MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION
PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to describe multicultural education in a perennial philosophy perspective. Butbecause of the breadth of discussion, this paper is limited to one dimension of multicultural education, which is related to religious pluralism in Indonesia. Because socio-religiously, Indonesian society is a pluralistic society on religious aspects and almost all major world religions exist in this country.

Multicultural education wants to be inculcated early in school or in society that the Indonesian nation-state is plural in nature will bring forth to an inclusive attitude and at the same time positive tolerance. This is in line with the spirit of the Qur'an, especially in QS. Ali Imran verse 64, so that the outer phenomena of religions do not hinder efforts to go to the meeting point (*kalimah sawâ'*) between all of them. One attempt to find a common ground is perennial philosophy. Perennial philosophy is a concept that seeks to bring people to an awareness that God is an absolute form, the source of all forms, including the plurality of religions and religious sites. In the view of perennial philosophy, although the true "Religion" is only "One", but because it is derived in the context of a different sociological and historical spectrum, so "religion" appears in a pluralistic format. However, perennial philosophy does not want to make a universal religion or equate all religions. On the contrary, perennial philosophy recognizes all sacred traditions that exist in religions as something that comes from God that must be respected and respectful.

To bridge interfaith dialogue because of the truth claim can be done through phenomenological methods. That is, a way of understanding existing religion with an appreciative-persuasive attitude, without the spirit of hatred or disbelief. This method is to avoid external attitudes that consider their religion the most correct and the religion of others must be wrong. Through this method there will also be interfaith dialogue that puts forward mutual respect for the diversity of others, without leaving their own faith.

Keywords: *Multicultural Education, Kalima sawa ' and Perennial Philosophy*

I. Introduction

This paper aims to describe multicultural education in the perspective of perennial philosophy. But because of the breadth of discussion, this paper is limited to one dimension of multicultural education, which is related to religious pluralism in Indonesia. This is in accordance with Ainurrofiq Dawam's statement that multicultural education is one of them is the process of developing all human potentials that value religious pluralism.[300]

Especially on socio-religious, Indonesian society is a plural society because almost all major world religions exist in this country. According to Adian Husaini, the difference in conceptions between religions is a reality, a fact that cannot be denied by anyone.[2] First, from the outside. On this side, there must be a variety of true religions. This is the relative dimension of a religion.[301] These religions have one purpose, its called salvation (with different concepts) with different paths. Through these differ-

ences, religions can enrich one another. Second, from within. In this dimension, it is recognized that there is one true religion, this is the absolute dimension of a religion. Such a position does not have to reject the truth of other religions, insofar as it does not contradict the religious message adopted.[302]

Through Hans Kung's understanding, it can be an "entrance" to find common ground between religions or in the terminology of the Qur'an called the sentence *al-sawâ* '(Surat Ali Imran: 64).[303] To study the point of view of religions it is not enough to only limit the outer (skin) aspects. But it is also very important to understand the substance of the religions. To examine the substance area (esoteric) religions is very important to understand perennial philosophy. Because in perennial philosophy, said Budhy Munawar-Rahman, although the true "Religion" is only "One", but because it is derived in the context of different sociological and

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[300] Ainurrafiq Dawam, *Emoh Sekolah "Menolak komersialisasi pendidikan dan kanibalisme intelektual manuju pendidikan multikultural"*, (Yogyakarta, Inspeal Press, 2003).

[301] Adian Husaini, *Tinjauan Historis Konflik Yahudi, Kristen, Islam*, Cet. I, (Jakarta: GIP, 2004), p. 1.

[302]ST. Sunardi, "Dialog: Cara Baru Beragama Sumbangan Hans Kung Bagi Dialog Antar Agama". In Seri DIAN I *Dialog, Kritik dan Identitas Agama* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar dan DIAN, 1994), p. 66-67.

