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Developing Moderate Islamic Education: Special Reference to Al-Daghasyi's Thought and Its Contextualization in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background. One of the main agendas for promoting a harmonious life in a diverse society strengthening religious moderation, which has become a priority program of the government.

Purpose. This study tries to contribute to the reinforcement of religious moderation through literary explorations concerning the concept of moderate Islamic education.

Method. This research was a study of al-Daghasyi's educational thoughts through literary explorations which were then positioned as a dialogue partner to formulate the significant concept for the development of moderate Islamic education.

Results. According to al-Daghasyi, when education is based on moderate Islam, it will play an important role in preventing deviant attitudes and behaviours, such as intolerance and extremism, namely al-ifrāth and al-tafrīth (liberalism and radicalism).

Conclusion. This study has significant implications for instructional practices in The real endeavor does not involve weapon confrontations but fundamentally deals with preventing warfare and injustice.

KEYWORDS

Al-Daghasyi, Intolerance, Pro-Existence

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INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that Islam is the religion practiced by the majority in Indonesia. As the dominant religion, Islam holds significant influence over the social and national life of the country. Therefore, it is reasonable if Syafi'i Ma'arif (2009) emphasized that, as the majority, Muslims should no longer be overconcerned with the debates over the relationship between Islam, Indonesianness, and humanity (Azmi & Akbar, 2022; Rumbay dkk., 2024). These three concepts need to be placed in one breath so that Islam that develops in Indonesia is Islam that is friendly, open,

inclusive, and able to provide solutions to the major problems of the nation and the country. Thus, there should be no concern about the character of Indonesian Islam which is shaped by local and global elements, an inevitable reality, as long as it does not dissolve and drift in negative and regressive, nor is it dragged by global currents that could bring catastrophes to Indonesian Muslims.

The progress of a nation no longer relies on the abundance of natural resources but on the excellence of its human resources (Kurniawan dkk., 2024; “‘Urf and Its Role in The Development of Fiqh: Comparative Study of Family Law Between Egypt and Indonesia,” 2024). For this reason, the important pillars needed are the whole person's development and the mastery of science and technology (Finaka, 2020). The creation of superior Indonesian human resources cannot be instantly realized. Instead, it requires a long time and various intelligent breakthroughs. In that context, the National Education System (SISDIKNAS) is required to continuously fix and improve its quality so that it can effectively support the realization of excellent human resources. In 2045, Indonesia will enter an important moment to commemorate a century of independence. Although the arrival of this momentum is still two decades away, the realization of excellent human resources must be sustainably prepared as early as possible.

Excellent human resources do not have a single face but are multidimensional and multi-perspective. It is said to be multidimensional because superiority is not only concerned with mastery of science and technology but also with character, morals, and other competitiveness needed to emerge as a winner (Indrawati dkk., 2023; Zamroni dkk., 2022). Meanwhile, it is said to be multi-perspective because many points of view can be used in defining the meaning of superiority. Different people can see from different perspectives, such as economic, political, social, cultural, and religious perspectives. In short, superior or excellent human resources are very likely to be studied from various perspectives without intending to deny the importance of a holistic-integral understanding of the whole person. Placed in the spectrum of challenges of a pluralistic society in the country, even a complete plurality (Latif, 2020), superior human resources require the ability to respond to diversity and manage differences positively and productively for weaving harmony, unity, and oneness amidst the diversity.

The ability to respond to and manage diversity is considered very fundamental to the sustainability of a pluralistic society and nation (Rohmadi, 2021; Hermawan, 2020). Diversity that is not managed properly is like fire in the husk that has the potential to destroy the pillars of the nation and state (Bachtiar & Baidhawiy, 2022; Halim & Hm, 2020). This can be seen, among other things, from the differences in political aspirations that have torn apart social harmony. Also, differences in religious understanding have been proven to ignite the flames of hostility between religious communities so that they easily accuse each other of being misguided and infidel. As a result of the infiltration of radical religious understanding, social media are increasingly filled with content that insults, provokes, and spreads hatred (Badruzaman, 2019; Zamroni dkk., 2022). Such conditions are strongly suspected to be the excessive impact of neglect of diversity and the erosion of the spirit of togetherness (Suryohadiprojo, 2014; Alam, 2018; Saputra, et al. 2021)).

To respond to these problems, education should prioritize the development of moderate and tolerant competencies of students through the actualization of humanization and hominization. These two roles are very much needed considering that globalization has reduced humans to mere commodities to obtain material benefits and for pragmatic interests (al-Daghasyi, 2016). Through the role of humanization, education is required to be able to develop all the human potential of students, namely physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual potential. On the other side, through the role of hominization, education is expected to be able to develop the humane side of students so that the actualization of self-potential (individuation) is kept within the framework of participation

by honoring others through justice, care, and tolerance (Hakim dkk., 2023; Panuntun dkk., 2023). This is the essence of *akhlaq* (Islamic ethics) in humanity that is often marginalized from the mainstream of the educational process.

