes how guidance is perceived and expressed by *muallaf*. **First, hidayah comes in an illuminative manner**. Here, illuminating manner refers to something whose timing and process are unknown. However, its existence is genuinely felt. For example, the attraction to Islam may suddenly emerge without any apparent reason and is difficult to rationally explain. Even the interest in Islam may be triggered by small things.

Almost all *muallaf* state that their attraction to Islam, the phenomena that lead them to Islam, and eventually conversion to

Islam were initiated by unknown reasons. Guidance, as something that leads *muallaf* to embrace Islam, can be considered illuminating. It flows naturally, and the reasons behind it remain unknown. This is expressed by *muallaf* when they feel something they have never experienced before. Later, after embracing Islam and gaining an understanding of it, they conclude that what they felt was, indeed, *hidayah*.

Here is a statement from a *muallaf* explaining this. It was described that the conversion to Islam as a gift and *hidayah* that he did not know where it came from or how it originated. He suddenly felt an attraction to Islam and to be a Muslim.

> "In my opinion, faith (Islam) is a gift because even though I was raised as a non-Muslim, from a non-Muslim family, I had an attraction to Islam since I was young, sir. I saw men going to the mosque, I got peacefulness in my heart seeing them wearing a cap, wearing a sarong, and usually hanging their prayer rugs. It was very enjoyable, so it started from there. Why was it enjoyable? I don't even know why... Why do I call it *hidayah*? Because such a feeling doesn't come from the family, it doesn't come from education, it's not realized immediately, but slowly..." [24]

Secondly, *hidayah* requires sacrifice. If understood solely from the perspective of *Jabariyya* theology, the issue of *hidayah* can lead to a mindset that raises questions about the justice of Allah. According to the *Jabariyya* perspective, Allah provides *hidayah* to someone, who then embraces Islam, and Allah rewards him/her. Meanwhile, there are others who are not given such guidance or are misguided by Allah, and later Allah will impose punishment to them in the afterlife [25].

Understanding of *hidayah* with an empirical approach based on the experiences perceived by *muallaf* directs towards a proportional interpretation of *hidayah*. Considering human effort becomes highly important in the context of *hidayah*. *Hidayah* is not a free commodity without effort or consequence of sacrifice from a human being.

Although it has been revealed as explained above that *hidayah* is illuminating, its presence is unknown, and it is a valuable gift from Allah, but it still requires struggle and sacrifice. The forms and qualities of struggle and sacrifice differ from one *muallaf* to another. So, after a *muallaf* receives *hidayah*, there are consequences that

he/she will take. They also have to struggle against various challenges and risks. These challenges include committing to learning Islam, and committing to leaving their previous beliefs behind. It is not easy to accomplish and it requires sacrifice. Such sacrifice implies that they will receive a worthy reward from Allah.

As an illustration of such sacrifice and struggle, we can observe a fragment of the process of one *muallaf* in embracing Islam.

The sacrifice and struggle in getting the difficult path of *hidayah* was experienced by the informant (AL). In order pursue intellectual thirst for the truth of a belief, he had to struggle against internal conflicts. These conflicts were between the power of his rationality and existing theological principles. On one hand, his rationality pushed him towards embracing Islam, while his belief still hesitated to depart from his previous religious teachings. It was a long and exhausting internal conflict that required patience and steadfastness in consistently pursuing what he considered rationally true about Islam. Due to the intensity of this internal conflict, he sometimes experienced unusual physical symptoms. For example, uncontrollable trembling or even physical anomalies at specific times, such as in the dusk, around the Maghrib prayer call.

In addition to struggling against his own internal conflicts, when he decided to choose Islam as his way of life, he was forced to no longer receive financial support from his parents for a certain period to meet his daily needs. Moreover, in the early stages of his conversion, he had to endure the sense of alienation from the community. He described situations where he had to avoid meeting his former friends by taking different routes or hiding his Muslim identity by removing his *peci* (cap). It should be noted that such struggles were not endured for just a few days or months, but for years. He acknowledged that the moral support from his spouse played a significant role in his resilience in facing these challenges [26].

