

Epistemology discussion on Pluralism : A comparative study between West and Islam

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Abstract

The presenters will present the epistemological discussion on Pluralism: A comparison between West and Islam in the International Seminar of Islamic Thought. Pluralism is a belief that the diversity of things in the world is the same and accepts the diversity in any circumstance. In the history of Islam, Islam accepts the general concept of pluralism but Islam rejects the concept of pluralism as it relates to the faith of Muslims. The methodology used in this study is through library methods and field methods. This study aims to expose students to the concept of pluralism more clearly especially in religious pluralism. Based on the findings, researchers have concluded that there are various similarities and differences in perspective on pluralism from the west and Islam. Among the perspectives of the western and Islamic perspectives are in terms of the general pluralism of pluralism but differing in special areas such as religious pluralism. Among the differences is that the western pluralism of Islam has something contrary to what has been stated in Islam through the reference of the Quran and the Hadith. In addition, from the perspective of Islam only uphold Islam is only a true religion compared to the west which states that all religions are the same. This can prove that Islam cares about the issue that is contrary to the religion of Islam by the Quran and Hadith. Therefore, the ideology brought by an individual or group should be studied and examined in advance so as not to contradict what has been taught in Islam. Finally, civil society needs to be exposed to the concept of pluralism so as to illustrate the dangers of this kind of thinking.

Keywords: *Perspective of pluralism, religious pluralism, western, Islam, equality, difference*

Introduction

The prosperity of society becomes a point of opportunity to spread pluralism. Pluralism is a fact that claims that all religions are towards the same truth in other words the proponents of this religion accept all religions and as believers cannot justify their religion to be true. According to the historical chronology of the past, this ideology arose at the end of the 20th century based on the West. Then expanded globally to Southeast Asia, which was originally only scientifically debated in seminars, discourses and research titles as well as theses in master degree alone. However, these supporters began to promote their beliefs to the general public, especially Malaysia with a plural society. Through the angle of historiography it is found that pluralism is one of the patterns of thought born of a Christian church or Christianity. This pattern is formed as a result of the reaction of the Christian religious exclusivism itself to the darkness of the mastery of the church. This happens because there are groups that manipulate religion as their own interests. In this regard, the researcher's purpose of investigating this understanding is to expose the public to the pluralism of this whether it is a contradiction of the creed or not. In addition, researchers will also discuss the definition, background, origins, developments to date and Western and Islamic views on this concept. The research method used in this study is a

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qualitative method whereby researchers examine all the issues arising on rational facts without prejudice against religion or other beliefs.

Pluralism in West perspective

Religious plurality is simply a fact that appears in this world. There are different religious traditions in terms of doctrines, practices, institutions, scriptures, experiences, and expectations. Our concern is with the religious pluralism - RP for the short term. RP is an interpretation of religious pluralism. It comes in several types, one of which is in danger of being canonical. Nearly canonical versions say that all good religious traditions are "equally valid". This concept assumes that all religions in this world are equally good and achieve the same truth. The longest phrase is in Religion Interpretation Professor John Hick 1989. The phrase that made a strong effort to answer criticism was Professor Hick's expression of 1995, judging RP as one finds it here.

Besides, for the concept of pluralism as well, we can take opinions through western characters such as John Hick. He is a well-known philosopher and has his own view of pluralism. He also was a founder of Religious Pluralism and a Professor of Theology at Claremont Graduate School California USA who is teaches all religions to a central point, namely 'Single Reality' (God) but the god is manifested in various forms and means according to the teachings of their respective religions. In other words, all religious teachings in this world are generalized toward the same truth or salvation. This flow of understanding does not stop at the time of John Hick but it has also been developed this understanding by a group of Christian thinkers who accept and assume such thinking is acceptable and should be adopted by the general public such as Raimundo Panikkar, Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Fritjhof Schuon and John L. Esposito (Dr. Anis Malik Thoha, 2012).

Moreover, Hick has brought a concept of storytelling or analogy to explain the concept of this pluralism. He brought a well-known story about the story of a blind man with an elephant. He says that an elephant was brought to a group of blind men who had ever encountered such an animal before. One felt a leg and reported that an elephant is a great living pillar. Another felt the trunk and reported that an elephant is a great snake. Another felt a tusk and reported that an elephant is like a sharp plough-share. And so on.... Of course they were all true, but each referring only to one aspect of the total reality and all expressed in very imperfect analogies (Michael Peterson, 2013).

