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RELIGIOUS INTERCONNECTIVITY IN AN EFFORT TO REALIZE GLOBAL PEACE: A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

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Abstract

Religion on the one hand is a way to find true happiness on the basis of love, peace, guarantor of safety, moral guidance for all mankind. However, it is not uncommon that in the name of religion it also causes human suffering, triggers conflicts, wars, and various other sufferings that are born from human beings in the name of religion. Therefore, this is certainly counter-productive to the principles of religion which contain noble teachings by prioritizing humanity, peace, love and so on. Therefore, inter-religious dialog must be prioritized, in order to create harmony and peace among human beings. This research seeks to find the common ground of religions through qualitative methods and phenomenological approaches. The results of this study show that an inclusive attitude in religion can be realized through the Trilogy of Harmony, namely 1) Interfaith Harmony, 2) Internal Harmony of Religious Believers, and 3) Harmony between Government and Religious People. Furthermore, religion as a social construction process must be able to act as a moral guide for every human being. In principle, religion is expected to be able to guide global ethics, because there is no world peace without interfaith peace, and there is no interfaith peace without interfaith dialog. Also, interfaith dialog starts from 1) parliamentary dialog, 2) institutional dialog, 3) theological dialog, 4) dialog in community life, and 5) spiritual dialog.

Keywords: Religious Interconnectivity, Religious Dialogue, Global Peace, Philosophy of Religion

I. INTRODUCTION

Indeed, talking about religion is like talking about a paradox. On the one hand, religion is experienced as the way and guarantor of salvation, love and peace. On the other hand, history proves that religion is the source, cause and reason for the destruction and suffering of mankind. Because of religion, people can love each other. But in the name of religion, people can also kill and destroy each other. Moreover, various cases that have occurred indicate that religion seems to be a source of triggering hostility and violence, and in the name of religion, people seem to be allowed to negate others. The new millennium that was supposed to bring hope turned out to be the beginning of sadness and worry, now in the name of religion people can destroy each other. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the duty and mission of religion to contribute to peace and human welfare in this pluralistic world.

Inter-religious harmony is one of the main pillars in maintaining national unity and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. Harmony is often defined as a condition of life and living that reflects an atmosphere of peace, order, tranquility, prosperity, respect, esteem, tolerance, mutual cooperation in accordance with the teachings of religion and the personality of Pancasila (Depag, 1997). Inter-religious harmony is a social condition where all religious groups can coexist together. Harmony is also a way of human life that has certain parts and goals that must be maintained together, helping each other, tolerance, not hostile, taking care of each other.

The existence of differences that grow in religion causes a shift in the meaning and function of the actual religion. Religion, which always teaches a peaceful and prosperous life, is on the other hand one of the factors that have a major influence on violence and conflict. This condition is caused by the lack of universal

understanding of religious adherents, so that they construct in their minds an assumption that the religion they adhere to is the only religion that has a source of truth (Bagir et al., 2016).

The conflict that occurs between religious communities in a multicultural society is a big challenge for the community and the government. Because these conflicts can be a serious threat to national integration if not managed properly. In order for religion to be a unifying tool for the nation, then pluralism must be managed properly and correctly, so an effective way is needed, namely inter-religious dialogue for problems that block each group of religious believers. Because maybe so far the conflicts that arise between religious communities occur because of the disconnection of the right information between religious adherents from one party to another so that negative prejudices arise (Sofyan, 1999).

The history of religion was born as a form of liberation from suffering and oppression of power for the peace of life. All forms of religion are intended so that humans can live freely before God in the right way, which is actualized by obeying the law, loving each other, being fair, and protecting themselves from bad deeds. All of these things are clearly conveyed in the holy books of their respective religions (Muhammad, 2013).