[303]Nucholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 1992), p. 184.

historical spectrums, so "religion" appears in a pluralistic format.[304]

Furthermore, multicultural education is interpreted not only limited by the barriers of the walls of formal schools, but more than that as maturation of religious attitudes. The maturity of religious attitudes is very much based on rationality and cool head attitude in the face of provocation by irresponsible parties. In practice, people often lose common sense and tend to prioritize emotions when provoked by certain parties. One of the efforts to mature religious attitudes is to strengthen the building of public rationality through the attitude of critical and evaluative thinking of what comes outside.[305]

Therefore multicultural education should instill that the nation and society of Indonesia is a pluralistic society, both culture, ethnicity, including almost all major world religions here. In relation to the plurality of religions, the conception of the meeting point of religions is the principle of value system in the pattern of equal public relations, mutual respect for differences, and choosing a peaceful path without conflict and violence.[306] That is, when Indonesian people understand and realize that even though living in religious pluralism, it turns out that each religion can be "met" in the frame of perennial philosophy, so that conflict between religious communities in Indonesia will be minimized.[307]

It was very concerned, it was noted that since 1999-2018 there were

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[304] Budhy Munawar-Rahman, *Reorientasi Pembaharuan Islam: Sekularisme, Liberalisme, dan Pluralisme*, (Malang: Madani, 2017), p. 709-710.

[305] Masdar Hilmy, "Politik Pluralisme dan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia; Pendewasan Sikap Beragama Melalui Rasionalitas Publik". In Ahmad Zainul Hamdi dan Muktafi (ed), *Wacana dan Praktik Pluralisme Keagamaan di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Daulat Press, 2017), p. 37-38

[306] Zakiyuddin Baidhawy, "Membangun Sikap Multikulturalis Perspektif Teologi Islam". In *Jurnal Addin*, Vol 4 no. 2, (Salatiga: STAIN Salatiga, 2005), p. 30.

[307] It was very concerned, since 1999-2018 there were inter-tribal conflicts triggered by the "lighters" named after religion, for example the Ambon conflict (1999-2002). This conflict has ethnic religious nuances between the Ambonese issue of Christianity and immigrants (Buton, Bugis, Makasar, and Javanese) who are Muslim. The South Lampung conflict included Bali and Lampung (2012) which left 14 people dead, dozens of severe injuries and 1,700 residents displaced. The destruction of the Huria Kristen Indonesia church place of worship (HKI) on October 13 2015 in Aceh Singkil. In 2018 there was also an inter-religious conflict in Sentani Papua triggered by the Alliance of Jayapura Churches (PGGJ) for the construction of Al-Aqsa Sentani Mosque closed and demolished. PGGJ controls so that the height of the buildings is the opposite, with the height of the church buildings around it. This is the answer to the problem of the call to prayer in the mosque. Every mosque in Indonesia is advised not to harden the call to prayer because it is considered to be a Muslim not a Muslim. Although this is not until there is a physical conflict, but inter-religious harmony and harmony will be displayed in Indonesia.

inter-ethnic conflicts triggered by the "lighters" named religion, as an example of the Ambon conflict (1999-2002). This conflict has the nuances of religious ethnicity between Ambonese who are Christian and immigrants (Buton, Bugis, Makassar and Javanese) who are Muslim. The South Lampung conflict between ethnic Balinese and ethnic Lampung (2012) resulted in 14 deaths, dozens of severe injuries and 1,700 residents evacuated. The destruction of the Huria Kristen Indonesia church place of worship (HKI) on October 13 2015 in Aceh Singkil. Even in 2018 there was also an inter-religious conflict in Sentani Papua triggered by the Alliance of Jayapura Churches (PGGJ) demanding that the construction of the Al-Aqsa Sentani Mosque tower be stopped and dismantled. PGGJ requested that the height of the mosque building be lowered, so that it was parallel to the height of the church buildings around it.

This is where the importance of this article is to elaborate further the dimension of the heart of all religions who bring their truth claims. It is expected that with multicultural education, where there is a develop-ment process of all human potentials that values religious pluralism in the perspective of perennial philosophy will bring up to an adult attitude in religion and appreciate that each religion has its own "way of salvation".

II. Multicultural Education Urgency:

Efforts to Build Pluralist-Inclusive Religious Attitudes

Talking about multicultural education will always go hand in hand with the democratization process in the lives of Indonesian people. The democratization process is based on recognition and appreciation of human rights without distinguishing religion and ethnic identity, skin color and gender. Therefore, multicultural education is a necessity for modern Indonesian society and becomes an instrument to foster a safe and prosperous life, where ethnic groups in a country or nations in the world can sit together, respect each other and help one another. Multicultural education is very necessary to expand the view of a person or community that truth, especially truth and salvation in religion is not monopolized by himself and his group, but the truth can also be shared by other

groups, because that is the right of Allah SWT.[308]

Meanwhile, James A. Bank said that multicultural education is a concept, idea or philosophy as a set of believe and an explanation that recognizes and assesses the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in shaping lifestyles, social experiences, personal identities, educational opportunities from individuals, groups or countries.[309]

Thus it can be emphasized that this type of education is strongly opposed to various forms of discrimination, both in terms of religious, racist and other discrimination. Therefore, multicultural education highly values plurality and heterogeneity as a necessity, so that it can accommodate all differences from various socio-cultural groups.