Based on this story, it can be concluded that we humans cannot tell which one view in this religion is true. This is because of our weaknesses in which we as human beings have no absolute power that has the advantage of knowing everything. We as human beings can be analogous to the blind in this story and the elephants describe the truth in this world where Hick thinks that elephants represent a religion that leads to the same truth whether or not their way of worship is different. Religions in this world are generalized like elephants and everything we do in their religion is no fault and is generally accepted by these pluralist-minded people. The ultimate statement is a metaphor confirmed by their effectiveness in defending security or personal transformation and adherents of traditional religions nurturing and supporting their beliefs and making this beliefs spread throughout the world (Michael Peterson, 2013)

In addition, another theory has also been manifested by a pluralism figure, the theory of "Transcendent Unity of Religions." He is one of the great theories in the discourse of Religious Pluralism. The main character who embodies this theory is Frithjof Schuon, he is a German scholar. His theory was Schuon who was born in Basel, Switzerland, dated June 18, 1907 is convinced that although on the external level of religion is different, but in essence all religions are the same. In other words, the unity of religions that occur at the transcendent level. events that apply outside of human power and this pluralism may apply according to him Schuon's above belief departs from his view that all religions have two realities or essence, namely exoteric and esoteric. Exotic nature is the essence of birth, whereby at this level all religions have dogma, different rituals and beliefs, and even to each other opposition. While the essence of esoteric is the essence of the mind, where all religions with all the differences and their opposites have met.

Herein lies the meeting point of those religions. So the exoteric level is like a religious 'body' while the esoteric level is the 'heart' of religion. The exoteric level varies, but the esoteric level is the same. That's why Schuon calls this his theory the 'transcendent unity of religions'. Thus, in Schuon's view, in a deeper sense all religions are separated not by a vertical line, but separated by a horizontal line that divides all religions. The line does not separate religion from one religion to another, but separates the lower (exoteric) rank of all religions with the top (esoteric) rank. All this according to Schuon shows that the absolute or absolute in all religions is the esoteric dimension. While the exoteric dimension must be relative to coexistence with other religions. (Unknown, 2009)

In conclusion, we can see that epistemology from a western perspective strongly supports the concept of pluralism. This concept is understood to bring all religions to life in peace and lead to the same truth. This is contrary to Islam and Islam rejects the concept that is contrary to Islamic law.

Pluralism in Islamic Perspective :

Pluralism is generally accepted by Islam. According to Islam everything in the world has a pluralism concept. Among them are living beings in this world that are created in pairs like men who have sex between men and women (Huwaidi, 1996)

Allah Ta'ala says,

ومن كل شيء خلقنا زوجين لعلكم تذكرون

"And all things We create pairs so that you may remember the greatness of Allah" (QS. Adz Dzariyat: 59)

Islam also accepts pluralism as a thought that can balance the universe. This we can see through the creation of nature created by the creator who has his or her spouses. This can balance the systems contained in this world and can show the creator's power (Huwaidi, 1996)

Ibn Katsir rahimahullah states,

جميع المخلوقات أزواج: سماء وأرض, وليل ونهار, وشمس وقمر, وبر وبحر, وضياء وظلام, وإيمان وكفر, وموت وحياء, وشقاء وسعادة, وجنة ونار, حتى الحيوانات [جن وإنس, ذكور وإناث] والنباتات

"Every creature is in pairs. There is a sun and earth. There is a night and there is noon. There is a sun and a moon. There is a land and there is a sea. There is light and dark. There is faith and there is infidelity. There is death and there is life. There is misery and there is happiness. There is heaven and there is hell. Up to the animals there is so. There are also jinn and there are people. There are men and women. There's also a pair of plants."

Nevertheless, we need to continue to study more deeply about this concept of pluralism in Islam. Does Islam fully accept the concept of pluralism? Is it contrary to what has been taught or delivered through the Quran and Hadith? Therefore, the researcher will explain in more detail the acceptance of pluralism in the Islamic religion itself. Generally, we can see Islam accepts the concept of pluralism but when it comes to the Islamic religion itself it has little to do. We should know here the concept of Pluralism in religion that it means believing that all religions in this world are true and achieve the same truth despite the different ways. This is rejected by Islam because according to Islam, Islam is a true religion and no other religion is true. All the practices of worship in Islam taught in generations according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Proof of revelation that is like the Quran has explained and explained everything that is in this

world. The writing of the tradition of mutawatir and validity has also helped to explain the general verses of the Quran and to guide mankind that Islam is a true religion. Where might Islam accept the concept of pluralism in the religious chapter? It should be for some issues and not be for some issues. This concept is forbidden for Muslims to practice and believe in this concept when it is contrary to what is embodied in the pillars of the faith and the pillars of Islam.

Futhermore, in the view of al-Qaradawi who is Islam scholar state that plurality among men is especially in religion because of the will of Allah SWT. Everyone believes it as an inevitable incapable refused or changed a bit. However, that's all happening to be free from wisdom and his goodness. One of human wisdom created in plurality according to al-Qaradawi is so that they can be distinguished by other creatures. If humans are created in unity so that there is no diversity or disagreement, they are no longer called human classes because in their social life they are like bees or ants and in their spiritual lives like an angel. The other wisdom is because people are ordered to seek knowledge, given the choice, confirming some of the possibilities that are more correct and not forced by God SWT. Some of these things cause them different in preparing supplies, studying, and make choices (Huwaidi, 1996). The word of Allah SWT in Surah Hud verses 118 and 119:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ . إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لِأُمَمًا
جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

"If thy Lord willed, He would have made mankind one, but they are always in disagreement, (119) except those who are blessed by your God. And for that God created them. The words of your Lord (His decision) it is fixed: "I will fill hell with jinn and man (the disobedient) is all."

