

## RELIGION AND RELIGIOUSNESS; A CLARIFICATION FOR EMPATHY

Muhamad Arfan<sup>1)</sup>, Iqbal Bafadal<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> State Islamic University of Mataram, Indonesia

email: [arfan240785@uinmataram.ac.id](mailto:arfan240785@uinmataram.ac.id)

email: [iqbalbafadal@uinmataram.ac.id](mailto:iqbalbafadal@uinmataram.ac.id)

### Abstract

The nature of religion has been endlessly discussed by philosophers, theologians, psychologists, and sociologists. They look at different aspects of religion as their interests and their purposes differ. Therefore, they formulate various definitions of religion. Religion is seen to be difficult to define. But it is necessary to have a clear definition of religion as a starting point for religious studies. This paper discusses the definition of religion given by the schoolchildren and then gives a clear definition as an attempt to build up tolerance. Religion is not the same as religious beliefs and practices or religious experiences.

**Keywords:** *Religion, Religiousness, Empathy*

### Abstrak

Hakikat agama telah dibahas tanpa henti oleh para filsuf, teolog, psikolog, dan sosiolog. Mereka melihat aspek-aspek yang berbeda dari agama karena kepentingan dan tujuan mereka berbeda. Oleh karena itu, mereka merumuskan berbagai definisi agama. Agama dipandang sulit untuk didefinisikan. Namun perlu adanya definisi yang jelas tentang agama sebagai titik tolak studi agama. Tulisan ini membahas definisi agama yang diberikan oleh anak-anak sekolah dan kemudian memberikan definisi yang jelas sebagai upaya membangun toleransi. Agama tidak sama dengan keyakinan dan praktik keagamaan atau pengalaman keagamaan.

**Kata kunci:** *Agama, Religiusitas, Empati*

## INTRODUCTION

Muslim modernists are often criticized, even ridiculed, by Islamic groups themselves because they are accused of carrying out "Islamic religious reform". They are accused of renewing and changing Islam and are seen as the creators of a new religion. On the one hand, the criticism and ridicule stem from the belief - which is actually also held by the proponents of the modernization movement - that Islam as a

religion was taught and inherited by the Prophet Muhammad in a perfect and complete state and does not need to be changed or renewed again. On the other hand, the criticism arises from the assessment that what the Muslim reformers did was change the Islamic religion that had been inherited by the Prophet. Of course, the criticism becomes even louder when modernization or renewal turns out to face many challenges that result in the ideas and concepts of renewal not being implemented as expected.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, many religious experts (with various motivations and backgrounds) state that all religions are the same.<sup>2</sup>For example, Paul F. Knitter, as quoted by Rahman, says: "You cannot say that one religion is better than another. All religions are, by their very nature, relative – that is, limited, partial, incomplete – as ways of seeing things. To say that one religion is intrinsically better than another is now felt by religious scholars to be a rather wrong, offensive, and narrow-minded attitude."<sup>3</sup>

The view that all religions are the same is also often voiced in Indonesia, especially when efforts for tolerance between religious communities became an important government program during the New Order era. Through schools and various educational forums, Indonesian children were taught to accept and believe that all religions in Indonesia are the same so that religious differences need not be a problem. Discussion about the differences between one religion and another seemed taboo and had to be avoided because it was seen as damaging relations between religious communities in the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. There was an impression that with such views and methods, conflicts between religious adherents could be avoided and eliminated. It was assumed that with such understanding and

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<sup>1</sup>HM. Rasjidi, *Four Islamic Religious Lectures in Higher Education*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1990), pp. 26-33.

<sup>2</sup>Budhy Munawar-Rachman, "Foreword", in Komaruddin Hidayat and Muhammad Wahyuni Nafis, *Religion of the Future; Perspective of Perennial Philosophy*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p. xxviii.

<sup>3</sup>Ahmad Norma Permana (ed.), *Methodology of Religious Studies*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2000), p. 14.

attitudes, a religious adherent would be tolerant and respectful of adherents of other religions and various actions that could disrupt relations between religious communities could be avoided. However, after using such approaches and methods for more than 20 years during the New Order, life between religious communities in Indonesia until now has still not been harmonious. The tolerance that has grown is merely superficial. Only one year after the New Order fell, the Ambon case broke out, followed by the Poso case which very clearly involved religious sentiment. Not to mention the various cases that were buried, not coming to the surface.

