MULTICULTURALISM TRENDS IN PESANTREN EDUCATION

Septi Gumiandari & Ilman Nafi'a

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that Indonesia stands on the diversity of ethnic groups and languages as well as a series of other differences. Indonesia, more than most other countries, is a country that is not only multi-ethnic, and multi-religious but also multi-cultural. This diversity is a social strength and diversity when one another synergizes and works together to build the nation. However, when this plurality is not properly managed and nurtured, it will become a trigger for conflict and violence that can destroy the pillars of national life.

For Javanese people, the issue of respecting differences *(teposliro),* mutual respect and cooperation regardless of one's origins has actually been carried out for centuries. So that the Javanese community is very accustomed to facing the reality of human differences with all their shortcomings and strengths. However, along with the dynamics of the development of science and culture in society, the habits of the people in dealing with the differences mentioned above are starting to fade with the strengthening of local identities. Indonesian society, which was known to be familiar, polite, humanist, has now become violent, individualistic, hedonistic, pragmatic and opportunistic.

The history has proven the phenomenon of violence that has racial, religious and ethnic roots in various parts of Indonesia. In the last 50 years or so, bloodshed and conflict have occurred almost sequentially. Starting from the September 30th Movement of the Indonesian Communist Party (G.30.S.PKI)'s incident, where the event is still a big question for the public. Chinese ethnic violence in Jakarta in 1998, conflict between Muslim-Christian Maluku in 1999-2003, tribal conflict between Dayak and Madurese tribes in 2000, tribal conflicts in Papua that claimed hundreds of lives, [1] including the pros and cons of discussing of anti-pornography law. Several demonstrations that were held to support or reject the law ended in riots and even more personal attacks. In a society that prioritizes deliberation and dialogue as a characteristic of civil society, prioritizing personalities, moreover humiliation someone is a violation in the world of civil society. All of this hypothetically proves that the Indonesian people are not ready to face differences.

Responding to the various anarchisms mentioned above, the issue of the implementation of multiculturalism found a meaningful place and religious

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[1] Martin Van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia", *Southeast Asia Research* no 2, 2002, p. 117.

education in the case of the Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) became an important factor. The question then is why pesantren as the object of study in this paper? This is based on a common sense, that as an educational institution that is very concerned with the field of Islamic teaching and community moral development, pesantren are known to be allergic to change and progress. Islamic boarding schools are attached to their "status" as puritanical, extreme and radical traditional educational institutions. Pesantren is unfairly cornered as a place for the preservation of intolerant and non-cooperative Islamic teachings. The pesantren is claimed to be a base camp for producing cadres of militant terrorists. [2] Meanwhile, on the other hand, multiculturalism and plurality are considered as "a product of discourse" that is intentionally transmitted effectively, massively and intensively through various information technology channels that exist by Western countries. Therefore, this paper will explore further how the strategic role of Islamic boarding schools is in responding to the pluralistic and multicultural contemporary reality.

THE MEANING OF MULTICULTURALISM

The term multicultural, seen from the formality of the term, can be said to be something new, but if it is seen from its substantial meaning for the Indonesian people, especially Muslims, it is not something new. Multiculturalism means as a readiness to accept differences,[3] which is considered *sunatullah* (something natural) is clearly present in Islam. Even differences can be used as a means of creating welfare for the people *(ikhtilaful ummati rahmatun).*

Related to the term multiculturalism, there are actually three terms that are often used interchangeably to describe a society that consists of this diversity such as plurality, diversity, and multiculturalism. The three meanings actually do not represent the same thing, even though they all refer to the existence of an "un-singular". The concept of plurality presupposes the existence of 'more than one thing' (many). Diversity shows that the existence of which "more than one" is different, heterogeneous, and even cannot be equated. Compared to the two previous concepts, multiculturalism is actually relatively new. There are conceptually significant differences between plurality, diversity, and multiculturalism. The essence of multiculturalism is the willingness to accept other groups as a whole, regardless of differences in culture, ethnicity, gender, language, or religion.

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[2] Bruinessen, "Global and local in Indonesian Islam", *Southeast Asian Studies* (Kyoto) vol. 37, no.2 (1999) dan lihat pula hasil penelitian ICIP (International Centre for Islam and Pluralsme), Jurnal *Al-Wasathiyyah,* no. 1, January 2008.

