

Inter-Religious Harmony

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Abstract - A lot of media, these days, broadcast some unrests and even conflicts between religious groups. The latest conflict between Muslims and Christians occurred in Tolikara, Papua on the day of Eid in 2015. The conflict caused a lot of injured, some even died. Several kiosks and worship places were burned. Besides, disputes often occur in one religion, such as competition among the Evangelical Churches in Indonesia (GIDI). Among Muslims, some disputes are also often reported their conflict between Sunni and Shia, even with the Islamic worshipers. Those are some examples of religious conflicts. Some questions arise: why does the religious conflict frequently occur? Can a religion be a source of conflict? All religions teach to live in peace and uphold tolerance. Why do people often dispute in the name of religion? Is it because the conflict of religion is easily to provoke. As a result to this, as religious issues are sensitive, it is quite often that the social conflict, politics and economics are drawn to the area of religion, in order to get more support from its followers. This paper will discuss how people understand a religion, why those religious conflicts often occur and what the role of religion in society is.

Keywords: *harmony, conflict, religion*

I. INTRODUCTION

Most people are trying to do a linguistic approach in defining a religion. The term of religion is derived from the Sanskrit word which means not chaotic. This means that the religious life is not chaotic as it follows the rules that are laid down by religion. The term is also derived from a Latin word "religare", which means to bind. So, a person who has religion unites himself with God. In Arabic, the word "al-din" is used to define religion. This word connotes religion in general, not directed to any one religion. It is the name for each faith that exists in this world.

The terminology of religion is understood as a system that talk about faith, worship, and norms that is given by God to human. To clarify the system, God also sent a scripture along with its messenger of God. However, the religions and beliefs in a society are influenced by the level of development of civilization in the community. For example, in a nation that is still primitive and very simple, religions and beliefs against God is very simple. Religion, from the standpoint of sociology, is defined as a social phenomenon that is common and is owned by the whole community in religious life [1]. Emile Durkheim [2] sees religion as a social phenomenon in society, where religion has a belief system, rituals, followers, sacred book, and leaders.

These days we often witness the emergence of religious communities with all forms of rituals, books of reference, to the belief that seems different from the religious beliefs. Zuly Qadir [3] indicated that the rise of religious communities is due to alienation in the

community religious, thus requiring new guidelines. People who are alienated need a figure that is considered capable of being the savior of the destruction of his life.

Differences in religious views could result in internal conflict in a religion. The difference in sect is one of the differences that are evident in the society. Another difference is in religious community-based organizations. In one religion, for example Islam, differences in interpretation resources, appreciation, studies, the approaches of the Qur'an and As-sunnah, have proved to create internal religious disharmony. As a result, to this, this issue becomes interesting to study.

II. DISCUSSION

On the one hand, religion is seen as a source of values and morals, but it is often also a source of conflict. Johan Efendi [4] says that on the one hand, a religion is understood as the path to salvation, unity and fraternity, but on the other hand, a religion reveals as violent and spreading the conflict, even causing war as noted in history. The question is, is it true that religion can be a factor of conflicts? Or is the conflicts that have been happening actually caused by man, in this case the followers of the religion, not because of his religion. In the Quran Allah explains that it has been apparent damage at sea and in the earth caused by human hands [5]

In a religion, there is a scripture and a messenger of God in charge of providing guidance to its adherents. At the time of the messenger of God is dead, there are some interpretations of the scripture which gave birth to diverse views and ritual actions that are sometimes different with one another. The difference is caused by socio-cultural backgrounds and the levels of interpretation of religion adherents. Therefore, despite the same religion and the same holy book, the differences in views are likely to happen among the adherents, and we can find multiple streams or schools or sects in a religion. The religious believers are also different so that different views are very likely to happen. It is the difference in views that results in the religious conflict among the believers, not the religion itself. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish which the teaching of religion is and which the understanding of religious adherents to the teachings, especially when the understanding of the religious teachings have been performed in in forms of behavior.

