

MANAGING PLURALITY TO BOOST HARMONY AMONG RELIGIOUS ADHERENTS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract - *Indonesia with its pluralities is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world. The pluralities include living religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hindu, Buddha, Kong Hu-chu, and variety of indigenous local beliefs. In Indonesia, keeping religious tolerance is a necessity to ensure social stability from ideological coercion and physical clashes among different communities. Thus, religious difference is not only a blessing but also a recognition and respect of someone toward other faiths and work together in virtue. Of the main findings that difference in religious beliefs is not a driving factor for mutually demeaning, mutually humiliating, or confusing one religion with another. Plurality is an indisputable reality in this archipelago. Therefore, the community must have an attitude for the realization of tolerance in order to yield harmony among religious adherents. The importance of tolerance is to maintain stability, harmony, and tolerance, wisdom, and social benefits. The result of this research is to increase religious harmony in Indonesia by implementing religious tolerance in daily life. With mutual tolerance, it will create a beautiful and peaceful life.*

Keyword: *harmony, plurality, religious communities, social life, tolerance.*

Abstrak - *Indonesia dengan kemajemukannya merupakan salah satu negara multikultural terbesar di dunia. Kemajemukan tersebut meliputi agama-agama yang hidup seperti Islam, Kristen, Hindu, Buddha, Kong Hu-chu, dan berbagai kepercayaan lokal asli. Di Indonesia, menjaga toleransi beragama merupakan suatu keharusan untuk menjamin stabilitas sosial dari pemaksaan ideologis dan bentrokan fisik antar komunitas yang berbeda. Dengan demikian, perbedaan agama tidak hanya menjadi berkah tetapi juga merupakan pengakuan dan penghormatan seseorang terhadap pemeluk agama lain dan bekerja sama dalam kebajikan. Dari temuan utama bahwa perbedaan keyakinan agama bukanlah faktor pendorong untuk saling merendahkan, saling menghinai, atau membingungkan satu agama dengan agama lainnya. Pluralitas merupakan realitas yang tak terbantahkan di nusantara ini. Oleh karena itu, masyarakat harus memiliki sikap untuk terwujudnya toleransi agar tercipta kerukunan antar umat beragama. Pentingnya toleransi adalah untuk menjaga stabilitas, kerukunan, dan toleransi, kebijaksanaan, dan manfaat sosial. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan kerukunan umat beragama di Indonesia dengan menerapkan toleransi beragama dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Dengan saling toleransi maka akan tercipta kehidupan yang indah dan damai.*

Kata kunci: *kehidupan sosial, kerukunan, pluralitas, toleransi, umat beragama.*



A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a pluralistic nation with various religions, ethnicities, and sociocultural groups. Plurality is an indisputable reality in this archipelago. On the one hand, this plurality becomes the social capital for nation-building, and on the other hand, is a potential for social conflict. Indonesia is also an example of a multicultural society. The multiculturalism of Indonesian society is not only due to the diversity of ethnicities, cultures, languages, and races but also religions. Religions or faiths recognized by the Indonesian government during the current reformation era are Islamism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Kong Hu-chu (Rohman & Lessy, 2017). These differences, if not properly maintained, can lead to conflicts between religious communities. Clashes either ideological or physical are juxtaposing the basic values of religion that teaches human peace, respect and tolerance, and help and mutual aid (Nazmudin, 2018). Religion becomes an attitudinal and behavioral guideline for every adherent to determine the purpose and direction of their life while in the world and toward the afterlife. Religion is not a mere dogma, but it is also a physical manifestation following local customs and traditions in various activities in human life.

For this reason, religion, ethnicity, culture, and tradition of the social groups are considered an instrument to enhance the plurality of Indonesian society, and these can become crucial ingredients for the process of social cohesion. In this context, the religious understanding of the adherents greatly influences the realization of tolerant attitude between religious communities. Also, it is argued that religion encourages the creation of a peaceful society. This is because religion has two opposing sides at once. On the one hand, religion has tremendous power in uniting people of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and on the other hand, religion is also a very effective potential that triggers a conflict, and this is where we can see how understanding of religion can lead to a conflict which in turn will destroy social harmony. Thus, in order to create true harmony between religious communities, a concept of state life must be created that binds all members of social groups of different religions to avoid the "sudden explosion of inter-religious conflict" which is still occurring in the current Reformation era. This paper, therefore, will explore the importance of creating harmony between religious communities to strengthen our national harmony.