[3] Scott Lash dan Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Recognition And Difference: Politics, Identity, Multiculture* (London: Sage Publication, 2002), p. 2-6.

In other words, if plurality merely represents "more than one," multiculturalism affirms that with all the differences they are the same in the public sphere. Multiculturalism has become a kind of new policy response to diversity. And the existence of different communities is not enough; the most important reason is that these communities are treated equally by the state. Therefore, multiculturalism as a movement demands recognition (politics of recognition) of all differences as entities in society that must be accepted, respected, protected and their existence guaranteed.

Diversity in modern society can take many forms, including differences that are naturally accepted by individuals and groups and which are constructed collectively and become a kind of common sense. According to Bikhu Parekh, this difference can be categorized into three things: (1) subculture diversity, Individuals or groups of people who live with different perspectives and habits from large communities with value systems or culture generally prevails; (2) perspectival diversity. Individuals or groups with a critical perspective on the mainstream of values or established culture adopted by the majority of the surrounding community; and (3) communal diversity. Individuals or groups who live a genuine lifestyle in accordance with their communal identity (indigeneous people way of life). [4]

According to Bhikhu Parekh, multiculturalism first emerged as a movement around the 1970s in Canada and Australia, then in the United States, Britain, Germany and others. After that, the discourse of multiculturalism developed very quickly. After three decades since it was rolled out, multiculturalism has experienced two important waves: ***the first wave***, multiculturalism in the context of the struggle for recognition of different cultures. The principle of the need for recognition (needs of recognition) is the main feature of this first wave. ***Second wave,*** multiculturalism that legitimizes cultural diversity, which undergoes several stages,[5] including: the need for recognition, involving various other academic disciplines, liberation against imperialism and colonialism, the liberation movement of identity groups and indigenous people, post-colonialism, globalization, post-nationalism, post-modernism and post-structuralism which deconstructed established structures in society.[6]

According to Steve Fuller, the second wave of multiculturalism mentioned above, in turn, raises three challenges that must be considered at the same time to be aware of: ***first,*** the existence of western hegemony in the political, economic,

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[4]Scott Lash dan Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Recognition,* p. 3-4.
[5]H.A.R. Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme; Tantangan-Tantangan Global Masa Depan dalam Transformasi Pendidikan Nasional* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2002), p. 83.
[6]Gregory Jay. "Critical Contexts For Multiculturalism" in *http://www.uwm.edu/~gjay/Multicult/ contextsmulticult.htm*, download 2 December 2005.

social and scientific fields. The community, especially developing countries, needs to study the causes of western hegemony in these fields and take steps as necessary to overcome them, so that they can be equal to the western world. ***Second,*** cultural essentialization. In this case, multiculturalism seeks to find the essence of culture without falling into a xenophobic and ethnocentrism view. Multiculturalism can give birth to narrow tribalism which ultimately harms the community itself in the era of globalization. ***Third,*** the process of globalization, that globalization can eradicate the identity and personality of a culture.[7]

Therefore, to avoid confusion in the discourse on multiculturalism, Bikhu Parekh underlines three basic assumptions that must be considered in this study: (1) Humans will be basically bound by their own cultural structures and systems in which they live and interact. This attachment does not mean that humans cannot be critical of the cultural system, but they are shaped by their culture and will always see everything based on that culture. (2) Cultural differences are representations of different value systems and perspectives on goodness. Therefore, a culture is an entity that is both relative and partial and requires another culture to understand it. Thus, no single culture has the right to impose its culture on other cultural systems. (3) Culture is basically internally a plural entity that reflects the interaction between different traditions and strands of perspective. This does not mean negating cultural coherence and identity, but culture is basically something that is plural, continues to process and is open. Therefore, it would be appropriate if Parekh wrote: *"a culture's relation to itself shapes and is turn shaped by its relation to others, and their internal and external pluralities presuppose and reinforce each other. A culture cannot appreciate the value of other unless it appreciates the plurality within it"*[8]

PESANTREN IN THE ERA OF MULTICULTURALISM

As the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that has a distinctive Indonesian style (indigenous). In other Islamic countries, there are no educational institutions that have the same characteristics and traditions as pesantren, although there may be certain educational institutions in other countries that are considered to have similarities with pesantren, such as *ribâth, sakan dâkhilî,* or *jam'iyyah*. However, the characteristics of pesantren in Indonesia are clearly Indonesian because they are closely related to the history and process of spreading Islam in Indonesia. This can be seen during the colonial era. At that time, pesantren became the basis for the nationalist-indigenous struggle. A lot of resistance against the colonials based on