Although the accuracy is still being debated, the Chief of the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) some time ago signaled that there were 198 Islamic boarding schools affiliated with terrorist networks (CNN Indonesia, 2022) and the fairly massive phenomenon of radicalism entering schools in Indonesia (Yulianto, 2018; Basyirah & Nur Fuad, 2023). Those are a concrete indication of ongoing educational malpractice in the field, considering that radicalism and terrorism are still serious threats to national education (Ihsan & Fatah, 2021). Responding to this problem, it seems interesting to use the principle or concept that al-Daghasyi (2017a) has once voiced in reforming education and society, that is the principle of “starting from authenticity and a moderate approach (*al-ashâlah fî al-munthaliq wa al-wasathiyah fî al-manhaj*).” He has also voiced the importance of the principle or concept of “the other” (*shûrat al-âkhar*) as the basis for Islamic education amid diversity to realize a harmonious life (al-Daghasyi, 2017b).

Based on that, it is very relevant to study aspects of moderate Islamic education through dialogic elaboration with al-Daghasyi's Islamic educational thoughts. Several of the considerations are that first, al-Daghasyi's educational thought was born from his struggle to face the socio-political turmoil in the Yemen region and other Islamic worlds, which have many similarities with conditions in this country (Dahlan dkk., 2021; Zaman dkk., 2024). Second, al-Daghasyi's educational thought has not been studied much so it has not colored the discourse on Islamic education in this country. Third, demands regarding the need for “educational reform” that carries the strengthening of moderation, *akhlaq*, diversity, and others can gain significance from the “dialogue partners” of al-Daghasyi's educational thought.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a study of al-Daghasyi's educational thoughts through literary explorations which were then positioned as a “dialogue partner” to formulate the conceptual significance for the development of moderate Islamic education. The thoughts were contextualized with the reality in Indonesia. Thus, al-Daghasyi's educational thoughts were used as a primary source (Dahlan dkk., 2021; Zaman dkk., 2024). Then the conceptual data from the results of literary explorations regarding the core problems/ideas were confirmed, discussed, described, and elaborated in the Indonesian context. This was a form of the application of the heuristic method in finding new understanding needed to solve or analyze problems so that it is known as a “logic of creativity” (Bakker & Zubair, 1990). Referring to Noeng Muhadjir's classification (2000), this literary exploration research could be considered as a type of library research that required more philosophical and theoretical processing through critical reflection, comparison, and confirmation with dialogue partners to reveal the empirical-contextual meaning of Indonesianness.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A Brief Profile of al-Daghasyi

The figure studied is a living figure and is intellectually recognized as having extensive contributions. As revealed in the author's biography at the end of the book (al-Daghasyi, 2016 & 2017b), al-Daghasyi's full name is Prof. Dr. Ahmad Muhammad al-Daghasyi, a professor of Islamic educational thought at the Faculty of Education, Shan'a University, Yemen. He was born in the province of Shan'a in 1967. The young al-Daghasyi took his undergraduate education at Shan'a University and graduated in 1991. Next, he took his Master's education at Yarmouk University in

Jordan and graduated in 1995 (Harisudin, 2021; Thohari dkk., 2021). For his doctoral education, he majored in Philosophy and History of Education at Khartoum University in Sudan and completed his studies in 1998 with a doctoral dissertation entitled *Nadhariyyat al-Ma'rifah fi al-Qur'an wa Tadlmînatuhâ al-Tarbawiyah* (The Concept of Knowledge in the Qur'an and its Educational Implications).

Al-Daghasyi earned the academic title of Professor in 2010. He served as the Head of the Department of Education and Psychology at Shan'a University in 2002-2005 (Mashuri dkk., 2024; Rahmatullah dkk., 2024). Then in 2005, he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Education and *Adab* (manners) at the University of al-Andalusia Yemen. In addition, he was once the official spokesman for the International Conference on Moderation from the Yemeni Branch, a member of the International Association of Muslim Scholars (*Ulama*) of the Yemeni Branch, and a speaker in various national and international scientific forums. Among his scientific works on education are (1) *Shûrat al-Âkhar fi Falsafat al-Tarbiyah al-Islâmiyyah* (2017), (2) *Fî al-Taghyîr al-Tarbawî* (2017), (3) *Dirâsât fi Falsafat al-Tarbiyah al-Islâmiyyah* (2016), (4) *al-Houtsyiyûn wa Mustaqbalahum al-Askarî wa al-Siyâsî wa al-Tarbawî* (2013), (5) *al-Asâs al-Fithrî fi al-Tarbiyah al-Islâmiyyah* (2006), and (6) *Nadhariyyat al-Ma'rifah fi al-Qur'ân al-Karîm wa Tadlmînatuhâ al-Tarbawiyah* (2001).

