Inclusive Islamic Education in the Framework of Inter-Religious Harmony: A Study of Mohammad Talbi's Thoughts

Abdul Gaffar
Institut Agama Islam Al-Khairat Pamekasan Madura
masgaffar@alkhairat.ac.id

Riza Zahriyal Falah[1]
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus
rizazahriya@gmail.com

Zainuddin Syarif
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Madura
doktorzainuddinsyarif@gmail.com

Abstrak

The purpose of writing this article is to present a concept of inclusive Islamic education by showing Muslim and Christian relations in the spectrum: "A Common Word" which has a connotative meaning that everything is equal, balanced, and level. Using the study method can reveal the results of the study on the thoughts of Mohammad Talbi. First, it touches on the range of modern Islamic issues and religious issues in general in the context of intra-Islamic relations and the relationship between Islam and other religions, particularly the relationship between Muslims and Christians. Second, building a paradigm of peace among adherents of the "Ibrahim faith" and building awareness that we and followers of other religions are one big family, namely the Ibrahim family (Millah Ibrahim) who can create a world of peace and harmony in diversity. The third ideas of Mohammad Talbi as an instrument in the process of understanding or constructing the historical-sociological-humanist perspective approach. The fourth is the relevance of the Islamic education model.

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[1] Correspondent Author

A. Introduction

Religious communities have their way of expressing their religion. This method is usually obtained from the process of interpreting the authority of religious teachings. In this context, it is "prone" for truth claims to occur *(Thurth Claim),* who thinks he is right. Many phenomena are found in the reality of religious life, in the form of a passionate "religious" spirit that is not accompanied by an attitude of not paying attention to the situation and conditions of religious expression. Of course, this is not a phenomenon that is independent of the others. The construction of this understanding is caused by the legacy of religion which is the authority of religious leaders, even worse, the authority is "without criticism" from followers of religion.

The Indonesian nation always shows various spectacles of social conflict as a result of the gap in views, understandings, and beliefs. History records starting from the massacre of followers of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1998, the massacre of ethnic Chinese in Jakarta in 1998, the war between Muslims and Christians in North Maluku in 1999-2003, the ethnic war between the Dayak and Madurese in 2000. (Tilaar 2004:53). Even recently, similar conflicts have often colored the lives of Indonesian people, such as the Sunni-Shia riots in Sampang Madura on August 28 2012, the expulsion of Ahmadiyah members in Lombok, and the emergence of issues of radicalism and religious fundamentalism. (Azra 1999:91). Radicalism is a movement with a tradition of fundamental understanding of socio-religious interpretations (mazhab) that make Islam a religion and ideology so that it develops not only theological doctrines but ideological doctrines.

This shows that religion is a transnational phenomenon that is like two sides of a coin that has the potential to create harmony and conflict (Henderson 1998). Ghirah (sentimen) religion so easily resonates into a force that spreads to all corners of the earth with an immeasurable magnitude. Hassan Hanafi, reminded us that the issue of violence is often used as an instrument to bring down other parties as well as efforts to defend the truth (Hanafi 2001:34). In fact, religion does not teach humans to commit violence in the name of religion. The erroneous interpretation of the implementation of religious values eventually creates new conflicts, although on the one hand it also creates new benefits.

Andrew Sullivan as quoted by Jack Nelson-Pallmayer in the book "Is Religion Killing Us?; uncovering the roots of violence in the Bible and the Qur'an"(Pallmayer 2007), depicts religion as being used to carry out extreme repression, even through terror and acts of violence,

which does not only happen to certain religions. The existence of an element of repression in a religion can be traced through history. For example, Christianity has a worse history with the Crusades, Inquisition, and religious wars covered in blood during the 16th-17th centuries which also indicates, that Europe seems to have shed more blood for religious purposes than has ever happened in the Islamic world.

