

Mukti Ali's *scientific-cum-doctrinaire* approach and Ibn Arabi's *wahdat al-adyan* in strengthening religious moderation

Syarifuddin

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
e-mail: Syarifuddinagst@gmail.com

Shofiyullah Muzammil

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
e-mail: Shofiyullah.mz@uin-suka.ac.id

Wasil

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia
e-mail: wasil.wasil@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract

A conservative adherence to religious beliefs and fanaticism has the potential to result in a unilateral judgment toward other faiths. At the exoteric level, religions represent different ways of approaching the divine. However, when one sees this from an esoteric point of view, all these religions aim for one divinity. This esoteric perspective is in line with the idea of religious pluralism in the modern world. However, long before that, Ibn Arabi had already discussed this idea. Firstly, Ibn Arabi talked about his philosophy of divinity. God, on one hand, is One, unreachable, transcendent, but also as the resembling, close, immanent. From the immanent aspect, God then manifests and reveals Himself continuously, resulting in diverse beings, including religion. However, in this research, Ibn Arabi's ideas were found to be only ideological-apologetic. Therefore, the author collaborates them with Mukti Ali's ideas, which are

modern and methodological, combining various approaches, both normative and scientific, in the study of religious moderation called scientific-cum-doctrinaire. The method used in this research is descriptive-collaborative. The scientific-cum-doctrinaire is used to investigate Islam and other religions, with the expectation that it will foster interfaith literacy, encourage inter-religious cooperation, and contribute to the promotion of religious moderation. In this light, the parallel between Mukti Ali and Ibn Arabi becomes apparent.

Konservatisme dan fanatisme agama dapat mengarah pada penilaian yang tidak berimbang terhadap agama-agama lain. Pada level eksoterik, agama-agama mewakili cara yang berbeda dalam mendekati yang Ilahi (Tuhan). Namun, dari sudut pandang esoterik, semua agama tersebut bertujuan kepada satu ketuhanan. Pemahaman esoterik ini sejalan dengan gagasan pluralisme agama pada dunia modern. Namun, jauh sebelum itu, Ibn Arabi telah membahas gagasan ini. Pertama, Ibn Arabi berbicara tentang filosofinya tentang ketuhanan. Tuhan, di satu sisi, adalah Satu, tidak terjangkau, transenden, tetapi di sisi lain juga sebagai yang menyerupai, dekat, dan imanen. Dari aspek imanen ini, Tuhan kemudian terus bermanifestasi dan menunjukkan diri-Nya serta menghasilkan keragaman makhluk, termasuk agama. Namun, menurut penulis, gagasan Ibn Arabi ini hanya bersifat ideologis-apologetik. Oleh karena itu, penulis menggabungkannya dengan ide-ide Mukti Ali yang bersifat modern dan metodologis, sehingga dapat menggabungkan berbagai pendekatan, baik normatif maupun ilmiah, dalam studi tentang moderasi keagamaan yang disebut sebagai Saintifik-Kum-Doktriner. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif-kolaboratif. Dalam tulisan ini, Saintifik-Kum-Doktriner digunakan untuk menyelidiki Islam dan agama lain, dengan harapan munculnya moderasi, literasi dan kerjasama lintas agama. Dalam konteks ini, hubungan paralel antara Mukti Ali dan Ibn Arabi dapat tergambar dengan jelas.

Keywords: *Scientific-cum-doctrinaire, Wahdatul adyan, Pluralism, Religious moderation.*

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Introduction

Mukti Ali (1923-2004) and Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) are the breakthrough figures of religious thought in their respective times. Their courage and spirit in making

movements and thinking, especially about plurality, are important contributions that transcend their time. In the case of Ibn Arabi, who is called a great Sufi because of his expertise in formulating mystical, intuitive, subjective knowledge into rational knowledge (Ogunnaike, 2013), a significant contribution that is not only in academic studies but the initial basis of pluralism in classical Islam is the issue of knowing the Godhead from His immanent side (Kartanegara, 2017), and its relationship with the process of creation which later the concept boils down to the concept we call *wahdatul adyan*.

In the concept of *wahdatul adyan*, the existing religions, which are diverse, according to Ibn Arabi, basically have one common goal towards one God, namely Allah. This understanding of *wahdatul adyan* can be understood as the idea of religious pluralism at this time. However, regarding *wahdatul adyan*, there are many debates from intellectual figures, such as Su'ad al-Hakim from Lebanon, Naquib al-Attas, and several other figures who argue that Ibn Arabi does not show or have the idea of *wahdatul adyan*. In contrast to them, William C. Chittick, Sayyed Hosen Nasr, Nicolson, Henry Corbin, Annemarie Schimmel and several others argue otherwise, that Ibn Arabi discussed the concept of *wahdatul adyan* although not explicitly (Bahri, 2012).

