

RELIGIOUS MODERATION MOVEMENT AS THE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION: Efforts to Apply Islamic Shari'a Rahmatan lil alamin

Dr. Arif Budi Raharjo, M.Si

Master of Islamic Studies Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta
arifbr@umy.ac.id

Abstract - There have been efforts to equalize perceptions among muslims at the global level regarding religious moderation, namely the International Assembly for Moderate Islamic Thought and Culture in Jordan. In Indonesia, it's discourse has been intensively re-discussed since 2019 which aimed to stemming the narrative of extremism. However, there are still differences in perspectives on religious moderation, both at the conceptual and practical levels of its development. The idea of religious moderation is not only to answer religious problems merely but also to solve the problems of global civilization. Islamic education has become a strategic and dominant domain because the goals of muslims in initiating or participating in global welfare are identical to the goals of Islam. The era of globalization has become a new challenge for civilization and muslims to redefine themselves and their identity.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Islamic Education; Evaluation and Development

1. Introduction

Since 2003, there have been efforts to equalize perceptions among muslims at the global level regarding religious moderation, namely the International Assembly for Moderate Islamic Thought and Culture in Jordan. A similar event was held again by the same institution in Kuwait one year after. In 2008 al-Qaradawi's Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal emerged in Doha, and the establishment of the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation—GMMF—in Kuala Lumpur in 2012 and anothers (Kamali, Moh. Hasyim, 2015). In Indonesia, it's discourse has been intensively re-discussed since 2019 which aimed to stemming the narrative of extremism (Subhan, Arif and Abdallah, 2021). However, even though this has been done, it appears that there are still differences in perspectives on religious moderation, both at the conceptual and practical levels of its development. Thus further discussion of the concept of religious moderation is still needed so that the discourse that has become a real movement is not counter-productive in realizing the progress of global civilization, in the context of the nation-state as the contribution of muslims in realizing global welfare from various aspects of life. The idea of religious moderation is not only to answer religious problems merely but also to solve the problems of global civilization (el Fadl, 2005; 243). Islamic education has once again become a strategic and dominant domain because the goals of muslims in initiating or participating in global welfare are identical to the goals of Islam.

The principle of religious moderation in Islam is quite clear textually stated in the holy book al-Quran. Likewise the interpretation of the scholars regarding that naqli argument (dalil naqli). However, as with the plural understanding between people and groups, there will always be differences, but finding a universal meaning to the deepest wisdom of a particular concept or message will certainly not give rise to a diametrically dichotomous difference as is the content of the term extremism itself as opposed to the word moderation. This optimism should be the main motive for mainstreaming religious moderation as a progressive discourse and movement.

Referring to the previous description, the necessity of the religious moderation movement still discussing the concept of religious moderation itself means being part of the process of Islamic education which is indeed lifelong learning. With continuous dialogue and deliberation among internal muslims themselves, a relatively similar formulation will be found, or at least the same understanding can be obtained between one individual or group with another. Of course, it is ironic when some muslims want the realization of a harmonious life in the context of nationality but with their "brethren in the faith", it is not harmonious. Religious moderation thus becomes an urgent movement for the Islamic da'wah movement which is played by all groups and components of muslims.

In the context of Indonesia especially, allegations of extremism to a small part of muslims need to be responded to appropriately. Less systematic steps and the tendency to generalize will be counterproductive and create a bad image of the existence of muslims as a whole (Sulaeman, 2019; Tike, 2015). This negative response has the potential to cause internal disharmony among muslims which has an impact on disharmony in the life of the nation.

Likewise, the accusation of the practice of Islamic education deliberately sowing the seeds of extremism requires a scientific response that is not rash. Having a self-critical attitude is a must for muslims to evaluate their da'wah as the main task of Islam. That can be done only if all parties can understand each other's aspirations, motives, and efforts. No less important is understanding the micro context of each of the fundamental factors that determine the direction and style of movement of each Islamic group, moreover understanding the broader context in the context of national and global nationalities.

