

Religion Pluralism: Meeting Point Looking For Religions

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Abstract. Religious plurality actually necessitates religious pluralism. That is an understanding that promotes and upholds the attitude of accepting, maintaining, and respecting religious diversity and diversity as uniquely true to its Adherents. But reality speaks differently. Religious pluralism precisely presents a prolonged polemic between pro and contra groups. Religious pluralism is transformed into something very complicated. Religious pluralism can not be understood simply by saying that our society is advanced, God has created us with different religions, nationalities, tribes, and others. In fact, we often experience Bloodshed tragedies in the name of religion, Such as: Ciukesik, Magelang, clash of Monas monument between FPI and AKKBB, as well as of bloody events. However, to borrow the word *Cak Nur*, religious pluralism must be understood as a true link of diversity in bonds. Even religious pluralism is a must for human safety and world peace.

On that basis, the question arises: Can religious pluralism, be used as a way to find the meeting point of religions in the Midst of religious conflict?

Keywords: Religion; Pluralism; Conflict.

1. Introduction

Variety religion embraced by mankind (Jews, Zoroastrian, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, and others) are social facts that indicate the presence of religious plurality. That is a condition of the existence of religious diversity.

If so, in fact necessitates their religious plurality of religious pluralism. That is an understanding that carries and uphold their acceptance, maintaining, and respect for difference and diversity as a true religion is unique to its adherents. But the reality of another talk. Precisely religious pluralism presents a prolonged polemic between groups pros and cons. For the group of pro argue that religious pluralism is inclusive and be a way to create a peaceful religious life. While the counter-argued that religious pluralism is considered denying the exclusive truth of a religion; regarded as the imposition of Western values; and regarded as *deislamisasi* process.

Therefore, religious pluralism transformed into something very complicated. Religious pluralism can not be understood simply by saying that our society, God has created us different religion, nation-states, tribes, and others. The proof, we the Indonesian people often experience the tragedy of bloodshed for the sake of religion, such as: Ciukesik events that happened recently, the unrest in Magelang, Monas clashes between the FPI and AKKBB, as well as other bloody events.

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But, to borrow a word *Cak Nur*, precisely religious pluralism must be understood as a true affinity diversity in bundles. Even religious pluralism is a necessity for the survival of humanity and world peace, including through mechanisms of maintenance, checks and balances that result. As has been mentioned in the holy books that Allah SWT. has created a mechanism of checks and balances among others in order to maintain the integrity of the earth, and is one manifestation of God's grace in abundance to the people. If Allah does not compensate a party with a party other man, then surely the earth is destroyed, but Allah. have abundant mercy to all the worlds.²

On that basis, I would put religious pluralism as a way to find common ground religions (which of course with the study and rational argument) despite the presence of religion has often been accused by some as quarrel and bloodshed among men by positioning the religion as the reasons, including conflict-religious conflicts that occurred in Indonesia. A sociological facts are indisputable.

On basic also, the question arises: Could the religious pluralism can be a way to find common ground in the middle of religions religious conflict?

2. Discussion

2.1. Religious Conflict in Indonesia

For the global community that barely knows no boundaries and social barriers, religious plurality must be studied and utilized in the context of the theological reality is positively linked with the social reality. Our spiritual experiences often prove when the reality was not able to put together it will be easy to be a conflict between religious groups. Because of that global society must be able to position and utilize both as part of objective reality of the needs and interests. With this method of modern society was always able to anticipate the best way to live together in harmony in diversity and peace.

This awareness is very important, because it is usually difficult human relations between individuals of different beliefs vertical. The existence of religion is usually the cause of a variety of variable of communication between human beings in a social interaction. The fact the field this assumption, as in the case of violence against the Ahmadiyya Muslims in Ciukesik Bandung, Ketapang case, Sampit, Kupang, Ambon, and other areas in Indonesia.

The inability of our nation recognizes both the realities encourage the institutionalization and civilizing attitudes and individual behavior and social justification of the interests of their own religious beliefs without regard to the interests of people of other faiths.³As a result of individual and social attitudes are

²Nurkholis Madjid, 2000, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, (Jakarta: Paramadina).