In an effort to compile and design multicultural education in the order of vulnerable people with various

religious conflicts, such as Indonesia, it is not easy. Because multicultural education is not just limited to "celebrating diversity". Under these conditions, multicultural education is more appropriately directed as an advocacy to create a tolerant society that respects the differences between groups in society.[310]

This is in line with the opinion of Brazilian education figure, Paulo Freire (1921-1997) who said that education was not an "ivory tower" that tried to stay away from social and cultural realities. For Paulo, education must be able to create an educated and educated society, not a society that only glorifies social prestige due to the wealth and prosperity it experiences. Multicultural education can be said as a response to the development of the diversity of the population of educational institutions, as well as the demands for equal rights for each group.[311]

In line with Paulo, James A Banks, said that substantially multicultural education is directed more

[308] Zainal Abidin, "Teologi Inklusif Nurcholish Madjid: Hahmoni Antara Keislaman, Keindonesiaa, dan Kemodernan". In Jurnal *Humaniora*, Vol.5 No.2 Oktober, (Jakarta: Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia, 2014), p. 671.

[309] Rus'an dan Sri Dewi Lisnawaty, "Urgensi Pendidikan Multikultural Dalam Pendidikan Islam di Madrasah Aliyah (MAN) Poso Pesisir (Upaya Menciptakan Integritas Sosial dan Strukutur Sosial yang Terbuka)". In *Istiqra'*, Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah, Vol. 1, No. 1 Januari-Juni, (Palu: P3M STAIN Datokarama, 2013), p. 94.

[310] Hujair AH. Sanaky, "Pendidikan Multikulturalisme dan Budaya Bangsa". In *Unisia*, Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, No. 58/XXVIII/IV, (Yogyakarta: UII, 2005), p. 405.

[311] Paulo Freire, *Pendidikan Sebagai Praktek Pembebasan,* terj. Alois A. Nugroho, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1984), p. 130-135.

towards freedom and at the same time as a dissemination of the pluralist-inclusive movement in order to strengthen relations between human beings. So multicultural education is a discourse that is not limited by other religious and primodial barriers (across borders), because it is related to issues of social justice, human rights, and democracy.[312]

So, the main focus of multicultural education, said Tilaar, is no longer directed solely at racial, religious and cultural domains or mainstream groups. This kind of focus has been a pressure on intercultural education which emphasizes increasing understanding and tolerance of individuals from minority groups towards dominant mainstream culture, which in turn causes people from minority groups to be integrated into mainstream society. Multicultural education is actually an attitude of "caring" and "willing to understand" (difference), or "politics of recognition", the politics of recognizing people from minority groups.[313]

When linked to Islamic idealism regarding religion as written in the Qur'an the Surat al-Hujurat verse 130 is a doctrine to know each other and respect various cultures, races and religions as a reality of humanity. As a concept, multicultural education finds its relevance for the Indonesian context. Multicultural education is in line with the Indonesian motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika which has the understanding that Indonesia is one of the nation states in the world which consists of various ethnic groups, races, cultures, languages and religions, but still within the framework Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The interpretive meaning of the issue of religious plurality and other ethnic identities has added to the long list of occurrences of horizontal communal conflict that has the potential to cause national disintegration. Therefore, to overcome this humanitarian problem, it cannot be other than using a multidimensional approach. It means that, the discourse and implementation of multicultural education becomes very important as a progressive approach to transform education and society culture as a whole, in line

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[312] James A Banks & Banks, C.A.M. (Eds), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, (New York: MacMillan, 2001).

