



Syakur Yasin's Perspective on Religious Pluralism in Developing Islamic Education in Indramayu, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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Background: The issue of pluralism has always been a topic of conversation from time to time, along with scientific developments. Likewise, theological thinkers and Islamic thinkers have highlighted pluralism to date regarding pluralism in Islamic education. Pluralism is an essential issue because it has contributed to developing the world of Islamic education.

Purpose: This article examines the understanding of the concept of religious pluralism put forward by one of the Islamic leaders, namely Saykur Yasin or Buya Sakur.

Methods: This qualitative research uses content analysis with data sources from books, journals, and YouTube related to Buya Sakur's thoughts.

Results: The concept of religious pluralism of Buya Sakur in developing Islamic education can be seen from the concepts he teaches at Islamic boarding schools, public recitations, and da'wah through Chanel YouTube. The uniqueness of pluralism thinking, according to Buya Sakur, is that the reality of life in this world shows pluralism and various ethnic groups, skin colors, languages, and different religions that receive recognition from God as reality

Conclusion: The concept of religious pluralism that he conveyed was very different from that of other figures or scholars. Some claim that he has a concept of understanding, especially regarding religious pluralism which is liberal in orientation and adheres to relativism.

Keywords:

Pluralism, Islamic Education, Sakur Yasin, Buya Sakur, Religious

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that has many cultures, ethnicities, religions, races, and languages and has a vast territory (Nuridin et al., 2021; Ulfa et al., 2021). This large area causes interaction and economic and social integration that is difficult to distribute evenly, resulting in differences and gaps in social welfare. This inequality is the beginning of a sense of citizen dissatisfaction which has the potential to become a conflict, both vertically and horizontally (Ali, 2009). The condition of the government system that paid little attention to humanitarian development in the previous era, the policies of the Indonesian State were dominated by economic interests

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and national stability (Hanafy, 2015). The political education sector and nation-building have received less attention. Differences in ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA) as actual conditions inherited from generation to generation are elements of wealth that color the nation's cultural treasures (Rahma et al., 2022). The negative impact is to become a frightening specter, as well as a potential threat to the nation's existence and diminishing the sense of nationalism.

A sense of nationalism can awaken the Indonesian nation free from colonizers of other nations. This understanding can awaken the Indonesian people to refrain from dependent on other countries in economics, politics, and other fields (Armawi, 2020). Becoming a nation that genuinely has independence requires a long process; now, the sense of nationalism is starting to thin out because many cultures outside our country enter and are more attractive, known as the flow of globalization (Syafri, 2021).

Indonesia can be said to be one of the largest multicultural and plural countries in the world (Madakir et al., 2022;

Nuridin et al., 2021; Sumarna et al., 2021). This statement can be justified by looking at the sociocultural and geographical conditions that are diverse and broad in Indonesia. This diversity can be both a blessing and a disaster if fellow children of the nation do not understand the nature of the nation and state under the auspices of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Kholil et al., 2022). However, this diversity can also trigger conflicts that are feared to end in the nation's disintegration (Fuadi, 2020). For over a decade, a series of conflicts and violence with SARA nuances have continued in Indonesia. Starting from inter-religious riots in provincial cities in 1995-1997, anti-witchcraft campaigns in Java, and conflicts between religious groups in Central Sulawesi and Maluku in 1998-2001, to the mobilization of religious-based paramilitary groups and bombings carried out by terrorist groups in the name of "*jihad*" in 2000-2005 (Majid, 2014). In addition, sectarian conflicts and violence that befell the Indonesian Ahmadiyya Community and other religious sects have added to the number of incidents of religious conflict and violence in Indonesia (Miharja & Mulyana, 2019).