The significance of the study of al-Daghasyi's thoughts will be increasingly seen when placed in the context of bilateral relations between Yemen and Indonesia. Historically, Yemen has an important position and a close relationship with Indonesia. Al-Daghasyi's country of origin, as the place where he plays a large role in articulating his ideas, has long been proven to contribute to the development of Islam in this country (Mashuri dkk., 2024; Rahmatullah dkk., 2024). This is shown by the role of preachers from Hadramaut Yemen in the process of Islamization in the archipelago and the formation of the Rabithah Alawiyah association in 1928 which until now continues to actively drive "cultural diplomacy". As a result, *mawlid* (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday commemoration), *haul* (commemoration of death), *hadrah* (musical art performed in groups that accompanies the reading of the Prophet's prayers), food, and clothing from Yemeni culture are widely spread in Indonesia (Husein, 2023). The Alawiyin preachers from Yemen who spread Islam in Indonesia adhered to the Shafi'i school of thought. Therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of Muslims in this country adhere to the Shafi'i school of thought.

The Urgency of Moderate Islamic Education

There are at least three things that confirm Islam as a religion that carries a vision of humanity (al-Daghasyi, 2017b; Misrawi, 2010). First, Islam is a religion that is based on the concept of *fitrah* (innate nature of human beings) and the nobility of human beings. With *fitrah*, humans are ready to know their God and develop their humanity because they have been equipped with potential since birth (Panuntun dkk., 2023; Widiasih & Rachman, 2022). By holding the principle of the nobility of human beings, Islam does not justify actions that harm the nobility. Second, Islam is a religion that has a high spirit of tolerance. Islam calls for the importance of knowing each other and helping each other in goodness and justice/moderation. Islam is moderate, just, and middle-path. This principle should be the foundation for Muslims to build a harmonious life within both intra-religion and inter-religion context in national and global scope. In this way, Muslims as the majority in this country will be able to give hope for the birth of a life that prioritizes dialogue and peace. Third, Islam is a religion that prioritizes public welfare and avoids *mudharat* (harm).

The increasing religious extremism and radicalism, which in al-Daghasyi terms is called *al-tadayyun al-maghsyûsy* (2017a), have triggered the discourse of moderate Islam or religious moderation to become a hot issue among intellectual elites and the wider community. Some are trying to formulate a theological basis underlying the understanding of moderate Islam or the concept of Islamic civil society education (al-Daghasyi, 2017a). At the same time, they criticize religious extremism and radicalism which have raised global concern. This is because religious extremism and radicalism have been proven to have many victims. After all, the movements have triggered various conflicts, acts of terror, and hostility among Muslims and the society. In such a context, the discourse of moderate Islam or religious moderation appears as a counter ideology and an agenda to strengthen the paradigm of *akhlaq* (Islamic ethics) of humanity, namely justice and freedom, which are the main missions of the Islamic message.

The recent warm discussion of moderate Islam or religious moderation is not new. Substantively, the meaning contained in the term moderation (*wasathiyah*) has been accommodated in various similar terms that have long been popular, such as *al-'adl*, *al-i'tidâl*, *al-qisth*, and *al-wazn*, although the term *wasathiyah* is not found in the classical Islamic intellectual treasury (Fuadi dkk., 2024; Mustofa dkk., 2019). Many similar terms in the classical Islamic treasury that accommodate the meaning of *wasathiyah* indicate that moderate understanding and practice are the main characteristics of the Islamic teaching practice among Muslims since the early days, as exemplified by the Prophet Puh, the Companions, the *salaf shâlih* generation, and Muslim reformers from generation to generation. Normatively, the characteristics of Islam are moderate, and historically, moderation is the main current of the Islamic teaching practice among Muslims (Yatim, 2011). Affirming this opinion, al-Daghasyi (2017) emphasizes that one of the main characteristics of Islamic teachings is its support for the values of freedom, justice, and equality among humans, the values of which demand religious moderation.

In facing the socio-political turmoil and dynamics, including religious extremism and radicalism, it is necessary to strengthen the values of moderation that guarantee citizenship rights and cooperation between elements of the society (Ekawati dkk., 2020; Tisnanta dkk., 2024). Therefore, every educational institution is responsible for to the preparation of the next generation based on the paradigm of cultural Islamic education, which is the one based on authenticity/purity and having a moderation strategy (al-Daghasyi, 2017a). This is because this paradigm allows for a peaceful revolution (*al-tsaurah al-silmiyah*) to take place to avoid conflict between extreme and radical camps and secular and liberal camps.