³Budhy religious attitude Munawar Rahman split into three parts, namely: an exclusive attitude, inclusive, parallelism. See more in Budhy Munawar Rahman, 2001, *Islam Pluralis: Wacana Kesetaraann Kaum Beriman*,(Jakarta: Paramadina), pp. 44-48.

formed that are not ready to accept the presence of people and other religions are not religion. And will give birth to the attitude of in-group or out-group, minna or minhum, misunderstandings, differences of interest, and more. This attitude will damage the institution of social, political, and shredding a portrait of our nation that is supposedly known as a polite and religious nation. The number of religious conflict strengthen while those that tolerance and true religiosity Indonesian nation is only at the outer skin (exoteric) it just is not touching aspect spiritual (esoteric), inner awareness. Suppose has touched the aspect that will certainly not be a conflict in the country. Diverse country that is not only religion but also a variety of sociological reality. Tolerance which is still at the outer skin of the real religious community is a failure of reason religion has been established and taught by the clergy to the nation each including Islam. The formation of a religious reason for these people more likely to use bayani and Burhani approach. Yet in addition to these two approaches there is still another approach, namely Irfani approach. This is where the important role of religious leaders and scholars to make changes in the methods of knowledge / religious sciences which impact on the formation of a tolerant religion of reason and accommodating to all differences.

2.2. A meeting point of religions

The formation of a tolerant religion of reason and accommodating to all theoretical differences actually very supportive of the existence of understanding religious pluralism that carries and uphold their acceptance, maintaining, and respect for difference and diversity as a true religion is unique to its adherents. Acceptance, maintaining, and respect for difference and diversity promoted religion understand religious pluralism implies the meaning that this understanding more focused on efforts to find a meeting point of the religions professed by mankind. In other words, through the understanding of religious pluralism, the religions professed by mankind can be searched temunya point. The meeting point of religions within the framework of understanding religious pluralism can be achieved in several ways, as follows.

First, the perennial concept of religion, namely the existence of the same nature in any religion though encased in a container / a different path. With this concept it is possible to achieve a transcendent unity of religions by Frithjof Schuon termed The Transcendent Unity of Religions.⁴ It's just that transcendent unity of religions / intersection or the unity of religions is not at the level of the exoteric religion but at the level of esoteric, essential or transcendent.⁵

⁴Frithjof Schuon, 1984, *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*, (Wheaton, Illinois: The Philosophical Publishing House).

⁵Budhy Munawara Rahmana givenice metaphor that can be usedforillustrates the unity of religions. If esotericism is light, then any religion that captures light in various colors (as religions) and various power the light - no light at all, there is the middle, and there is also vague. That is, of course on the metaphysical doctrine. But from the standpoint of Perennial philosophy follows the multicolored light's brightness is not important for several reasons. First, although there is a wide range of light (red, yellow,

In the Islamic context, the meeting point of these religions can also be known through the stories described by the Qur'an with Ibrahim as characters. Ibrahim names contained in the Qur'an sixty-nine times.⁶The mention of this much shows how important pioneering and Prophet of Allaah Ibraaheem Ibrahim. Ibrahim (Abraham) - was the figure of the Prophet and Messenger of Allah was referenced by all the religions of the Book (the sky); both Jews, Christians can, and Islam. All recognize that Abraham is a role model and example of the faithful. Because it should be studied, why Ibrahim in the good fortune as the central figure of the heavenly religions?

Ibrahim religious discourse, at length set forth in paragraphs 130-141 surat al-Baqarah. Word of God, "... And nobody hates milla (religion) Ibrahim except someone who reveals himself, and indeed we chose in the world ...". This verse clearly shows how ideally millah Ibrahim for mankind. The use of the term millah give distinction (segregation) with said al-din, though in Indonesian equally mean religion. If al-din was a religion that has accompanied the Bible as a religious and social institutions, then al-milla does not have a heritage of Scripture and only suhuf (sheets) only. Then, how actually the essence of Abraham to be a typology millah belief (religious) ideal?

In the Qur'an explained that Ibrahim millah characteristic is obedience and submission to the Lord of the universe so that man would not die, but surrendered (Muslims) to him. Therefore, millah Ibrahim is not a Jew, Christian, or otherwise, but millah Hanafiyah; namely the belief that straight in holding monotheistic beliefs dualism is far from God. Thus maenstream millah Ibrahim is an attitude of trust and the totality of the laws and rules of God. This attitude is at once negated all of his strength as well. Nimrod despotism at the time of Abraham is one of the challenges that must be

green, black, and so on), but all that remains is called light. So if religion is authentic, there remains a core of the same. Second, although the power has a bright light that varies, but all of the light (also religious) would take humans on the Light Source (Source religions, namely God) in spite of the thin and dim. For if he continues to discover that light, he will remain until the source is. Until the source is the most important in religion. Because of the nature of religion is the sense of the absolute in human beings, so that he felt the continuous presence of the Absolute in itself.