Thirdly, Allah does not provide misguidance, but only provides guidance. As explained earlier, *hidayah* is a gift from Allah to His chosen believer. This does not imply that Allah intends to misguide other individuals. So, when they were not yet Muslims, it does not mean that they were deliberately misguided by Allah but rather a sociological process they underwent. When they reached maturity and discerned what they deemed as good or true, they realized that sins and mistakes were their own responsibilities. None of the *muallaf*

who participated in this study expressed the belief that "misguidance" was an intervention from Allah.

One of the *muallaf* analogized individuals who are still embracing other religions other than Islam as children or individuals who are still engaged in their own games. They were deeply engaged in their own games. However, their parents have set boundaries on when to stop playing. Some individuals choose not to stop and continue playing. The parents do not scold them because they had already set those boundaries. Allah will then remind some of those individuals, with His love and mercy. So, they stop being engaged in their games and return to their parents. He analogized his conversion to Islam as a manifestation of Allah's love, who reminded him to stop being engaged in his games, in his previous religion.

So Allah does not misguide His believers, but rather it is the believers themselves who are engaged in their own games and do not pay attention to the warnings of Allah conveyed through His messengers. In the view of *muallaf*, Allah is not cruel in misguiding His believers and will eventually punish the misguided believers [24].

In this aspect, there may be differences between the opinions of ulemas and what is experienced by the *muallaf*. If the *muallaf* feel that Allah does not misguide - at least to the *muallaf* who became the informant of this study - but among the ulemas, especially for those inclined towards the concept of *Jabariyya*, it is normatively stated that Allah is the one who misguides His believers. Because besides being All-Powerful over everything, He also knows who among His believers deserves *hidayah* and who deserves to be misguided.

Fourth, the *Terra Incognita* of *hidayah*. The choice of the phrase *terra incognita* is considered most appropriate to express *hidayah* as a mystery. This mystery is even felt by the individuals who receive it, the *muallaf*. *Terra incognita* here refers to a territory that cannot be known and is beyond the reach of reason. It is unknown what its clear cause and effect are.

What reason can comprehend is the sequence of events that can be understood as a series of causes, for example, because they often see Muslims praying in congregation and find it appealing, which encourages someone to be interested in Islam and eventually become a Muslim. However, in essence, that is not the cause because if it were the cause, the same thing could happen to others as well. The fact is not everyone who sees someone praying is interested and becomes a Muslim. So the true cause is not known for sure whether it is a simple

thing, according to others' perspective, can "cause" someone to become a Muslim, while it is not the case for others.

Human reason has limitations in understanding why *hidayah* happens to a person with a simple event background, while others do not experience the same thing. It can even be the opposite. This is what is meant by the *terra incognita* of *hidayah* in this writing.

3.4. Comparison of *Hidayah* According to Ulemas and *Muallaf*

The last part of this fourth chapter will discuss how the ulemas use a deductive normative approach and *muallaf* empirically experienced how guidance comes to them perceive it. The discussion on this matter will be examined from several aspects as follows.

3.4.1. Approach

In terms of the approach used, there is certainly a difference between the ulemas and *muallaf* in viewing the issue of guidance. Ulemas intentionally study the issue of *hidayah* through the examination of texts, both the Qur'an and Sunnah. Hence, the approach used is deductive normative. They explain *hidayah* not based on what is felt but begin with what is stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah, seeking connections between various texts, thus, constructing an understanding that approaches a comprehensive understanding of *hidayah*.

This is different from how *muallaf* perceive guidance. They consider *hidayah* as Allah's guidance to embrace Islam based on what they feel and experience. Their explanation of *hidayah* is naturally simple and not detailed. The simplicity of their views on *hidayah* is understandable because they rely more on what they have experienced during the conversion process. Although their views on *hidayah* are not detached from their knowledge about *hidayah* after getting into the teachings of Islam. In terms of their approach, muallaf are more inclined towards an inductive empirical method in explaining *hidayah*.

3.4.2. Basis

Regarding the basis used by the ulemas and *muallaf*, it is closely related to the approach they use. Since the basis used by ulemas to explain *hidayah* consists of the evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah, their explanation of *hidayah* does not refer to personal experiences.

In contrast, the perspectives of *muallaf* on *hidayah* are explained based on what they feel and experience. They do not rely heavily on the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah but consistently refer to

what they have felt and experienced. Therefore, their basis of explanations on *hidayah* lies in a series of psychological and spiritual experiences that led them to Islamic guidance.