Groups representing pro-caliphate views consider Islamic moderation that rejects the caliphate ideology as a serious threat that shallows the Islamic faith. It is proven that hardline pro-caliphate groups in various corners of the world (Abdul Karim, 1995) are not only being persistent in their efforts but also fighting tooth and nail to establish an "Islamic state" in the region that becomes the center of their movement. Fighting tooth and nail by carrying weapons (*al-jihâd al-qitâlî*) should not aim to establish an Islamic state, but rather to reject or prevent the emergence of war and injustice/oppression (al-Daghasyi, 2017). The reason is that the basic teachings of Islam are peace and tolerance (Ming & Daliman, 2022; Sakti dkk., 2021). For that reason, al-Daghasyi voices the importance of *al-jihâd al-madanî* (peaceful struggle, civic efforts) as a tactical effort to avoid extreme polarization that hijacks Islam and leads to violence (al-Daghasyi, 2017) and narrow fanaticism. According to al-Daghasyi (2017), there is an important educational value from the existence of various schools of thought/camps, namely the urgency of strengthening tolerance towards differences to ward off fanaticism that accuses other groups of being misguided and infidel.

Al-Daghasyi highlights conflict escalation in Yemen, between the supporters of the Houthi group and the government. Conflict escalation in his country was triggered by the politicization of ideological affiliations that received support from “outside” that brought various interests. Here, we do not mean to criticize the differences in religious affiliations, such as Shia and Sunni, which have indeed been part of the long history of the Yemeni nation (Nasution dkk., 2024; Zaim & Eldeen, 2024). However, we need to be critical of the politicization of religious affiliations that encourage violent actions and reactions and that lurk each other to seize hegemonic power one day (al-Daghasyi, 2017). The empirical reality of Yemen, which greatly influences the articulation of al-Daghasyi’s thoughts, can certainly present an “inspirational” experience to be applied within the context of life in the nation. This is because this country is still facing the threat of conflict due to the infiltration of extremism and radicalism.

The emergence of extremism and radicalism has a complex background. The complexity of the problem in the emergence of extremism and radicalism is often intertwined with five potential triggers, namely (1) Islamic teachings that cover all aspects of life so that they can be understood as a whole; (2) natural resources owned by Muslim countries that are widely plundered and exploited; (3) human resources consisting of more than one billion Muslims, who are considered a potential threat by “outsiders” but are also not easily united; (4) inequality in the economic growth among Muslim communities; and (5) dark historical experiences of the past (Jainuri, 2016). Therefore, comprehensive resolution is needed through various educational efforts, coaching, and strengthening of moderate values, as well as consolidation of non-violent and non-absolutist preaching approaches, by both the government and all elements of the society. According to al-Daghasyi (2017a), “all elements of the society need to work together to promote common denominator to realize fellowship and harmony and to moderate differences so as not to trigger conflicts and hostility (Edyar, 2021; Nasution dkk., 2024).” By citing the view of Imam al-Syathibi (d. 1388), al-Daghasyi (2017) states that issues in Islam that cause differences of opinion among Muslims and do not trigger conflict and hostility can be considered religious issues. However, issues that lead to conflicts and hostility among Muslims are not religious issues [but rather issues that are fabricated into religious concerns].

Based on that view, al-Daghasyi emphasizes the deep educational content (*madlâmin tarbawiyyah ‘amîqah*) regarding the need to instill the value of tolerance (*al-taghâfur wa al-tasâmuḥ*) in differences, and this must be a comprehensive-holistic approach in life (*manhaj syâmil lil hayâh*). He even affirms that this value has to be instilled since elementary to higher education institutions. Historically, the basis of tolerance can be traced from the emergence of different concepts in Islamic epistemology, namely *al-Mushawwibah* and *al-Mukhaththiah* (al-Daghasyi, 2017c). The first concept is that truth is plural. Therefore, differences of opinion may be the manifestations of this plural truth. On the other hand, the second concept tends to see that truth is singular. Thus, others are considered wrong. In this context, the first concept becomes a strong historical basis for the actualization of tolerance towards pluralism among Muslims.

The Contextualization of Moderate Islamic Education

In the book entitled *Shûrat al-Akhar fi Falsafat al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah*, al-Daghasyi (2017b) asserts, “Indeed, in the face of Islamic education there is a great responsibility concerning the rights and responsibilities towards ‘other’ groups (Munthe & Andaru, 2024; Thadani & Go, 2021). Thus, Islamic educational institutions, such as *mosques and madrasas*, need to help institutionalize awareness of this responsibility as the fulfillment of citizenship rights and responsibilities.” Along with this assertion, al-Daghasyi also voices the importance of the principle of co-existence and pro-existence (*al-ta’âyusy al-insâni; al-ta’âyusy al-ijtimâ’i*) as the efforts to

realize harmony in diversity. With this assertion, he considers the need to fulfill citizenship rights and responsibilities as the pillars of nationalism that mark religious moderation. In addition, he also notes that the willingness and readiness to live side by side in differences, either within one religion with various existing schools of thought/groups or between religious communities, are the main prerequisites to realizing mutual harmony. Al-Daghasyi's assertion can help explain nationality and religiosity in this country. One reason is that harmonious relationships between religious communities in Indonesia are something unfinished.