The global era with the inevitability of contestation between nations and civilizations (Huntington, 1993), does not mean that it has left internal contestation between components of the nation. The struggle for influence, which always requires power, has been part of the genetic phenomenon of life since ancient times. The only difference is, in this global era of high-tech, especially in the information and communication arena, there are more and more opportunities for fiercer disputes between human beings, anywhere and anytime, with almost no boundaries. The dispute is of course more open to any ideological propaganda messages in his name. This great context must be understood, anticipated, and ultimately addressed and faced scientifically and practically according to the universal basic values of Islamic teachings that uphold the dignity of divinity and humanity. Hasyim Kamali's opinion

on religious moderation written in his work entitled *The Quranic Principles of Wasathiyah*, needs to be taken into consideration. According to him, wasathiyah is an important principle in Islamic teachings but is often forgotten in practice. Wasathiyah can be the basis of thinking for muslims in the modern era to build bridges with other civilizations, especially Western civilization. The era of globalization has become a new challenge for civilization and muslims to redefine themselves and their identity (Kamali, 2015).

So back to the topic of religious moderation in Islam from the perspective of Islamic education, the question to be discussed in this study is how religious moderation is conceptualized in Islamic education?

2. Straightening the context

Islamic moderation is not moderation of Islam as a religion. It is important to put forward this statement to emphasize that Islam as a way of life inherently has a moderate meaning. Islam is not a teaching that contains extremism as the basic assumption of the phenomenon and movement of Islamophobia. Islam is an idealistic and realistic religion, which is also scientific and practice (*ilmiah-amaliyah*). As stated by Abu Abdur Rahman Faruq that moderate Islam (*wasathiyah*) is an understanding and practice of religious teachings in a way that is not excessive and negligent. (Faruq, 2013:13)

In the global context, awareness to distinguish between Islam as a teaching that is in the realm of "theoretical" and muslims who are in the realm of empirical practice, becomes the main capital to understand phenomena, discourses, and practices in life. Therefore, in scientific studies, it is necessary to distinguish between Islam in the aspect of eternal revelation and Islam in the cultural aspect as the expression of muslims humans in filling their empirical life. However, in the practice of Islamic *amaliyah*, it is not necessary to distinguish between the transcendental aspect and the immanence aspect because it means a demonstration of secularism which is contradiction with Islamic teachings that require integration in all aspects and lines of life.

The global trend with the occurrence of contestation of civilizations, culture, and religion (the assumption that conflicts between civilizations will arise) makes religious factors become increasingly considered in the context of relations between countries (nation-state). The existence of these phenomena is identified by many experts with the term religious turn in international relations, or point rejecting religion in international relations (Kratochwil, 2009; Thomas, 2014; Kubalkova, 2009;), of course, involves contestation between nations, groups and communities with their respective beliefs and interests. Therefore, it is important for scientists, Islamic leaders and formal leaders to understand the historical aspects of each component within the muslim community itself, whether as a nation, mazhab group, mass organization, and community. An objective understanding far from elements of interest and information bias will be a necessary material in efforts to continue dialogue and friendship between these components within muslim for efforts to looking for the same strategy in the

participation of advancing human civilization as well as strengthening Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah).

The character of the nation-state of the muslim community is certainly different, these differences also determine the pattern of religious moderation they carry out, the basis for their footing and the interpretation of the issues that occur in each country. Plurality of Indonesia has similarities and differences with other muslim countries. Of course, finding similarities is more important for cooperation between components of the muslim community than another. In that way also being aware of propaganda actions that threaten the solidarity of muslims can always be confirmed and resolved. without it, a split will occur if each party feels superior, so they feel that they are the most correct, reluctant to dialogue, and ultimately have the heart to annex the other party in the name of religion as well.

Affirming the orientation of *khaira umah* for the symbol of *rahmatan lil alamin*, is an important agenda to be continuously maintained through attitudes to build peace, respect pluralism, respect the human dignity of men and women, uphold noble civility, and advance human life which is manifested in an attitude of life of trust, justice, compassion, tolerance, compassion for mankind without discrimination, respect for pluralism. According to Mukti (2019), all of that is religious moderation as the actualization of the values and mission of *rahmatan lil alamin*. For this, there is no need for a caliphate leadership system as understood the same as the papal system in Christianity. It is a collective caliphate between Muslim countries that is needed, namely the occurrence of continuous deliberation to respond and participate in solving global problems, but also at the same time establishing solidarity for worship in helping solve problems faced by other muslim nations states that require a helping hand.