Responding to tensions between religions, especially Muslims and Christians, requires dialogue in the form of regional, national and international seminars, such as the emergence of the "A Common Word" model discourse which is a resistance to Pope Benedict XVI's statement in his "Great Oration". (Lecture of the Holy Father) on 12 September 2006 entitled "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections" in the Magna Hall of the University of Regensburg Germany (Sirry 2003:17-61). Pope Benedict XVI's scientific oration aroused the anger of Muslims in various Muslim countries, the cause of which was one of the statements of the oration which was considered insulting to the Prophet Muhammad. and Islam, namely:

Just show me one new thing what Muhammad brought and you will not find it except evil (devil) and cruel (inhuman) things, for example, his command to spread his religion (Islam) by the sword (Esposito 2010:188).

One of the reactions that later developed into a historic discourse was an open letter dated October 13, 2006 from 38 Muslim religious and intellectual leaders from around the world addressed to Pope Benedict XVI. (Anon n.d.). The letter, which was initiated by the institution "The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought" which is an institution under the guidance of the highest ruler of Jordan, King Abdullah II, was later given the title "A Common Word Between Us and You" ("the sentence sawā' baynanā wa baynakum") (Q.S. Āl Imrān 3: 64). The letter became the embryo of the declaration of 138 Muslim religious leaders and intellectuals who invited all Christians to live in peace and harmony in the differences between "Muslims and Christians" to foster and realize world peace together. Because world peace is very dependent on the harmony of relations between the adherents of these two religions.

The religious leaders and Muslim intellectuals who contributed to the seminar came from Egypt, Syria, Oman, Bosnia, Russia, and Istanbul. General studies of theological issues that are often used as themes include (1) belief in one God (belief in one God), (2) divine revelation/word of God (divine revelation), (3) prayer (prayer), (4) sacred scriptures, and (4) common moral behavior (common ethic)(Anon n.d.).

"A Common Word" was transformed into a series of seminars whose participants came from world religious institutions and university institutions. Muslim religious leaders and

intellectuals who contributed to the seminar came from Egypt, Syria, Oman, Bosnia, Russia, and Istanbul. (Linnan 2010:177). Including Mohamed Talbi put forward an idea that specifically touched on the range of modern Islamic issues and religious issues in general in the context of intra-Islamic relations and the relationship between Islam and other religions, especially the relationship between Muslims and Christians. This research uses a literature review that focuses on the hermeneutic approach. According to Ricoeur, the hermeneutics stage, enters the most complex stage, namely the ontology stage, which explains the nature of understanding, the ontology of understanding through the methodology of interpretation. (Permata 2003:223). But this ontology is not an ontology of understanding directly in itself, but as far as can be reached through ontologies of interpretation of the expressions in which life objectifies itself (texts, documents, manuscripts, and the like).

Muhammad Talbi is the author of many books, some of which have been translated or written in French, such as Un respect têtu (A Stubborn Respect), co-written with philosopher Olivier Clément. Unfortunately, Talbi's two most important essays on Islam from a philosophical perspective, Ummat al-Wasat (Society of moderation) and 'Iyal Allah (Family of God), both written in Arabic to date have not been translated.

The object that became the primary source (main reference) in this study was Mohammad Talbi's work, Islam and Dialogue which was translated from the original book entitled Islam et dialogue: réflexions sur un thème d'actualité which was published by The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, United Kingdom in 1997. The reason for choosing this work among some of Mohammad Talbi's works is because the content of the discussion is more about suggestions for Muslims to be inclusive. Talbi's views were an important part of Islamic religious thought in the latter part of the twentieth century, particularly in his discussions of the relationship between religion, religion and politics, religion and history, and the interpretation of traditional religious texts. Still largely unstudied by modern Islamic students, Talbi's original work on Islamic thought requires analysis of his ideas and methods in historical and intellectual contexts.

B. Result

1. Overview of Mohammad Talbi

Mohamed Talbi is a contemporary Muslim intellectual and historian of North Africa. Born in Tunisia 21 on September 16, 1921. Talbi grew up and went to university in his own country. Talbi memorized the Qur'an, learned to understand the world of Tariqah

al-Qadiriyah in his extended family, and studied Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir al-Baidawy and al-Jalalayn (Kurzman 2003:250). All that he received in childhood (Griffiths n.d.:145). Furthermore, Talbi also studied Arabic education at the University of Tunisia and dedicated his knowledge as a teacher at a madrasa in his homeland.

