Identification of Multicultural Education Based on Sufistic Insights

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ABSTRACT

*This study aims to find and explain the philosophical basis of sufistic to identify multiculturalism education. The research was conducted with a literature study with critical discourse analysis and philosophical on the primary literature studied and analyzed to identify multiculturalism education sourced on sufistic insights. The result is the foundation of sufistic insight is based on three essential paradigms, namely, first, the principled sufistic basis that all human beings are *tajallī* of *asmā Allah*, so there is a bond that unite them in diversity, namely the potential of *asmā Allah* that exists in human as a part of the *fitrah* of creation. Second, although it appears in diversity on the *shari'a* dimension (exotherric), every religion has similarities to its transcendent dimension (esoteric) because it is sourced from the same God. This similarity is the meeting point in the diversity of religious people so that it can be a connecting rope in building harmonious intersubjective religion. Third, human equality refers to its ontological status unity of biological origin, not by other attributes, including their beliefs and religion. Therefore, religious differences cannot be used as an excuse to demean people's honor and dignity of humanity.*

Keywords: multicultural education, sufistics, and Islam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian society is a religious society, so multicultural education—especially in Indonesia—needs religious support to create a harmonious multicultural society. Spirituality is a cultural asset that should be seen as an essential educational process (Christine J Yeh, Noah E Borrero, and Munyi Shea, 2018). In this context, the model of religious-based multicultural education becomes an inevitability.

According to Suyatno, the integration of pluralism and multiculturalism values in Islamic Education tends to be ignored and still far from expectations. It can be observed from the content of the curriculum, approaches, and methods applied by teachers in Islamic Education that tend to be textual-literal. These approaches and methods run parallel to the pattern of religious understanding of teachers. However, in practice, the pattern of understanding of Islamic Education teachers is signaled to have exclusive tendencies. It is the root of neglect of pluralism and multiculturalism values in the Islamic Education system (Suyatno, 2013).

Among Muslims, the idea to realize the multicultural Islamic Education model began to be developed in recent years (Ahmad Arif, 2012), including providing a theological foothold for the values of multicultural education (Zakiyuddin Baidhaw, 2012). However, the Islamic Education

model applied so far is considered less responsive in addressing the reality of multicultural Indonesian society, its normative-doctrinal approach and dominated by fiqh oriented (Imam Hanafi, 2012). On this basis, multicultural Islamic Education is considered a solution in instilling inclusive and tolerant religious awareness. In response to these demands, the Indonesian Association of Islamic Education Teachers (AGPAII) has drawn up guidelines for integrating multicultural values in Islamic Religious Education (Hanafi, 2012).

However, because the concept of multiculturalism was born from the western world (Geng, 2013), not a few of the Muslims viewed it with suspicion. Multiculturalism is seen as having a very close relationship with religious pluralism, leading to religious relativism (Nashruddin Syarief, 2014). As a western-born concept, multiculturalism and the concept of pluralism that was first popularized received various Muslim responses. Several critical accounts of multiculturalism are set out—among others (as a sample)—in Nasip Mustafa (Dody S. Truna, 2010).

First, multiculturalism has various definitions, from mere recognition of multicultural reality to understanding that reflects truth and religious relativism. According to Nasip Mustafa, multiculturalism is a continuation of understanding inclusionism and religious pluralism (Fatwa MUI No. 7/MUNAS VII/MUI/II/2005). Suppose in the concept of inclusionism, the integrity of particular religions is still maintained despite the recognition of truth in others. In that case, multiculturalism in this sense goes even further: allowing sharing religion with others. This idea contained religious syncretism, even not impossible, gave rise to a new religion called multiculturalism.

Second, the concept of multiculturalism seated Islam as the same religion and equal to other religions. In contrast, Islam as a religion (al-dīn) is different from the religions that exist in this world. Islam is the only religion of revelation until now, its authenticity is maintained. Third, in the understanding of multiculturalism, truth claims should no longer be resonated. They assume that the claim of truth is the culmination of an egocentrism spirit, ethnocentrism, and chauvinism. The claim of truth to this understanding is accused of the psychological disorder called narcissism (pride and self-respect). According to the founders of multicultural education, this claim will generate friction in society and create conflict. Islam should not claim to be the only true religion in the sight of God because it would be to injure the spirit of tolerance in the frame of multiculturalism. Fourth, multicultural education in the realm of religion should be suspected to be a tactical agenda to smooth the colonization of secular-liberal values in the globalization era.