In the Indonesian context, it is necessary to accept the criticism conveyed by Ibrahim (2018) that the moderation of diversity is a meeting point for mutual sharing and caring and willingness to sacrifice, which includes tolerance, accommodation, cooperation, and building coexistence as a unity for uniting diversity. According to the motto of the Indonesian State, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

3. The concept of religious moderation in Islam and Islamic education

The word moderation comes from the Latin *moderatio* which means moderation (no excess or deficiency). According to Kamali, moderation or *wasatiyyah* has synonyms of *tawassuṭ*, *i'tidāl*, *tawāzun*, and *iqtiṣād* in line with the concept of justice, namely choosing a position in the middle between two extreme points (Kamali, 2015). In the view of the Koran, the term moderation is the opposite of the term extremism (*tatharruf*) which means *ghuluw* and or *tabdir*.

In Surah al-Baqarah verse 243 and Surah Ali Imran verse 110, it is stated that muslims are *ummatan wasathan* (midmost community) which means the best people ever created by Allah. Based on this verse, muslims are people who are dedicated to increasing virtue and preventing evil, building the earth for human welfare, and upholding justice. (Subhan, Arif and Abdallah (Ed.), 2021). In Islamic education, the principle of "simple" behavior applies. Simplicity in the deepest realm of the individual

is in the form of the ability to control oneself which has an understanding as the ability to control lust.

In Freud's concept of the core trilogy of human personality elements, the term id can be understood as lust. In this theory, the id as the main energy of individual behavior works by following the principle of the pleasure fulfillment mechanism. (Husin, H, 2018). The "pleasure" referred to in Freud's theory is a physical pleasure because in his first theorization (before it was revised by him), it was explained that what was meant by the id was the libido (sexual urge). Some of this Freud's theories can be accepted because they explain one side of individual innate nature, but his theory is wrong because it generalizes its conclusions to all human individuals. The undeveloped element of fitrah (holiness) as the other side of the positive nature of the individual, causes the individual to not have the ability to overcome his negative tendencies due to the mastery of lust. The Self-control ability lowers individual behavior to measure and put their passions in the corridor of morality, that which still maintain the dignity of human honor.

Wasathiyah as a religious attitude and practice of the Prophet Muhammad can be known in many hadiths, including the hadith narrated by Ibn Majah no. 3029 which means "O people, stay away from you too excessive attitude (beyond the limit) in religion. Because things that destroyed the people before you were due to an excessive attitude in their religiosity." The classical muslim scholars practiced the wasathiyah attitude and way of life by imitating the wasathiyah apostle of Allah s.a.w. Ibn Taimiyah for example, argues that "Muslims are called wasath people because they are not excessive and extreme towards their prophets. Moderate Muslims do not equate the prophets as God and do not take the attributes of the prophets as divine attributes and then worship them and make them healers of disease. Muslims also do not ignore the prophets as messengers of Allah, reject them and disobey them, but Muslims respect the prophets, follow their shari'ah and help their religion" (Al-Qardhawi, 2009).

The same thing is found in the views, attitudes, and Islamic practices of modern muslim scholars, including Yusuf Al-Qardhawi who describes his "relationship with wasathiyah" through the expression "Truly Allah has honored me by introducing the direction of wasathiy Islamic thought or Islamic moderation since the first time. My struggle was not a coincidence, or plagiarizing someone's opinion or following lust, but it was all because I got strong arguments and definite reasons that this manhaj washathiyah is the essence and core of Islamic teachings itself. Washathiyah is not an Islamic thought that is oriented towards the culture of certain countries, certain sects, certain congregations, or because of certain times, but Islamic moderation is the essence of Islamic teachings first taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW before being polluted by the filth of thought, mixed with additions to heresy, influenced by differences of opinion within the ummah, affected by the views of Islamic directions and sects and colored by foreign ideologies. I re-introduced the concept of wasathiyah Islamic thought or Islamic moderation more than half a century ago, which I discussed clearly in the introduction to my book entitled *Al-Halal wal Haram fi Al-Islam* which was published in 1960" (Al-Qardhawi, 2009).

4. Evaluation and Development of Islamic Moderation in Islamic Education

Islamic education is the most strategic side of the religious moderation movement. However, it is still necessary to carry out planning and implementation stages that are designed systematically and comprehensively based on factual, objective, and measurable studies according to scientific principles. The religious moderation movement itself is not a phenomenon, activity or program that is separate from the overall series of Islamic education that has been running since the revelation of Islamic teachings. So in this context, the religious movement is seen as an evaluation process of Islamic educational praxis or as an evaluation of the religious praxis of Muslims. So it is not an exaggeration if Muhammadiyah, as one of the major Islamic community organizations in the country, recommends educational institutions to improve the quality of education, ideally evolving into Islamic institutions that are progressive in all aspects. One of the five pillars of the concept of progressive Islam is being tolerant, moderate, and cooperative (AIKA Writing Team, 2018)

Based on the results of the evaluation, the religious moderation movement needs to be developed into a major project for the revision of Islamic education in all types, pathways, and levels of education. Evaluation and development of Islamic religious moderation in formal education need to be carried out at least through five program stages, namely: exploring and uniforming perceptions for educators; internalization through the example of the principal; formulation of Islamic education curriculum content (or Islamic religious education); monitoring and evaluation.

