

Plurality in The Context of Religious Harmony

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Abstract: Pluralistic societies can be understood as societies consisted of various social and economic, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious groups and strata. In a plural society, anyone can join an existing group, without any systemic obstacles that cause obstruction of the right for having group or joining a certain group. Plurality is diversity in a form of unity. Diversity, uniqueness, and partiality are an undeniable reality. Sociologically, humans consist of different ethnicities and cultures and bind themselves each other. All show differences, diversity and uniqueness, but remain in unity. Individual differences merge into one unit of family, the diversity of families fused into one social bond, to the variety of tribal summed up in one nation and the world community. If the rules of religious plurality as mentioned above, one is violated by one of the religious followers, and the offense disturbs the honor of other religions, ofcourse there will be disharmony in daily life, even the toughest form, such as conflict and war.

Keywords: Al Quran; plurality; religious harmony; culture

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian nation is one of the most pluralist countries in the world. Indonesia has thousands of islands and is the largest archipelago country in the world with the most diverse background, that is about 400 ethnics and languages of its auspices. Indonesia is also a country of a very diverse culture. Pluralistic societies can be understood as societies consisted of various social and economic, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious groups and strata. In a plural society, anyone can join an existing group, without any systemic obstacles that cause obstruction of the right for having group or joining a certain group. The new plurality means positive if there is interaction and the relationship of mutual trust between people (social-trust). It is a prerequisite for the creation of a civilized and prestigious society. The people who have moral, character, ethic, virtuous, polite, patient and wise, and respect human rights, respect for self and others, the own nation and other nations, tribes, own groups and other groups. That is why to achieve optimal quality of life is more prosperous, just and rich, that will undoubtedly bring the society to sit as low and upright as the other nations of the world.

Pluralism is a philosophical view that does not want to reduce everything to one last principle but accepts diversity. Pluralism includes the cultural, politic and religious fields. Based on the biased definition with this relativism, of course religious people can not fully accept it. Therefore a different understanding of the pluralism idea will always occur among religious leaders.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1 The Definition of Pluralism and Plurality

Pluralism has a "plural" sense that derives from word "plural" meant "more than one". In terms of we can refer to the Muslim Indonesian archipelago, Cak Nur, according to him, pluralism is a base of a positive attitude to accept the plurality of all things in social and cultural life, including religion. What is meant by a positive attitude is an active and wise attitude.

Pluralism in English according to Anis Malik Thoha has three meanings. First, the sense of ecclesiastical: the title for the one who holds more than one position in the ecclesiastical structure, has two or more positions simultaneously, both ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical. Second, philosophical definition; means a system of thought which acknowledges the foundation of thinking based on more than one. While the third, the definition of socio-political: is a system that recognizes the coexistence of group diversity, whether of race, ethnicity, stream or party, while respecting the highly characteristic difference aspects among the groups. The word "Pluralism" is from English.

When referring from the English wikipedia, the definition of [eng] pluralism is: "In the social sciences, pluralism is a framework of interaction in which groups show sufficient respect and tolerance of each other, that

they are fruitfully coexist and interact without conflict or assimilation. Plurality is diversity in a form of unity. Diversity, uniqueness, and partiality are an undeniable reality. Sociologically, humans consist of different ethnicities and cultures and bind themselves each other. All show differences, diversity and uniqueness, but remain in unity. Individual differences merge into one unit of family, the diversity of families fused into one social bond, to the variety of tribal summed up in one nation and the world community. The whole personality is part of plurality, that plurality is the largest form of the parts of the personality.

Sociologically, religious pluralism is a fact that we are different, diverse and plural in terms of religion. This is a social reality, something that is inevitable and undeniable. In social reality, we have different religions. This recognition of the existence of religious pluralism is sociologically the simplest pluralism, because this recognition does not mean allowing recognition of the theology truth or even the ethics of other religions.