Indonesia is neither a secular state nor a theocratic state. Indonesia is a state based on Pancasila. Here, people with different religious affiliations have the following characteristics: Having the freedom to embrace one of the recognized religions, Having the freedom to practice the teachings of their religion, Refraining from spreading religion to those who have embraced a particular religion, Being responsible for promoting and maintaining harmony between various religious groups with a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, for the sake of national unity and the unity of humanity, Recognizing Pancasila as the representation of objective Islam principles and other religions that also find themselves in the formulation of Pancasila (Kuntowijoyo, 2002)

Thus, Pancasila carries the articulation of Islam in the spirit of plural nationality and the common denominator of various existing religions to realize a harmonious life (Strukova, 2024; Utami dkk., 2024). This is what al-Daghasyi (2017b) meant by the concept of *al-qawâsim al-musytarakah* or common denominator which is mutually agreed.

Placed within the framework of Pancasila, religious education is required to have a national vision and be oriented toward national interests. This means that religious education is expected to increase the courage of students to live amidst religious, cultural, and social diversity without feeling threatened by the existence of "others" (Wang, 2021; Zidny dkk., 2021). Religious education, according to al-Daghasyi (2017b), can strengthen the pattern of social co-existence. Religious education should make students aware that differences need to be seen as a gift, instead of providing an alternative to immediately ending these differences such as the ideologization of Islam that leads to efforts to make Islam an alternative ideology to Pancasila.

In line with this responsibility, M. Amin Abdullah (2010) underlines five main tasks of Islamic (religious) education in facing religious diversity, especially in Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI) in this country. Those five main tasks are (1) introducing contemporary issues faced by Muslims, along with efforts to explain classical Islamic teachings, (2) directing the main goal of Islam to solve problems regarding human relations, (3) contextualizing Islam, (4) criticizing religious education that only emphasizes on the cognitive domain, and (5) dedicating Islam to not only the development of individual morality but also public morality. One of the targets of these main tasks is that religious education can provide students with life skills to help overcome various challenges that will be faced throughout their lives amidst the pluralistic society.

Tolerance is considered to be one of the most emphasized character values; tolerance is also part of several of the most important moral values (Shihab, 2016). Thus, the discussion of tolerance can at least have two benefits: (1) clarification, that is clarifying its meaning which is indeed needed to dispel the ambiguity of the concept, and (2) constructive, that is formulating functional insights to form the basis of our perspective and appreciating the insights as a fundamental value in religiosity and education. Appreciation of tolerance as a fundamental value has become part of the history of the nation. This is because Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world, in terms of both religion and culture, which has a long history of managing diversity and has relatively succeeded (Risakota [ed], 2015). This means that Indonesia as a nation has so far positively faced

diversity by displaying tolerant attitudes and behaviors to be able to realize the goal of harmonious living in the society amidst differences.

So far, tolerance has been recognized as one of the important pillars to help establish civil society (Kartanegara, 2007). Therefore, the emergence of intolerant actions in several places in the form of terror, extreme attitudes, and acts of violence in the name of religion, including Ambon, Poso, Cikeusik, Madura, Lampung, Lombok (West Nusa Tenggara), and Tanjung Balai, from a group of people who attacked and burned the property, houses, and places of worship of other groups, need to be handled seriously. Thus, these actions do not spread further and tear apart the society that has lived together in harmony.

Based on that understanding, tolerance is a “wise” attitude in dealing with diversity and differences concerning religion, politics, culture, thought, and other issues. In line with the meaning of tolerance, al-Daghasyi (2017b) regrets the views of some Islamic jurists who do not prevent violent behaviors against “other” groups. As a wise attitude, tolerance can be actualized and improved from passive tolerance to active tolerance and partial tolerance to comprehensive tolerance by leaving extreme-radical attitudes. This wise attitude of tolerance is a concrete realization of the principle of knowing each other and helping each other based on the values of goodness and justice which are one of the main principles in the formulation of the Medina Charter established by the Prophet Muhammad Pbuh (al-Daghasyi, 2017).

One of the important points underlined by M. Abid al-Jabiri (2003) when discussing the topic of tolerance (*al-tasâmuḥ*) is “Justice demands equality, while giving ‘priority’ to others within the framework of equality [amidst differences] is a form of tolerance”. According to him, this kind of tolerance is needed in the broader context of human life, not only in the scope of thought but also in the scope of religion and politics. Giving ‘priority’ (*al-awwaliyyah*) to others amidst differences can be realized by the willingness of the majority group to respect the minority group or the readiness to show the best behavior. The ideal spirit of tolerance includes love, nobility, good behavior toward others, and respect for others (al-Mustiri, 2014). The perfect spirit of tolerance must be realized through the fulfillment of the rights of others, and Islamic educational institutions in this context have the responsibility to actualize awareness of the fulfillment of the rights of others (al-Daghasyi, 2017).