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[7]Mahalingan & Cameron McCarthy, *Multiculturalism Curriculum*, 2002. p. 15-36 as cited by Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme,* p. 84-85.
[8]Parekh, *Jurnal India Seminar….*

the world of pesantren. This suggests that the existence of pesantren education is never separated from the spirit of the nation's struggle for strong integrity.[9]

In Indonesia history, many resistance movements were driven by pesantren residents. For example, the peasants' rebellion in Cilegon-Banten 1888, *Jihad* Aceh 1873, and the movement led by H. Ahmad Ripangi Kalisalak 1786-1875 and so on. From those movements, it can be understood that as a field of religious education (Islam), pesantren has a clear social basis, because its existence is integrated with society. At this point, pesantren is not only synonymous with Islamic meaning but its existential character implies Indonesian authenticity (indigenous). As indigenous, pesantren emerge and develop from the sociological experience of the community in their environment.[10] Therefore, it is not wrong that C. Geertz calls it a subculture of Indonesian society (especially Java).[11] The subculture here also means that pesantren has its own uniqueness in the following aspects: the way of life adopted, the way of life and values that are followed, and its own internal hierarchy of power which is fully adhered to.

Indigenous is what makes the world of pesantren education still exist and be strong in the midst of the increasingly brutal siege of modernity. The twists and turns of the journey are filled with minor assumptions, skewed judgments, blasphemies, stigma and labeling, especially in matters of its tradition. However, it still does not shake its historical roots which are so strong in the level of local culture. Pesantren have long survived in the history of the development of Indonesian education. It has been proven to have contributed a lot to the effort to realize the idealism of national education, which is not only to improve the quality of human resources (human resource) in the aspects of mastery of science and technology, but also to be more concerned in producing Indonesian citizens who have devotion to God, especially in cultivating a generation of good morals *(akhlaq al-karimah).*[12]

Apart from that, the dynamics of the pesantren journey are not always smooth. It had to move around in each phase of history with a different level of problem. The current development shows another indication, where the pesantren is now accused of being a den of terrorists which legalize acts of violence in the name of religion. Its inhabitants are labeled exclusive, old-fashioned, stiff, and

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[9]Achmad Fatchan dan Basrowi. *Pembelotan Kaum Pesantren dan Petani di Jawa* (Surabaya: Yayasan Kampusina, 2004), p. 23.

[10]Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Kyai*, cet. 6 (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1994), p. 17.

[11]Clifford C. Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960), p. 7.

[12] Sindu Galba, *Pesantren Sebagai Wadah Komunikasi* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan dan PT Rineka Cipta, 1991), 71.

intolerant.[13] This accusation was born not without evidence. The arrest of Imam Samudra and Amrozi et al, five years ago, as the perpetrators of the bomb detonation in Bali and the various acts of vandalism committed by students of public facilities in various parts of Indonesia reinforce this accusation. The perpetrators, although only a small part were graduated from the pesantren. Naturally, the accusations were addressed to this institution. Since that incident, Islamophobia has spread to haunt Western people in Indonesia, especially fear of Islamic boarding school alumni. Therefore, it is interesting to go back to tracing whether the audience members legitimized violence and were not friendly to differences? What is the real root of the emergence of people's prejudice on the attitude of exclusivity in the pesantren body? The answers to these two questions will be revealed if it is traced back through the transformed learning of religious education for students in pesantren.

Exclusivity of Religious Education in Islamic Boarding Schools

During the New Order, religious education in general in Indonesia was only a process of fulfilling obligations which tended to be an instant project, so that what happened was only the formation of people who were ready to work and became employees in various religious institutions. Religious education in this framework is only oriented towards the transfer of religious knowledge, while the aspects of forming attitudes, personality, mental and creativity are far from the reach of religious education. The results of religious education in the New Order model did not teach or even stay away from pluralist-inclusive religious attitudes. And because the material has been internalized in the brain cells of the students, what has grown is the attitude of truth and defense of their own religious beliefs.