As M. Rasjidi explains that religion is an inexorable problem, moreover it changes. He likens that religion not as (like) home or clothing that if it is needed, it can be replaced. If a person does a belief, then that belief can not be separated from him/her. Based on this belief, according to Rasjidi, religious communities have difficulty speaking objectively in religious matters, since human beings are involved. As a Muslim, for example, he is fully aware that he is involved with Islam. However, Rasjidi acknowledges that in reality the history of society is multi-complex which contains religious pluralism, various religions. It is a reality, therefore we must adapt by recognizing the existence of religious pluralism in Indonesian society. It can be noted that Rasjidi does not see any meeting in theological issues. His pluralist view does not mean a meeting in matters of faith, but only an acknowledgment of the existence of other religions. His pluralism view is not about the truths that exist in other religions. He does not mention it at all. However, he also does not view the errors of theological teaching of other religions. His criticism of other religions is social criticism, in the sense that he criticizes the missionary or zending practices of Christianity. He criticizes the mission or zending activity. He does not criticize theological teachings that exist in Christianity. That's why the pattern used by Rasjidi is a responsive pattern on a growing problem, such as about Christianity, so it seems defensive. What he proposes is a defense, a persistent dialogue, not an attack. Rasjidi's defense of the various problems that befell the Muslims is openly, clearly and exposed, and sometimes even fails where the allegations can not be avoid, allegations in the empirical (actual) matters. It never covers anything, although it is bitter and hard, for example about what Christians do.

There is the impression that the view of religious absolutism is based on the content of the doctrine that believers can not be objective against other truths. For Muslims it may be based on the doctrine that "the truest religion in the sight of Allah is Islam". This sociologically pluralism recognition is also expressed by Mukti Ali. Mukti Ali socially does not question the existence of pluralism in social confessions, but he is very firm in theological matters. He asserted that belief in theological things cannot be used by compromising law. Therefore, in the same matter (object), each religious believer has different points of view, such as the view of the Qur'an, the Bible, the Prophet Muhammad, Jesus and Mariam. According to him, Muslims make a high appreciation of Mariam and Jesus. That is part of Muslim belief. Muslims cannot really believe in the divinity of Jesus but believe in his prophethood as the Prophet Muhammad. Then, Muslims also not only look at the Qur'an but also Torah and Gospel as the Holy Book. The question is whether the current Biblical book is authentic or not, and whether it is entirely God's revelation. This does not mean that Muslims have always rejected the Lord's Revelation revealed to the Prophet Moses, Jesus or other apostles, although Muslims cannot admit that the Bible as the entire Word of God. However, Muslims believe that the Bible contains the Word of God. It seems that Mukti Ali wants to assert that each religion has an uncompromising theological belief. Islam has its own faith, even including things that other believers believe, such as the concept of Prophet Isa. Likewise, Christians have their own faith, even including things that are believed by Islam, such as the concept of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, the recognition of pluralism is at the social level, that we sociologically have our own faith and belief. The matter of truth is within the region of each religion.

The discourse of religious pluralism of Djohan Effendi is different from pluralism of Rasjidi and Mukti Ali above. The recognition of pluralism by Djohan Effendi is not only the sociological recognition that religious people are different, but also the recognition of theological intersection among religious people. Djohan disagreed with religious absolutism. He distinguishes between religion itself and human religiosity. The definition between religion and religiosity must be understood proportionally. According to him, religion - especially derived from revelation, is believed to be divine. Religion has absolute value. However, when religion is understood by humans, the truth of that religion cannot be fully captured and reached by man, because man himself is relative. Therefore, any truth expressed by man including the truth of religion said by human beings is relative, not absolute. The absolute is the truth of religion itself, while the religious truth said by the human being is relative. The absolute truth can only be known by the knowledge of God. In another language, Greg Barton mentions that Djohan Effendi rejects religious absolutism and recognizes religious pluralism.

Djohan points out: "As a relative being, human's comprehension and knowledge are unlikely to be able to reach and capture religion as a truth doctrine precisely and thoroughly. It exists only in God's science. Thus if a follower says the words of religion in his mind and not religion itself, but also belief that is believed, even his own comprehension and understanding. Therefore, his comprehension and definition of religion is clearly not the religion itself and there is no reason absolutely to blame the other's comprehension and definition."