Although the opinion above is debatable, it shows that multiculturalism still presents a challenge among Muslims (William Kilpatrick, 2016). Religious perspectives among Muslims are the biggest challenge in applying multicultural education, and this challenge is more due to its philosophical basis, namely multiculturalism. In essence, Muslims have always appreciated differences and uphold human equality, regardless of cultural attributes. Thus, differences in ethnicity, race, language, skin color, social status, gender, and other cultural attributes are equal in Muslim beliefs. However, when it comes to differences in faith, creed, or belief, Muslims—for the most part—will view adherents of other religions in a position that is not equal.

There is no denying that in the practice of religious education (both Islamic and other religions), there is an interest in strengthening the learner's belief in the teachings of religion that they adhere to as a single truth. Even if not expressly explained, the consequences—learners conclude that the teachings of other religions deviate from the truth. This belief is realized or not, will imply behaving towards different religions with them. So there is psychological ambivalence in interacting with people of different faiths. On the one hand, they are viewed as culturally equal, but on the other hand, viewed as theologically inferior.

Multicultural education developed in Islamic Education (PAI) will be stuck in such ambivalence as long as the approach used is still a normative-doctrinal approach that fiqh oriented. Regardless of religion, the concept of human equality is always suspected of threatening the creed and leading to religious relativism. It is seen—among other things—in the Association of Indonesian Islamic Education Teachers (AGPAII) attitude, which warns against integrating multicultural educational values in PAI learning, will shallow the learner's creed. To avoid this, AGPAII advises against linking the issue of multiculturalism to the creed. That means multiculturalism is treated as a sociological perspective in interacting with others, and at the same time, retains a theological perspective in an exclusive territory.

This strategy has the potential to create pseudo-multiculturalism, built multiculturalism (more precisely forced) for social, economic, political, and other interests, which can turn into conflict when the bonds of interest are lost. This kind of multiculturalism is merely rhetorical multiculturalism as it happens on several campuses

in Western countries with the slogans that raise issues of equality, but in practice still discriminate against non-white people, as revealed—among other things—from the results of the Dian Square study (Dian Squire, 2017).

Thus, multicultural education cannot be built superficially and instantaneously but requires a substantial reconstruction of the reality of diversity. The worldview of cultural plurality and human honor dignity is the starting point in building multicultural education. Research by Gezer shows a positive correlation between a person's philosophical views (teachers) and their attitude towards multicultural education (Melehat Gezer, 2018).

Critical attitudes towards the worldview of multiculturalism are essential to put forward before adopting the concept of multicultural education that was born. That is because an idea, concept, or thought cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context that gave birth. There is a way of thinking, according to Karl Mannheim, that cannot be adequately understood as long as its social origins are unclear. In this case, the worldview (*weltanschauung*) behind a concept plays a vital methodological role (Karl Mannheim, 1954).

Therefore, to implement multicultural education into Islamic Education, more intense studies are needed, including criticizing the worldview that is perverse (multiculturalism). So the model of multicultural Islamic Education does not merely give theological legitimacy to western secular multiculturalism values with verses of the Qur'an or Hadith. Instead, multicultural Islamic education is based on worldview born from the heritage of Islamic tradition itself.

One of the legacies of Islamic tradition (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1987) that can be used to

look at multicultural issues is sufism. However, the perspective of sufism in understanding religion focuses more on its esoteric dimension, resulting in inclusive religious understanding. That is why, since the beginning, Sufis have had a multicultural perspective, although based on a worldview very different from secular multiculturalism born from the West. Therefore, it is interesting to be observed and elaborated further to give birth to a conception of multiculturalism-sufistic, which can be used as a solution in realizing multicultural Islamic education.