Considering that religious education in the New Order era was only oriented to the "camouflage" of religious teaching, students only became objects that could be shaped according to the wishes of the teacher. To borrow Paulo Freire's term, students become humans with only magical awareness, accepting everything that is accepted as absolute truth, without critical awareness. In fact, education is actually the formation of a perfect human being who comes through a dialogical process, respecting humanity, and emphasizing mutual freedom and justice. [14]

As part of the national education system, pesantren experience conditions that are not much different. Pesantren is now being questioned and facing serious challenges because of its inability to free students out of religious exclusivity.

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[13] Imam Muhsin, "Jangan Mengambinghitamkan Pesantren" di *Jawa Pos*, Senin 5 Desember 2005.

[14] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogi Pengharapan,* terj. A. Widyamartaya Lic. Phil. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2001), p. 25.

Pesantren through their wombs is claimed to be unable to produce a society that respects pluralism and diversity. From the results of the study conducted by Syamsudini, it was found that religious education taught by *ustadz* in pesantren was generally considered to only emphasize religious teachings that were theological-dogmatic in nature, so that the chauvinism of a sense of truth in their own religion was formed. As a result, religious teaching does not touch the real aspects of social reality, it does not reach the real action of the process of religious behavior.[15]

And ironically, in some traditional classical pesantren, it is almost east to find discourses on *kafir-iman,* Muslim-non-Muslim, heaven-hell which are often lessons for ideological mapping in the class that is always indoctrinated. Theological lessons are taught only to strengthen their faith and attainment towards heaven without being accompanied by an awareness of dialogue with other religions. This phenomenon thrives in Islamic boarding schools. This exclusive-doctrinal understanding of religion has created the awareness of its people to view other religions very differently, even hostile. This condition is what makes Islamic education institutions very exclusive and intolerant of other religious education. Whereas in the era of multiculturalism today, Islamic education must carry out a philosophical-paradigmatic reorientation on how to shape the awareness of its students so that they have an inclusive and tolerant face. This is a serious challenge in developing Islamic education in Indonesia.[16]

The aforementioned reality is shared by Amin Abdullah. He revealed that this was partly due to the material and methodology of teaching religious education in pesantren which tended to emphasize the exclusivity of religious truth, ignoring plurality and inclusiveness.[17] Teaching materials and methodologies that are intertwined in the world of pesantren rarely touch the issue of religious plurality directly in a package of religious education that they usually teach their students. The material of religious plurality and religious plurality is only obtained by students through civic education and Pancasila morals, but it is very rare that it is included in one complete component in religious education material. Even more serious are the texts that are often used as references and references in Islamic history teaching materials, which always return to the past, such as the Crusades, the expansion of the Arab nation, and the forced spread of religions. So it can be said that religious education and teaching in Islamic boarding schools in general still emphasizes the safety of individuals, religions and groups themselves, by ignoring the safety that is owned and desired by others outside of themselves, their

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[15]Syamsudini. "Pendidikan Islam di Era Multikulturalisme" download *http://darussolah.com/cetak.php?id= 151*

[16]Syamsudini. "Pendidikan Islam*…."*

[17]Amin Abdullah. *Pendidikan Agama era Multikultural Multireligius* (Jakarta: PSAP Muhammadiyah, 2005), p. 33.

religion and their own groups. The students are only educated and taught about their religion, how to uphold their religious beliefs, and at the same time carry out *da'wah* to spread their religion with a 'sword' (coercion) imagination, while the vision to respect and be tolerant towards followers of religions outside their religion is less elaborated. Therefore, it can be ascertained, if the pesantren is not able to provide provisions for the students when they have to face and face the actual and concrete reality of the diversity embraced by members of society, both nationally and internationally. [18]

In line with Amin Abdullah's statement above, Kautsar Azhari Noer also suspected that religious education in Islamic boarding schools has not touched the phenomenological aspects of religion which can find common points for universal humanity. Kautsar sees the education system in the religious area (pesantren) so far has emphasized the cognitive aspects of religious education, not on the affective and psychomotor aspects. So that it only produces an educational process that emphasizes the progress of intellectual knowledge, skills and does not pay attention to the socio-religious realities that are intertwined in the community. According to him, the vision and mission of religious education appears to be colored and dominated by the basic assumptions of the classical-scholastic paradigm of its conceptors and designers, which underline the belief and opinion that social safety and group safety are very dependent on individual safety.