This is where people perceive the symbolic meaning of the Lord's presence. Being the essence of religion is actually the knowledge but also the wisdom as well. The term sophia, said the sages of ancient Greece; or sapientia Christian saints according to the terms of the Middle Ages; Jnana according to Hindu tradition; and al-ma'rifah or al-wisdom according to the concept of the Sufis. That is the essence of religion is often referred to as scientia sacra which means sacred knowledge or knowledge devine. This knowledge diyakini- experienced-not just come from the Natural Celestial, which was later revealed to be a revelation in many ways / methods. Hence, harmony (unity of religions) are in the divine sky (the esoteric, transcendent) and not in the earth's atmosphere (exoteric).

Well, in a way transcendent, then all the rituals, doctrines and religious symbols that are used to achieve an understanding of the religious basis that, get penjelesan thorough through the form of formal or glued in one religious tradition or in Islam conceived "glued in a specific Shari'ah", Walikullin ja'alna minkum syir'atan waminhaja. See Budhy Munawar Rahman, Op. Cit., P. 89-90.

⁶Chual Labuam, tth., *Tafshil Ayat Al-Qur'an al-Hakim*, Terj. Bahasa Arab Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi, (ttp: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah)p. 64-70.

annihilated in order to implement the teachings. Similarly, otoritarian attitude Azar (father of Ibrahim) requiring idolatry.⁷

Ibrahim grandeur for the faithful afterwards led to the plat-form kalimatun sawa 'that enables the retrieval space of divine religions, beliefs and even the whole of mankind. The plate-form as described God, "... Alla na'buda illa nusyrika bihi syai'an wala wala yattakhidza ba'dhuna ba'dhan arbaban mindunillah" (Ali Imran verse 64). That is, should purify confidence and trust only in God and free himself from all relationships and power other than Him. Wal result, theology became the foundation Ibrahim is' aqidah taharruriyah (liberation theology). From here also then Musa destroy Pharaoh's regime and Qarun in Egypt, Jesus against the absolutism of the Roman king, Muhammad fight against the tyranny of infidels of Mecca.

Kalimatun sawa 'here by itself build a discourse of pluralism for mankind. That the symbols or slogans formal legal religion, faith and obedience is not the essence of a person. Whatever the human religion predicates and label all hold firm commitment of faith in God (Allah), then he has been included in the frame right religion (Hanafiyah). *Second*, to achieve the transcendent unity of religions / intersection or the unity of religions that exist at the level of esoteric (spiritual), essential or the transcendent, it must use the approach or epistemology Irfani. In this context, Amin Abdullah stated that:

"Past experience with inner profound, authentic, pure, Hanafiyya Samhah and almost unspeakable by logic (burhan) and incommunicable by language (parrot) is called an al-ilm al-khudhuri (direct experience) by tradition Ishraqi in the East or preverbal, prereflective prelogical consciousness or knowledge by the existentialists in the West. ... Bulkhead, bulkhead formalities created by traditional epistemology and Burhani bayani either in the form of language, religion, race, ethnicity, skin, class, culture, traditions, who helped loosen and take distance among peoples. Esoteric spirituality that cuts across religion, language, and culture rather than externally-exoteric greater emphasis identity of religion, language, race, skin, culture, wanting in style of reasoning put forward by Irfani epistemology. For that principle understand the existence of people, groups, and people of other faiths in a way fertilize empathy, sympathy, social skills and cling to the universal principles of reciprocity (when pain pinched, do not pinch others) will deliver the tradition of epistemology Irfani on a mindset that is more unity in difference, tolerant and pluralist. "⁸

Third, with the concept of form and *adyan wahdat wahdat*. This concept is in addition to delivering at the intersection of religious people, also parallel to efforts to promote inter-religious harmony in containers Communication Forum (FKUB).

⁷Said Aqiel Siraj *Ibrahim Bapak Monotheisme Agama-Agama*, paper presented at the National Seminar Three Faiths One God November 2006 in the Cathedral of Semarang.

⁸See M. Amin Abdullah, 2010, *Islamic Studies di Perguruan Tinggi: Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif: an integrative approach-Interkonektif*, Cet. II, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Belajar), p. 380-381.