The two views expressed above (criticism of modernization and equating all religions) are related to the understanding of religion and religiosity. Many people equate the meaning of these two words. They do not distinguish between religion and religiosity and then mix up the meaning of both. The same attitude also occurs among writers who discuss religion in their various writings so that many of them admit to being confused about defining religion, as if religion is something that cannot be defined. For them, defining religion is unnecessary and will only be in vain, useless.

Religion and religiosity are two words that have different meanings. Morphologically, each expression certainly has its own meaning. In accordance with linguistic rules, the change in form from the basic word religion to religiosity should be enough to remind us that both must be used and given different meanings. It is a mistake that must be avoided if these two words are given the same meaning or significance. The use of these words in the same sense clearly contradicts the proper linguistic rules. Religion is a noun and religiosity is an adjective or state.

In the following description, the author attempts to uncover the differences between the meanings of religion and religiosity. Through this description, it is hoped that a proper understanding of both expressions will be obtained so that in the end they can be proportionally understood by adherents of various existing religions. From that understanding, it will also be highlighted whether it is true that all religions are the same. Then with the proposed understanding, ideas will also be put forward for

the formation of a proportional and genuine tolerant attitude in an effort to foster the desired civil society.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### a. Critical Review of Several Definitions of Religion

Religious experts formulate various definitions of religion so that dozens of definitions of religion can be found in various books that talk about this issue. The many definitions of religion actually obscure what we really want to understand by religion.<sup>4</sup>This is because it is so difficult to define the terminology called religion. In one of his writings, Mukti Ali once stated: "Perhaps there is no word that is more difficult to understand and define than the word religion. There are three reasons for this. First, because religious experience is a subjective and highly individualistic spiritual matter. Second, because discussions of religion always involve very strong emotions. Third, a person's conception of religion is always influenced by the purpose of that person giving meaning to that religion. People who like to go to places of worship tend to assume that religion is identical to going to mosques, churches, temples and so on; while anthropologists who study religion tend to consider religion as activities and customs that can be observed."<sup>5</sup>Moreover, as stated above, many people equate religion with religiosity.

Pay attention to some of the definitions put forward by the following experts and then pay attention to the elements contained in them! For EB Taylor, religion is the faith in Spiritual Beings (belief in spiritual beings).<sup>6</sup>Meanwhile, Pratt stated that religion is the serious and social attitude of individuals or communities toward the power or powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests and destinies.<sup>7</sup>Meanwhile, Everyman's Encyclopaedia, as quoted by Anshari, explains that in a broad sense, religion can be defined as acceptance of obligation toward

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<sup>4</sup>HA Mukti Ali, *Several Religious Problems Today*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 1987), p. 173.

<sup>5</sup>Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Science, Philosophy, and Religion*, (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1985), p. 118.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

powers higher than man himself.<sup>8</sup>Next, Harun Nasution presents several definitions of religion, including the following: (1) Recognition of the existence of a relationship between humans and supernatural powers that must be obeyed. (2) Binding oneself to a form of life that contains recognition of a source that is outside of humans and that influences human actions. (3) Belief in a supernatural power that gives rise to a certain way of life. (4) Recognition of the existence of obligations that are believed to originate from a supernatural power. (5) Worship of supernatural powers that arises from feelings of weakness and fear of mysterious powers that exist in the natural world around humans.<sup>9</sup>

If all the definitions above are examined carefully, it will certainly be understood that all of them show that, according to them, religion is not a form that stands alone, but rather something that is inherent and united to another form, namely in the self of a religious person. The words belief, attitude, acceptance, recognition, binding, worship, and other words that are often used to formulate the definition of religion refer to something that is inherent in humans. Religion is not seen as a noun, but as an adjective or even a verb because all of these definitions refer to a state or activity that is inherent in humans. Thus, religion is considered the same as a nature or attitude towards something, namely a supernatural power that is all-powerful and mysterious, which is feared because that power determines fate and controls human life. Therefore, all of these definitions are more appropriately used to explain the meaning of religiosity, not the meaning of religion.