It can be said exploratively that individual safety, in the learning discourse in pesantren, however, is much more basic and more important than social safety. If the individuals in society behave well and have religious morals, then automatically the social and collective group life will also behave well and have religious morals. The psychological paradigm of individual education is more dominant than social psychology. Such assumptions oversimplify problems in the reality of group life, especially when applied to the multicultural sphere of Indonesian life. [19]

The manner of handling cases experienced by individuals is very different from the way of handling cases experienced by groups. Crowded mass anger, the phenomenon of provocateurs, social unrest, the spread of negative and irresponsible issues, collective mass violence cannot be explained, resolved and anticipated through religious teaching which only emphasizes the safety of individuals exclusively. [20]

The concept of religious harmony which is only based on the assurance of individual safety with a measure of the strength of aqidah, faith or certain creeds

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[18]Amin Abdullah. *Pendidikan Agama...*
[19]Look at Kautsar Azhari's writing in Sumartana et al., *Pluralisme, Konflik dan Pendidikan Agama di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Interfidei, 2001), p. 232-264.
[20]Sumartana et al., *Pluralisme….*

still has to be tested in the field. If these individuals group, congregate and organize with various inherent interests that often act in the name of religion to attract full emotion and support for the adherents of that religion, then it must be clarified with a form of agreement that prioritizes social interests rather than religious interests. The cultivation of socio-religious attitudes is not touched on in religious learning in Islamic boarding schools. What is emphasized a lot is precisely the theological aspects and formal spirituality which differ greatly.

Pesantren education emphasizes more on salvation which is based on the goodness of an individual's relationship with God rather than individual salvation with other individuals. The students' insensitivity to the fate and suffering experienced by fellow believers of other religions is the result of education using an individual salvation approach to God. Education that turns off the sensitivity to solidarity between fellow human beings and not merely fellow members of the same religion is the result of the religious concept that people who do not believe in or outside the group are "opponents". For this reason, the new approach proposed by Amin Abdullah, namely how religious education will emphasize the religious life of students who can consider a more open social life. The principles of social coexistence are based more on the "social-contract" approach and not just "agree in disagreement". The social contract, according to Amin, contains an appreciative belief that existing differences must be maintained with an element of cooperation (cooperation) in the form of a social contract.

In the concept of agree in disagreement, there is still a theological approach that is quite prominent and very thick with respective religious values, because the disagreement is always highlighted, while the agree component can be quickly crushed by the disagreement. Meanwhile, the state of mind, mentality and ways of thinking and acting hidden behind the keyword social contract is an assumption and belief that we are all different from the start in many ways, especially in the field of aqidah, but in order to maintain harmony, safety and In the interests of coexistence and group life (social survival), inevitably we must be willing to establish cooperation in the form of a social contract between fellow groups and members of society, which from the start is different from any point of view.[21]

Departing from the above reality, a common thing happens when religious education material in Islamic boarding schools is considered to be exclusive, not open to the pace of development of religious thought that develops outside the pesantren. The trend or tendency to maintain *'al-qadim'* (old and tested concepts of religious education) which is considered and believed to be much better *(al-aslah)* in religious education, is more dominant in adopting new educational concepts *(al-jadid)* that is better and in accordance with the demands and challenges of the times.

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[21] Amin Abdullah. *Pendidikan Agama …*, p. 34-35.

Therefore, it can be understood if the attitudes of religious teachers and santri in pesantren in facing the plurality of communities and adherents of religions outside the ones they are used to know barely change. The issue of kafir kafir, between groups of followers of religion, accusations of not being safe if they adhere to outside the religion they profess, apostasy with other people's existence as a threat is still often encountered in any religious education practice openly or subtly which ultimately leads to social and group emotions. provocateurs who have political, social, economic and cultural interests are easily ignited and burned.

This pattern of education is manifest not only in the world of pesantren, but also in religious education which is taught from the lowest level (kindergarten) to higher educations. The efforts to review and examine the paradigm of the concept of religious education offered by the curriculum, syllabi, literature and teachers in the field in the era of multiculturalism are very urgent, moreover when such efforts are linked to finding some of the sources or roots of conflict and riots in plural societies.