According to Lickona (1996), ten signs of human behavior indicate the direction of the destruction of a nation, namely: 1) Increasing violence among adolescents, 2) Dishonesty that is entrenched, 3) Increasing disrespect for parents, teachers, and leaders, 4) Peer group influence on acts of violence, 5) Increased suspicion and hatred, 6) Worsening use of language, 7) Decreased work ethic, 8) Decreased sense of individual and citizen social responsibility, 9) Increased self-destructive behavior, 10) Increasing loss of moral guidance.

Of the ten mentioned above, it has been seen and happened in Indonesia. For example, student fights, many parents, teachers, and leaders commit acts that are not commendable and lose children's respect for them, and many other problems still occur in this country.

These complex problems and issues require real solutions and actions. A commendable national character, excellent citizen intelligence, solid Indonesian nationalism, and the ability to live in a multicultural society and culture needs to be the focus of the personal development of every citizen of the nation (Anditasari et al., 2023; Banks, 2004; Fuad, 2023). This can be achieved through education, culture, and training both formally through school institutions and informally through community institutions, work groups, community organizations, and, starting from an early age until today and even into old age, including through pluralism education.

This paper aims to analyze the concept of religious pluralism by one of the Islamic leaders, Syakur Yasin (famous name: Buya Sakur) from Indramayu, Indonesia, and his efforts in developing Islamic Education

II. METHOD

This research is qualitative through content analysis (Djubaedi et al., 2022) with data sources from books, journals and Youtube related to Buya Sakur's thoughts.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Biography of Syakur Yasin

Prof. Dr. K. H. Abdul Syakur Yasin was born in Indramayu on November 12, 1960 (Suhendrik, 2021). For the people of Indramayu and its surroundings, it is known as Syakur Yasin or Buya Syakur. An Islamic scholar with a typical delivery of NU Islamic studies, with a voice that never rises, he explains various complicated issues slowly and with focus. Another distinctive feature of NU is the content of his studies which prioritizes *muamalah* life in the midst of a pluralistic society.

From childhood to adulthood, Buya Syakur spent time at Islamic boarding schools; besides that, he also added to his knowledge and insights into various Arab and European countries. For about 12 years, he intensively studied religion at the Babakan Ciwaringin Islamic boarding school, Cirebon. Because he grew up in a boarding school environment, he was taught religious and moral knowledge since childhood. After completing his education at Babakan, he continued his academic education in the Middle East and Europe (Sumarta & Adab, 2023).

In 1995 Buya Syakur founded the Cadangpinggan Islamic Boarding School (Hadi, 2023), which is located on Jl. By Pass Kertasemaya KM. 37 Rt. 01 Rw. 01 Cadangpinggan, Sukagumiwang, Indramayu. Apart from dedicating himself to the country through the Islamic boarding school he founded, he also often conducts studies with the community and it is not uncommon for these studies to be uploaded via the Buya Syakur Youtube and Wamimma TV.

The themes uploaded via his YouTube account are heavy, and many are based on contemporary books or Sufism, writing and translating books in Arabic. As seen in several videos uploaded on YouTube, he is doing poetry readings.

Buya Syakur invites all Muslims to live side by side with non-Muslims. In his lecture, which Wamimma TV uploaded, he emphasized that non-Muslims make many daily needs. According to him, it is not good to say that non-Muslims are infidels and they will go to hell. Vice versa, Muslims are not guaranteed to enter heaven. Buya Syakur said there had been much interreligious cooperation in the world.

The uniqueness of pluralism thinking, according to Syakur (2019), is that the reality of life in this world shows pluralism and various ethnic groups, skin colors, languages, and different religions that receive recognition from God as reality. The goal is to understand that other than religion itself, other religions must be respected. Based on this opinion, these differences should not be made a problem because that is the will of Allah SWT and a reality that we

must accept. Humans, as religious people, must respect and respect each other.

In his concept, Buya Sakur said that pluralism and multiculturalism are the plurality of society as *Sunatullah* (Khobir et al., 2019). Most importantly, there must be interaction and tolerance among fellow human beings in this world.

The statements above have motivated the writer to explore and analyze his thoughts, especially regarding religious pluralism.