The emergence of the understanding of the word religion as above can be understood because it is used and presented by sociologists who are more interested in the people who adhere to the religion in question, namely regarding their attitudes and behavior as manifestations of the religiosity they have, not their religion itself. They see religion as something that is understood and responded to by people who

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>9</sup>Harun Nasution, *Islam Reviewed from Various Aspects*, (Jakarta: UI Press Publisher, 1985), p. 10.

claim to be religious. For them, religion is nothing more than the practices carried out by its adherents. This group does not pay attention to the distance or separation between religion and its adherents. In this case, Nottingham stated that sociologists are interested in religion as a universal function of society wherever they are found. Their attention is to religion as one aspect of group behavior and to the role it plays.<sup>10</sup>In their view, the form of a religion is only as displayed by its adherents in their daily behavior. Islam is what is understood and done by people who claim to be Muslims. Likewise, Christianity is what is displayed by Christians. Sociologists do not care about religion that stands alone and is outside the human being concerned. Sociologists are indeed more concerned with the religious behavior of a society that they are talking about.

In terms of language, religion is not an adjective, a state, or a verb. The word that contains the meaning of a state or state is religiosity, which is a word derived from the basic word religion which is then formed into agama, then given the prefix ke-dan-an so that it becomes religiosity. In Indonesian, words that receive the prefix ke-dan-an contain meanings, among others, of a state or state, such as kebekuan (a frozen state), kebesaran (a state of enlargement), industriousness, sensitivity, honesty and others. Religiosity means the state or nature of religious people, which includes the state and nature or pattern of understanding, enthusiasm and level of obedience to carry out the teachings of the religion they adhere to, and the state of their daily behavior after they become adherents of a religion. From here, the terms Islam Abangan or Islam Santri, Islam Liberal, and others emerged.

Furthermore, it can be observed that the acceptance, belief, recognition, attitude, and so on, that exist in a group of people are never the same, even though they are of the same religion. Therefore, in every religion, there are schools of thought and schools of thought that have different attitudes and beliefs from one another. Perhaps, a group of people are all Muslims, but their attitudes, beliefs, and acceptance

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth K. Nottingham, *Religion and Society*, translated by Abdul Muis Naharong, (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1985), p. 2.

of Islamic teachings are not the same. Adherents of the Mu'tazilah and Ahlussunnah or Syafi'iah, Malikiah, and Hanafiah schools, who are all Muslims, have different beliefs, attitudes, and actions in various aspects. Likewise, the attitudes and beliefs of Catholics and Protestants are also very different even though they are said to be both Christians. In fact, the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of NU people are often different from those of Muhammadiyah people. In fact, both are not schools of thought, but "only" socio-religious organizations. These differences do not make them different religions. Their religion remains one. What is different about them is not their religion, but their religiosity, namely the pattern and level of understanding and the way and quality of their practice. Differences in religiosity can occur in every individual in a group of adherents to the same religion.

#### **b. Establishing the Understanding of Religion**

In various literature, the word religion is also usually given the meaning of not chaotic or orderly. It is meant that religious people certainly have guidelines that can make their lives orderly and not chaotic. Religion is understood as the state or nature of the lives of religious people. This understanding refers more to the results or impacts of religiosity, not to religion itself. With religion, a person or a society will live orderly and regularly. However, this understanding is considered not in accordance with the rules of the original language.

In terms of language, Rangkuti emphasized that this word comes from Sanskrit, a-gama (with a long a). A means the way, and gama means to go, which is to walk or go.<sup>11</sup>Based on that understanding, it is further emphasized that religion means ways to walk to reach God's pleasure. From here, it can be understood that religion is a way of life (the way to go) that must be taken or a guideline that must be followed by someone. This understanding is in line with the meaning of the Arabic word syari'ah,

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<sup>11</sup>This opinion was put forward by Bahrum Rangkuti, a scholar and linguist. He further stated that people who interpret the word religion in a chaotic way are people who do not understand language. See Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Ibid.*, p. 123.

which literally means the way to the source of the spring.<sup>12</sup> Water is a source of life for humans. The word sharia is used in the sense of the path to the source of life or the way of life.

Based on the understanding as described above, it can be understood that religion is a form that stands alone and is outside of the human self. For example, the Islamic religion is not automatically the same as the attitudes and practices of people who claim to be followers of Islam. It is not certain that someone who claims to be Muslim already reflects the true Islamic religion. Likewise, Christianity may not be as practiced by those who claim to be Christians.<sup>13</sup> The attitude and practice of every religious adherent is a manifestation of religiosity, which describes the nature and level of belief, understanding and loyalty to their respective religions. In fact, if there are religious adherents who appear to behave well, it does not necessarily mean that their religion is true and good. Conversely, if there are religious adherents who behave badly, it also does not mean that the religion they adhere to is definitely wrong.