B. METHOD

This research method is a literature study that focuses on reviewing previous studies related to efforts to manage plurality to improve religious harmony in Indonesia. This method is called the library method. The library method is a type of research that is used in collecting in-depth data information through literature, books, notes, magazines, other references and relevant previous research results, to obtain answers and theoretical foundations on the problems to be studied.

In this study, to obtain these needs, it can be produced through libraries, bookstores, maktabah syamilah, research centers and internet networks by accessing discourse and information about the diversity of religious communities in Indonesia. In addition, we also interact with the works of authors related to Islamic studies at higher levels of education in Indonesia. Some of them

are Abdullah (2001) with his work namely Religious Pluralism and harmony in religion, and also Fitriani (2020) discussing diversity and tolerance of religious communities and Aslati (2012) regarding inter-religious tolerance in an Islamic perspective. By using data from various, both primary and secondary references. These data were collected using documentation techniques, namely by reading, reviewing, studying, and recording literature related to the problems discussed in this paper.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tolerance According to Islamic Perspective

The concepts of tolerance and harmony between religious communities are two forms that are inseparable from each other. There is a causal relationship between the two as harmony has an impact on tolerance and vice versa tolerance results in harmony, both of which concern relationships between humans. If the three-harmony between religious communities, internal religious communities, and religious communities with the government is built and applied to life and daily life, tolerance will emerge between religious communities. Or, if tolerance between religious communities can be well and properly established, it will result in a harmonious society with each other. Religion is a fundamental element of human life and life, therefore, freedom to have a religion and no religion, and to change religions must be respected and guaranteed (Arifin, 2016).

The word tolerance comes from English tolerance or in Latin it is called "tolerantia". In Arabic, this word refers to the term *tasamuh* or *tasahul*, namely: to tolerate, to overlook, excuse, to be indulgent, forbearing, lenient, tolerant, merciful. *Tasamuh* words; means *hilm* and *tasahul*; is defined as indulgence, tolerance, toleration, forbearance, leniency, clemency, mercy and kindness.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, tolerance is the quality of tolerating opinions, beliefs, customs, behaviors, etc., different from one's own, which means that attitude allows, recognizes, and respects other people's beliefs without requiring approval. W.J.S. Poerwadarminto stated that tolerance is an attitude or tolerant nature in the form of appreciating and allowing an opinion, opinion, view, belief or other that is different from one's own stand (McKay & Hornby, 1975). It can be concluded that tolerance is an attitude or characteristic of a person to allow freedom to others and to provide the truth of these differences as recognition of human rights.

Tolerance between religious communities means the graceful attitude of a person to respect and allow followers of religions to carry out worship according to the teachings and provisions of their respective religions, without disturbing or damaging either other people or their families. In its implementation, the attitude of tolerance among religious communities that is carried out in society is more associated with freedom and freedom to interpret the teachings of each other's religions without feeling conflicting with one another in order to create harmony between people in society.

In Islam the tolerance described in the Qur'an can easily support the ethics of difference and tolerance. The Qur'an not only hopes, but also accepts the reality of differences and diversity in

society. This is in accordance with the word of Allah SWT in Surah al-Hujurat verse 13, this verse shows the existence of an essential human order by ignoring the differences between the differences between one group and another, humans are each large family.

In interpreting this tolerance, there are two interpretations of the concept. First, the negative interpretation which states that tolerance is sufficient requires an attitude of allowing and not hurting other people or groups, both different and the same. Meanwhile, the second is a positive interpretation, which states that tolerance is not just like the first (negative interpretation) but there must be help and support for the existence of other people or other groups (Abdullah, 2001).