In a nation with a plural society, the spirit of tolerance is considered to have eroded. This is caused by (1) negligence in our struggle to build a country that prioritizes *Ika* (unity) and ignores *Bhinneka* (diversity), and (2) the loss of the spirit of cooperation which is the core of togetherness (Suryohadiprojo, 2014). Moreover, the erosion of the spirit of tolerance is also caused by the infiltration of radical transnational religious movements and ideologies in this country resulting in various conflictual frictions in the society. This has increased the national socio-political tension and even potentially become a serious threat to the stability and integration of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Transnational religious movements and ideologies have successfully infiltrated Indonesia through cross-country networks, based on the concept of “*ummah*” (Muslim community) rather than the concept of the nation-state, and partially adapted modern ideas and instruments (A.S. Ali, 2009).

Quraish Shihab firmly states, “Tolerance is very much needed in life because diversity and differences are inevitable” (Shihab, 2016). If not managed properly, diversity and differences will lead to disaster. Qs. Hūd [11] stated that humans will continue to differ and disagree, except for those who are blessed by Allah, namely those who can manage differences, including being tolerant of other people’s views. From this verse, there are at least two important reasons. First, tolerance is

a prerequisite to differences (*ikhtilâf*) that will not result in disputes (*khilâf*), and second, tolerance is worthy in the sight of Allah because it receives His grace.

Although tolerance is important, its realization must not sacrifice the principles of religious beliefs. In the same way, religious beliefs must not be sacrificed for the sake of tolerance. Under the pretext of tolerance, we must not allow any form of legal violation that can disrupt public order. In this case, Qur'an, suggests at least two things. The first is recognizing differences and diversity as an undeniable reality (*sunnatullâh*). The second is seeking common ground and coexistence (Misrawi, 2010). Based on this perspective, if Islam proves to be a religion that has a high spirit of tolerance. According to Ibn Asyur, as quoted by Misrawi (2010), three things confirm the vision of Islamic humanity. First, Islam is a religion that is based on the concept of *fitrah*. Second, Islam is a religion that has a high spirit of tolerance. Third, Islam is a religion that prioritizes public welfare and avoids *mudharat* (harm).

Education (Islam) is a human's cultural activity. This means that educational activities are carried out only by humans. Educational activities also become the axis of glorifying the dignity of humanity (al-Daghasyî, 2017). Education is expected to play a major role in fostering students' self-awareness regarding "honoring humans" (*takrîm al-insân*) so that they will be able to humanize themselves and others who may have different beliefs, ethnicities, and cultures (al-Daghasyî, 2017). Humanizing oneself and others is one of the basic cores of moral nobility which is a parameter for assessing the best human being. On this basis, the education goal is nothing but humanizing mankind (Bagir, 2019). Education that spreads a culture of hatred towards "others" cannot be justified because this is contrary to Islamic ethics (al-Daghasyî, 2013).

The concept of *knowing self and others*, which was introduced by John Valk (in Sporre & Mannberg [eds], 2010), is interesting to elaborate. This concept requires students to be willing to explore various worldviews and also to reflect on their worldviews to improve their understanding of living in a society that is interrelated. Thus, religious education is expected to be able to develop two attitudes at once, namely having a strong belief in the truth of their religion and respect for the beliefs of others, even being able to communicate well with people of other values (Suseno, 2021). This is where the importance of tolerance be one of the characteristics of a noble human character, which makes us able to accept differences.

Al-Jabiri (2003), realizing the importance of tolerance, considers tolerance as something positive that needs to be strengthened to counter intolerant and radical attitudes and behaviors in the name of religion that have become increasingly widespread lately, including in Indonesia (Sarwono, 2012). The Qur'an affirms diversity and difference as an undeniable reality; therefore, it is needed to appreciate the positive meaning of diversity and difference (al-Jabiri, 1994). Ideally, tolerance recognizes the inherent value of diversity and establishes a moral demand to learn from the existing diversity (Turner, 2011). Tolerance is very much needed in a pluralistic life, at both the individual and societal levels, as an attitude of accepting, respecting, and appreciating diversity (Hjerm, et al., 2020). Nevertheless, in its practice, in the relationship between the majority and the minority, the minority groups as the target of tolerance often still consider the majority group to be not completely sincere in implementing tolerance (Verkuyten, et al., 2020).

In the Living Values Education Program (LVEP), tolerance becomes part of the universal values that are included in the education curriculum and instilled through various learning activities (Lovat & Toomey [eds], 2009). Several countries view tolerance as an important 'small virtue' that is proven to be very much needed by society to realize harmonious living in society (Leenders & Veugelers in Zajda & Daun [eds.], 2009; Aspin & Chapman [eds], 2007). In short, besides being instilled through education of value, tolerance is also emphasized in civic and character education,

even in religious education. However, religious extremism and radicalism have always been a serious threat and latent danger to the diversity of people since the early history of Islam until now (al-Jabiri, 2004). Therefore, a main reform is needed in the *ijtihad* (the effort to improve independent reasoning skills by experts to find solutions for matters not explicitly addressed in the Qur'an and Sunnah) that is not limited to discussing trivial issues. Likewise, a fundamental reform is also required in education to address of the crucial issues that need thoughtful responses (al-Daghasyî, 2016; al-Jabiri, 1991).