In several existing writings or research, researchers have yet to find any work specifically discussing the concept of religious pluralism thought by Buya Sakur.

B. Religious Pluralism

Pluralism is an understanding that emphasizes the positive aspects of diversity and tolerance and recognizes the existence of different (religious) groups as a preventive measure in tackling inter-religious conflicts (Naharudin, 2019; Retnasari et al., 2023; Rois, 2013). Pluralism should be understood and accepted positively, not sued negatively, especially if it is claimed to be an ideology that damages the faith, especially for Muslims (Naharudin, 2019).

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) once issued a fatwa that stated the definition of religious pluralism in terms of ideological aspects (Basya, 2011).

"Religious pluralism is an understanding that teaches that all religions are the same and, therefore, the truth of each religion is relative. Therefore, every religious believer may not claim that only his religion is correct while others are wrong. Religious pluralism also teaches that all adherents of religions will enter and live side by side in heaven."

MUI mentions a definition of the concept of ideology (*aqidah*) and provides a clearer perception of the reality of religious pluralism (Noviatin, 2013). Meanwhile, activists of religious pluralism seem reluctant to emphasize ideological aspects (beliefs) when defining them. They only look at it from a social aspect other than faith. They may realize that conveying an *aqidah* perspective means blaming people of all religions. So, they try to hide behind the mask of social meaning.

Many supporters of religious pluralism in Indonesia have tried to refute the MUI fatwa and question the validity of the MUI's definition of religious pluralism. However, they cannot deny the validity of the definition content. Because of that, the step they use is to spread doubts among ordinary people that there are many different definitions regarding religious pluralism.

In conclusion, we will not find agreement among religious pluralism activists in defining the term religious pluralism accurately and comprehensively. The reason is their different perspectives on the concept of religious pluralism. Some see it from the religious side, some from the social side, some from the political side, and so on.

Based on Buya Syakur's statement that the author obtained from a YouTube broadcast (<https://youtu.be/zDWkOhlSKOQ>), one of the uploaders in the broadcast, Buya Syukur, said that "religion was created to make people happy". Then he continued by saying, "Then why exactly now, religion makes people difficult and schism." This is an empirical matter; if we look at today's social reality, it is true if we do the thesis "if religion only becomes a source of division among the people," it seems that there will be very many who affirm.

With Buya Sakur's radical and liberal thinking, he can become a milestone for the Indonesian nation and his colleagues, such as Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur. Buya Syakur, and they are reformers of Islam in the archipelago. Thus, we must understand that Islam is not a religion but a treatise, teaching that everything on this earth is essentially Islamic. Consciously or unconsciously, like it or not, accept or not accept. Because the core of all religious teachings is "surrender to God." This is very clear from the teachings of inclusivism introduced by Nurcholis Madjid. So segmentation and exclusivity must be eliminated because these two things contradict Islamic teachings, which are *rahmatan lill alamin* (Rozi, 2020).

As humans, we must accept nature if we are social beings who need other people and cannot live alone, which is where we cannot live without the intervention of others. We must open our eyes to all existing differences, be it differences in religion, race, ethnicity, or other differences that have the potential to divide unity and oneness within the framework of diversity.

Husein Muhammad stated that *li ta'arafu* does not only mean knowing someone's name, address, identity, and physical characteristics (Hajar & Umayah, 2020; Zulaeha, 2020). It is interpreted broadly by recognizing various traditions, customs, habits, ideas, and views. In this case, getting to know each other gives the impression of always being wise, humble person and prioritizing human values regardless of their identity.

According to Buya Syakur, the first principle of Pancasila was the founding way of the Indonesian nation to unite the various religions in the archipelago, which is interpreted as an unwritten condition for living in Indonesia, anyone who wants to live in Indonesia must acknowledge that there is one God. Thus, all religions are forced to acknowledge that God is One. This can be interpreted that the relationship between a human being and his God (*Habluminallah*) is a vertical relationship, each has the freedom to believe in his own beliefs, and there is no relationship of loss to one another. If this is used as a basis for nation and state, like in this archipelago which has various ethnic groups and religions, there will be no problems in creating peace in society.