When talking about religion, there are two important notions that must be explained. First, religion as a doctrine and teaching contained in the holy book. Second, religion as the actualization of these doctrines found in history (Roth, 2018). Religious believers are expected to carry out the teachings well, but the reality is often far from what is desired. Therefore, religion often presents itself with a double face. This means that things happen that are far different from what religion actually means. For example, all religions call for peace, unity and brotherhood. But

in reality, in the name of religion there are also many cases of conflict, suffering, division and so on. So it is very important to understand religion essentially which emphasizes the principles of humanity, tolerance, harmony and also unity and global peace. Thus, global peace will be realized by dialoguing religions in order to find the common ground of each religion. Because basically, all religions teach the principles of love towards all beings. It is on the basis of this love that religion will return as a provider of awareness, and make humans who are essentially homo religious.

II. METHODS

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This research seeks to reveal phenomena that exist in society related to religious behavior. In addition, phenomenology aims to see as a whole with regard to symptoms to the principle aspects of religious behavior. The source of data in this research is obtained from literature study, meaning that the data presented in this research comes from literature review or through searching various literatures that have a connection with this research. Therefore, the data sources in this study were obtained from various scientific works such as books, articles or other scientific works that have relevance and relevance to the field of study in this research. Meanwhile, data analysis in this study was carried out by following the analysis pattern of Miles and Huberman, namely from data collection, then data reduction, data display and conclusion of the analyzed data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Human as Homo Religious

Humans, as homo religious, have an innate nature to seek meaning in life and relate to the transcendent. The existence of humans

as religious beings has become a central theme in various fields of science such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and religion. Belief in the supernatural and transcendent is the hallmark of humans as homo religious. This is reflected in the diverse forms of religion and spirituality that exist around the world, reflecting the diversity of human spiritual needs. Homo religious tend to explore philosophical questions about the origin and purpose of human existence. Humans seek an understanding of the nature of the universe, existence and morality. Religious experiences, such as contemplation, meditation and worship, help humans deepen their understanding of themselves and their relationship with the world around them (Roth, 2018).

Religious freedom and pluralism are important features in a society that values humans as homo religious. This gives individuals the freedom to choose and pursue religious beliefs according to personal conviction. However, this freedom can also give rise to conflicts and differing views on religion and beliefs. Homo religious create a diverse cultural heritage in the form of art, music, literature and architecture inspired by religious beliefs. These arts not only serve as an expression of creativity, but also as a means to honor and glorify religious beliefs. In many cultures, religion also plays an important role in shaping ethical norms and morality. Religious beliefs can provide guidance on what is considered right and wrong, and this can influence the behavior of individuals and groups in society.

Religion is also often a source of inspiration for social and political movements that strive for social justice and positive change in society. Many historical figures who led movements for change were driven by religious values and principles. While religion can provide

emotional support and spiritual strength for many individuals, it can also be a source of conflict and intolerance if not managed wisely. History records numerous conflicts based on religious differences, and the challenge today is to find ways to promote interfaith dialog and understanding. In summary, humans as religious homo continue to seek well-being and happiness, both in this life and in view of life after death, in accordance with religious beliefs. Efforts to achieve spiritual and material balance are integral to the human experience as a religious being (Banawiratma, 2010).

Religion is a path taken as an alternative for someone to get salvation in his life. The belief in the existence of a supreme power, which regulates the course of life should indeed be believed by humans. Because something that "exists" must have been created. And the creator has a higher position than the created. Religion must begin with faith in God. Believing in God means believing in His existence and attributes (Zaman, 2000).

Proving the truth of a belief, of course, does not have to state that other beliefs are wrong and misguided. A dominative perspective not only fails to carry out the mission of religion, but also deviates from the noble goal of religions to realize a peaceful and harmonious life order. Religious believers are always in a position to seek and not monopolize the truth. Because, when they feel they have grasped the truth, then at that time they also experience an identity crisis (Scharf, 1995).