[313] H.A.R Tilaar, *Kekusaan Dan Pendidikan Suatu Tinjauan Dan Persepektif Studi Kultural. Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Tera, 2003), p. 167.

with the principles of education implementation as set forth in Law Number 20/2003 concerning the National Education System article 4 paragraph 1 which states that education nationally organized in a democratic and fair manner and not discriminatory by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values and national diversity.[314]

Islam as a universal religion has taught an inclusive-pluralist understanding or religious plurality.[315] For Muslims, a belief is held that even today in this world there will be religious diversity because religious diversity cannot be destroyed (sunnatullah). Because if you don't recognize the necessity of religious pluralism, it's the same as opposing sunnatullah. Although there are claims that the truth of religion is in Islam (QS. Ali Imran: 13), but in the Qur'an also mentioned the rights of others to religion. Religion cannot be forced on others (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256). This attitude is the principle that underlies the political policy of religious freedom. Islamic inclusivism provides space and formulation that Islam is an open religion and rejects exclusivism, absolutism and gives a high appreciation for pluralism.

Therefore, it is very urgent to implement multicultural education, both at school and in the community. With the existence of multicultural education that is instilled early in school or in the community that the Indonesian nation-state is pluralistic will create an inclusive attitude and at the same time positive tolerance among students in schools and in the community. This is in line with the spirit of the Qur'an, so that outward phenomena do not hinder efforts to go to the meeting point (*kalimah sawâ'*) between all of them.

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[314] See *Undang-Undang RI Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*,(Jakarta: Cemerlang, 2003), p. 8.

[315] Islam is expected to emerge with productive and constructive cultural offerings and be able to express themselves as bearers of good for all, without communal exclusivity which in the Qur'an is called *kalimah sawâ '*. Muslims must authentically develop a pluralistic understanding of society (social pluralism). Along with this, it is also demanded the ability to develop mutual respect among fellow members of the community, by respecting what is considered important for everyone and groups. Universal values are always the core of religious teachings that unite all humanity. These universal values must be linked to the real conditions of space and time in order to have effective power in society as a basis for social ethics. A more complete explanation of the concept of faith in relation to the diversity of society can be seen in Nucholish Madjid, *Islam Doktrin dan Peradaban*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 1992).

III. Point of Meeting of Religions Perennial Philosophy Perspective:

A Strategy for Building Multicultural Education

As mentioned in the previous discussion, religious plurality has become a reality and at the same time has become the will of Allah. Because in the al-Qur'an, it was stated that humans were created by Allah, the nations and tribes and different sexes to know and appreciate each other (Surat al-Hujurat: 13). Even in the Al-Qur'an, it is also mentioned that the difference is one of the signs of the greatness of Allah (QS. Ar-Rum: 22). Therefore, differences, both differences in religion and other ethnic identities, actually do not need to be evicted, but should be used as a base for repelling competing towards various goodness and that Allah will explain why humans differ, later when we return to Him (QS. al-Maidah: 48).[316]

Moreover, there are religious differences adopted by the people in Indonesia. When viewed from the perspective of Islam, in fact the differences or pluralism of religious communities is a realistic thing, so it always requires a meeting point (sentence *al-sawa'*) in the value of the similarity of all existing religious communities. From an Islamic point of view and finding common ground is part of its very important teaching. In the Qur'an there is a command from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad to invite the people of Al-Kitāb to unite in the same view (sentence of *al-sawa'*), which is the understanding of the Almighty God (QS. Ali Imran: 6);

> Say: "O People of the Book, let us hold on to a sentence that there is no dispute between us and you, that we do not worship except Allah and we do not associate Him with anything and we do not partially make others as God besides Allah ". If they turn away then say to them: "Behold, that we are those who surrender (to Allah)" (Surat Ali Imran: 64).

The invitation of al-Qur'an above is very logical which was once practiced by the Prophet when he built a civilized society in Medina. At that time, the Messenger of Allah tried to find a meeting point between religious communities and between tribes (ka-

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[316]*Ibid.*, p. lxxv.

bilah) through the Medina Charter. In the Medina Charter, it contains the principles of human rights and government politics, including; the principle of the ummah, the principle of unity and brotherhood, the principle of equality, the principle of freedom, the principle of inter-religious relations, the principle of defense, the principle of neighborly life, the principle of helping and defending the weak and persecuted, the principle of peace, the principle of deliberation, the principle of justice, the principle of law enforcement, the principle of leadership, the principle of piety, amar ma'ruf and nahi munkar.[317]