2. METHOD

This study uses library research with a philosophical approach. The method used is the qualitative research method, which results not solely in generalization, but a deep understanding of a problem related to Sufistic multiculturalism education (Sumanto, 1995). Qualitative research methods are used because: first, the variables targeted by research are qualitative; second, the focus of the research is more on subjective thinking; third, the object of research is partly spiritual and transcendental (Anton Beker, 1994).

The data in this study are ideas, thoughts, and concepts contained in the text form. The data collection is done through tracing literature related to sufism, multiculturalism, and education. The literature on sufism focuses on the three main traditions of the most influential sufism thought, namely (1) 'Irfān, Gnosis or Theosophic with Ibn Arabi as the main character; (2) Al-Ḥikmah al-Isyrāqiyyah or Hikmah Sublim, the main character is al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl; (3) al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah pioneered by Mulla Shadra. The primary literature that is referred to in understanding the thoughts of the three traditions is (1) Suhrawardi, al-Ḥikmah al-Isḥrāqiyyah

(Philosophy of Illumination Hikmat Al-Ishraq) editor John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai, (New York: Binghamton University, 1999). The book was translated into English by John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai and printed with the original manuscript in Arabic; (2) Hossein Ziai, "Shihāb Al-Dīn Suhrawardī: Founder of Illuminationist School," in History of Islamic Philosophy, Part I, editors Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); (3) Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna-Suhrawardi-Ibn'Arabi, 3rd ed. (New York: Caravan Book, 1997); (4) Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn Al-'Arabī, Al-Futuḥāt Al-Makkiyyah (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1999), especially Volumes I, III, IV, and V; (5) Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn Al-'Arabī, Fuṣūs Al-Ḥikam (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyy, 1946); (6) William C. Chittick, The Sufi Path of Knowledge Ibn Al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination (New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989); (7) Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Al-Shirazi, Al-Ḥikmah Al-Muta'āliyah Fī Al-Asfār Al-'Aqliyyah Al-Arba'Ah (Beirut: Dār Ihyā wa al-Turāsh al-'Arabī, 1999). This book consists of nine volumes; dan (8) Ibrahim Kailin, Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

The collected data will be analyzed using a philosophical approach. The data analysis procedure follows the Miles and Huberman pattern consisting of three stages (Thomas F Powers, 2002): (1) data reduction. At this stage, the data obtained from the literature is reduced based on themes relevant to the problem. Thus, the stages are: selection of literature and continued with the selection of topics or discourses relevant to the issue studied; (2) data presentation, collected data

shall be presented systematically based on the topics studied; and (3) verification or conclusion drawing to the data presented, by looking for the meeting point, or nuances of differences, logical relationships between the data presented, so that resulting conclusion.

This research data is entirely text, so the method of data analysis used is a qualitative content analysis using models: critical discourse analysis and comparative analysis, first, critical discourse analysis. The discourse referred to in this study is the text that is above the sentence level, focusing the analysis on the message it contains and not on the text itself as is commonly found in quantitative content analysis (Klaus H Krippendorff, 2004). Second, comparative analysis. The comparative pattern used is an asymmetrical model that—in Anton Bakker formulation—begins by describing a view or concept in full. Then, while describing the other views or concepts, they are directly compared to each other (Beker, 1994). This comparative analysis was conducted across the boundaries of significantly different philosophical traditions by both historical and cultural distances, thus finding similarities and differences in both (Ralph Weber, 2013).

3. DISCUSSION

In general, multiculturalism can be interpreted to recognize and respect all diverse groups in a community, recognize and respect their socio-cultural differences, and provide equal opportunities to contribute in an inclusive cultural context that empowers everyone in the community (Caleb Rosado, 1996). The keyword in the concept of multiculturalism is equality in diversity without having to impose uniformity. Every cultural uniqueness is given the same space to express, so

there is no subordination of minority cultures from the majority culture.