In relation to plurality in society, the Koran calls Muslims "ummatah wasathah" (middle / moderate people). According to M. Quraish Shihab, the word al-wasathah itself originally meant everything that was good according to its object. Meanwhile, something that is good usually falls between the two extreme positions (Arifin, 2016).

Basic or Proposition Tolerance in Islam

Tolerance between religious believers can mean that each religious community allows and maintains a conducive atmosphere for members of other religions to carry out their worship and religious teachings without being hindered. This is the tolerance meant by Islam (Jamrah, 2015). There are several theological grounds that directly or indirectly contain messages of Islamic tolerance morals. Theologically, Islam realizes and recognizes the reality of religious pluralism as a nature created by Allah in every human being, that every person instinctively has different tendencies, including in determining and choosing a religion that is used as a role model. Allah Almighty did not create and or force humans to be uniform and united in one religion, but instead gave freedom to humans to make different choices, as stated by the verse:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ۗ

Meaning: *If your Lord wills, of course He will make human beings one, but they always disagree.* (Surah Hud, 11: 118)

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرَهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

Meaning: *If your Lord wills, surely all people who are on earth will have faith. So, do you want to force people to become believers entirely?* (Surah Yunus, 10: 99)

The principle of freedom to determine and choose a religion is increasingly clearly and firmly stated by the Koran:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning: *There is no compulsion to embrace religion (Islam). Indeed, the right path is clear rather than the wrong way. Therefore, whoever denies to Thagbut and believes in Allah, then in fact he has held on to the knot of a strong rope that will not break. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.* (Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 256).

This principle of freedom without coercion, says M. Quraish Shihab, only related to freedom of choice of Islam or anything else (Shihab, 1992). But if someone has made a choice to Islam, for example, then there is no freedom to choose anymore, he must be obedient and obedient to carry out Islamic teachings in total, *kaffah* Islam; there is no longer the freedom to choose to implement some teachings and reject some other teachings. It is wrong if there are Muslims, for example, who say that they are free to obey or not, because there is no compulsion in being Muslim.

Verse 256 of Surah al-Baqarah, once again, is in the context that a person is free to determine and choose the religion that will be used as a role model, not free to choose between whether or not to implement some of the religious teachings that have been chosen. That is why, every obedience in Islam is rewarded and every violation is sanctioned.

The Importance of Tolerance Among Religious Communities

Religious tolerance is tolerance that includes issues of belief in humans that are related to the faith or divinity that religious communities believe in. Every person should be given the freedom to believe in and embrace the religion he chooses and to pay respect for the implementation of the teachings he holds or believes. Religious tolerance is a form of accommodation in social interactions. Socially religious humans cannot deny that they must associate not only with their own group, but also with groups of different religions. Religious people must strive to create tolerance in order to maintain social stability so that ideological and physical clashes between people of different religions do not occur.

Indonesia itself highly upholds and respects all existing religious religions. But in fact, divisions and conflicts with religious backgrounds are very easy to occur and are even only caused by trivial things (Pangeran, 2017). Cases and riots that occurred in Indonesia and abroad, such as disputes and wars based on religion resulted in many people having to die of their brothers and sisters and even to the point where places of worship were damaged and even burned, such as mosques, churches, and schools that were still good have become unfit for use for teaching and learning activities. This is very easy to happen because every religious person is less aware of the meaning of tolerance between religious communities and accepts existing differences (Pangeran, 2017).

In real life, conflict is inevitable and creative in nature. Conflict itself can be resolved without violence and requires the involvement of each party. Conflict can also be useful for building harmony. Conflict is needed to create awareness of problems, push for better and necessary changes, improve solutions, so that there is social sensitivity. In social life, tolerance is needed because it is useful for building harmony. Tolerance is a form of mutual respect and does not impose one's will. Humans who consider themselves higher, good, and true, it tends to lead to an anti-tolerant attitude (Widiyanto, 2017).