Djohan Efendi's idea about pluralism is from an comprehension that *da'wah*/preaching (both Islam and Christian) is important, but He does not agree if religiosity is opposite of religious view absolutely and statically (assuming that truth or salvation is a group's claim. From here, according to Djohan, dialogue is something essential to stimulate our religiosity, so it stays static, and Djohan does not approve of religious absolutism, so any coercion or violence should not have a place in *da'wah*/preaching efforts. In this case, what is needed is a moderate and liberal attitude toward another faith. From there, the theology of harmony will come true.

Djohan points out: With an approach and comprehension that realize human limitations and unabsolute fully, It may be possible to develop a theology of Harmony, a religious view which is not monopolizing truth and salvation and a religious view based on the realization that religion as the truth teaching never caught and revealed by humans fully and intactly, and that one's religion is generally more of a product, or at least an environmental influence. " Djohan makes a firm line between religion and diversity. These two things can not be joined. He disagrees to one's religious view as a absolute religion. Religious absolutism is not true. The issues that befall religious people are often caused by the view that one's religiousness is the only truest, while the other's religiousness is wrong. This is to cause the existence of mission, preaching etc.

According to him, Islam emphatically gives people freedom completely in religious and religiosity matters. He refers to the verse of Qur'an which states that "there is no compulsion in religion." He also refers to a verse which shows that God welcomes anyone who will believe or not believe to Him. According to him, Islam does not deny the existing religions. Islam recognizes the existence of these religions and does not reject the values of its teachings. Freedom in having religion and respecting to other people's religions and beliefs are religious teachings, besides that they are important to a plural society. Thus, defending religious freedom for anyone and respecting the religion and beliefs of others is regarded as a part of Muslimity. He refers to the verse of Qur'an stating that the necessity of defending religious freedom symbolized by the preservation of worship house such as monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques.

The same thing is also found by Nurcholis Madjid. He expresses his disagreement to absolutism, because absolutism is the base of all hostility. He says: "Another concrete guideline for keeping *ukhuwah* (relationship) is that it is not justified by a group of believers to despise or disrespect other groups because who knows despised is better than despising. It teaches us in socializing with other human beings, especially fellow believers to not do absolutism, a base of all enmity. "

Nurcholish affirms how the importance of religious life. He does not explain explicitly what is meant here is the only religion of Islam. It means that the religion that is meant is the religion in general. However, with dialectical language, he carries out autocratic criticism of believers. He acknowledges that in religions, more precisely, in the circles of adherents of religions, there is always the potential for dangerous negativity and destruction. Nurcholish sees that the 1992 map is being marked by conflicts with various religions. Admittedly, religion is not the only factor, but it is clear that religious considerations in these conflicts and in the escalation play a great role. Every religion in a conflict often involves a formal religion or an organized religion. He calls places of conflict; Ireland, around France and Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Palestine, Near East, Black Africa, Sudan, Gulf War, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and the Philippines.

In response to the slogan introduced by futurologists, John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, *Spirituality, Yes; Organized Religion, No*, Nurcholish states that the slogan contains a principled meaning that she ever proposes 20 years ago- "Islam, Yes; Islamic Party, No ". Nurcholish claims to have great difficulty, even the impossibility, to accept the truth. He also asserts that the motto of *Spirituality, Yes; Organized Religion, No.*, does not seem to have a strong foothold. That is, official religions are still a phenomenon that plays many roles in human life.

Referring to the Holy Qur'an, Nurcholish asserts that every people or human being groups have been raised or sent by a messenger of God, with the task of calling his people to worship only to God (in the sense of the pure Godhead). He quoted Sura al-Nahl (16): 36. Based on the words of God, it is said that:

"... all the religions of Prophets and Messengers that have been raised in every people are the same, and the core of the teachings of all the Prophets and Apostles is the Belief in the One and Resistance to tyrannical powers. In other words, Belief in the Almighty and opposition to tyranny is a meeting point, common platform or, in the language of the Qur'an, *kalimatun-sawâ* '(the same sentence or teaching) among all Holy Books. "

According to Nurcholish, the similarities in the religions are not surprising thing. He argues that all truth comes from the same source, that is Allah(al-Haqq). All Prophets and Messengers teach the same doctrine of truth. Meanwhile, the difference is only in the forms of the specific response of an Apostle's duty to the demands of the times and places. It is asserted that the difference is not principle, while the basic teachings