In definitive terms, religion is a teaching, guidance, command, prohibition, law, and regulation, which is believed by its adherents to come from the Almighty supernatural being, which is used by humans as a guideline for actions and behavior in living their daily lives. In other words, the core of a religion is the teaching that humans use as a guideline for life. Religion is a teaching and various rules that serve as a guideline for life consisting of guidelines for thinking, guidelines for viewing and assessing something, and guidelines for acting daily. As a teaching, a religion is believed by its adherents to come from the Almighty supernatural being, not from humans. That is what makes humans always submit and obey the religion they adhere to, even though they are mocked and ridiculed by others because the power of the supernatural being that is the source of the religion exceeds any power. Every adherent of a religion

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<sup>12</sup>Al-Raghib al-Ashfahani, *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, (Bairut: Dar al-Ma'rifat, n.d.), p. 258

<sup>13</sup>Consider for example the way they dress. Nuns in South America as shown in various soap operas that are widely aired in Indonesia wear very neat clothes that cover their bodies. However, on the other hand, many Christians show off the "beauty" of their bodies in public places. Then, the question arises, how does Christianity actually regulate this? Which is Christianity and which is the religiosity of Christians? This needs to be sought in Christianity itself, not in Christians.



believes that the religion they adhere to is not a human creation, but something that comes from God, a supernatural power that has power beyond the power possessed by humans. No adherent of a religion wants to admit that their religion is a cultural product (in religious studies it is often called *ardhi* religion). For every follower, their religion is a heavenly religion, namely a religion that comes from the Most High.<sup>14</sup>

No matter how a religious follower is mocked and insulted by others because of his belief and practice of his religion, he will not care about the mockery and insults. For him, what he believes and practices comes from the Almighty who must be feared and all His provisions must be obeyed. He believes that violating his religion will bring great danger to him. He may be mocked because he believes in things that are unreasonable according to others or he does things that are considered stupid by others. However, if he adheres to a religion, he will certainly defend it as optimally as possible. A true religious follower will never dare to go against the provisions of his religion. Therefore, Islam reminds us that there should be no coercion in matters of religion because it will be in vain.<sup>15</sup> Religion must be with a creed, a confession based on true faith or belief. Religion that is forced will be meaningless.

If a person believes that there is a rule that he must follow and he believes that the rule comes from a supernatural power that is more powerful than himself, such as a rule to bury the body of a cat that is hit on the street in a certain way, in fact such a rule is already a religion for the person concerned. They believe that if it is not done, he will definitely be harmed. It is as if there is a rule that stipulates that a person who hits a cat on the street must bury it in a certain way and ceremony. Violation of this

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<sup>14</sup>Among Muslim writers, there are those who accept such an opinion, with the addition that the only truly *samawiy* is Islam. Presumably, a Muslim must state that only Islam is the *samawiy* religion, the others are *ardhi* religions. It may be that all other religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, etc., all originated from Allah SWT. However, the teachings that exist today can no longer be said to be *samawiy* religions because their authenticity is no longer guaranteed as taught by the Messenger who brought them. According to Islamic teachings, all these religions have been intervened by humans in the course of their history by carrying out *tahrif*, deviation, either by addition or reduction and change.

<sup>15</sup>See QS. Al-Baqarah, verse 256.

rule will cause the almighty supernatural being to be angry with him. In fact, when hitting a dog or chicken, goat, and others, such a method does not need to be done.

The supernatural being or power believed to be the source of religion is God who is feared and glorified by the followers of the religion in question. Each religion has a different concept about the form that is seen as God and the attributes that He possesses. Polytheistic religions view God as many and monotheistic religions teach that there is only one God. Some teach that God has his own form and some believe that he inhabits certain objects. For example, adherents of the Dynamism school of thought believe that God is a force that exists in certain objects that must be worshiped and treated in certain ways. That is what drives them to collect and worship certain objects.