The relationship between the first precepts of Pancasila and the following precepts cannot be separated from one another, forming a unified whole, like the human body, which

is interconnected between members of the body and another. As the saying of Rasulullah saw:

"Know that in the body there is a lump of flesh if the meat is good, then the whole body is good. If it is damaged, then the whole body is damaged. You know, that lump of meat is the heart" (HR. al-Buhkari Muslim).

The correlation between the heart and all members of the human body, while the belief in the existence of God Almighty, is also the firmness and the knowledge of the human heart about one's faith. If the value of one's divine essence is high, it will affect the behavior, actions, and decisions of every step of the human being himself. So it is natural that there is a teaching in Islam that "Know that each of you is a leader and each leader is responsible for his leadership. Every head of state is a leader, and he is responsible for leadership (of his people). Every woman/mother is a leader for her husband's household and her children and is responsible for her leadership. An enslaved person is the head of his master's property and is responsible for his leadership. Know that each of you is a leader, and each is responsible for his leadership." Moreover, all of that depends on the integrity of each human being in managing himself. So naturally, the first precept is the most critical coordinating point because if a human being has God, and his divine essence is high, it will be reflected in the values in the following precepts to carry out life in his community.

Buya Syakur that the factor of the diversity of languages, customs, geography, and religion is Allah SWT's will, such as the Bubat war during the Majapahit era (Khotimah, 2020). Then at independence, a question arose based on the state, eventually becoming a debate between people. At that time, Japan asked Soekarno for conditions to remove seven words, namely "carrying out the Shari'a." Mr. Soekarno, at that time, promised the Muslims that after independence, we would discuss it again; at this time, the important thing was to be independent first and fulfill Japan's conditions (Setiawan, 2021).

Buya Sakur at the 74th Indonesian Independence Day event said that "Fortunately, the basis of our country is Pancasila, so we have avoided the same destruction as other Islamic countries in the world." At that time, the Prophet Muhammad succeeded in carrying out unity and unity between the Anshor and the Muhajirin. There was no one except the Prophet at that time because the vision and mission of the Prophet himself only upheld the sentence of monotheism not to cut off people's hands, and the monotheism was interpreted by The Messenger of Allah at that time was "Unity." The platform of the Prophet Muhammad at that time was unity, which later became a figure of unity. The *syariat* that is built is unity, and *maqasid sharia* that was implemented by the Prophet Muhammad in order to build unity of the ummah. Then Buya Sakur also reviewed the current divisive movement in Indonesia, namely about the emergence of radicalism, separatism, and civil wars

between fellow Muslims because Indonesia is predominantly Muslim; the country should be a Godly state, not a religious country, together to build goodness and preach building a socially capable reconcile all parties.

From the opinion above, the nation fills independence with positive things, namely the dissolution of physical power by soul power. Because the soul's domain is the controller of all external things which have no limits, it needs to be based on inner strength so that it can feel the will of other people who are also full of interests. If the two elements are harmonious, it will strengthen the spirit of the nation and state based on kinship without marginalizing groups of people and even individuals. The era that continues to develop into the era of globalization does not rule out the possibility of foreign cultures entering this country and melting into the nation's culture. It is also a separate threat for a country to face a conflict of divisions within the country. Now many Indonesian cultures have begun to be forgotten among young people. Without realizing it, they use more foreign cultures and lifestyles. Therefore, the Indonesian people should continue to maintain the unity that exists in this country. Even though there are many differences, there is still one unity in the Indonesian state. It is necessary to restore awareness of the meaning of the third precept of Pancasila.