(*Shari'a*) of the Prophets and Messengers are the same. In this explanation, he quotes from the Qur'an, namely in Surat Al-Syûrâ (42): 13, al-Nisâ '(4): 163-165, al-Baqarah (2): 136, al-Ankabût (29): 46, Al-Syûrâ (42): 15, and al-Mâ'idah (5): 8. The quoted verses relate to the similarity between the Shari'a of Muhammad and the Shari'a of Noah, Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qub, Ayyub, Jonah, Aaron, Moses, Solomon, Dawud, Isa and to the apostles who are not told to Muhammad. The verses indicate the continuity, unity and equality of the religions of the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. Nurcholish criticizes today's society, whether Muslim or not, because many people are unaware of that view. Explaining the point of religions, there are four principles which are proposed by Nurcholish. First, Islam teaches that God's religion is universal because God has sent His Messenger to every human being. Secondly, Islam teaches the view of the unity of *nubuwwah* (prophethood) and people who believe in God. Thirdly, the religion brought by Prophet Muhammad is the immediate continuation of previous religions, especially the closest "genealogical" is the Semitic-Abrahamic religions. Fourth, Muslims are commanded to maintain good relations with other religious people, especially the followers of the holy book (Ahl al-Kitab). All these principles lead to the doctrine of "no compulsion in religion".

III. DISCUSSION

Controversy of Religious Pluralism

a) Pre pluralism

Indonesian Muslim scholars have been involved in a number of discourses on Islam and pluralism. Based on the view that Islam is a humanity religion (*fitriah*), which means that its ideals is parallel to the ideals of universal humanity, Nurcholis Madjid argues that the ideals of Islam in line with the ideals of Indonesian people generally. This is one of the principal teachings of Islam. Therefore, the political system that should be applied in Indonesia is a system that is not only good for Muslims, but also brings goodness to all members of society. In other words, a system that benefits all party, includes non-Muslims.

According to him, this view has gained support in the early history of Islam. Nurcholis realizes that the society of Indonesia is very pluralistic in terms of ethnicity, customs, and religion. In terms of religion, besides Islam, reality shows that almost all religions, especially large religions can develop fertile and represented aspirations in Indonesia. Therefore the issue of tolerance or interfaith relations is very important. Nurcholis is optimistic that in this matter of tolerance and pluralism, Islam has proved its ability convincingly. The fact that Islam reinforces tolerance and aspiration to pluralism, is very cohesive with the values of Pancasila which from the beginning reflects the determination of various groups and religions to meet in a common platform in the life of the nation and state. Indonesia has a long historical experience in the struggle about diversity, political and religious, from pre-independence times to the aftermath. Nurcholis sees the state ideology, Pancasila, which has provided the basic framework for Indonesian society in the issue of religious pluralism. Meanwhile Abdurrahman Wahid also sees the relationship between Islam and pluralism in the context of the manifestation of universalism in the cosmopolitanism of Islamic teachings. According to him, Islamic teachings that perfectly display universalism are five basic guarantees that Islam provides to citizens, both individually and in groups. The five basic guarantees are:

1. Physical salvation of citizen
2. Belief salvation of each religion
3. Family and generation salvation
4. Wealth and property salvation, and
5. Profession salvation.

In the context of this pluralistic Indonesian society, Abdurrahman expects the ideals to make Islam and Muslims as a "single color" for the community life. He also refuses if Islam is made an "alternative" of the awareness of the nation that has been so strongly entrenched in Islamic society life. It should put the feature as a complementary factor, and does not dominate the life of the nation and the state. Thus the format of Islamic struggle is ultimately full participation in the effort to form a strong, democratic, and justice Indonesia. The goal is to function Islam as an integrative power in the life of the nation.

b) The Contra of Pluralism

Unlike the two figures above, who see the struggle of Islam and pluralism in the perspective of the substance of Islamic teachings, Kuntowijoyo more relate it to the social-cultural setting. For Kunto Islamic civilization itself is an open system. This means that Islamic civilization becomes fertile in the middle of the pluralist culture and civilization of the world. Nonetheless civilization and Islamic culture are also original and authentic, which has its own characteristics and personality. Kunto argues that Muslims can accept the positive aspects of any ideology or concept, but at the same time, it should be based on the fact that Islam is authentic, has a whole personality and a separate system. In the context of Indonesia, Kunto argues that Muslims, especially their scholars, should be able to integrate the interests of national and Islamic ideals.

