# Islamic Thought Offers in the Polemic of Fanaticism Religious Communities in Indonesia

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to look at offers in inter-religious dialogue in Indonesia regarding the polemic of religious fanaticism. This research explains the Islamic thought approach of Nurcholis Madjid and Amin Abdullah using analytical descriptive methods which include qualitative research with data in the form of literature and journals that are still related to the theme. The data collection technique is a literature study that relies on the books Islam, Modernity and Indonesianness from Nurcholis Madjid and Religious Studies: Normativity or Historicity from Amin Abdullah and related journals. The findings achieved from this research are in the form of an understanding of the ideas of historicity, normativity and religious inclusivism which explains that all three have the same approach in creating peace in Indonesia. historicity with historical, anthropological and sociological approaches, both of which must be united to be able to see the diversity of Indonesian society. Nurcholis Madjid with the idea of inclusivism, he criticizes religious traditions which tend to be formalistic textualists, thus changing them with a normative-historical approach and a classical-modern approach to be contextualized in the diversity of Indonesia's pluralistic society. It can be seen that these two Islamic thinkers have contributed ideas that can be actualized for the continuation of peace between religious communities in Indonesia. Therefore, both of them have approaches that can be used in dialogue between religious communities as an offer to polemics about religious fanaticism in Indonesia.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic thought is inseparable from the discussion of Islamic philosophical figures who are popular in it, not least in Indonesian Islamic thought which, if seen from the beginning of the 1970s, Indonesian Islamic studies are still in the dominance of a thick paradigm of Islamic knowledge dogmatism, even conservative Muslim groups to modern still claim the most correct understanding. [1] The assertion of rigid and historical Islamic knowledge causes a stagnant tendency in Islamic thought. As in the thinking of Nurcholis Majid, which in the 1970s became the momentum of Indonesian Muslim renewal, this was because Islamic thought embraced the truth which was considered always definitive. In addition, this also causes

the Islamic world to be unable to respond to waves of modernity and waves of social, cultural, political and religious change in the era of globalization.

In Nurcholis Madjid's thinking on the idea of integrity and rethinking, that the integrity of the ummah is not a practical approach because the political situation during the new order requires changes in the behavior and emotions of Muslims, where the idealistic approach to integration will only contribute to further progress and hinder popular thinking. [2] Social change made polemical conflicts of Islamic ideology emerge, while communicative conflicts subsided, Islamic thought became static and no longer dynamic.

The lack of dynamism of Islam raises a new ideology that is different from the mainstream Islamic ideology in Indonesia in two decades still attracts attention, especially an Amin Abdullah as an Islamic thinker in Indonesia who has an ijtihad attitude in changing Islamic thought to be dynamic and visionary, from his thoughts there are several popular terms such as shifting paradigm, truth claim, normativity and historicity of Islam and integrative interconnection, from some of these terms identify that he wants a philosophical discourse in order to raise progressive Islamic thought. [2]

As according to Nurcholis Madjid, there are various attitudes that need to be understood in religious matters such as exclusive, which rejects cooperation between religious communities because each gives claims to its own truth, inclusive views on the desire to cooperate with other parties on the basis of social interests, and pluralism, each religion has its own truth and path of goodness so that there is no sentence of refusal in cooperation, from the three of them are interrelated with religious peace. People who are experts in resolving polemics have the aim of winning a forum that has been thought of to be fought for. [3]

Previously, it is necessary to understand that interreligious dialog has the word dialog, which in Malay means conversation or any form of speech and

exchange of opinions, discussion consultation between two or more parties regarding a problem openly. Dialogue in Arabic is called al-Hiwar which refers to the etymology of ha, wau, ra, according to Ibn Mansur in the book Lisan al-Arab explains that al-Hiwar is understood as al-ruju which has the intention of being referred to again, as is the case with the dialogue between the angel Gabriel in conveying the word of God to Muhammad Saw in the form of kalam lafzi, this is the occurrence of divine dialogue to mankind. [4]

the When viewed from above definition that dialog in terms of language is understood as a summary of interrelated matters through conversation and action between two parties. Like the term from Leonard Swidler who interprets dialog as a matter between two people with different views with the main purpose of learning from each other in order to obtain change and development, the concept of authentic dialog is not only limited to religious representatives who are truly experts in certain fields, but dialog must also include the participation of all levels and layers of society. [5]

Inter-religious dialog has existed for a long time starting from the national to the international level with the aim of solving problems that occur in religious life, [6] as Mukti Ali, inter-religious dialog is a meeting of hearts and minds between adherents in various religions.