Furthermore, according to Amin Abdullah, this tendency is also caused by the lack of religious dialogue forums that involve religious teachers. So far, dialogue between religious communities has only limitedly involved figures in the religious organization elite, functionaries who are authorized in religious institutions, and community figures who are considered respected. Meanwhile, religious teachers as the spearhead of religious education from kindergarten to higher education institutions and Islamic boarding schools have hardly been touched by the waves of thought and discourse on religious thought around the issue of pluralism and dialogue between religious communities during the last 30 years.[22] The results are predictable, their mindset (thoughts) are generally still called to teach religion with the same material, methods and methods with the basic assumptions of their beliefs and presuppositions that students, society and people outside school seem to live in a homogeneous community and not religiously heterogeneous.

When the students get accurate information about the complexities of religious life in the era of plurality and provide cool alternative solutions, they learn to repackage the messages of religious values that they embrace in the era of plurality, students will be earlier able to understand (not negate differences and reject them), respect the beliefs and religions that other people adhere to or embrace (not hate them and be hostile to them). Thus, in time, they can take a stand and face the reality of plurality of religions, cultures, ethnicities, ethnicities and groups in a more wise, mature and mature manner.

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[22] Amin Abdullah. *Pendidikan Agama..*, p. 35.

INTERNALIZING MULTUCULTURALISM IDEAS INTO PESANTREN ENVIRONMENT

In Islam, multicultural values actually have a strong enough justification, even become a foundation in Islam. Islam teaches its followers that humans are indeed created differently, with tribes in order to know each other. This process of knowing each other is what is called the essence of the idea of multiculturalism, and thus, multiculturalism should of course also be included in the form of worship in Islam, and will be rewarded by God. Even the basic principle of *tawhid* itself, which means the oneness of Allah, requires that apart from Him, it must take a multiple form. The principle of monotheism like this also shows that multiculturalism is very strong in the foundation of this religion and becomes part of worship and the principles of life of its people. However, what is very unfortunate is that there are some religious authorities who do not want this authority to spread. They object to this understanding. They tend to favor uniformity and thinking that is monolithic, petty and intolerant. Power then often becomes a medium to maintain the authority they and their groups have.

In fact, every human being has the same potential mind to understand all the realities that occur in this universe. No one has the right to claim that his thinking is the most correct. Anyone may think to reject or disagree with another thought, but he has no right to call on others to equally reject and disagree with these other thoughts. After all, differences and diversity should be seen as gifts of human life and not as a threat to the truth authority of any group. Therefore, efforts to soften rigidity and break the ice-coldness of religious thought and understanding which is rigid-monolithic towards the existence of religion, should be put forward.

These efforts, according to Amin Abdullah, should be started by internalizing the understanding that distinguishes between the following three concepts; Human diversity (religiosity), religious diversity (religions) and the process of "becoming" towards a better, perfect and complete direction, which continues as long as the life contains the body (being religious). Of the three concepts, it is necessary to map which ones are considered "absolute" which are considered "relative" and which are "relatively absolute." [23]

In everyday life, these three concepts are often mixed up, making it difficult for religious people to face complex socio-religious problems in society. The mixture of stirring and overlapping between the three makes the phenomenon of religion unique and complex. On the one hand, the religious phenomenon is related to elements of transcendental sacredness, but on the other hand, it is also directly related to cultural and social phenomena. Consequently, understanding religious

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[23]Look at Amin Abdullah's article retrieved from *http://www.uin-suka.info/ind/index.php?option=comcontent&task =view&id=510&Itemid=341*

phenomena requires special methodological tools; Besides being familiar with existential psychological and philosophical approaches, they are also required to be able to appreciate and at the same time use approaches and methodologies that can be used in cultural and social fields.

Everyone wants to know and yearn unconditionally for the existence of basic ideas of divinity, goodness, welfare, health, peace, justice, freedom, happiness, tranquility, spirituality, integrity, honesty, order, safety and beauty. These basic human demand and needs are absolute, because every human being, regardless of differences in skin color, ethnicity, race and religion, longs for and aspires to the same thing. So "religiosity" is a kind of demand for the fulfillment of things that are basic, fundamental, spiritual, and fundamental, which are needed by every human being regardless of his/her religious background and communality. That is the meaning of absolute referred to in this paper.