The Relationship Between Tolerance and National Harmony

In the context of the interests of the state and nation, religious harmony is an important part of national harmony. Religious harmony is a condition of inter-religious relations which is based on

tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, respect for equality in the experience of their religious teachings and cooperation in the life of society, nation and state within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. 1945. Therefore, the harmony of life between religious believers is a precondition that must be created for development in Indonesia (Mukti Ali: 1975: 42).

The problem of inter-religious harmony in relation to the life of the nation and state in Indonesia, Pastor Weinata Sairin (1996: 183) commented as follows: "Harmony between religious communities in Indonesia is the only option. There is no other choice, except to continue to work on it and develop it. As a nation we emphasize to defend the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which is based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. We are also determined to continue to build our society, nation and state, so that it becomes an advanced and modern nation without losing our personality. In that context, religions has a vital and decisive place and role in our lives as a nation as a society and as a state."

Unity and cooperation between religious communities is absolutely necessary. However, the matter of relations between religious believers is a very sensitive matter. Many incidents that sometimes lead to hostilities and the destruction of national assets are caused by issues linked to inter-religious relations in addition to other elements that are often referred to as SARA (ethnicity, religion, taste and between groups), even though in fact every religious community teaches harmony between humans and between believers. religious. In the framework of fostering and maintaining religious harmony, since several years ago the Ministry of Religion has developed a three-harmony approach (Trilogy of Harmony), namely: Internal Religious Harmony, Inter-Religious Harmony and Inter-Religious Harmony with the Government (Nazmudin, 2018).

The task of realizing harmony between religious believers in Indonesia is the collective task of all religious communities in Indonesia and the government. Every individual and group of religious communities in their daily lives is always involved and relates to each other in various interests, it is necessary to understand correctly and precisely the meaning of the harmony of life for religious communities, for their interests. It seems that it is very clear how we must cooperate and tolerate and tolerate each other with adherents of non- Islamic religions. With the spirit of cooperation and tolerance without eliminating and reducing the weight of the quality of our faith, inter-religious ties are very important, especially in the context of strengthening the integrity of the nation. Naturally, then the government promoted the importance of religious harmony through the tri- harmony program, namely inter-religious harmony, inter-religious harmony, and inter-religious harmony with the government.

Implementation of Tolerance in Religious Life

Humans are indeed created as individual beings and as social creatures. Because as social beings, humans need relationships and cooperation with other people in meeting their needs, both material and spiritual needs. Tolerance between religious communities is an attitude of tolerance towards the reality of differences that exist in society. Because with this respect for each other, they

will mutually maintain good relations with each other in everyday life. Because basically belief in God is meaningless if it is not reflected in brotherhood with fellow human beings.

In addition, there is no meaning that belief in God is pledged if humans do not respect each other as equals. Therefore, one thing that needs to be done in the social life of the Indonesian nation is an "attitude of tolerance" towards fellow human beings.

Tillman (in Amien Wahyudi, 2017: 52) shows that there needs to be points for reflection on tolerance, including:

- a. Peace is the goal and tolerance is the method.
- b. Tolerance is open and receptive to the beauty of differences.
- c. Tolerance of respect for individuals and differences.
- d. Tolerance is mutual respect through understanding.
- e. The seeds of intolerance are fear and indifference.
- f. The seed of tolerance is love, to be watered with love and care.
- g. If there is no love, there is no tolerance.
- h. Who knows to respect the good in others and situations have tolerance.
- i. Tolerance means the ability to face difficult situations.
- j. Tolerance of life's discomforts by letting go, taking it easy, and letting go of others.

If you look at the journey, Islam has a long tradition of managing relations with non-Muslims. There is no tradition and persecution of infidels in Islam, as is found in the concept of "heretics" in medieval Europe. Islam does call non-Muslims "kafir", but that is not at all a license let alone an order to execute kafirs because of religious differences. The Koran affirms: "There is no compulsion to embrace religion." (al- Baqarah: 256). Karen Armstrong notes: "There was no tradition of religious persecution in the Islamic empire", there is no tradition of religious persecution in the Islamic world (Armstrong, 2001).