One of the foundations and binder of multiculturalism is the standard of equality that refers to Human Rights or rather humanism (James A. Banks, 1995) and the conception of the human as a cultured being. The concept of human existence as a cultured being becomes important in multiculturalism because the problem is individual equality and cultural equality. The standard of value that binds this diversity can give rise to harmony in difference. Each cultural variant has different values, moral and ethical standards born from their respective cultures (Jame Rachel, 2012). Although this humanism becomes a reference to universal values, in some issues related to culture, unavoidable, the intervention of power to provide a standard of shared value in the community, thus the product of multiculturalism is born, that is the public policy to organize diversity in ordinary life. Humanism is the basis of the value of multiculturalism is secular humanism, which is renaissance humanism that tries to free humans from all shackles outside of themselves, including religion. Humanism is based on human independence and has nothing to do with transcendent things.

Suppose the concept of multiculturalism is seen from the point of view of sufism. In that case, the answer to equality in diversity is undoubtedly very different, including human values (humanism). To build a philosophical framework of sufistic multiculturalism, diversity, equality, and humanism must be seen from the worldview of sufism. Therefore, the following section will be presented the view of sufism about human existence that forms sufistic humanism, as well as about diversity (plurality and multiculturality), and

the basis of values that become a reference in building equality..

3.1 Sufistic Humanism The Source of Multiculturalism

Humans, although part of the universe, have the privilege compared to other beings. So it is stated in the Qur'an, Q.S. al-Isrā' (17): 70 which means "And indeed, We have honored the descendants of Adam, and carried them on land and sea, and provided them with good things, and preferred them above many creatures which We have created with excellence."

The human being mentioned in this verse is a human being as a species regardless of race, ethnicity, social status, or even religion. Allah above other creations glorifies all. The privilege of humans have been seen from the beginning of creation, when the angels were commanded to prostrate to Adam as revealed in some verses in the Qur'an, in Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 34 which means, "And (remember) when We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves to Adam." So they prostrated, except the devil. He refused and was arrogant, and he was one of the unbelievers."

In the previous verse, Allah has informed about the status of His creation as Caliph on the earth (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 30), as well as described how Allah Almighty taught al-Asmā (names) and demonstrated it in front of the angels (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 31-33), and as the ending the angels are commanded to prostrate to Adam a.s. This commandment is repeated in the Qur'an with various editorials as a signal of the importance of this issue to be studied.

Some believe that the glory of a human from another being is related to the presence of divine "rūh" in them. It is understood from Q.S.

Ṣād (38): 72, which means, "Then when I have perfected the creation and blown spirit My- (creation) into him, so bow down before him." The command to prostrate in this verse applies after the blowing of the spirit into Adam's body, which means that the spirit is what makes Adam worthy of being glorified. The "rūh" blasphemy of God (My-rūh) in this verse indicates that the spirit is a sacred and holy substance. Even some adherents of the ḥulūl theory assume that the spirit is part of God. However, this view is rejected by most theologians of tafsir (Fakhr al-Rāzī Muḥammad ibn 'Umar, 2005).

In the sufism perspective, human privilege is not seen from the spirit presence but because human is the only being who receives *tajallī asmā'* Allah SWT ideally. At the same time, the universe accepts the *tajallī* partially. Through the sufism logic, it can be understood that the blowing of the spirit into the human (Adam a.s.) is essentially a process of perfecting the divine *tajallī*. Therefore the existential human status ontologically surpasses other beings, including angels. *Asmā'* God *tajallī* on human as His caliph. If he (Adam) does not manifest in the form of Him whom he represents, he will not and is not worthy to be the Caliph (ambassador, successor) of God (Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn Al-'Arabī, 1946). A caliph must have a certain amount of potential that makes him able to play a substitute role than he represents, in this case, God. On this basis, human qualifies as a caliph because, unlike all other beings, human is the perfect container of divinity attribute *tajallī*.

The main attributes of divinity that show its traces in humans are life (al-Hayy), knowledge (al-'Ilm), will (al-*Irādah*), strength (al-Qudrah), and speech/ratio (al-Kalam). Guidance can only be directed to living beings who have knowledge,

choose between objects of knowledge through will, manifest their will through strength, and understand divine words while articulating their situations by ratio. These primary qualities are not possessed on the same level by all humans. The balance between these attributes contributes to human perfection (William C. Chittick, 1994). Although not equal in quality, but all human beings have this divine attribute.