In the first stage, it is necessary to conduct some research to determine the perceptions, tendencies, attitudes, and practices of religious education subjects. This research is evaluative because basically, it wants to know the results of Islamic education (or Islamic religious education) and or the experience of educators as muslims in implementing their knowledge and beliefs in the empirical realm. This research also functions as an effort to map the quality of Islamic religiosity for educators and students from various aspects, the results of which are used as materials in developing religious moderation programs for educators.

This first stage is carried out through the development of a measurement scale for muslim religious moderation. The process of developing a scale for measuring the level of Islamic moderation begins with the selection of indicators of religious moderation to formulate the attribute construct of individual religious moderation. The selection was carried out through the study of various concepts of moderation by experts, both classical scholars, scientists, and thinkers in the field of Islamic education. As a consideration, it is also necessary to study the results of previous studies that have attempted to take measurements related to religious moderation, so that the preparation of research instruments is carried out based on the attribute constructs of religious moderation that have been formulated. The instrument that has been compiled, before being used, is necessary to carry out content validity and field trials through its empirical validity (empirical validity).

The second stage is the implementation of the Islamic moderation development program, with the main objective as a medium for equalizing or uniforming perceptions, understanding, and attitudes of educators. This equation is not interpreted as standardization of uniformity, or more as indoctrination, which is contradictive to the concept of moderation itself. At the individual level, the diversity of levels of understanding, motivation, and "ability" of religious implementation is unavoidable and must be accommodated and respected as an acknowledgment of plural reality as well as respect for individual human rights. Thus, it can be understood that the evaluative religious moderation development program is early mitigation for the occurrence of religious extremism in understanding, attitudes, and actions.

The third stage is the internalization and dissemination of wasathiyah knowledge, values, attitudes, and behavior through the example of the principal. This stage is also an affirmative stage for the most basic theory in Islamic education theory, namely prioritizing exemplary as the main method of internalizing Islamic values (Arifin, H.M, 1991; Maya, R, 2017). Directly it is also an affirmation of the concept of Islamic learning leadership. It's the central and strategic role of school principals who do not just have managerial skills, but more important than that are attitude or personality skills that will be the inspiration for the growth of spirit and creative educational innovations for their educators, student, and their parents.

The fourth stage is the formulation of the content of the Islamic religious education curriculum. At this stage, of course, it is not a formulation from zero, but as an evaluation, completion, and emphasis on the content of Islamic religious messages which will ensure the formation of knowledge, attitudes, and moderate behavior of the students as an outcome of Islamic education. The formulation can be done with integrated curriculum development or a partial curriculum development approach. Integrated in the sense of inserting moderation values and or messages in all units of learning activities, both curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular. While partial in the sense of strengthening in the field of Islamic religious education (PAI).

Finally the fifth stage is monitoring and evaluating. Monitoring is carried out simultaneously at each stage to ensure all activities can run according to the plan, while evaluation is carried out to measure the process and outcomes of educational programs consisting of knowledge, attitudes and changes in students' Islamic religious behavior.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes: that first, religious moderation has become a religious movement in Islam which is essentially an inseparable part of Islamic educational endeavors. The religious moderation movement is a necessity for the spirit of progress in Islamic civilization which has gained momentum in the era of globalization which is completely open, complex, and full of contestations between civilizations, religions, nations, and other geopolitical statuses. Awareness of the changes in the global environment should be addressed and anticipated wisely to prioritize the doctrine of social monotheism (social-tauhid) in the form of Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah) before other forms of ukhuwah (wathaniyah and basyariah). The Islamic

religious moderation movement in the context of Islamic education functions as an evaluation and development of Islamic education.

Second, the evaluation and development of Islamic religious moderation in formal path education need to be carried out through five stages of the program, namely: exploring and equalizing perceptions for educators; internalization and dissemination through the example of the principal; formulation of Islamic education curriculum content (or Islamic religious education); monitoring and evaluation

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