3.4.3. Conceptual Explanation

Conceptually, the explanations of *hidayah* by the ulemas can be considered comprehensive. As their objective is to explain or interpret what Allah intends in His verses so that it can be well understood by the *ummah*, their explanations about *hidayah* are detailed, considering various contexts and aspects.

This is different from the perspective of *muallaf* on *hidayah*. They perceive and explain *hidayah* when asked, but they rarely speak about it if not prompted. They simply feel it, nurture it, and maintain it for the sake of their own Islamic faith, remaining consistent with what they have felt and experienced. From a conceptual standpoint, their explanations of *hidayah* appear to be simple and sometimes less systematic. This is understandable because their explanations are not presented within the framework of providing understanding and teaching others about *hidayah* but are limited to expressing what they have personally experienced.

3.4.4. Allah's Will

Regarding the connection between *hidayah* and Allah's will, both ulemas and *muallaf* believe that *hidayah* is related to Allah's will. If Allah intends for someone to become a Muslim, they will become a Muslim, and if Allah does not have a will on them, they will not become a Muslim.

The difference lies in the fact that the *muallaf* explicitly explain that Allah does not misguide His believers, including the *muallaf* themselves. Even when they were non-Muslims, they did not see it as Allah misguiding them but rather as their own will to be non-Muslims. Therefore, some *muallaf* deeply regret their previous religious diversity and hope for the Islamization to their relatives.

This is somewhat different from the explanations given by the ulemas. In explaining the connection between misguidance and Allah's will, sometimes they do not draw a clear demarcation. The fact that *hidayah* is a divine grace is already clear, but when it comes to explain misguidance, they may on one occasion detach it from Allah's will, while on another occasion, they may connect it to Allah's will as well.

The following table provides a concise summary of the comparison between the views of ulemas and *muallaf* regarding *hidayah*, as previously described.

Table 1.
The Comparison of Views Between Ulemas and Muallaf Regarding
Hidayah

No	Aspects	Perspectives	
		Ulema	**Muallaf**
1	Approach	Deductive-normative	Inductive-empirical
2	Basis	The texts (*Nash*) from both the Qur'an and Sunnah, when elaborated with reasoning	Empirical experier involving psycholog aspects
3	Explanation	Detailed, structured, and diverse, including the concept of *hidayah* to embrace Islam. There are differences in the explanations of the concept of *hidayah* among ulemas.	Simple and singular, nar *hidayah* that leads to Is Its understanding tend be the same among *muallaf*.
4	Allah's Will	Although many ulemas explain that *hidayah* is based on the absolute will of Allah, there are some who lean towards the Jabariyya doctrine, which explains that misguidance is also the intervention of Allah.	According to the *mud hidayah* is a divine gift f Allah, and on the other h Allah never misg humans. The darkness humans engage in be receiving the light of Isla due to their own will. because humans desire be so..

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the perspective of muallaf on hidayah: First, muallaf explained *hidayah* with an inductive-empirical approach. Second, *muallaf* interpreted *hidayah* as Allah's guidance that leads them to embrace Islam. Third, *hidayah* is presented as illuminating. Fourth, *hidayah* requires sacrifice. Fifth, according to the *muallaf*, it is Allah who provides *hidayah*, and Allah does not misguide His believers. Lastly, *hidayah* is *terra incognita*, with a mystery that cannot be comprehended through reasoning.

Other conclusions regarding the comparison of views between the ulemas and *muallaf* regarding *hidayah* are as follows: First, in terms of the approach, the ulemas used a deductive-speculative approach, while *muallaf* used an inductive-empirical approach. Secondly, in terms of the basis of their explanations, ulemas relied on textual evidence, while *muallaf* drew from their psychological-spiritual experiences. Regarding the conceptual aspect, the explanations of *hidayah* by the ulemas were more comprehensive and systematic, while *muallaf* offered simpler and less systematic explanations. Furthermore, concerning Allah's will, the *muallaf* believe that Allah guides His believers and does not misguide them. In contrast, according to the ulemas, Allah does not only provide guidance but also misguidance (*Jabariyya* teachings).

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