Mohammad Talbi began studying history, then left for Paris to take part in the postgraduate doctoral program at Sorbonne University concentrating on North African history, until finally, Talbi became an expert (specialist) in this field. Talbi admits that Paris is a country that has great concern for intellectual development and civilization, especially in 1947 (Griffiths n.d.:156). Talbi speaks Arabic, French, and English. Talbi also has a deep understanding of the history of North Africa (dissertation research). After that successively, Talbi poured his brilliant ideas, Talbi wrote various scientific works, including:

Political History of the Aghlabiyah Dynasty (L'Emirat aghlabide: histoire politique 184-296/800-900)

1. *al-Islam wa al-Hiwar* (*Islam et dialogue: reflexion sur un theme d'actualite/* Islam and Dialogue: Devotional on the Current Theme);

2. *Ta'amulat fi al-Qur'an* (Reflection with the Qur'an);

3. *al-Israr 'ala al-Ihtiram* (The determination to reach glory);

4. *Plaidoyer pour Islam Modern* (Defense for Modern Islam);

5. *'Iyal Allah Afkar Jadidah fi 'Alaqah al-Muslim bi Nafsihi wa bi al-Akharin* (The families of God: contemporary thinking about the relationship of Muslims with Muslims themselves and Muslims with followers of other faiths);

6. *Ummat al-Wasat/ Community of Moderation* (Middle Ages);

7. Write various articles including (1) *Religious Liberty: A Muslim Perspective, in* Leonard Swindler (ed.), (2) *A Record of Failure: Islam and Democracy in the Middle East, in* Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner and Daniel Brumberg (ed.), (3) *"Religious Liberty,"* in *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook,* Charles Kurzman (ed), (4) *A Muslim Experience of Prayer,* (5) *A Community of Communities: the right to be different - the path of harmony,* (6) *Abraham's faith and Islamic faith,* (7) *Islam in the West: beyond confrontation, ambiguities and complexes,* and others;

8. *Liyatmainna Qalbi* (For Peace of My Heart) contains his critique of 'Abd al-Majid al-Sharafy and Muhammad Arkoun about Arab civilization and inter-religious relations (Marquand, D. 2000:55).

2. Mohamed Talbi's frame of mind

a. Inclusive discourse in the Islamic spectrum

Islam teaches that there is no one particular system for all mankind. Allah sent a Prophet for each community, and there was a different Prophet for different communities. Allah reveals His Message in every part of the world and makes no distinction between prophets (Al-Qur'an 22: 67; 2: 285). Having faith in all the Prophets is a fundamental belief in Islam (Al-Qur'an 4: 136; 4: 164). Islam recommends that if anyone does not believe in God and His prophets and discriminates against God's prophets, then he will deserve a humiliating punishment (Qur'an 4:150-151). Islam considers itself a continuation of all the religions that were revealed before. For example, Noah is called a person who surrenders (Muslim) (Al-Qur'an 10:72). Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) is also referred to as a Muslim in the Qur'an (Al-Qur'an 3: 67). Thus, Islam accepts all the previous Prophets as the Prophets of Islam.

As a modern North African Muslim intellectual, Mohamed Talbi is not a man who easily accepts the circumstances faced by Muslims in his time. As a Muslim, Talbi has a firm and deep belief in the truth of the Qur'an. Talbi says:

> Reforms are carried out by reading the Qur'an and Sunnah alternatively, namely with a living perspective and not with a dead perspective. This is done by always asking the question: "Lord, what are you telling me right now?" for me, He asked me to do good. For philosophers like Luc Ferry (author of the book Man-God), that is what his conscience tells him. That's also my conscience. However, Luc Ferry's consciousness is only philosophy. Meanwhile, I was illuminated by a light that I considered divine. Without a doubt, it is my conscience that tells me, a consciousness in which there is divine light. And I am completely free of my conscience(Talbi 1997:82).

The depth of his spirituality and intellect also plays a role in determining his personality as a rare intellectual with a clear identity, conveying ideas of renewal openly to build a balance between grounded beliefs in the recesses of life and the world of modernity. The openness of the dialog as a tool for conversion or as a means for

resolution. This not only prevents dialogue but also causes participants to approach each other in disbelief. Dialogue can only be possible if the participants are open-minded (Talbi 1997:103). All believers should not try to convert one another. Both Muslims and Christians should learn about each other's religion as much as possible (Talbi 1997:104).