If tolerance is assessed as both attitude and action, it then can be categorized into basic rules and preference rules. Basic rules are like the rules of the game, while preference rules are the choices of attitudes and actions taken by someone within the framework of basic rules (Apple, 2004). Tolerance introduces basic rules of attitude and action in various aspects of life, such as politics, economics, social issues, and religion. However, with preference rules, people may exhibit varying attitudes and actions depending on the context such as in religion and politics. The readiness to accept differences as a basic rule of tolerance is viewed differently when it comes to political and religious topics.

Based on the claims above, the vision of religious education helps raise intellectual capabilities in the scope of thought and strengthens the principles of justice and equality in the scope of social relations. This vision confirms the views of al-Daghasyî (2017b) and al-Jabiri (1991 & 1994). These scholars voice the importance of (1) criticism of the traditional understanding of *turâts* (heritage in thoughts, culture, and so on), (2) the principle of democracy based on human rights, freedom, and equality, (3) tolerance and moderation, (4) the nobility of human dignity, and (5) coexistence and pro-existence. Through his critical view of traditional understanding, al-Jabiri proposes a hermeneutical approach to studying *turâts* so that the ability to contextualize readings of *turâts* in general and holy books (revelation texts) in particular is needed. In terms of the importance of the principle of democracy, he affirms the urgency of the postulation of universality and the main purpose of sharia as a framework for hermeneutical interpretation of various legal provisions of the revelation text; thus, the legal provisions can adapt in responding to the dynamics of life problems (al-Jabiri, 2004). Meanwhile, through the importance of tolerance and moderation, they remind us of the latent dangers of extremism and radicalism, including in religion, which need to be constantly watched as one of the serious problems among Muslims (al-Daghasyî, 2017b; S.I. Ali, 2007). Therefore religious education activities should carry the mission of developing an inclusive-tolerant attitude or distancing themselves from *al-ifrath* and *al-tafrith* (radicalism and liberalism).

Religious Moderation: The Urgency of Islamic Education Based on *Akhlaq*

Islamic education develops not destroy things. The education needs to be based on *akhlaq* (Islamic ethics) (al-Daghasyî, 2001). This is in line with the main mission of the Islamic message, namely the perfection of noble *akhlaq*. This means that *akhlaq* should be the benchmark for religious piety. Thus, the practice of rituals will have a significant impact on strengthening noble morals. For that reason, it is inappropriate if people only busy themselves carrying out various religious commands, even accompanied by very high *ghîrah* (literally: protective jealousy, terminologically: high spirit). Yet, they are less concerned with the moral-spiritual meaning. Here, religion is only symbolically formally understood as a series of commands and prohibitions and a set of ritual activities that must be carried out with the provisions, conditions, and pillars wrapped in various religious symbols that must be highlighted. On the other hand, the internalization of the substantive matters, the appreciation of moral-ethical goals, and the human values tend to be neglected.

Based on that explanation, it is very reasonable if there is a call to emphasize the importance of implementing the paradigm of *akhlaq* in practicing religion. In this case, al-Daghasyi (2017) mentions the need for educational institutions in the Islamic world to promote Islamic teachings of tolerance, justice, and compassion. Why does the paradigm of *akhlaq* need to be strengthened? This is because so far the paradigm of *fiqh* seems to be more dominant, leading to the perception that the function of religion is somewhat less becomes capable of uniting, harmonizing, and reconciling. Instead, it increases differences and incites disputes within and between religious relations. Noble *akhlaq* will certainly not be realized by themselves, but it requires proper understanding, continuous practice, positive context, and accurate and effective coaching efforts.

Theoretically, *akhlaq* includes moral character and moral behavior. Therefore, even though humans are born in a condition of "*fitrah*" (innate nature of human beings), to grow and have good ethics, they still need guidance and education. Without both, they will grow up deviating from their *fitrah*. This is because the positive potential in *fitrah* needs to be continuously and holistically nurtured and guide to ensure it is properly actualized and aligns with noble *akhlaq*. From the perspective of the triadic concept of Jabir al-'Alwani (2008), the development of noble morals needs to be based on the *aqeedah* (creed) of monotheism (theistic paradigm), the spirit of *tazkiyah* (self-purification; moral-spiritual), and the mission of *'umrân* (welfare; cultural progress). With the *aqeedah* of monotheism, the orientation of value and dedication of life is directed towards Allah SWT. With the spirit of *tazkiyah*, all steps taken must be meaningful for self-purification and moral improvement, and with the *umrân* mission, everyone carries out the mandate to improve the quality of life in the society and build a better civilization.