The relation to religious life in Indonesia, Kunto offers two issues to be observed, namely solidarity between religions and positive pluralism. Concerning solidarity, there are two stages that determine progress in inter-religious relations, namely from harmony to cooperation. The progress is from inward looking to outward looking after a series of "misunderstandings" among religious adherents in Indonesia, where the minister of religion held by Mukti Ali (1970). Since the term of inter-religious harmony begins to be conducted, there has been a debate about the meaning and practice of tolerance, whether tolerance is imposed on the majority or minority. Conclusion on paper is always both, but in the field, harmony never happens.

The fear of Christianization in the Islamic area and Islamization in the Christian area haunts both sides, and this is not profitable for efforts to create harmony. In 1970-1990 harmony never took place in the practice of Indonesian society. This happens, according to Kunto, because each religion looks within (inward looking). Solidarity that really happens in the 1990s, with a new theme, no longer interreligious dialogue, but outward looking is to think together about this nation. That is what happens in the forums of religious scholars. Positive pluralism is the common rule that Kunto offers in interfaith relations.

This rule is necessary to avoid relationships based on prejudice. The rule is that (1) Besides the own religion, there are other religions that must be respected (pluralism), and (2) each religion must keep religious fully. Pluralism becomes negative when one considers religion as a shirt, which can be changed at will. Positive pluralism is practiced by the Apostle in Medina. In line with Kuntowijoyo, Alwi Sihab state that if the concept of religious pluralism is to be applied in Indonesia, then there must be one condition, namely a strong commitment to their respective religions. A pluralist, in interacting with various religions, is not only required to open up, learn, and respect his dialogue partners, but also commit to his religion. It is only with this attitude that we can avoid religious relativism that is inconsistent with the concept of Unity in Diversity.

3.2 The Harmony of Interfaith

The Indonesian nation lives in a "plural society", a society of dualism, double of trust, culture, political aspirations, religion, and so on. Indonesian people has religion that is required to be harmonious in religious life. Harmony in the life of religion can be created if each person is tolerant. There are some thoughts that are proposed by people to achieve harmony in religious life as followings; First, all religions are the same. This is called syncretism. In the book of Bagayat Gita there is an term: "whoever comes to me, in what manner and through any path, I can meet him. They all walk dragging hard through various ways, and all ends in me ". Max Muller (1823-1900), a scholar of language and history in his book *Vorlesungen uber Religionswissenschaft*, expressed an opinion about the authentic equality of religions. According to him, every religion is true, even tribal religions. Secondly, by way of reconception, it means that to explore and revise religion itself in confrontation with other religions. The character is W.E. Hocking; and his thoughts are described in his book *The Coming World Civilization*. He argues that all religions are the same. The main question in Hocking's mind is how exactly the relationships between the religions in this world are, and how they can perceive the need toward one religion in the world. He states that religion is a desire for a right way of life and a desire to flatten a way of life, and that desire is the urge or demand of the universe, so religion is not as morals. Religion comes from the cosmos and the metaphysical world. The desire that arises from metaphysics is according to him, the core of all religions. Third, by way of synthesis, is to create a new religion whose elements are gotten from different religions, so that every religious believer feels that some of His religious teachings have been taken in the synthetic religion. In this way, one assumes that the religious life will be harmonious. Fourth, by way of replacement, is to admit that their own religion is the right one, while the other religions are wrong: and try to get the other people into their religion. He is not willing, that other people have a religion and beliefs that are different from his religion. The living religions must be replaced by the religion which he believes, and with it he suspects that new religious harmony can be created. Fifth, by agree in disagreement. He believes that his religion is the best religion, and welcomes others to believe it, and he is sure that one religion with other has differences and similarities. Based on that comprehension, respecting each other is generated between the adherents of one religion and the followers of other religions.