However, on the other hand, there are Cirebon figures and scholars such as Kyai Husein Muhammad, caretaker of the Darut Tauhid Arjawinangun Islamic boarding school and founder of the Fahmina Institute and Buya Syakur, caretaker of the Cadang Pinggan Indramayu Islamic boarding school who are very intense in fighting for women's rights and view that justice and gender equality not prohibited by Islam, even Islam teaches about the concept of gender equality. Islamic teachings strongly reject discrimination, injustice, and gender-based violence that befell many women. In Islam, equality is taught for women to get the same access and rights as men in various fields, such as education, health, politics, economy, etc.

Leaders of Islamic community organizations, Ulama, Kiai, and Ustadz, use YouTube to carry out their political campaigns and have another mission, namely to distribute religious thoughts and understanding, such as Ust. Kholid Basalamah, Ust. Reza Syafiq Basalamah, Ust. Firanda Andirja (Suhendrik, 2021). In his lecture on YouTube, he identified his religious understanding as more inclined toward the thoughts of Ibn Taimiyah and Abdul Wahab, who, among Muslims, are known as Wahabi.

Based on the description above, the researchers are trying to study the role of YouTube in the development of Islamic da'wah and the spread of religious understanding. The researcher limits this research by examining the Buya Sakur YouTube channel and Wamimma TV to be more focused. The reason for the researcher to raise this discussion is that the Buya Syakur is conceptually very different from other figures in deciphering the meaning of the verses of the Koran

and often makes reinterpretations of the understanding of Muslims who are already established in society.

In addition to these reasons, Buya Syakur's da'wah approach emphasizes a logical approach compared to cloth figures who are more subject to the power of doctrine, so that reason is more comprehensive and quickly accepted in deciphering the texts of the Qur'an and hadith. Although when compared with the thoughts of other figures, Buya Syakur seems to be the opposite of mainstream, such as in the elaboration regarding Conventional Bank Interest, the law of cutting off the hands of thieves, and his criticism of the hadith, which encourages Muslims to kill lizards on Saturday night. Buya Syakur's description differs from other figures. who prefer to take a safe position by following the opinion of the *madzhab* imam.

Buya Syakur's specialty is that, as Gus Dur once said, only three people think analytically in understanding Islam in Indonesia, namely Quraish Shihab, Buya Syakur, and Cak Nur. This is evident from the themes uploaded via his YouTube account, which have pretty heavy themes, and many are based on contemporary books or Sufism, for example, *Fi Zhilali Al-Qur'an*, *La Tahzan* by 'Aidh al-Qarni, to *al-Hikam*. Ibn 'Athailah As-Sakandari, the Book by Sekh Abdul Qodir Jailani, and his penchant for writing and translating Arabic books can also be seen in several videos uploaded to his Youtube account with the theme of Poetry Reading which is known as "Wave of Love" which is sometimes read by among artists and artists on the side lines of his book study.

Several of the poems that Buya Sakur read were often based on conditions that often hit the general public, easy to understand but still powerful, with a style and accent typical of the Pantura dialect.

The results of research on the KH Syakur Yasin / Buya Syakur / Wamimma TV Youtube Channel can be summarized in the following points.

1. Applying the da'wah channel on the YouTube Channel KH Syakur Yasin MA/Wamimma TV is considered very easy and efficient. The delivery and content of da'wah are accessible for the community to understand. This is because the community can search for any da'wah material that is desired or needed in Islamic video content in the form of Islamic lecture videos on YouTube media. So da'wah through the YouTube channel can be applied in daily life by DAI.

2. Apart from being a propaganda medium, Youtube is also used to spread religious understanding/*manhaj* by certain groups, so people must be more careful and vigilant in finding content and DAI.

3. The advantages and disadvantages of the YouTube channel as a medium of da'wah include, among other things, the advantages of da'wah through YouTube are easy to access, YouTube is quite effective and efficient to use anywhere and anytime. You can add insight into Islam and other sciences through the YouTube channel. Meanwhile, the

lack of da'wah through the YouTube channel cannot be interacted with directly, so the knowledge isnad is unclear, and there is no feedback. If you are still unsure, you cannot ask because it is only one way, and you cannot understand the characteristics of the *mad'u*.