He explained the encounter between religious adherents without feeling inferior and without undisclosed goals. [7] If it is related to the issue of conditions in Indonesia, interfaith dialogue has an attitude to build religious harmonization that is interrelated with others, this is as the plurality of religions embraced by Indonesian citizens.

Therefore, this research wants to show the offer of Islamic thought in contributing to the problem of fanaticism of Indonesia's plural religious communities.

# 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study pays attention to previous research that is still relevant to the topic including research from Amanah Nurish which explains how the proliferation of radical movements and how fanaticism began, in his article explained that all attitudes and movements that affect the existence of religious fanaticism is a factor of religious preachers, seditious media and hate speech, so according to him it is important to minimize the attitude of fanaticism towards religion which he considers can have an impact on the increase of extreme movements in Indonesia. [28]

As in Budi Ichwayudi's research, which assumes that radical understanding is not only related to adulthood but also to young age, therefore the need for initiators to conduct interfaith dialogue among young people in order to create an open understanding of every religion and difference. [29]

In a study by Abdul Halim explained that the existence of factors of religious believers tend to be closed resulting in an understanding of the truth of his own religion without looking at other religions, the recognition that his own religion is right and others are wrong causes the religion to be closed and seem rigid to differences. [25]

Therefore, it is important for the contribution of figures to realize peace in the surrounding environment as in Remita's research which explains that religious leaders have a central role in becoming mediators of conflicts that can collaborate between religions as a joint effort to create religious persecution. [30]

So it is necessary to support the understanding of religious fanaticism with scientific discussions in the research room, as explained in Lintang Lituhayu research, according to him, from many journal publications and articles have not targeted an explanation of religious fanaticism that is comprehensive and consistent, it is from the range of 2013 to 2022 there are only 1,833 journals, so it is important that the explanation of religious fanaticism continues

to be intensified in order to have an impact on religious scientific discussions. [31]

## 3. METHODS

This research uses an analytical descriptive method with a form of literature research or literature study, the literature study method is efficiently used in collecting and analyzing data thoroughly. Data obtained through articles and scientific journals as well as sources related to the research, from the selected data will later be analyzed. This research focuses on the thoughts of Nurcholis Madjid from the book Islam Kemoderenan and KeIndonesiaan and Amin Abdullah from the book Religious Studies: Normativity or Historicity.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# 4.1 Religious Fanaticism in Indonesia

The as religious violence has increased, the image of Indonesia, where religious pluralism coexists harmoniously, has deteriorated. When reformasi came along with democratic values, the openness and freedom inherent in these values were misunderstood by some. [7] Those who were threatened were free to retaliate, leading to protracted conflicts, both horizontal and vertical. Ironically, religion plays a role in the creation and development of this anarchism and conflict. Some people or groups use religion as an excuse to attack other groups that do not adhere to the same beliefs or religions. [8]

The complexity of the problems that have arisen recently related to religious issues has increasingly encouraged intellectuals to reflect on religion. Therefore, it is not surprising that many observers of religion and its problems, both from among religious people, culturalists, sociologists and intellectuals, one of the factors that explain the inability of religion to provide a foundation for the creation of a peaceful and prosperous life is the inability of theology to capture the reality of life that continues to grow. [8]

Judging from Indonesia's pluralistic society, when it comes to interfaith relations, dialog is a good way. There is a positive affirmation from Nurcholish Madjid about diversity, especially the attitude that begins with recognizing the fact that we live in a heterogeneous society. As a reformist and clerical figure, he supports the concept of pluralism when considering the diversity of religious beliefs in Indonesia. Integration of thought, is one step towards hope that the problems that befall the Indonesian nation, especially interfaith relations or interreligious relations, continue to be a problem that can be minimized. [9]

Moreover, fanaticism has grown due to errors in the delivery of understanding religion that gives a wrong understanding of other religions. [10] Therefore, it is important to conduct inter-religious dialogue in order to harmonize religious communities. Because religion is a guide to individual life in the sense that the consequences of religion are owned by everyone to do good in positive behavior and avoid despicable behavior. [11]