Some religions have holy books which contain a collection of the teachings of the religion in question. The holy book is believed by its adherents to be a collection of God's words which contain instructions, teachings, commands, prohibitions, laws, rules, etc. as a guide for humans to live their daily lives. In fact, the essence of a religion is the collection of teachings contained in its holy books. In other words, the Islamic religion is everything contained in the Koran, not what is within every person who claims to be Muslim. Changing or renewing Islam means changing and updating the Koran.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, Christianity is all that is in the Bible, not what is in Christians. Therefore, the assessment of a religion should be directed at the teachings contained in its respective holy books, not at the religiosity of its followers, although, the assessment of the religiosity of a people is also an interesting field of study and needs to be done. The existence of a written holy book is something that is very important for a religion because it will provide a guarantee of the authenticity and truth of the religion in question.

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<sup>16</sup>Changing the Quran and Sunnah, of course, cannot be justified. Every religion (its teaching text) always has the potential to give rise to different understandings among its adherents. An understanding that arises from a text cannot be immediately said to be wrong as long as it is presented according to possible rules.

In addition, there are also religions that do not have holy books. They maintain and pass down their religion from one generation to the next orally. Of course, a religion like this will find it difficult to avoid various opportunities for change, and will be easily diverted by its adherents according to the conditions they face.

### **c. Are All Religions the Same?**

Religion in the sense of a guide to life that is believed to come from supernatural powers, of course, cannot be the same. The statement that says all religions are the same is stupidity and foolishness.<sup>17</sup> Such an opinion is no different from the statement that all animals are the same, namely that they are both animals or stating that dogs are the same as cats, namely that they both have fur. Can trading be equated with robbing or stealing because both aim to collect wealth? Each religion as a guide to life, clearly has different teachings and provisions from one another.

The differences between one religion and another can be seen from various sides. Among them:

1. The belief system, in particular, concerns the concept of God. In the description above, it has been stated that each religion believes in the existence of a supernatural power that is seen as God. Each religion has a different concept or description of the form and various attributes of God. Something that is considered God by one religion is different from what is considered God by another religion. In addition, there are still many issues of faith that need and can be compared between one religion and another, which show the uniqueness of each. For example, issues related to sin and reward, prophecy.
2. Worship system. Each religion teaches its own ways to realize devotion to God who is glorified by the religion in question. The differences in worship systems cannot be separated from the differences in the faith systems of each religion, especially about God and His relationship with humans. The worship and

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<sup>17</sup>In its National Conference at the end of July 2005, the MUI issued a fatwa that pluralism is an ideology that is contrary to Islamic teachings and is forbidden to follow.

rituals carried out are nothing other than manifestations of the faith held by adherents of a religion. Assessment of a religion cannot be done partially by only looking at the worship aspect.

3. A legal system or norm that regulates relationships between humans and between humans and their surroundings. Each religion has teachings that regulate individual and social life, which in many ways, differ greatly from one religion to another. Islam forbids its followers from eating pork. This rule does not apply in other religions. Under certain circumstances and conditions, Islam allows its followers to have more than one wife. Islam also opens the door to divorce with certain conditions. Meanwhile, in other religions, the rules are not like that. Islam has various rules about property ownership, which are different from the rules of other religions.

Thus, it would be naive to say that there is no difference between one religion and another, or to say that the differences are only in historical and sociological factors, not in their essence and content, as Radhakrishnan, a Universalist from India, said.<sup>18</sup> Such a view is a misguided and misleading view. It will only emerge from people who do not actually adhere to any religion. In Indonesia, which requires its citizens to have a certain religion, such a view should not grow, let alone be developed. In everyday life, it can be seen that those who adhere to such a view, their religious spirit has been reduced to such an extent, they have no pride in being adherents of a certain religion because they no longer care about it.

#### **d. Fostering an Attitude of Empathy in Religion**

In Matt. 5: 21-26 Jesus taught: "I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be (in danger of) judgment". Inevitably anger will drive someone to act wrongly, even endangering others. Like a judge, if he makes a decision based on anger or a like or dislike attitude, he may act wrongly, namely by sacrificing what is right and justifying what is wrong. The Prophet Muhammad also in the teachings he received

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<sup>18</sup>HM. Rasjidi, *Four Islamic Religious Lectures in Higher Education...*, p. 33.

from God mentioned that God has said in surah al-Maidah/5: 8 saying "la yajrimannakum syana'anun qamin ala alla ta'dilu", "let not your hatred for a people drive you to act unjustly". Therefore, things that can influence every decision, especially influences that lead to mistakes, should be postponed. This means that the decision-making should be postponed first, so that the condition of the self is truly stable and free from negative lusts.