The concept was first proposed when Ibn al-Araby stated that all that exists in the real world is just a form of shadow and its essential form is the form of God. So the logical consequence of this concept is that all forms of religion by all means of worship is essentially a manifestation of self that have been there before, in eternity, in *al-a'yan al-tsabitah* that essentially also a manifestation of God's shadow through the names and His attributes. Thus, all forms of worship and the worship of religions diverse basically just a symbol of the real worship, the goal is the same, namely the worship of God Almighty, because the religion brought by the Prophet in principle come from and will return the principal one, as emanating from God the One and this is the definition *adyan wahdat* which is a logical consequence of the ideology *wahdat* form. Therefore, Ibn Araby argued that all religions, both of which belong to the heavenly religions and *ardhi* there is no difference, since all religions worship the One God who descry in miscellaneous them and miscellaneous all deities, worshipping idols or else even exposes the face to the Kaaba completely void, if it is worshiped, because it is only a symbol. But on the contrary, although what made a good symbol of fire or idols, or sculpture, the Kaaba, or else, the origin remains in God itself that is religion. Thus worship is considered valid if it is deemed all forms of all sorts, all that is visible and what,⁹

According to al-Hallaj,¹⁰ that basically the religion embraced by a person is the result of choice and will of the Lord is not entirely a man's own choice. Likewise, John Hick¹¹ found 99% of religious belief depends on where a person is born. Someone born in Thailand is very likely Buddhist, in Switzerland very probably Muslim. Principal base of a single universal truth that is understood on God, or Tawhid. That man from the beginning of its existence embraced Tawhid also symbolized in the self and Adam belief that religions smitik regarded not only as the first man but also the First Prophet. The most important consequence is the termination of a pure tawhid resignation on God and not make the same more as against him. Therefore, Allah says:

"Indeed, they are the believers, the Jews, the Christians, Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and do good, then there is no fear come upon them and they do not need to worry". (Al-Baqarah verse 62).

The paragraph provides assurance that, as Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Sabians, as long as they believe in Allah and the Last Day, and based on the belief that they are doing good, then they all go to heaven and escape hell.

⁹Ibn al-Araby is the curved kesufian ordinary thinker rich and creative, but also wild, uncontrollable. In his hand *wahdat* understand form, monism, reached the peak of its development. Many condemned as heretical or even pagan, but his teachings continues to grow and influence the world of Islamic thought, directly ataupun indirectly. For his followers he is al-Syaik al-Akbar (Professor of General). See Nurkholis Madjid, 2000, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, (Jakarta: Paramadina), p. 172-173.

¹⁰Al-Hallaj continued Sufi thought Dzu al-Nun al-Mishry. Famously said Ana al-Haqq (I am the Truth), signaled his identification with God. Nurkholis Madjid, *Ibid.*, P. 171.

¹¹He is the main character of the most impressive argued pluralist paradigm. He became known for his God and The Universe of Faiths (1973). See Budhy Munawar Rahman, *Op. Cit.*, P. 48.

3. Closing

3.1. Conclusion

One thing that the reality of the world community is a plural society (plural), the diverse community, whether religious, ethnic customs and so on. Plurality it gave the impression of uniqueness and because it takes uniqueness also is treatment based on understanding of pluralism.

In the context of religious plurality, understanding religious pluralism carrying and uphold high acceptance, maintain and respect the differences and diversity of religions as uniquely true to its adherents, can be used as a way to reach the meeting point of religions (in the esoteric level) adopted by mankind because of this understanding more emphasis on the search for the Absolute that exists in every religion. The essence of religion is the sense of the absolute in human beings, so that he felt the continuous presence of the Absolute in itself. The meeting point of religions within the framework of understanding religious pluralism can be achieved by several things including perennial is the concept of religion, Irfani approach, and the concept of form and *adyan wahdat*.

Adyan wahdat concept can be taken as one of the theories that can be developed in the direction of religious plurality and supporting religious pluralism. Nevertheless *adyan wahdat* concept also can not be separated away from criticism. If *wahdat* obscure form was judged to have good and bad value parameter, then *adyan wahdat* also rated obscured parameter believers and unbelievers. Therefore need wise and prudent attitude to pluralism of religion, namely in our absolute relative while our exit.

3.2. Suggestion

In the framework of realizing the meeting point of religions embraced by the people, it is implementable need to hold inter-religious dialogue to foster mutual understanding among religions. Even if necessary, in the container for a joint organization to facilitate coordination in finding solutions together when there is friction between religious communities. In this way the barriers that exist between them can be eliminated and inter-religious relations is more conducive. That ultimately create harmony between the life of co-religionists. And Allah knows best bi al-sowab.

4. References

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