C. The Thought of Religious Pluralism Education Buya Sakur in Developing Islamic Education in Indramayu

The uniqueness of Buya Sakur's thoughts on Multiculturalism and Pluralism is that the reality of life in this world shows the diversity and diversity of ethnic groups, skin colors, languages, and different religions that receive recognition from God as reality. The goal is to understand that other religions must be respected apart from one's religion. Based on this opinion, the above differences should not be made a problem because that is the will of Allah SWT and a reality that we must accept. Therefore, as religious people, we must respect each other.

Buya Sakur said that pluralism and multiculturalism are the plurality of society as *sunatullah*. Most importantly, there must be interaction and tolerance among fellow human beings in this world. Buya Syakur invited Muslims to live side by side with non-Muslims. In his lecture uploaded by Wamimma TV, Buya Syakur said that non-Muslims make many daily needs, both Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and followers of other religions.

Buya Sakur said: "Muslims make the cell phones, aren't we? What we use every day. We import rice from Vietnam, aren't we Muslims? Those who make carpets, those who make textiles, and those who make electric poles are not all made by Muslims. May I use their products? So as long as we are together in the world, we don't have different religions,".

According to Buya Sakur, it is not good to say non-Muslims are infidels and they will go to hell. Even Muslims are not guaranteed to go straight to heaven. Buya Syakur also emphasized that there has been a lot of cooperation between religions in the world.

"We have rice, and there are chilies. We exchange them. They have weapons. We have garlic. Airplanes, please. All are guaranteed safety. We don't have to ask. Now interfaith cooperation has been proven in the world," continued Buya Sakur.

Buya Syakur allows Muslims to collaborate, make friends, do business, study, exchange cultures, and exchange interests with non-Muslims. He also invited all Muslims to help build this country more prosperous. Help each other and improve each other.

"We prove that this country is prosperous. We guide people who are in need, and we provide for orphans. Do not let older people fall into their homes. That is the problem. That is the way to heaven. So, in the end, the way to heaven is to foster clarity of heart, piety, and peace of mind. However, the way to heaven is we are together." said Buya Sakur.

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Buya Syakur, in conveying the contents of the da'wah delivered on the YouTube channel, there are many

differences from other preachers, such as the many scientific terms that are often expressed like academics on campus, the descriptions carried with the latest interpretations by the context of space and time, and not least translating the understanding considered to have been well established, translated and reinterpreted, such as the law of cutting hands for stealing, it is sufficient to replace it by cutting off one's freedom, such as being imprisoned, the law of wishing Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year which is permissible based on mutual respect and there is still much room for differences in understanding with other preachers.

The concept of religious pluralism that he conveyed was very different from that of other figures or scholars. Some claim that he has a concept of understanding, especially regarding Religious Pluralism which is liberal in orientation and adheres to Relativism. Relativism is an understanding of thought that denies the existence of absolute truth and is a characteristic of Liberals. This is possible due to his educational background in the Middle East and Europe.

IV. CONCLUSION

Buya Sakur is a scholar and character who has characteristics in delivering his lectures. Unlike other Islamic scholars, besides being a preacher, he is proficient in art, philosophy, and Islamic scriptures. He created many works related to this, such as the books "Sharing Happiness," "Caring for Plurality," and a collection of poems that are summarized in "Wave of Love."

The concept of religious pluralism of Buya Sakur in developing Islamic education can be seen from the concepts he teaches at Islamic boarding schools, public recitations, and da'wah through Chanel YouTube.

The concept of religious pluralism that he conveyed was very different from that of other figures or scholars. Some claim that he has a concept of understanding, especially regarding Religious Pluralism which is liberal in orientation and adheres to Relativism. Relativism is an understanding of thought that denies the existence of absolute truth and is a characteristic of Liberals. This is possible due to his educational background in the Middle East and Europe.

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