Abu Hayan in his book, *al-Bash'ir wa al-Zawahir*, narrates that once the Messiah said, "The world has been spread out for you, you have been seated on its back, while I myself have no wife, no children. My mattress is earth, my pillow is stone, my lamp is the moon. No one rivals you in seizing the world except Satan and the kings. Face Satan with prayer and steadfastness, and submit to the king of the world, surely he will submit to you your religion. The kings have neglected wisdom for you to take, so neglect the world for them to take." This moral teaching was delivered by him in the midst of a society that was wallowing in the splendor of life, extravagance, and two-facedness. Religious leaders were only associated with the formality of ritual events, but their souls were barren and dry. At that time the victims of splendor had fallen in abundance, so that salvation was needed from the ferocity of the influence and impact of materialism.

In such social and psychological conditions of society, he came bringing moral teachings, "woe to those who are full and do not realize that they are actually hungry, who are rich but forget that they are in need. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him your left cheek."<sup>19</sup>

In line with what Jesus taught, the Prophet Muhammad also strongly condemned people who sleep full while their neighbors are groaning with hunger. In a hadith it is stated, "la yu'minu ahadukum man baata sya'baanan wa jaruhu juuan." This means,

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<sup>19</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *A Glimmer of Divine Light: Living with the Qur'an*, (Bandung: Al-Mizan, 2000), p. 30.

"one of you is not considered a believer who sleeps full while his neighbors are groaning with hunger."

As explained above, one of the driving factors for the emergence of the view that all religions are the same is the need to create a peaceful life in a pluralistic society like Indonesia. Historical experience teaches that differences in religion and sects within a religion often cause disharmonious relationships between fellow citizens of a community group. In fact, religion becomes a trigger for conflict and war. Therefore, fostering a tolerant attitude among religious communities is indeed very necessary. However, the approach and strategy used need to be studied carefully so as not to be counterproductive.

During the New Order, various efforts have been made by the government together with the people, both through educational institutions and social activities that are considered to be able to support the program. Among the efforts that have been quite intensively carried out, and have recently increased and developed, is to promote the idea among the community, especially students in schools, that all religions are the same, that is, they have the same goals and are equally good. Various seminars and discussions have been held for this purpose. However, this step, in fact, actually resulted in two negative things at once, namely the weakening of the attachment of religious adherents to their own religion and the creation of a false attitude of tolerance. Many members of society no longer care about religion. Not a few teenagers have lost their obedience to the religion they adhere to because religion is considered only a burden. Religion is no longer seen as a guideline for life that must guide all their daily behavior. They will be permissive and will not become consistent loyal followers. In fact, it is also seen that some of them view the teachings of other religions as better than their own religion. Of course, this is a threat to religious communities.

If all religions are said to be the same, of course those who have a healthy and normal mind will choose the religion that is easiest and has the loosest rules. Religion as a guide to life is clearly a "burden" and "bond" that burdens and limits the attitudes

and actions of its adherents. It is very human if someone chooses the lightest burden and the loosest bond when the alternative choices are stated to be the same. Moreover, with this view, the urge to not be bound by religion is getting stronger. In line with that, the teaching that says religion is just an addiction to society is growing.

Tolerance in religion does not need to be formed by stating that all religions are the same because in reality each religion is different. Students must be made aware that one religion is different from another and taught how to choose a religion correctly and responsibly. Every religious adherent must be educated to be loyal and fully convinced of the truth and superiority of the religion they adhere to. Children must be educated to love and uphold the religion they adhere to sincerely and earnestly. They must always be consistent in submitting to their religion and living their lives according to the religion they adhere to.

However, it should be remembered that being a good religious follower does not necessarily conflict with a tolerant attitude. A militant and fanatical attitude in defending the religion one adheres to does not require the loss of a tolerant attitude at all. It is no different from a good husband. He must view his wife as the most beautiful woman who gives him satisfaction. It is not good if he states that his wife is the same as other women. The better a husband's assessment of his wife and the more satisfied he is with her, the more stable social stability will be. On the other hand, if a husband views all women in his environment the same, of course, social stability will be threatened, because he will easily "get lost" to a neighbor's house. To be tolerant, a person is only required to be willing to appreciate and respect other people's choices regarding something they consider right, without reducing their beliefs and choices regarding their own religion. It is no longer tolerance if a religious follower is required to act and behave like a follower of another religion. Moreover, if he is told to follow and practice the teachings of another religion for the sake of tolerance. In tolerance, every follower of a religion must remain consistent with his own religion. In fact, in Islam, being kind to followers of other religions is one of the indicators of the perfection of a person's Islam.