In Talbi's view, humans are naturally divided and diverse, including in their thinking models. Differences (ikhtilaf) are part of human nature given by God (Talbi 1996:67). Within Islam itself there are various schools of thought, religious understandings, and different tendencies of thought. This expression is a sunnatullah that has occurred even since the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

This difference, apart from giving rise to good wisdom because it is a form of God's grace, also creates problems. Problems arise when individuals, groups, or religions reject the thoughts of other groups that are not in line with them (Talbi 1996:83). From here, conflicts emerged, and even physical wars were involved. The problem becomes even more complicated when the friction that occurs has involved people of other religions. In the end, the problem of differences in beliefs and thoughts will cause horizontal conflicts and lead to condescending attitudes towards others whose beliefs and thoughts do not match them (Mohamed Talbi 1985:99–113).

Everything described above, becomes a heavy burden for Talbi, because in his view humans are basically pluralists (al-ta'adudi). The tendency to see himself as the "true one" is actually contrary to human nature itself. Talbi's solution for all this is that Muslims, both within their religion and between their religions and other religions, should always try to awaken the instinctive value of pluralism (al-ta'adudiyah) and use it as a basis for inculcating mutual respect (al-ihtiram al-mutabadil) (Nettler 2000:131). Talbi guarantees that the diversity of religious opinions, which are natural and supported by God, will lead to an attitude of mutual respect, to live in peace and harmony in diversity. All religions need to go through this process, and serious attention is needed, especially on the political-religious struggle in Islam and the relations between the three divine religions/Abrahamic religions (Talbi 1995:57). In this case, Talbi said that Islam naturally shows an ethos of tolerance and respect, of course, based on differences in religious views is a natural human character (Griffiths n.d.:176).

According to Talbi, regarding the importance of building a peace agreement between adherents of the Abrahamic religion, all believers are one big family (God's family) and this is the ultimate goal of writing Talbi's book entitled, 'Iyal Allah: Afkar

Jadidah fi 'Alaqat al-Muslim bi Nafsihi wa bi al-Akharin that the importance of inter-religious dialogue, especially between Muslims, Christians, and Jews as an effort to create peace in the form of grounding a complete understanding of religious values and maintaining the stability of unity among religious adherents in living their lives. (Talbi 1992:61). Dialogue according to the Islamic perspective is a sunnah of the sunnah prescribed by Him. In various verses of the Qur'an, Allah invites Muslims to always seek dialogue with followers of other religions to achieve the common good (Talbi 1992). In the article written by Talbi as quoted by Griffiths in the work Talbi Islam and Dialogue says:

Certainly! In essence, dialogue becomes an uninterested and Truthless cooperation. In such a frank, relaxed and peaceful atmosphere, everyone without exception can engage in dialogue and reap the benefits. Let's fantasize about this: if the dialogue is not mutually beneficial for all parties, it will not happen at all or will not progress anywhere (Griffiths n.d.:167).

Talbi also has a view of global ethics (al-akhlaqiyyah al-shamilah) as a minimal basic agreement relating to binding values, irrevocable standards, and moral attitudes, which can be affirmed by all religions, even non-religious ones (Talbi 1992). Global ethics teaches that peace among the world's religions will not be created without diplomatic dialogue and cooperation between religions or civilizations with an open mind and tolerance (John Cooper 2002:158).

According to Talbi, Allah loves all His creatures and loves goodness, guidance, and happiness, all of which should also be implemented by His creatures. Although there are differences between Muslims themselves and the people of the book who are conservative, radical (al-tatarruf), and do not accept agreements or negotiations, all of these can be brought together in the same understanding, namely both believing in Allah and believing in a day end (Mohammed Talbi 1985). The basic concept of loving kindness and loving others who are different should be the language of unity for existing religions, prioritizing dialogue and honesty in them.