However, according to Leonard Swidler, by creating harmonious relationships within religious communities, there are at least ten principles that must be considered so that comprehensive dialogue between religious communities can be established peacefully and harmoniously: First, must have an attitude to learn. Second, have an effort in two-way dialog. Third, honesty. Fourth, compare fairly between religious affiliation and religious doctrine. Fifth, having an authentic identity. Six, discarding unrelated suspicions for the sake of interfaith harmonization. Seven, having balance or equality in all goodness between religions. Eighth, trust each other. Ninth, having a critical attitude. Tenth, have a sense of each religion. of some of these principles is a level in religious attitudes, therefore in building a religious dialogue process it is necessary to pay attention to the metaphysical dimension of the meaning of sanctity and the presence of religion to move towards a form of awareness of peaceful and harmonious life. [7]

According to Sori, there are several encouragements in the creation of interfaith harmonization, namely First, the awareness of

each religious adherent to apply mutual respect and tolerance. Second, having good communication between religions so as to minimize conflict. Third, avoiding negative allegations against other religions. This will only make each individual experience a thought construction that causes conflict. [12]

Therefore, interfaith harmony must be carried out to unite and instill brotherhood and kinship despite different beliefs, ethnicities, and races. [13] To achieve an attitude of interfaith harmony can only be built and achieved by arousing compassion and fostering a tolerant attitude among the community. [14]

Tolerant attitude is one of the characteristics accepted by the community as a legacy of the Indonesian ancestors. [15] Therefore, tolerance in society is not a necessity demanded by the situation, but rather giving on the basis of generosity and kindness, not on the basis of rights. [16] So that Muslims are required to live in harmony and respect each other to other religions. As in surah al-Syuura verse 15 which means:

"So call them to that religion and remain as you are commanded, and follow not their lusts and say: I believe in all the Books which Allah has sent down, and I am commanded to be just among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us is our deed and for you is your deed. There is no quarrel between you and us. Allah gathers us together and it is to Him that we all return."

According to Hasan Basri, the Qur'an has taught Muslims to walk with each other on the path of Allah and even though it is not accepted, it does not mean closing the door to coexist with groups outside Muslims. [16] In line with that, Hossein Nasr interpreted Surah Asyuura verse 15 as follows:

"That each group has its own deeds means that each will receive the reward or recompense commensurate with those deeds That there is no argument or dispute between the believers and the disbelievers means that, since the truth has appeared, the dispute is settled or, as implied by the final sentence of the verse, that as God will gather all people together and judge between them, there is no need to dispute the

matter, since unto God are all matters returned". [17]

That each group has its own actions so that in each of them will receive rewards as they have done, therefore it is no longer to be disputed because God will gather all people to judge them, for God everything is returned. Therefore, the basic attitude of Muslims is the willingness to live in harmony and friendship with followers of religions other than Islam.

# 4.2 Approaches to Normativity, Historicity and Religious Inclusivism

The inter-religious harmony arises through inter-religious relations based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, and respect for equality in practicing religious teachings, and cooperation in social life. [18] As Nurcholis Madjid states, there are several attitudes in interfaith inclusiveness, namely including the understanding that other religions are part of the implicit form of one's own religion. Therefore, the inclusive attitude that exists in every religion must be maintained in order to maintain harmonious interfaith relations, as in Amin Abdullah's thinking who wants to answer the problems of Muslims with an inclusive point of view [1].

Furthermore, Nurcholis Madjid understands inclusiveness as fitri or fitrah, which is the spirit that reflects that in humans there is the potential for right and wrong. [9] According to him, fitrah is the basis for the sustainability of the spirit of mutual cooperation of Muslims in dealing well with other religious groups so as to create balanced justice for fellow humans. [9] Balance in religion if in understanding the normativity and historicity of Islam as Amin Abdullah, Islam has two faces with this view, namely the normative face and the historical face, both of which cannot be separated from one another. Normatively Islam is absolute, sacred and universal, this is because the source of norms has never changed, but when normative Islam moves to the realm of empirical and human historicity, then truth is worldly, temporary, connected by space and time, so at this level Islam becomes dynamic, relative and plural, so that Islam experiences geographical and

epochal developments with increasingly diverse faces. [19]

Amin Abdullah asserts that the approach and understanding of religious phenomena using the normative -textual and historical-critical theological paradigm is not always consistent and the rhythm of the relationship between the two paradigms is often colored with tension, both constructive and destructive. This is because the contextual group claims a normative approach that absolutizes the written text without understanding the sociological background of religious texts, according to him a difficult problem in the Islamic world is to link fundamental normativity values historicity and historical context in human life that continues to change. [20]