Tolerance must be instilled with true understanding and full awareness, not with deception, coercion, and intimidation. In this context, the Quran teaches that there should be no coercion in religion (*la ikraha fi al-din*). Religion must be based on the *shahada*, a sincere confession based on true understanding. In addition, Islam also encourages its followers to always do good to others without looking at differences in religion or belief. There is not a single verse of the Quran or the Sunnah of the Prophet that teaches to hate and criticize others who are not of the same religion. From a religious perspective, attacking and intimidating people who are not of the same faith is a sin. The desire to spread one's understanding or religion to others must be done with love and an open attitude, not with anger, hatred, intimidation or various tempting baits. The success of the Prophet Muhammad's preaching was determined by his very tolerant attitude towards those who did not believe. Islam itself came as a bringer of mercy to the universe. The command to fight in Islam is to create peace, namely when another party violates the rights of a Muslim, not as a way to convert others to Islam.

Tolerance requires mutual respect and respect for each other's understanding and views. No matter how much we believe in the mistakes and misunderstandings of someone's religion, we have no right to hate and scold them. A person has no right to punish other people for their religious misunderstandings and mistakes. The duty of an 'alim, in Islam, is only to convey and warn as long as the warning is still useful for the person concerned. If not, then the law clause *dinukum waliyadin* applies.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the perspective of the two major religions, namely Christianity and Islam, Moses was their oldest who was on the same line in receiving revelation from God. So that both of these major religions both acknowledge that Moses' God is also the same God that they worship. In this case, it is certainly very interesting, because in the course of its history (especially in receiving revelation), the religion that came later claimed the superiority of its respective revelations. Although both acknowledge the



existence of the Prophet Moses (even the Prophet Jesus by Islam), these two major religions in reality historically have different beliefs. This is the root of the problem, and history has proven how claims of faith have turned into catastrophes, disasters for religious adherents. Each party claims to be equally right, so that different beliefs are the same as enemies. Not a single person, especially from religious figures, has tried to dampen this by trying to look at the nuctah of uniformity, or even emphasize it. Worse still, religion has become a political vehicle to facilitate their ambitions. We can learn all of this from the journey of the Crusades which has claimed thousands of lives with the jargon of fighting in the "spirit of faith".

For that, will we continue to maintain these barriers or look for other solutions to open up wider areas so that each party can breathe a sigh of relief even though they are in the same space? By looking at the demands of the times, it seems that the attitude of different faiths is the same as enemies should be ended. Why is that, because this attitude will continue to be a nuisance in community life, and could be the source of the collapse of human civilization.

Faith is a personal matter between humans and God. So if there are people who have different beliefs from us, of course it is not our right to force them to convert to believe what we believe. Therefore, matters of faith must be truly protected by law so that in the end there is no coercion by other parties to impose their religion on people who are already religious. However, in matters of human interaction with others, this is where normative teachings (religious teachings related to morals) can be enjoyed together, and can even be forced on individuals or groups who insist on rejecting them. People who insist on saying and practicing that stealing and adultery are obligatory must be broken, even if necessary imprisoned when they have done it. These moral teachings derived from each religion are the 'Voice of Prophethood' and are the essence of uniformity that is required to be met.

As a final note of this article, borrowing Farid Esack's analysis when looking at the differences between religious communities, he stated that the various paths and religions that exist are God's will for humans to compete with each other in goodness.

In this competition, there are at least four implications that must be realized by every religious community. These implications are: 1). The virtues that are recognized and rewarded are not the monopoly of only one party competing. 2). The judges, (in this case God), must be outside the narrow interests of the participants. 3). The claim of each participant that their relationship is closer to the judges (more loved than others) is useless, and can even be detrimental to themselves as participants. 4). The results of a fair competition cannot be known before the competition ends.<sup>20</sup> *Wallahu'alam.*

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<sup>20</sup>Farud Esack *Library and Pluralism*, (Oxfod: One Word, 1998) p. 171.