To maintain and protect plurality so as not to conflict between mystery, ethnicity, race, and religion, then tolerance values are required. Tolerance will be the property reserve of freedom by everyone. With everyone's tolerance respecting and respecting others (Abdillah, 1996)

In addition, the Indonesian Ulama Council, through its fatwa dated 29 Mei 2005 also has stated that the idea of religious pluralism contradicts Islam and haram Muslims embrace this understanding. The MUI defines Religious Pluralism as a notion that teaches that all religions are the same and therefore the truth of every religion is relative; therefore, every believer cannot claim that only his religion is true while the other religion is wrong. Pluralism also teaches that all followers of religion will enter and live side by side in heaven. Dr. Anis Malik Thoha, an expert on Religious Pluralism, which also Mustesar NU of Malaysia Special Branch, supports the MUI fatwa and concludes that Religious Pluralism is a new, highly destructive religion against Islam and other religions. It will make a mistake to the ordinary people who have no knowledge and a strong belief in the (Husaini, 2005).

In conclusion, we can know that Islam accepts pluralism in general regarding the creation of the moon and the stars, the seas and the coast, men and women as the sign of God's power as the creator of this world. However, Islam rejects a pluralistic concept that states that all religions in this world are leading the same truth. Islam is still able to colonize Islam to respect other religions but if it is contrary to the Islamic creed it must be avoided and eradicated.

Discussion

Through these views, can we discuss that there are some similarities and differences presented in the western and Islamic perspectives. Among the major equations is Islam and the west accepts and acknowledges the concept of pluralism in general which all things in the world have a couple, various kinds of things and so forth. This can be proven through the events of the sun and the sun,

men and women, the heavens and the earth and many other examples of pluralism we can present.

Furthermore, through a special concept of religious pluralism both perspectives, western and Islam accept the concept of which western and Islam recognize the existence of religious diversity in this world. Islam respects other religions around it but Islam does not assume that all religions in this world are true and just admit that the only religion of Islam is true religion even in this world of religious diversity.

Among the differences in the concept of this pluralism is the West accepts the concept of pluralism thus touching on religious chapters which they consider that the existence of various religions in this world should be accepted by all. They also claim that all religions are true and human beings are free to choose their religion. This is in contrast to an Islamic perspective in which Islam only recognizes that Islam is only a true religion and opposes the concept of equality of truth to all religions.

In addition, the West accepts the concept of pluralism is aimed at avoiding the problems of religious quarrels which each blame each other and assume that personal religion is the only truth while Islam rejects the concept of pluralism because it is impossible that all religions are in truth while the teachings and the thinking in a religion is different. Islam rejects the concept of pluralism with two principal sources of the Quran and the Hadith but still admits the existence of religious diversity by respecting their religion and not spreading Islam faithfully. This can prove that Islam is a simple and true religion.

Conclusions

In conclusion, there are various epistemologies that we can identify and examine more deeply through Western and Islamic perspectives on the concept of this pluralism. The epistemology of the western perspective is more to support the pluralism of this thought which is also based on the western thinking of John Hick. Various arguments were given by John Hick to reinforce the thought he created, pluralism. In contrast to Islam, which generally agrees and assumes that this is in fact no problem for life in this world where in this world there are various invented pairs of colouring in this world but when this concept of pluralism is associated with which religion it claims that all religions in this world are towards the same truth although different ways it is wrong and violates what is applied and set in Islam itself that there is no other religion that is true other than Islam because God is only one God Paragraph. Contextualise your thinking within the literature you surveyed in intro, but make sure that you draw some of your own, unique conclusions from your work.

We should also be aware that through this research I have had a slight difference with literature review where previous studies focus more on a view only, if we look at the views of Islam then the writing is only about the view of Islam as well as the West. But my study combines these two views to further conclude whether there is a significant relationship or not. In conclusion, I find that epistemology from the western perspective and Islam has significant relationship in the acceptance of pluralism in the religion in which the West receives the pluralism and Islam concepts receive a certain things in the world and rejects some concepts of pluralism such as acknowledging the truth of religion is the same but can be polarized in matters related to non-faith such as doing good with non-Muslims and so forth. Therefore, the results of my research will give clarity to those who are still dead on the concept of pluralism in religion and we should be Muslims should care about such thoughts so that our thoughts and our faith are not affected and deviated especially for the general public.