Perennialists use a mystical approach to understand the complex reality of religion and religiosity, and try to trace the roots of religiosity from various forms of religion in understanding aspects of divinity and ideally try to find the nodes of the diversity of understanding, so that a transcendental

understanding of the One is found (Sabri, 1997). Existentially God is one. The issue that will arise is why from the One, in concrete reality a plural understanding emerges? The answer to this problem for perennialists certainly cannot only be understood logically rationally, but a mystical understanding is needed. Likewise, in understanding the religious forms displayed by religion. Metaphysically stated, only the ultimate reality is absolute and at the same time pure mandatory and pure free. Only God is perfectly obligatory and free, an absolute and infinite form.

3.2 Religion as Social Construction

The question of religion will not be resolved without including its sociological aspects. Sociology as an empirical discipline has a fundamental perspective compared to theology. A theologian begins his study with a belief in the existence of God and tries to implement the various implications of this belief in human life. In contrast, the sociologist departs from empirical human experience to help understand the nature of God (Scharf, 1995). Religious issues are a person's tendency to self-expression that has universal characteristics. According to Joachim Wach, this expression is divided into three forms; religious thought, religious action, and religious fellowship. Religious thinking is an expression in the form of theoretical and intellectual concepts or teachings, religious deeds are an expression of the implementation or implications of those theoretical and intellectual concepts or utterances, while religious fellowship is an expression in the form of a community or association of people who have the same religious thoughts and deeds.

Religion, which is the main reference for human behaviour and actions, is manifested in the form of "actuating action" with various symbolic articulations

that surround it. All articulations of human action have differences from actions based on religious beliefs with those that are not based on religious beliefs. Human action which is an articulation of religious experience is fundamentally based on the elements of "belief" in The Absolute Being and "meaning" of his actions. These two things are not found in other human social and cultural actions. The element of belief will control all human actions and will give meaning to the actions taken. The meaning is a reference for behaviour to achieve social orientations (Schuon, 2003).

Peter L. Berger argues that what is called religion is actually also socially shaped by humans so that the existence of religion also depends on social, historical and cultural factors. Berger understands religion as a form of human projection produced through externalisation. Historically, religion is one of the most effective forms of legitimisation because it connects the precarious reality construction of empirical society with ultimate reality. Religion is a symbolic universe that gives meaning to human life and that provides explanations for realities such as death, suffering or injustice. Religion has served the social function of safeguarding society from chaos. Religion legitimises social institutions by placing them within a sacred and cosmic framework. Therefore, religion is called the sacred canopy (Ghazali, 2014).

Berger argues that religion is not merely an "effect" or "reflection" of social (empirical) life, but a religious reality that can overcome human phenomena. So he tried to define religion not only as a "human product" made from humane materials, but also non-humane, therefore, for Berger religion is actually not only protecting, but also "sacred". However, the sacred according to Berger is not only related to social images but also a belief in the supernatural realm. But in terms of

rationality, Berger sees the destruction of rationality experienced by religion in this contemporary situation. As explained in his books *The Sacred Canopy* (1990) and *A Rumour of Angels* (1970), Peter L. Berger attempts to explain how religion is positioned in modern life. Both of Berger's early books tend to position religion as a response to secularisation. According to Berger, secularisation led to the demonopolisation of religious traditions and increased the role of lay people. Religious worldviews mingle and compete with non-religious worldviews so that religious organisations must undergo rationalisation and de-bureaucratisation.

It is based on the assumption that secular society is more orientated towards the relationship between religion and society in the context of the state and not in the territory of individuals. Religion remains a reference for the behaviour of individuals despite living in the context of a society that makes teachings between religious life and state life. For this reason, Peter L. Berger revealed that religion will remain a sacred canopy for society and religion will always be a reference for human action.

3.3 Interfaith Dialogue as a Pathway to Global Peace

When talking about religion, there are two important notions that must be explained. Firstly, religion as a doctrine and teaching contained in the holy book. Second, religion as the actualisation of those doctrines found in history. Religious believers are expected to implement the teachings properly, but the reality is often far from what is desired. Therefore, religion often appears with a double face. This means that things happen that are far different from what religion actually means. For example, all religions call for peace, unity and brotherhood. But in reality, religion presents itself as a fierce force, a spreader of conflict, often leading to war (Harahap, 2011).