In terms of *muamalah* (public relations), Islam commands us to do good and be fair to all people, both Muslims and non- Muslims. We are obliged to help neighbors who are in trouble even though they do not share our faith. Recognizing the existence of religions is not the same as acknowledging the truth of religions other than Islam. We can do good and respect and respect people of other religions to the extent that what we do cannot confuse *aqidah* or worship and do not hurt our faith.

Therefore, the essence of the implications of this tolerance is that recognizing the existence of religions is not the same as acknowledging the truth of religions other than Islam. We can do good and respect and respect people of other religions to the extent that what we do cannot confuse *aqidah* or worship and do not hurt our faith.

Wisdom and Benefits of implementing Religious Tolerance

Tolerance between religious communities in Islam is not foreign and has even existed since Islam existed. Tolerance in Islam is just a matter of implementation and commitment to practice it consistently. However, religious tolerance according to Islam is not to merge with each other in

terms of belief. Nor is it to exchange beliefs between these different religious groups. The essence of tolerance is that each party is required to be able to control themselves and provide space to respect each other's uniqueness without feeling threatened by their beliefs or rights.

No compulsion in religion is guaranteed by the *Shari'ah*, because forcing the will of others to follow our religion is an attitude that has no basis and for example in early Islamic history. On the contrary, with this beautiful tolerant attitude, the history of Islamic civilization has produced such brilliance that it is recorded in gold ink by the history of world civilization to this day and God willing in the future.

When viewed from the point of view of benefits, tolerance between religious communities is indeed a lot if we always apply it. However, in doing so we must be reasonable and cannot overdo it because it will offend others and actually have a detrimental impact on ourselves later. As for some of the benefits of inter-religious tolerance, including:

1. Can avoid divisions between religious communities

Every human being should instill tolerance in himself and apply it in his daily social life, especially in areas where there are a lot of religious beliefs and various kinds of ethnicities and cultures. An example is the attitude of tolerance between religious communities which can be seen from the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia which has more than one religion and also has a lot of ethnicities and cultures within it (Sianturi, 2021). Every religion, of course, teaches goodness to its people. There is no religion on this earth that teaches its people to live hostile to fellow humans. By maintaining harmony between fellow humans, our life will be peaceful and prosperous.

2. Can strengthen friendship

In addition to avoiding divisions and strengthening faith, tolerance between religious communities will strengthen mutual friendship. It cannot be denied that differences are indeed the reason for a conflict between one group and another. If humans do not understand and do not understand the meaning of tolerance, then friendship will never be established. For example, a certain cultural group is only willing to meet with the same people and culture. Things like this will hinder the occurrence of friendship between different groups (Dalamislam, 2020).

3. Promote peace

Every citizen is obliged to have an attitude of tolerance to reduce problems in various conflicts that can arise in society. A tolerant attitude provides many benefits for society or individuals who practice it. Without realizing it, the application of tolerance in increasing peace can be exemplified, such as reducing selfishness. This is because tolerance itself is an attitude of accepting existing differences of course making a person to have a pattern of thinking that does not prioritize self-interest over others.

D. CONCLUSION

All Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia recognize the principle of tolerance as a principle that must be protected or maintained in a pluralistic society. Tolerance is a manifestation of the principle of equality that gives rise to a helping-to-help and social care attitude among fellow citizens, which in turn will give birth to a strong sense of social unity and solidarity in social life.

In peaceful coexistence with other people through Islamic morals of tolerance, Islam is limited to allowing people of other religions to worship and carry out their religious teachings, without any disturbance, as long as these religious practices do not interfere with public order and interests, including the interests of Muslims. So the principle of Islamic tolerance must not damage and or tarnish the purity of Islamic faith and sharia. Therefore, tolerance in Islam has never and should not lead to syncretic matters.

In essence, tolerance between religious communities requires us to respect every difference that exists in life. The diversity of various religions requires people to allow each other and maintain a conducive, safe, and peaceful atmosphere for people of other religions to carry out worship in their religious teachings without being hindered and looked down upon by anyone. Tolerance between religious communities can be exercised when it comes to social relations in the form of mutual cooperation and community service activities and religious activities of each community in order to create harmony and peace in society, nation and state.

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