In other words, religious norms and rules that are claimed to be derived from the divine which is sacred, samawi and ultimate make religion have specific and unique characteristics, as well as differentiate it from other types of cultural and socio-religious experiences.[24] The possibility of truth claim which is common to adherents of religions, partly comes from this so-called holy. It's still okay for this step. However, when it is said that it originates from the divine and is expressed in the language of a certain religion, then it is immediately inevitable that cultural and social interference can be avoided. These things that are considered "absolute", if they have descended down, into the historical-empiric-cultural area of human history and social society, then there will be various models, styles, methods, choice of strategies and tactics to achieve them. Every group of society, culture and religion has different ways of formulating, conceptualizing, interpreting anything in order to determine the ways to achieve it.

Differences in concepts, language, culture, breadth of knowledge, and strategies to achieve it make some members of society then fight over the "best", "greatest", "perfect", and so on. Without realizing it, humans have entered the battlefield of a sociological nature. Social laws come into effect here. As a result, the quotation and citation of the revelation text must be carried out regardless of the context. Therefore, everything that had been considered absolute suddenly turns into "relative".[25]

The meaning of "relative" does not mean nihilistic. It is solely due to differences in interpretation between followers of different religious groups. Relativity here is natural because of the different levels of historical experiences that have been undertaken, the level of public education (nomadic, agricultural,

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[24] Dale Cannon. *Six Way Of Being Relegious* (Belmont: Wadworst Company, 2001), p. 50.

[25] Abdullah, M. Amin. *Pendidikan Agama…*, p. 54.

industrial, information-communication) and the technological tools they have. However, relativity here in no way negates the lofty goals which are "absolutely" held firmly by followers of religions. What is clear is that when these lofty ideals, beliefs, creeds, faith, and aqidah which were originally considered "absolute" are conceptualized and expressed through human language and institutionalized, then they enter an area that is historical-cultural and "relative". Things that are "relative" (instrumental values) actually cannot simply be transferred to areas that are "absolute" (ultimate values). If these things which are actually relative are being sanctified or sanctified, then sooner or later there will be social disharmony which can lead to violence. [26]

Up to this point, it is understandable, if there is often confusion in socio-religious life between "absolute" and "relative" areas. Unconsciously there is an understanding that "relative-particular" is in fact "absolute-universal," solely for the purpose of affirming the identity of oneself and their group in the presence of various rivals of other socio-religious groups. The perennial tension between the "Absolute" and the "relative" can only be reduced when man realizes again that he is just a being in continuous process. While the process is ongoing, many things can happen. What used to be when he was young, when he became a religious activist, was well known as an idealistic-fundamentalist figure, who could suddenly become very pragmatic-opportunistic after becoming an NGO figure, party figure, or government official, or extras helping government officials in power. Vice versa. Thus, the situation and momentary political changes, economic constraints and sufficiency, vertical mobility experienced by a person play a role in determining the "ongoing process of being religious".

Furthermore, Amin Abdullah revealed that one of the scientific approaches that also helped the understanding of this discourse was the phenomenological approach of religion. It can help find answers to difficulties or tension between absolutism and relativity in religion. The phenomenological approach to religion really wants to dialogue, unite, and bring back the two thinking entities that have often been separated diametrically. The comparative study of religions -in the old fashion- becomes a little less satisfying here.[27] Because the logic of comparison in certain religious thinking usually says that A + B + C = A. After making a comparison, it turns out that only the religion he adheres to is the best and the best, while others are not good or true. The multicultural and multi-religious era

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[26] Tomagola Thamrin Amal. *Dibakar Sumbu Agama* (Jakarta: Republika, 1999), p. 94.
[27]Zaini Muhtarom. *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama di Indonesia; Beberapa Permasalahan* (Jakarta: INIS, 1999), 15.

religious education which is assumed to use the logic A + B + C + D = A + B + C + D is better than the old model comparison logic. [28]

Another model of teaching Theology, Kalam, and Aqidah which only teaches A + A + A = A + A + A. It usually takes a long time for a person or group to study religion, but their level of knowledge is limited to the religion they profess themselves. During the long period of studying, he never touched and touched at all with followers of the religion owned by neighbors who live next door, neighbors, across the village, in neighboring countries.[29]