The contribution of religion in solving social problems is not easy, especially from day to day the challenges faced are getting heavier and human needs are increasing. Religion with the guidance of the holy book must be able to provide a realistic solution to the problems in a diverse society (Muhammad, 2013).

Religion is a guide for mankind to spread peace and provide solutions to life's problems. However, when religion is involved, the problem becomes increasingly tapered, even they (religious believers) are willing to kill each other in the name of the religion they believe in. Such conditions are likely to give rise to an attitude of distrust of the function / benefits of religion in order to overcome the problems of life, and this can be said to be a failure of the social role of religion (Zaman, 2000).

Since long ago, meetings between adherents of various religions have occurred. From that encounter has resulted in a lot of cooperation, but not a few have resulted in disputes, even wars. From the point of view of belief, disputes between religious adherents usually occur due to their truth claims and salvation claims. Initially, these exclusive claims are an affirmation of the distinctive identity of a religious group that is different from other religious groups. But in later developments, a religious group tries to show, even impose, the exclusive salvation claim on others who actually also have an exclusive salvation claim. This clash of exclusive claims is one of the causes, among others, of inter-religious divisions (Banawiratma, 2010).

Faced with these truth claims, the study of philosophy invites humans to jointly re-examine various truth claims. The goal is to add insight into intellectual breadth and flexibility, foster an attitude of tolerance towards various opinions and beliefs, and

free the exclusive attitude that is integrated into life beliefs. So that to understand religion, it is not only enough on a normative level but also by looking at historicity.

The nature of religion in the perspective of perennial philosophy can be seen from two sides, namely exoteric and esoteric. Schuon draws a dividing line between exoteric and esoteric. Exoteric are things that can be known and done by all members of a group of adherents of a particular understanding, while esoteric are things that can only be known and done by a few people from a group of adherents of a particular understanding. Schuon's thesis also explains that esoterically all religions are basically or essentially the same. But exoterically what makes them different is their form (Schuon, 2003).

Interreligious dialogue is one of the most important issues in the development of the study of religions. The issue of interreligious dialogue has accompanied the development of interfaith relations from time to time. This issue has become a concern of religious leaders in the midst of the global arena in order to build harmony and world peace. The implementation of interfaith dialogue academically reaches in-depth studies of various crucial doctrines in each religion, from theological doctrines to practical matters (Banawiratma, 2010).

Religious studies is the study of matters related to religion. Religious studies is a conscious and systematic effort to know and understand and discuss in depth about the ins and outs or things related to religion, both related to teachings, history and practices of real implementation in everyday life throughout its history. Religious studies can be carried out by adherents of each religion and can also be carried out by interfaith believers. Of course, there is a difference between

studying religion by adherents of their own religion and studying religions that are adhered to by others, and vice versa. Studying a religion by adherents of their own religion aims to understand and explore and discuss the teachings of a religion to be able to implement it and practice it. The study of a religion by adherents of other religions is certainly aimed at science.² Interreligious dialogue is part of religious studies in which there is a study of the adherents of a religion both to their own religion and to other religions. In the practice of interfaith dialogue, religious leaders explore the core of their own teachings and also try to understand the core teachings of other religions that can be dialogued together (Scharf, 1995).

By examining the core teachings of religion and the religiosity of adherents of a religion, an understanding can be reached that religion contains two important things, namely normative things and historical things, or esoteric things and exoteric things. A religion has two dimensions that cannot be separated, namely the esoteric and exoteric dimensions. In the esoteric dimension, religion transcends time and space, transcends rationality, is transcendent and absolute. While in its exoteric dimension, religion manifests in a structured form, exists in time and space, rationality, is limited and relative. The relativity of the form of religion (exoteric), opens opportunities for critical, in-depth, and rational studies, so that the truth values it contains can be revealed from the veil of limitations and relativity, and can function as a source of benefit in human life in this universe. In the context of the public sphere, a particular religion cannot be separated from its dynamic and complex history, so that reading of Islam is not enough with just one approach, let alone only with a normative approach, but must be done with multiple approaches and perspectives (Schuon, 2003).