There are some factors that can lead to conflict between religious communities, including 1) the nature of each religion that contain propaganda task or mission; 2) lack of knowledge of the adherents' religions and other religions; 3) the adherents attitude that shows less respect even despise to other religions; 4) the blur of boundary between attitudes of uphold tolerance in public life; 5)

suspicion to others' honesty; 6) lack of mutual understanding in the face of problems dissent. [6]

In society, the religion actually has many roles in addressing the problems that arise. If these roles are optimized, the presence of religion in society will function properly. With religion, people would have a way of life. The life of a community will be orderly, secure, peaceful, and prosperous. Some functions of the religion in society are as follows:

1) *Function of education*

Each religion has a messenger of God. It can be an Apostle, Prophet, Pastor, Monk or something. They are tasked with providing guidance to religious believers. The guidance contains religious teachings so that the believers can live a good life to obtain the happiness of life and unseen.

2) *Function of salvation*

Each religion has teachings that contain ways of salvation. Religion introduces its adherents to the Creator. It teaches how service should be done by a servant of the Lord, how relationships are built among fellow human beings and even with other creatures. Religion also teaches life after death, and what the man should do to survive either in this life in this world and in later life after death.

3) *Function of social control*

Religion will control its adherents. Religious people will select and sort which the deeds that can be done and which is forbidden because in the eyes of the adherent, all his actions will be supervised by God. So, religion has a control function to its adherents.

4) *Function of fostering fraternity*

There are many types of fraternity. There are fraternity based on a similarity of descendants, fellow countrymen, and faith. These types can strengthen the fraternal bond, especially when the fraternity was based on the similarity of views and ideologies, such as brothers and sisters in the same faith, the bond will be more robust. Many things can be done because they have the same vision and mission. It would be better in building a civilization in the midst of society.

Every religion has a mission of da'wah (disseminating its religious teachings). When doing this mission, every religion claims that their religion is the most correct. This issue sometimes creates a sentiment and a conflict among religions. At this stage it seems that religion is not only a unifying factor, but also a disintegrating factor. The disintegrating factor appears as the religion itself has the potentials to raise intolerance (conflict) arise, either because of the internal factors of religion itself or because of the external factors that intentionally committed by adherents in the name of the religion.

As a result to this, it is necessary to develop religious tolerance because every religion teaches compassion and tolerance, and there is no one religion that tells its followers to do hostile to people of different beliefs. Here are some examples of the teachings of a religion that teach tolerance:

1) *"There is no compulsion to (hold) the religion (Islam)"* [7]

2) *"To you your religion and to me my religion."* [8]

3) *"And if anyone of the disbelievers (idolaters) seek protection to you, then grant him protection"* [9]

Below are some steps to do so that religious conflict can be avoided:

1) *At the same religion, religious believers should pay more attention to the similar views rather than debating the difference.*

2) *The importance of establishing fraternity should be emphasized, both with fellow believers and with different adherents.*

3) *Avoid excessive fanatic attitude.*

4) *Increase the frequency of friendship and mutual visit.*

5) *Expand the dialogue, both in internal and inter-religious.*

6) *Every follower should be able to respect the opinions of others and do not feel that they are the most correct itself.*

7) *Every follower sought to understand the mission of religion because basically every religion teaches love to others.*

8) *Fostering of the religion should be performed not only in the aspect of piety as a ritual but also in socially piety.*

9) *Increase the role of religious-based organizations and government agencies to continuously conduct various activities that foster fraternity, in order to achieve a society in full of harmony and peace as aspired together.*

III. CONCLUSION

Inter-religious harmony is harmony among the people in religious life, either with each other in similar belief or with others in different religious faith. All religions have a mission of peace and teach compassion and, therefore, people should be able to coexist and respect each other. However, the fact shows that religious differences can cause conflict in society. This happens because many believers claim that their religions are the best, the most only true religion. The excessive bigotry coupled with the desire to spread the religion makes people often in conflict. Therefore, for the existence of religion has a positive value in the midst of society, the role of religion should be optimized so that religion can truly have the functions of education, salvation, social control, and fostering fraternity.

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