Ibn' Arabi also discussed the doctrine of *fitrah* of humans in this context. Humans, both male and female, can contain all levels of existence and reflection where God contemplates Himself. This fundamental human reality, Arabi said the Universe or Perfect Human (*al-insān as-kāmil*), is potentially contained in every human being but actualized only in the form of prophets and guardians, not only Islam but all religions of revelation (Anne Marieke Schwencke, 2009).

God created humans in the form of all divine names. One interpretation of the verse is that God taught Adam all the names (Q.S. *al-Baqarah* [2]:30). Consequently, humans show the diversity of divinity aspects or infinite "faces" (*wajh*). If all the attributes and activities of humans for the entire human history can be put together in one time and place, then the idea of what implies all those names will be seen. It is precisely this perfection of human that enables every kind of possibility for human, every attribute, and every possible action, whether good or evil, fair or unfair, loving or cruel (William C. Chittick, 1994).

Human as a microcosm has a high status in gradations *wujūd*. Mulla Sadra gives an idea of humans and their relationship with the world of plants and animals. As a manifestation of higher *wujūd*, 'humanity' contains everything that belongs to plant and animal species. Vegetation is the most

crucial difference that plants have. On the other hand, animals have vegetative abilities with several other qualities that are not present in plants, such as mobility and sensation. Meanwhile, humans contain all these qualities besides speech ability, intelligence, and free will, which plants and animals do not possess. To reveal this higher *wujūd* position, Sadra introduced the concept of ontological simplicity (*basīt*). Simplicity indicates a concentrated state of existence in which a substance contains some existential qualities without breaking or slits. Humans contain the totality of plant and animal attributes in a simple way, and as a simple substance dealing with the lower conditions below, humans gain a higher ontological status (Ibrahim Kailin, 2010).

The existence of human who gathers the totality of the attributes of other beings, as exemplified by Sadra above, in Ibn' Arabi's view is due to humans being gathered in them all divine *asmā*. At the same time, plants and animals—in the example above—have only a tiny part of the *asmā*. It is what Ibn' Arabi understood as the trust offered to the sky, the earth, and the mountains, but all refused to accept it (Q.S. *al-Aḥzāb* [33]:72). Thus, the divine *asmā tajallī* in humans correlates with their duty as the Caliph responsible for realizing the divine *asmā* in the world, morality with the moral of God (*takhalluq bi khuluq Allah*) (Shahzad, "Ibn ʿArabī's", 2004).

Thus, the primary orientation of all Islamic teachings is moral nobility in the sense of *takhalluq bi khuluq Allah*. It includes the worship of *maḥwāh*, such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and Hajj, basically boiling down to morality. Direct worship to God, such as prayer and fasting, is intended to give a charge to the potential of divine *asmā* embedded in human to become actual in behavior.

Prayer, for example, is a medium of connection between humans and Allah Almighty. The more connected with the owner al-asmā, the more potent level of tajallī in the adherent allows for takhalluq bi khalq Allah. Thus, God asserts that prayer prevents a person from committing abominations and evil deeds. At this point, it can be seen that shari'a and sufism are inseparable.

If all humans are tajallī of God's asmā, then there is certainly a bond that can unite them in diversity, namely the potential of God's asmā that exists in humans who is part of their fitrah creation (Haidar Bagir, 2019). As revealed by Aqil Siradj, moral equality in humans as the perfect tajallī of God should be a binder that unites all human beings in its diversity or multicultural (Said Aqil Siradj, 2011). From this comes the universal humanism values present in every tradition, culture, and religion, which in Perennialism view is known as al-Ḥikmah al-Khālidah (eternal truth).

3.2 Multiculturality in The View of Sufism

Diversity (plurality and multiculturality) in the view of sufism is not just a product of culture and the natural environment but as a manifestation of the nature of Kamāl (perfection) of God. All forms of maujūd are essentially sourced and dependent on one Absolute Form, namely God. The seemingly diverse phenomenon is simply due to the limitations of the senses and reason to reach out to the unity of the substance behind that diversity (Haidar Bagir, 2019). This ontological unity is the basis of equality in diversity, biological diversity, skin color, posture, ethnicity, race, and non-physical diversity such as thinking, tradition, and beliefs.