Therefore, the strategy to build multicultural education needs to be sought at the meeting point of religions in Indonesia. One attempt to find a common ground, Seyyed Hossein Nasr offers a new solution called traditional philosophy or perennial philosophy.[318] Perennial philosophy is a concept that seeks to bring people to an awareness that God is an absolute form, the source of all forms, including the plurality of religions and religious sites.[319] That is, to examine more deeply the point of meeting religions is not enough to be limited to the outer (skin) aspects only. But it is also very important to understand the substance of the religions. Understanding the substance dimensions (esoteric) religions needs to use perennial philosophical methods. Because in perennial philosophy, said Budhy Munawar-Rahman, although the true "Religion" is only "One", but because it is derived in the context of different sociological and historical spectrums, so "religion" appears in a pluralistic format.[320]

Furthermore, Komaruddin Hidayat and M Wahyuni Nafis stressed that perennial philosophy holds that the true nature of religion is only one. However, because of the emergence

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[317]See the detailed explanation in Chapter IV in J. Suyuthi Pulungan, "Prinsip-prinsip Pemerintah Dalam Piagam Madinah Ditinjau Dari Pandangan al-Qur'an". Doctoral Dissertation on Program Pascasarjana IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, (Jakarta, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1994).

[318] One opinion says that the term philosophy perennial was first used in the Western world by Augustine (1497-1548) in his De Perennial Philosophia published in 1546. This term was later popularized by Leibnitz in 1715.

Another opinion says that this term was first introduced by Leibnitz, and then popularized by Aldous Hunley. See Frithjof Schuon, *Islam dan Filsafat Perennial*, terj. Rhmani Astuti, (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), p. 7

[319] Komaruddin Hidayat dan Muhammad Wahyu Nafis, *Agama Masa Depan; Perspektif Filsafat Perennial,* (Jakarta: Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina, 1995), p. 1.

[320] Budhy Munawar-Rahman, *Reorientasi Pembaharuan Islam: Sekularisme, Liberalisme, dan Pluralisme*, p. 709-710.

of religion in space and time, the pluralism and particularity of religious forms and languages cannot be avoided in historical reality. In other words, the absolute truth message participates and symbioses in historical dialectics.[321]

For Nasr, the study of religions through the traditional philosophy approach (the mask of perennialpen philosophy) always focuses on the dimensions of equality. For example, human relations with God, the origin of religion, rites, symbols and sort of things. According to Nasr, the most principle difference of most religious schools of thought is due to differences in views about the nature of reality. [322] For Nasr and traditional groups, disagreeing with the Western worldview narrowing reality as an effect of rationalism and empiricism. Nasr explained that the field that became the study of traditional people, covered all religious areas, ranging from ethics, mystical theology, rites, symbols with the spirit of Godhead,

without rejecting manifestations and other possibilities that experienced change due to changes in time. Therefore the traditional people do not recognize religious slogans from the same origin, but cause problems in the order of practice.[323]

The explanation above leads to the conclusion that for the traditional community the meeting point of religions occurs in the metaphysical region. The truth of a religion is not only measured in the form of a religious ceremony that is Islamic in nature *an sich*. But the most important point of the meeting goes beyond every external manifestation to the transcendental nature. This suggests that in traditional philosophy initiated by Nasr, the absolute truth is only one. However, because religion appears in different spaces and times, the plurality of forms and languages of religions cannot be avoided. As a result, religious contents always consider and adopt the cultural value of the community in which religion is born and developed. This is where the meeting point of religions is at the estoteric

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[321] Komaruddin Hidayat dan M. Wahyuni Nafis, *Agama Masa Depan Perspektif Filsafat Perenial*, p. 6.

[322] Jaipuri Harahap, "Sayyed Hossein Nasr Tentang Filsafat Perennial dan Humanisme Spiritulitas". In *Jurnal Aqlania,* Vol. 08. No. 02 (Juli-Desember), (Banten: UIN Banten, 2017), p. 190.