Forming noble *akhlaq* requires an educational pattern with the paradigm of *akhlaq*, which in al-Daghasyi's terms (2017b) is called *al-Tarbiyah al-Hadlariyah fi al-Islam*. Philosophically, the paradigm of *akhlaq* has characteristics that include (1) plural truth, (2) leaving *fiqh* for the sake of fellowship, (3) *ikhtilâf* (differences) as an opportunity for convenience, and (4) piety measured by *akhlaq* (Rakhmat, 2007). Regarding the first characteristics, in many ways, the Prophet Puh gave examples so that we can appreciate the diversity of opinions and teaches us not to easily view problems in a simplistic black-and-white or right-wrong manner.

The second characteristic is leaving *fiqh* for fellowship. According to Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855), reading the *basmalah* needs to be louder. However, his companions chose to soften the *basmalah* when it was read in Medina because the people of Medina opposed people who read the *basmalah* louder. For that reason, Ibn Taimiyah in Rakhmat (2007), said, "People should leave the opinions they like for the sake of maintaining fellowship among people. The *maslahat* (benefit/goodness) that occurs because of the connection of hearts in religion is greater than the benefit of practicing this kind of *fiqh* understanding."

The third characteristic is *ikhtilâf* as an opportunity for convenience. Many arguments support this concept, including the Prophet's words, "Differences among my people are a blessing". The value of the blessing lies in the existence of choice and leniency, even in the possibility of *talfiq* (adhering to various opinions in a "mixed" manner). With this understanding, *ikhtilâf* is only a difference that will not cause disputes (*khilâf*). The value of grace in differences (*ikhtilâf*) indicates the importance of wise attitudes manifested in open-mindedness and tolerance towards differences. This is a real actualization of a commendable attitude and as a reflection of noble character.

The fourth characteristic is piety measured by *akhlaq*. *Akidah* (creed) and ritual (*'ibādah*/worship) are fundamental in practicing religion. However, the truth of a person's creed and ritual is determined by how much moral impact is caused. The reason is that people's creed and worship will be worthless if they become cunning, arrogant, and egoistic. Here, the creed and

worship that are carried out have not been able to produce honesty, humility, and social concern. In other words, creed and worship must lead to the goodness of a person's morals, namely the development of characters and moral behavior. This is what is meant by "religion is *mu'āmalāt* (transactions or dealings with others)". Islam is tolerant, just-moderate, and humanist (al-Daghasyi, 2017). Religious piety must have a social dimension as the core meaning of *akhlaq*. When piety is assessed from *akhlaq*, the benchmark used is more universal and humanist. It is said to be more universal considering that *akhlaq* is a form of virtue that everyone can accept, not limited to a particular school of thought or group of religious adherents.

CONCLUSION

The rising threat of religious extremism and radicalism as the manifestation of *al-tadayyun al maghsyûsy* (the misguided religiosity), has ignited discussions around moderate Islam or religious moderation, making it a crucial topic among intellectual elites and the society. Some individuals are developing a theological foundation that underpins the comprehension of moderate Islam or the notion of Islamic civil education. According to al-Daghasyi, the real endeavor does not involve weapon confrontations (*al-jihâd al-qitâli*) but is fundamentally about preventing warfare and injustice through peaceful means (*al-jihâd al-madani*). This approach is a strategic measure to avert extreme polarization that distorts Islam and fosters narrow-minded fanaticism and violent incidents. Promoting tolerance for diverse perspectives is crucial to countering fanaticism that labels other groups as infidels. Al-Daghasyi emphasizes that the root causes of conflict and animosity are not inherently religious, but are issues misrepresented as religious concerns.

The ideal spirit of tolerance must be realized through the fulfillment of the rights of others and the obligations of citizenship. Islamic educational institutions are responsible for actualizing awareness of the fulfillment of the rights of others and the obligations of citizenship to create harmony in living side by side amidst differences and diversity. Al-Daghasyi agrees that education has a major role in fostering self-awareness of students in honoring humans (*takrîm al-insân*). Thus, in the future, they will be able to humanize themselves and others who have different beliefs, ethnicities, and cultures.

Islamic education is an educational approach aimed at building instead of destroying; therefore, it needs to be based on *akhlaq*. In this context, moderate Islamic education is an education approach based on *akhlaq* that promotes the teachings of tolerance, justice, and compassion amid diversity. When education is based on moderate Islam, it will play an important role in fortifying oneself from deviant, extreme, and transgressive attitudes and behaviors, namely *al-ifrath and al-tafrith* (radicalism and liberalism), to shape moderate, inclusive, and tolerant students in this country. This will ultimately create a harmonious life in the society. Such an Islamic education paradigm is needed to enhance the wisdom of moderation and global awareness of students so that later, they will be able to play a role in maintaining diversity and utilizing it to achieve *maslahat* (goodness) while living side by side within the society.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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