Plurality, especially in terms of religion, is also affirmed in Q.S. al-Ma'idah (5): 48, which

means, "... for every nation of you, We have given you clear rules and ways. Had Allah willed, He would have made you a nation, but Allah wants to test you on the bounty He has given you, then competes to do virtue. Therefore, only to Allah, you shall all return, and He will inform you of what you used to differ about."

This verse confirms that religious plurality is part of divine will. There is a test behind it and wisdom for religious adherents to compete in virtue. No less important, there are things that can only be solved in the doomsday by God directly, related to what has been disputed by the religion's adherents. It is a hint that there is a secret of God behind the phenomenon of religious plurality, and that secret will be revealed in the future.

The plurality of religion is described by Ibn 'Arabi concerning the metaphorical view of Imam Junaid al-Baghdādī (d. 910), that "the color of the water matches the color of the cup (laun al-mā' laun inā'ih). By metaphor, this does not mean that Ibn 'Arabi sees all religions as equal, but rather as an affirmation that if water represents the essence of God, then diverse religions are represented by the colors of the container. Color is directly related to the "readiness" of religion to accept specific manifestations of al-Ḥaqq. It means that diversity (including religion) is due to the diversity of the readiness level of the container in receiving tajallī Allah (Media Zainul Bahri, 2012). In terms of religion, the container is related to the adherents, including space and time that surround it. So it can be understood why the shari'a brought by apostles is different from each other. It is because of the different situations and conditions that become the container.

In ibn 'Arabi's view, shari'a is essentially only one before it descends into the tajallī realm.

After descending into the *tajallī* realm, the realm of creation, the *shari'a* was bound by space and time and the context of society, thus giving birth to diversity following the mission and treatise of each apostle (Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn Al-'Arabī, 1999). All *shari'a* are light, and *syari'a* of Muhammad is like the sun among the stars. It hides or covers another *shari'a* as well as sunlight covering the light of the stars. However, that does not mean that the stars have vanished. On the contrary, the stars remain only invisible because the light melts in a more excellent light, sunlight (Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn Al-'Arabī, 1999).

Based on the above view, each religion, although it appears in diversity in the *shari'a* dimension (exotherric), has similarities to its transcendent dimension (esoteric), because it is sourced from the same God, as believed by perennialist such as Frithjof Schoun (1993) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2007). This similarity is the meeting point in the diversity of religious people so that it can be a connecting rope to build harmonious intersubjective religion.

3.3 Equality (Egalitarianism) as the Main Issue of Multiculturalism

Equality or egalitarianism is a significant issue in the concept of multiculturalism. Equality is not only individual equality between one person and another person, humanitarian equality, and cultural equality between one subculture and another subculture in society. Equality relates to social, economic, political, educational, and others related to public life.

The different stratifications in social reality do not indicate neglect of the egalitarianism principle. Egalitarianism does not mean uniformity, but its point of pressure on justice. The discourse on egalitarianism did give rise to several debates and

even criticism among academics. Ronald Dworkin, for example, defines equality as the distribution of 'envy-free' resources (Ronald Dworkin, 1981). So it seems like the issue of equality is only motivated by social jealousy. Philippe Van Parijs delivered another criticism that equality about liberal neutrality requires the state to support lazy and non-disabled homeless people who do not want to work (Elizabeth S. Anderson, 1999). Meanwhile, Richard Arneson claimed that equality requires, under certain circumstances, the state to subsidize costly religious events that adherents say must be performed (Richard J. Amerson, 1997).

In the theory of democratic equality, justice is a matter of obligation that is not determined by the satisfaction of subjective preferences. One's rights do not depend arbitrarily on individuals, and that one cannot claim rights without accepting related obligations to others. Democratic equality applies justice to the human order, not to the natural order. Human is not nature who transforms natural human diversity into an oppressive hierarchy. It places the deficiency of injustice on the social order, not as an innate gift. Democratic equality offers a way to understand and harness human diversity to benefit everyone. Democratic equality understands equality as a relationship between people and not just a pattern in economic distribution and power (Anderson, 1999).