As Nurcholis Madjid who speaks of religious pluralism that the term plural is not to be understood as diversity because it will describe the impression of fragmentation, otherwise it is also not understood as a negative good that is used only to get rid of fanaticism. Therefore, in cultural understanding, pluralism is acceptable but in religious matters it always triggers fanaticism. [21]

Fanaticism makes religious life not dynamic, in a normative approach Amin Abdullah states that Islam is a religion of revelation that has absolute and universal truth, so it cannot draw conclusions that contradict the text of revelation resulting in reality experiencing submission and being sub-ordinated under the authority of religious texts. The logic of normative thinking forces the standardization of Islam to appear in the form of rigid laws, causing the normative model to only revolve around the terms halalharam, reward-sin, heaven-doom. [22] In contrast, the historical approach assumes that religion is always born in a historical context because if it is not historical then religion has no meaning. In this approach, religious practice does not have to go word by word but the word of God is enough to capture the universal spirit of religion. [19]

According to Amin Abdullah, reading history in religious science research is

a good way of reading. Historism views Islam as more applied and able to move between data and reality, between pure science and applied science, and from essence to existence. [22] So that the scientific approach in the study of religion is to find the entanglement and mixing of religion with political, social and cultural interests in religious institutions not in the essence of religion, according to him in studying religious diversity people must have objective reasons to analyze fairly. Because without this attitude, the study of Islam will only be repetitive repeating what has been done by previous generations. The result is status quo, stagnation, decentralization, eliminating progress and criticism in the face of empirical and historical reality. [19]

If seen above, Amin Abdullah's ideas revolve around the issue of normativity, a problem in the understanding of the Islamic religion which has so far been understood as a rigid dogma, in this approach it is rooted in the text of the holy book which ultimately creates a scripturalist style of understanding, such as Nurcholis Madjid who criticized Religious traditions that tend to be textually formalistic, Nurcholis considers that the exclusive view is no longer conducive and is considered an embryo that triggers horizontal conflict, so that an inclusivist view is needed. [23] Amin Abdullah's next idea is historicity diversity human with historical, anthropological and sociological approaches, according to which these two approaches should not be separated, because both have contributions to a plural society. [1]

Pluralism can be seen from two points of view, a practical level and an ideological level. At a practical level, pluralism can be achieved through respect for practical differences and mutual respect between different parties. According to Alwi Shihab, pluralism is the demand for religious adherents to recognize the existence of the rights of other religions in an effort to achieve mutual harmony and understanding of appeasement. [24]

In the history of inter-religious relations in Indonesia, this often occurs,

especially in inter-religious issues, the thing that often causes problems is that there is a complex problem between the majority and the minority because religious adherents believe in each other's religion as the most correct one. Furthermore, Nurcholis Madjid emphasized that Islam as an inclusive religion must open and able to appear as a civil servant to act as an interlocutor for other groups, he provides a place of high plurality regarding inter-religious issues. [9]

There is a problem of closed religious dogmatism due to the claim of absolute truth of Islamic thought. Nurcholis Madjid departs from an understanding of the stigma towards some Muslims who want to enforce Islamic sharia in the state, therefore the construction of his thought is more towards inclusive ideas as mentioned above. In explaining inclusivity, normative-historical approaches and modern classical approaches are used. According to him, the inclusive concept is a guide to peaceful and tolerant religious life amidst the diversity of Indonesian society. [23] From inclusive thinking, it has the impact that all religions have an equal and egalitarian position in moving towards the truth, so that the truth claims of one true religion cannot be monopolized exclusively by other religions.

# 4.3 A Bid for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia

The context of religious conflicts in Indonesia began with the old order which inherited religious problems in the new order with the issue of Christianization which resulted in the burning of churches in Aceh, Mukti Ali as the position holder at that time used the idea of agreeing in disagreement which succeeded in conditioning relations between religious communities by implementing religious political modernization system that favored Muslims. [25] Not only that, in every religious group there is a tendency to be fanatical about their religion which affects the attitude of interfaith dialogue at that time, this fanatical group is now referred to as a fundamentalist group or another form of religious exclusivism, it departs from the understanding that states that the group continues the legitimate religious tradition by providing ideological and social cultural resistance to the form of life in society. [25]