Religion contains two things, namely things that are absolute and things that are relative. This also creates a mindset of religious people who treat all things in religion as absolute. As a result, claims of absolute truth develop from religious adherents when treating their thoughts or opinions. On the other hand, religion develops and lives together with changes in the conditions of the times of its adherents. Religion faces various things of life that are relative, meaning that they always change from era to era. Therefore, in the study of religion it is understood that absolute things must be dialogued with things that are relative. Religion that comes from God is absolute but the understanding of religious adherents of religion from God is relative. It is the understanding of religion that should not be an absolute. Religious understanding should not be immune to criticism. Religion when understood by its adherents is in contact with aspects of the profane history of adherents, which is relative. Therefore, according to Amin Abdullah, it is necessary to interconnect between things that are absolute normative with things that are relative historical.

Hans Kung states that inclusive dialogue means that every religious person must prove his or her faith, despite all differences. Every religious person must be responsible to God and serve human society with full respect for each other. Inter-religious dialogue can really bring understanding and enlightenment to people in the forum of inter-religious harmony. In inclusive dialogue, an attitude of mutual openness between religious adherents is required (Kung, 1991).

As in Hans Kung's expression in one of the works entitled "Is Dialogue Impossible", Hans Kung offers three hypotheses about the role of religion for the future of the world. First, there is no world future without a global ethic or no

survival without a world ethic. Second, there is no world peace without religious peace, and third, there is no religious peace without religious dialogue. Kung also mapped out four strategies of people towards other people's religions, namely first, the strategy of the fortress that considers its religion the most correct so that if you want a peace can only occur through the guarantee of a particular religion. Second is the strategy of ignoring differences. This strategy assumes that the truth already exists in each religion through its own way, so peace can occur if we ignore the differences that exist. The third is the strategy of embracing which assumes that only one religion is the most true but this truth has been spread to various religions so that if we want world peace then we must embrace all religions and integrate them into one. However, Kung disagrees with these three strategies because they cannot solve the problems that arise between religions. So he added a fourth strategy, namely the strategy of ecumenism. There is only one criterion of truth, namely humanity (*humanum*) so that the task of all religions is to formulate together the criteria of humanity.

Thus, in summary, in an effort to create peace among religious believers, there are several forms of dialogue that can be used according to needs. First, parliamentary dialogue, which involves hundreds of participants, such as the 1983 dialogue in Chicago at the World Parliament of Religions. Second, institutional dialogue, which is dialogue between institutional representatives of various religious organisations. Third, theological dialogue. Theological dialogue includes meetings that discuss theological and philosophical issues. Fourth, dialogue in community or dialogue in life, dialogues in this category generally tend to resolve "practical" and "actual" matters in life that are of common concern. Fifth, spiritual dialogue, dialogue

that is conducted with the aim of nourishing and deepening spiritual life among various religions.

IV. CONCLUSION

The importance of interfaith dialogue cannot be ignored in the context of an increasingly complex and multicultural world. Interfaith dialogue plays an important role in promoting understanding and harmony between individuals and communities of different religious beliefs. It helps reduce prejudice, mistrust and conflict that often arise as a result of ignorance about the beliefs and practices of other religions. Through dialogue, we can understand the similarities between different religions in values such as love, peace, and compassion, which in turn enables us to work together on social projects that benefit humanity. In addition, interfaith dialogue has an important role in the prevention of interfaith conflict, reconciliation in conflict situations, and creating an inclusive environment that respects religious diversity. In addition to the benefits at the individual and community levels, interfaith dialogue also contributes significantly to maintaining global peace and minimising tensions between nations that may arise as a result of religious differences. In essence, the importance of interfaith dialogue is in building a more peaceful, tolerant and harmonious world where all individuals, regardless of religious background, can live together with mutual respect and work together to achieve greater common goals.

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