[323]*Ibid.,* p. 191.

level (Ilahiyah), not at the exoteric level (Shari'ah) according to Nasr.[324]

In the study of perennial philosophy, the plurality of common platform religions can be traced from the chain of historicity about the growth of religion, looking for esoteric essences from exoteric plurality in each religion. Every religion has one form and one substance. Substance has unlimited rights, because it is born of the Absolute. While forms are relative and their rights are limited. Extrinsically, religion is limited by its form, so it is also relative and very much influenced by human limitations to express the absolute thing.[325] Furthermore, Komaruddin Hidayat and M. Wahyuni Nafis asserted that the Truth is only one, not divided. From One radiates truths. Like the sun it will appear green when captured and reflected by green leaves.[326]

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that although perennialists argue that the Absolute Truth is only One and from the One, it emits various truths that

have dialectics with history, so that the form and language of religion also contain different cultural values between one community and another. However, perennial philosophy does not want to make a universal religion or equate all religions. On the contrary, perennial philosophy recognizes all sacred traditions that exist in religions as something that comes from God that must be respected and respectful.[327] That is, every religious believer must absolve the truth of the religion he adheres to and at the same time must tolerate others to justify the religion he adheres to.

In order to build multicultural education through the search for points of view of religions, perennial philosophy offers a method of interfaith dialogue to bridge the truth claim through phenomenological methods. That is, a way of understanding existing religion with an appreciative-persuasive attitude, without the spirit of hatred or disbelief. In other words, this method is to avoid external attitudes that regard their religion as the most correct and the religion of others must be wrong. Through this method

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[324]*Ibid.,* p. 192.

[325] Frithjof Schuon, *Islam dan Filsafat Perennial*, p. 25.

[326] Komaruddin Hidayat dan Muhammad Wahyu Nafis, *Agama Masa Depan; Perspektif Filsafat Perennial,* p. 6.

[327] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Filsafat Perennial Perspektif Alternatif Untuk Studi Agama*, terj. Saiful Mujani. In *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an*, No. 3, Vol. III, (Jakarta: ELSAF, 1992), p. 8.

there will also be an interfaith dialogue that puts forward mutual respect for the diversity of others without leaving their own faith. To strengthen faith does not have to look for the faults of other religions, but understand the teachings of religious diversity to enrich the understanding of the religion they embrace.[328]

IV. Conclusion

Based on the above description it can be concluded that multicultural education, especially related to religious pluralism in the perspective of perennial philosophy is intended as a process of developing all human potential that respects the diversity of religions. Because socio-religiously, Indonesian society is a pluralistic society on religious aspects and almost all major world religions exist in this country. This is a reality, a fact that cannot be denied by anyone.

Understanding religious pluralism can be seen from two sides. First, from the outside. On this side, there must be a variety of true religions. This is the relative dimension of a religion. These religions have one purpose, called salvation (with different concepts) with different paths. Through these differences, religions can enrich one another. Second, from within. In this dimension, it is recognized that there is one true religion, this is the absolute dimension of a religion. Such a position does not have to reject the truth of other religions, insofar as it does not contradict the message of religion.

With the existence of multicultural education that is instilled early in school or in the community that the Indonesian nation-state is pluralistic will create an inclusive attitude and at the same time positive tolerance among students in schools and in the community. This is in line with the spirit of the Qur'an, especially in QS. Ali Imran verse 64, so that the outward phenomena do not prevent the effort to go to the meeting point (*kalimah sawâ'*) between all of them.

One attempt to find a common ground is perennial philosophy. Perennial philosophy is a concept that seeks to bring people to an awareness that God is an absolute form, the source of all forms, including the plurality of religions and religious sites.

[328] Arqom Kuswanjono, "Filsafat Perennial dan Rekonstruksi Pemahaman Keberagamaan". In *Jurnal Filsafat*, Edisi Khusus Agustus, (Yigayakarta: Fakultas Filsafat Universitas Gadjah Mada, 1997), p. 104.

That is, to study more deeply the point of finding religions is not enough to be limited to the outer (skin) aspects only. But it is also very important to understand the substance of the esoteric religions.

In the view of perennial philosophy, although the true "Religion" is only "One", but because it is derived in the context of a different sociological and historical spectrum, so "religion" appears in a pluralistic format. This also shows the form and language of religion also contains different cultural values between one community and another. However, perennial philosophy does not want to make a universal religion or equate all religions. On the contrary, perennial philosophy recognizes all sacred traditions that exist in religions as something that comes from God that must be respected.

To bridge interfaith dialogue because of the truth claim can be done through phenomenological methods. That is, a way of understanding existing religion with an appreciative-persuasive attitude, without the spirit of hatred or disbelief. This method is to avoid external attitudes that consider their religion the most correct and the religion of others must be wrong. Through this method there will also be interfaith dialogue that puts forward mutual respect for the diversity of others, without leaving their own faith.

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