Often the exclusivism group places its foundation on its group alone and ignores other groups outside it, therefore it is difficult to provide understanding by dialoguing with them. The fact is that the earth where we live inhabited by various patterns and variations of religious attitudes, characteristics of society and religion. [25] In the study of Islam, the study approach is useful in addressing humanitarian problems, while the Qur'an as a container in collecting the perfect kalam, the Qur'an is a source of norms that regulate human life in vertical and horizontal relationships. It contains universal human values that apply to all people on an equal level. However, there are also differences because immanent humans try to approach the truth of the Qur'an with their respective portions so as to make the truth experience differences, the Koran as an object and humans as subjects will always interact with each other in creating an understanding of it. Because the aspect of subjectivity will always exist, the nature of religious understanding at this level is interpretative. [19]

People's understanding of religion is sustainable and growing as the times with various levels of human beings in achieving religion. Therefore, maturity in understanding of religious dogma and doctrine develops not because of defects at first but because society has developed. There are several offers in addressing interreligious dialogue such as the Supra pluralism approach which has an emphasis on the dimension of balance in the humanist and ecological aspects in the sense that religious aspects are not in humanitarian standards but also ecological standards so that the creation of maturity in religion. [25] Similarly, in Amin Abdullah's idea of historicity and normativity he relies on the issue of the existence of a rigid and closed religious dogmatism, he describes historicity as a historical approach with social, anthropological, and normativity through a theological doctrinal approach, the two

cannot be separated to understand the diversity of plural societies, because both provide mutual improvement of deficiencies that occur in people's lives. [1]

Just as a religious believer will still maintain the value of his religious teachings which are considered as truth in order to maintain faith, it will be difficult when contextualized in issues and developments of the times because it only relies on aspects of normativity, on the contrary, it relies on historicity that no theological teaching text and the thoughts of the interpreter will not be achieved so that both approaches must be interrelated in interpreting the diversity of plural Islam. Especially exclusivism groups that seem fanatical about religious teachings and give themselves as a rigid group to the problems of plural society in Indonesia, a person in religion should be able to position the location of religious diversity without having to abandon the values of his teachings, so that it will lead to a tolerant and harmonious attitude in religion. [1]

religious matters, especially dogmatic religious teachings not only blunt religious knowledge and public thinking, but also open up opportunities for the emergence of demands and justifications that cause conflicts and harm harmony between religious people. [7] Therefore, it raises an inclusive attitude in religion as a point of view can foster plurality between religions, it is created by understanding the attitude of awareness of differences between religions by conducting continuous dialogue. According to Amin Abdullah, the success of inclusive dialogue activities is to reduce inter-religious conflicts. [7]

Religious conflicts can be minimized as Nurcholis Madjid, according to him the diversity and beliefs among religious communities in Indonesia are pluralistic, he is of the view that a dialogue between religions or groups to be a good thing to do and have a significant influence in creating peace in the community. [9] There are three things in the first inclusive discourse. Inclusive Islam that has the spirit of humanity and universality, second. Islam rejects exclusionism and

absolutism, third. Inclusivism is a commitment to pluralism. Of the three there are two major pillars of plurality as sunatullah and interfaith meetings. [26]

From the three points above, he asserted that normatively-doctrinaire Islam views plurality as a condition that must be addressed in underlying religious freedom, therefore Islam is an open religion. [9] Therefore, the idea of inclusiveness that can be taken from Nurcholis Madjid's thought is that there is an attitude of mutual acceptance of the fact of the plurality of society with a positive value and based on the idea that the existence of a plural society is God's grace to humans. [27]

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Interreligious dialogue is an important instrument in reconciling each group that claims to be the truest, especially in the era of technology that uses the name of religion as a religious divider. Islamic thought in interreligious dialogue has a contribution in fostering mutual respect and no longer a claim to truth that makes one group the truest of the other, it can be seen from the roots of

understanding as Amin Abdullah who departed from normative thinking with scriptualist textual understanding, and the historicity with historical, idea of anthropological and sociological approaches, both of which must be united to be able to see the diversity of Indonesian society. In line with that, Nurcholis Madjid departs from the inclusivism approach, he criticizes diversity that tends to be textualist formalistic, then he changes it with a normative - historical approach and a classical-modern approach that contributes to the implementation of diversity in the midst of a pluralistic society in Indonesia.

It is seen that the two Islamic thinkers have contributed to ideas that can be actualized for the continuation of peace between religious communities in Indonesia. Therefore, both have an approach that can be used in inter-religious dialogue as an offer of fanaticism polemic that is by providing a broad insight that every religion is understood as a form of dynamic and not rigid perspective in running life amid ongoing developments.

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