In Talbi's view, the message of Islam is to convey trust and commitment to promises. Before accepting the mandate as caliph, humans are creatures who are free to make their choices. This is where religion is present to help humans fulfill this task. Allah's religion is one with many different languages brought by His messengers, namely the message of one unity of faith (wahdat al-iman). Faith implies submission to Him and commitment to promises (Talbi 1992:67). The difference in sharia itself is a

phenomenon. The different ages from time to time throughout the history of the journey of the Prophets and Apostles opened up space for sharing in religious life. The concept of sharing space is a must by making difference as the main foundation and accepting that diversity. The main key is to love Allah and avoid division, love justice and fight injustice, and hold on to the belief that human life is not only limited to the world, but more importantly other goals after the life of the world that every human being will go through.

b. Dialogue as epistemology Mohammad Talbi

Talbi is here to provide enlightenment through a hermeneutical approach to al-Qur'an thinking which is divided into reading history and humanity (historical-humanistic al-Qira'ah al-Tarikhiyyah al-Insaniyyah) and a history-based approach and the goals of lawmakers or basic messages from a text (Intentional al-Qira'ah al-Maqasidiyyah)(Solichin 2015:229; Talbi 1992).

In the article For Dialogue Between All Religions, Mohammad Talbi questions the future of the Muslim Ummah, especially the fate of Islamic civilization given the strong grip and domination of rigid traditional orthodox interpretations on modern-day issues (Talbi 1998:171–99). Talbi is of the view that modern-day Muslims need a flexible interpretation and are open to reform (Griffiths n.d.:155). Through the al-Maqasidiyyah-al-Insaniyyah approach (a combination of two Talbi-style approaches) Talbi tries to build a linkage between epistemological-hermeneutical, finding the foundation, work ethic, and philosophical framework of the classical period al-Qur'an history to adapt its meaning to the present context. Talbi's al-Maqasidiyyah-al-Insaniyyah approach, according to him, goes beyond the analogical way of working (qiyas) in understanding the Qur'an (Solichin 2015:234).

Talbi's offer of contemporary Islam and inter-religious relations through the key concepts of al-Qur'an hermeneutic thought covers the following fields of study: (1) reading based on humanistic history (al-Qira'ah al-Tarikhiyyah al-Insaniyyah/ the historical human reading), (2) Intentional-based reading (al-Qira'ah al-Maqasidiyyah/ the intentional reading of the sacred text) in understanding the verses of the Qur'an (Solichin 2015:236).

Various meetings in inter-religious dialogue. The most intellectually challenging work that specifically touches on the reach of modern Islamic issues and religious issues in general in the context of the relationship between Muslims and the relationship between Islam and other religions, especially the Muslim-Christian

relationship, is one of them outlined in the article Christianity and Islam. : Strunggle Dialogue, a concept that is an instrument in the process of understanding or constructing a historical-sociological-humanist perspective approach. Talbi's contemporary model of approach and type of methodology to address Christians, including people of other religions, is the same as the concept of 'Ibad Allah (servants of Allah or His worshipers) (Griffiths n.d.:169).

3. **Inclusive Islamic education curriculum**

Alex R. Rodger said as quoted by Sumartana, that religious education is an integral part of education in general and serves to foster the understanding needed for people of different faiths, as well as to strengthen the orthodoxy of human faith. (Sumartana 2001:61).

In this context, inclusive Islamic education as a medium to raise awareness among the people needs to build an inclusive theology for the harmonization of SARA. The role and function of inclusive Islamic education are to increase the diversity of students with their own religious beliefs and to provide the possibility of openness to study and question other religions to foster an attitude of tolerance. (Sealy 1985:43–44).

Mohammad Talbi "to say at least it seems that Islamic civilization was undervalued.... (and) little has changed since then". The education and learning process in Islam and the West requires a path to be chosen for a better understanding between Islam and the West, and Christianity in particular (Talbi 1997:75). Studying the thoughts of Mohammad Talbi, a formulation called "interfaith education" was found. There is conformity with the philosophical foundation that is built on a strong foundation, both in terms of epistemology, and human concepts by referring to monotheism (Rakhmat 1995:34). Mohammad Talbi, in the article Christianity and Islam: The Struggle Dialog as reviewed by Griffiths is to promote awareness of polite dialogue for students which will be a prerequisite for the development of the concept of inclusive theology which is a challenge that must be implemented in every religious life. Because refusing plurality will endanger the creation of peace that is desired by all parties (Griffiths n.d.:174–76).