The core idea of democratic equality is that inequality regarding gaining equal opportunity and treatment is acceptable if it comes from a choice made voluntarily, but inequality stemming from the unelected features of personal circumstances is an injustice. Unelected circumstances include social factors such as the class and wealth of the family in which a person

was born and natural factors such as personal original ability and intelligence (Samuel Scheffler, 2003). That means any element of difference born from the natural condition, not a selected, such as gender, skin color, ethnicity, race, body shape (perfect or defective), intelligence, and cultural heritage, cannot be an excuse to treat it unequally.

The concept of equality, viewed from sufism, indeed rests on multiculturalism and plurality. All phenomena seen in reality have a single source, namely al-Ḥaqq. The diversity of *maujūd* is due to the difference in the intensity of divine light or the degree of its proximity to *Nūr al-Anwār* (in Suhrawardi terms) (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1997), or the difference *tajallī asmā'* (in Ibn 'Arabi terms), (Abū al-A'lā al-'Afīfī) or the diversity of *māhiyah* from a single form (in Mulla Sadra terms) (Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Al-Shirazi, Al, 1995). Thus, the human who is the complete figure of the reflection of al-Ḥaqq (Ibn Al-'Arabī, 1999) is substantially equal in terms of humanity, although diverse from aspects: ethnicity, race, religion, social status, skin color, posture, intelligence, and other attributes. Sufistic perception of the world as a reflection of God allows respect for human and human rights. Based on this logic, the worldview of sufism supports the protection of human rights. Therefore, every human being should be respected and treated honorably and nobly because they are the perfect reflection of God (Fait A Muedini, 2010).

This equality of human is also affirmed by the unity of his biological origin, *al-naḥs al-wāḥidah*, as stated in Q.S. al-Zumar (39): 6. Nasr explains this verse: one origin of humanity implies a profound unity in the diversity of human nature. Therefore, a religion based on the message of Divine Oneness cannot only be intended for or

available to some humanity. The diversity of races, nations, and tribes requires a diversity of revelations that ultimately gives birth to the diversity of *sharī'a* (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 2002).

Thus, human equality refers to their biological origin, ontological status, and unity, not by other attributes, including their beliefs and religion. Therefore, religious differences cannot be used as an excuse to demean the honor and dignity of humanity. Allah confirms rhetorically in Q.S. Yunus (10): 99 means, "if your Lord willed, all the people of the earth would believe. Will you then hate humanity until they become believers?"

Sufism sees multiculturalism-plurality, humanism, and egalitarianism, as described above, as the basis for constructing transcendent multiculturalism or sufistic multiculturalism. It is the conception of multiculturalism that is completely based on human dignity and honor, not just as a biological being at the highest level in the chain of evolution—as understood in secular Western humanism—but also as a transcendent being who becomes a medium of divine *tajallī asmā'* actualized in the mandate of the caliphate, realizing the benefit and peace on the surface of the earth. According to Aqil Siradj, human serves as an intermediary medium in the existence where God interacts with the cosmos directly, which expands the qualities inherent in the attributes of Allah (Siradj, 2005). Sufistic multiculturalism can be a philosophical foothold in the development of multicultural Islamic education, rather than simply adopting the values and ideology of Western-secular multiculturalism that has a different historical background and worldview.

4. CONCLUSION

Multicultural education in religious education (Islam) is education-oriented towards accepting and

respecting differences based on sufistic insights, not insights of Western-secular ideologies with different historical backgrounds and worldviews. The foundation of sufistic insight is based on three essential paradigms, namely, first, the principled sufistic basis that all human beings are *tajallī* of *asmā* Allah, so there is a bond that unite them in diversity, namely the potential of *asmā* Allah that exists in human who is part of *fitrah* of creation. Moral equality in humans as God's perfect *tajallī* should be a binder that unites all human beings in their diversity or multiculturalism. Second, although it appears in diversity on the *shari'a* dimension (exotherric), every religion has similarities to its transcendent dimension (esoteric) because it is sourced from the same God. This similarity is the meeting point in the diversity of religious people so that it can be a connecting rope in building harmonious intersubjective religion. Third, human equality refers to its biological origin, ontological status unity, not by other attributes, including their beliefs and religion. Religious differences cannot be used as an excuse to demean a people's honor and dignity of humanity.

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