Theology, Kalam or religious thought which have an inclusive-pluralistic style is a "new" religious mindset of the multicultural-multi religious era which can only be built through a phenomenological approach to religion by always dialoguing the dimensions of absolutist and relativity in one whole mindset and one breath of social life religious. In this way, the existence of the religious community as a sociological-anthropological entity can be appreciated (pluralistic), but still and always be aware of the possibility of the dangers of relative narrow communality and confessionality. [30]

From the explanation above it can be concluded that the building of theology or Kalam which is inclusive-pluralistic can only be understood and practiced if it can touch and dialogue the three concepts simultaneously in one breath, the spirit of a fresh religious spirit, namely religiosity, religions, and ongoing process of being religious. The theology which is inclusive-pluralistic is what should be introduced in the pesantren environment. If the model of approach and strategy of learning and religious education in Islamic boarding schools is merely transferring and repeating materials, methods and approaches commonly used in the internal community itself, then any religious education institution, including pesantren, can no longer be relied on as a medium of intelligence and enlightenment national life.

If the normative framework for inclusive-pluralistic theological learning above can be packaged and contained in various forms and content of curriculum and non-curriculum materials in Islamic boarding school education, it will form a cognitive, affective and psychomotor understanding in the pesantren community of an effort to advance a culture of peace, a sense of brotherhood and a new nationalistic attitude that combines various aspects such as mastery of science and technology, affection (wisdom, self-correction, critical thinking and attitude) as

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[28] Amin Abdullah retrieved from *http://www.uin-suka.info/ind/index.php?option=comcontent&task= view&id= 510&Itemid =341*

[29]Sumartana Th. dkk., *Pluralisme, Konflik dan Pendidikan Agama di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Interfidei, 2001), p. 232-264.

[30]P3PK, *Keimanan Beragama dan Peranan Pendidikan Agama* (Yogyakarta: UGM-Depag RI, 1997).

part of the formation of a national security culture and an attitude of tolerance towards diversity and social values in Indonesia.

This is important to do because this normative framework can encourage the creation of a culture of dialogue, sensitivity to justice, human rights and solidarity, which is currently very blind. In other words, an inclusive-pluralistic understanding is expected to erode the rampant culture of violence and disharmony among religious adherents. Religious education in Islamic boarding schools should begin to touch the issue of religious plurality directly in a package of religious education that they usually teach to students, discussing religious riots from a structural economic and political approach alongside a limited multicultural literacy approach that introduces celebrations, figures and places of worship. religions. The structural assessment and solution approach is a package with a cultural approach.[31] In that direction, religious education in Islamic boarding schools should be directed towards managing the plurality of society, and if this is realized, the pesantren will be able to play a strategic role in responding to today's plural and multicultural realities. In the midst of a multicultural society struggle, pesantren will be able to enter the contestation space with the chaos of cultural, racial and religious differences without losing their distinctiveness and wisdom. Pesantren will still be able to risk the quality of their educational output in order to remain superior and have an inclusive-pluralistic thinking.

The process towards this direction, of course, requires a lot of internal improvements and new innovations in order to be able to improve the quality of education. This process is of course positively correlated with the teaching context in the pesantren. Where, indirectly requires renewal (modernization), if it may be said so, in various aspects of education in the world of pesantren. Call it for example regarding the curriculum, infrastructure, administrative staff, teachers, management, evaluation systems and other aspects of the implementation of education in pesantren. If these aspects of education do not get proportional attention to be modernized immediately, or at least adapted to the multicultural needs and demands of society (social needs and demand), it will certainly threaten the survival of the pesantren in the future.

CONCLUSION

Reformative and reconstructive efforts towards religious education and socio-religious education in the era of multiculturalism at the pesantren level are a very urgent need. The formulation of new reformative concepts for improving the content of material, syllabi, curriculum and literature in the field of religious

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[31] James A. Bank dan Cherry A. McGee (ed). *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), p. 12.

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education should not only emphasize the level of faith, aqidah and the identity of each individual and group, but more broadly give a point of emphasis on how to strengthen and strengthen social interests and solidarity to face challenges, clashes and demands of the era of globalization, competition, and cultural, religious, ethnic, ethnic and racial pluralism. Therefore, *ijtihad* in the field of education which is directly related to religious education for Islam and Indonesianism is currently more necessary and urgent than *ijtihad* in the field of law which is usually conceptualized, understood, connotated and implemented so far. *Wallahu a'lam bi al-Shawab.*

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