In order for living in the harmony among religious believers to be ethical in the interreligious life, Hugh Goddard, a British Christian, who is an Islamic theologian, reminds us for the sake of interfaith harmony, to avoid the use of "double standards". Christians or Muslims, for example, always apply different standards for themselves; usually the standard shown is ideal and normative while for other religions, they use other standards that are more realistic and historical. Through this double standard, theological prejudices arise which further complicated the atmosphere of interfaith relations. Having salvation or not in other religions is often determined by the view of our double standards. The belief that religion itself is the correctest because it comes from God while another religion is only human construction, is an example of the use of the double standard. In history, this double standard is usually used to judge other religions in a theological degree of validity in the religion itself. Through this double standard, war and the claims of truth happend from one religion over another. In fact, related to interfaith conflict, it is caused as the effect of economic discrepancy, differences in political interests or ethnic differences. Finally, the concept of truth and goodness rooted in the political ideology or revelation of

God is often the reason for the justification of the oppression of humanity. For the sake of the creation of external relations of religions, it is needed to conduct interreligious dialogue while the internal religion is needed reinterpretation of religious messages that are more touching humanity universal. In this case, the role of religious leaders should be put forward.

Mukti Ali explains that there are some thoughts proposed by people to achieve harmony in religious life. First, *syncretism*, is the opinion that all religions are the same. Secondly, *reconception*, is to explore and revise the own religion in confrontation with other religions. Third, the synthesis is to create a new religion whose elements are derived from various religions, so that every religious believer feels that some of their religious teachings have been taken in the synthesis religion. Fourth, the substitution, is to admit that his/her own religion is right, while other religions are wrong; and to try to get other religious people into their religion. Fifth, agree in disagreement, is to believe that his/her religion is the best religion, and inviting others to believe the religion that they believe is the best religion. It is believed that between one religion and another religion, besides there are differences, there are also similarities. Mukti Ali himself agrees with the "agree in disagreement" way. He acknowledged that this is the path that is necessary to lead to the harmony of religious life. The religious person must believe that the believed religion by him is the best and most true religion, and others are also welcomed, even rewarded, to believe that the believed religion is the best and the truest religion.

3.3 The Harmony as Every Religion's Obligation

Harmony itself has been not the last value yet, but it is only a means that must exist as "conditio sine qua non" to achieve the further goal is a secure and peaceful situation. The whole world has now grown an increasingly profound awareness that humans from different religious traditions must meet in harmony and brotherhood rather than in enmity. The ideals above are essentially the fundamental teachings of every religion. It is not merely an aspiration but a duty to be conducted and realized in reality by every religion.

The existence of a sacred task is found in every religion and is formulated in different sentences either words or nuances, but the same intrinsic. Unfortunately the ideals of salvation and peace are not always a reality that is evenly distributed everywhere. Instead it happens in the opposite, ie hostility and clash between religious people. This is what often becomes the irony of religion, or even worse like the tragedy of religion. Now we live in an age where harmony is inevitable. Firstly, we do not live in a closed society inhabited by one adherent of the same religion, but in modern society, where communication and living together with other religious groups can not be denied for the sake and sustainability of society itself. In other words, we live in a plural society either faith or culture.

IV. CONCLUSION

If the rules of religious plurality as mentioned above, one is violated by one of the religious followers, and the offense disturbs the honor of other religions, ofcourse there will be disharmony in daily life, even the toughest form, such as conflict and war. Coercion toward Islamic follower to be Christianity through the Christianization project will lead to other violations towards the rule of religious plurality, such as the burning of churches that are considered to be central (planning) of Christianization. The case of burning the Dolulus resident may be explained by this action-reaction law. The burning of churches in Mataram and Yogyakarta, in this context too will not have happened if there has been no systematic attempt at the destruction of Muslims in Maluku (North). This will happend if there is violation toward the religious plurality. Each violation will bring new violations up and it will be difficult to create the harmony among religious followers. Admit that beside in the differences are found between certain religion and the other religions, there are many similarities. Based on the definition, respect and appreciative should be conctruted. Based on this basis, harmony in religious life can be created. Respect the human being with all totality, including their religion.

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