Mohammad Talbi's thinking can provide internalization of spiritual values that can provide spiritual enlightenment, namely enlightenment that leads to intimacy, love, courage, escapism, and drunkenness in the Khaliq (Allah) (Talbi 1988:163). Understanding the concept of inclusive theological education according to Mohammad Talbi is a process of internalizing theological awareness for every student at school to know

the nature of the sacred (fitrah) that has been embedded in the heart of every human being (Talbi 1997:76). Borrowing Kontowijoyo's term, Islam forms the deepest structure which is the foundation strength of the surface aspects of Islam, such as fasting, prayer, hajj, morals/ethics, and all everyday human behavior. This surface aspect of Islam will be meaningless if it is not supported by the power of theology (Kuntowijoyo 2005:36).

In the context of education, *"A Common Word Between Us and You" ("the* sentence *sawā' baynanā wa baynakum")* Besides being able to be used as the basis for and recognition of pluralism in life and multiculturalism, it is also a form of manifesto of a movement that encourages plurality and diversity as the core principle of life and confirms the view that all multicultural groups are treated equally and with equal dignity. Kalimatun sawa' is an inclusive call to monotheism, so that religious people and all cultures that surround them can move from focusing on the "self" to the "Holy One" to eliminate existing differences and foster coexistence. This sentence comes from the Qur'an Surah Ali Imran verse 64 which has the translation "Say: O all adherents of religion (and culture) hurry to multicultural dialogue and encounter (*kalimatun sawa'*) between we and you."

Based on the ideas of Mohammad Talbbi above, it reflects on some of the building of inclusive Islamic curricula in schools. First, the inclusive theology curriculum has the character of a general educational institution characterized by character religious education. That is, in addition to highlighting their education with mastery of science, the religious character also becomes an integral part and must be mastered and become part of students' daily lives.

Second, the inclusive theology curriculum also has the character of plurality-based education. This means that the education given to students does not create a single understanding, including an understanding of the reality of religion. Awareness of pluralism is a necessity that must be realized by every student.

Third; The inclusive Islamic curriculum has the character of an educational institution that revives the democratic system in education. An education system that gives students the freedom to express their opinions responsibly (Solikhah 2021). The school facilitates the existence of a democratic pulpit, by providing opportunities for all students to speak or criticize about anything, as long as they are responsible.

Marwah inclusive theology is an initiation that was born from the historical reality of education, especially in Indonesia which is considered a failure in building the image of humanity. Naturally, Amin Abdullah suggested the need for the reconstruction of socio-

religious education to strengthen the dimension of the socio-religious contract in religious education. (Abdullah 2005:67). Collaboratively, all elements of religious communities must have the same vision and mission to rebuild human civilization. Namely, building Indonesian society by improving the quality of an enlightened life. Because only through the realization of such people's quality of life, national development will succeed. Empirically, the reality of religious communities is not a destiny that cannot be changed, but it needs reform.

C. Conclusion

From some of the descriptions above, it can be found several important ideas of Mohamad Talbi were present in the context of providing enlightenment in religious synthesis through a dialogue approach. Inter-religious dialogue is a communication space between religious adherents that must continue to be nurtured, nurtured, and maintained to create a harmonious religious life. Following the orientation of "A Common Word" or "*Kalimatun sawa*" which aims to acknowledge differences and find common ground utilizing the texts of the two holy books on the same theme being read and understood together from their respective perspectives, without pretending to seek the truth. theological of the meaning it contains. The importance of awareness of inner dialogue (faith) between students by trying new understandings about how God has a way of 'rescue'. Students are required not to create a single understanding, but education that can support the process of students becoming democratic, pluralistic human beings and emphasizing the appreciation of life and reflection to become a complete human being (insan al-kamil). Required Religious teaching curriculum covers subjects such as tolerance, Inclusive Aqeedah, Fiqh Muqarran, and comparative religion as well as themes on ethnocultural and religious differences: dangers of discrimination: conflict resolution and mediation: human rights; democracy and plurality; universal humanity and other relevant subjects.

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