In addition to Ibn Arabi, in today's modernity, the figure of Mukti Ali has aspects in common with Ibn Arabi in the issue of pluralism. Ibn Arabi criticized the orthodox at that time which was very exclusive as one of the implications of understanding positive theology, so that understanding that contradicted him was considered a heresy that needed to be eliminated. Mukti, too, departs from the case of the internal situation of Indonesian Muslims who focus only on fiqh issues, and religious teaching only focuses on certain figures, resulting in a narrowing of religious understanding and causing the emergence of fanaticism towards certain groups. In addition, the existing scientific tradition is also centered on certain figures. Moreover, the method used is memorization and added to the tradition of explaining the books of certain figures, so that it does

not encourage the emergence of modern, open religious understanding, which is in accordance with the situation and conditions of the people and does not reflect universal religious values and characters (Basuki, 2013).

In the situation described above, Mukti Ali, an Indonesian Muslim scholar, contributed to the development of science, especially in the field of religious studies as an aspect of fostering and strengthening moderation, pluralism and harmony in diversity, with his theory called scientific-cum-doctrinaire (Djam'annuri, 1993). The approach combines normative approaches with historical-sociological-anthropological-psychological. Mukti Ali is considered one of the basic formulators of approach models in Islamic studies that developed in PTAI or Indonesia (Minhaji, 2010). He is also a figure who laid the foundation for interfaith dialog and harmony in Indonesia. Mukti Ali wanted to create inter-religious dialog in order to eliminate suspicion between religious communities. Therefore, according to him, methods and knowledge are needed to foster tolerance for religious differences (Basuki, 2013; Basuki, 2018).

Thus, it is important to collaborate between them for a more comprehensive model of strengthening religious moderation through two aspects, namely the methodological aspects offered by Mukti Ali and the ideological-apologetic aspects in Ibn Arabi's Sufism. So, talking about religious moderation, pluralism, and tolerance, not only through scientific aspects, but also through the esoteric-theological side that reaches the multi-dimensional area of public faith. Given that Indonesia is often referred to as the meeting place of world religion and a society that tends to be religious, the two approaches above become a progressive force in understanding religion and creating a moderate understanding.

Biography

Mukti Ali

Mukti Ali's was born in Balun Village, Sudagaran, Cepu, in 1923. Mukti Ali was arguably born and grew up in a well-off family. It is proven that he received privileges from his parents so that he received a proper education. His father, H. Abu Ali, was the biggest tobacco merchant in Cepu. His father was a person who was respectful to teachers and scholars. Meanwhile, Mukti Ali's mother was Hj. Khadijah who was a housewife and cloth merchant. Little Boedjono had six siblings, consisting of three men and three women. They all lived in a trading atmosphere that implicitly educated Mukti Ali and his siblings to be independent and not governed by others (Djam'annuri, 1993).

H. Abu Ali taught them, his children, to strive to be well-off, because poverty is one of the factors inhibiting many human desires. In addition, they were molded into individuals who were not a burden to others but should be a helper for those in need. This philosophy had a strong influence on Mukti Ali and his siblings. H. Abu Ali did not limit his children to studying only religious sciences; they also had to study other sciences, with the principle that no science is useless. For H. Abu Ali, the most important thing was for his children to become well-off and pious people. The village atmosphere, full of intimacy and simplicity, as well as the trading life and religious atmosphere, shaped young Boedjono's personality in the future (Djam'annuri, 1993).

Mukti Ali is a Muslim intellectual who is visionary, pluralist, disciplined, and highly values knowledge (Azra & Umam, 1998). After graduating from the lower civil service examination (Klein Ambtenaar Examen), he was sent by his father to the Tremas Islamic Boarding School, Pacitan. After completing his education at the boarding school, A. Mukti Ali enrolled himself at the Islamic College (STI) in Yogyakarta as a listening student. After STI was transformed into Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), A. Mukti Ali then continued his studies at the Faculty of Religion (Rahmadi, 2015). Before his studies at UII were

completed, he was told by his father to perform the hajj pilgrimage. He then planned to study in Mecca, and took a concentration in Islamic History at the Faculty of Arabic, Karachi University, Pakistan. He obtained his doctorate in 1955, after five years in Pakistan. While preparing for his return to his homeland, A. Mukti Ali received news that he received a scholarship from the Asia Foundation to continue his studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. He then enrolled at the Institute of Islamic Studies (Djam'annuri, 1993).

Arriving in Indonesia in 1957, A. Mukti Ali worked at the Ministry of Religious Education while teaching at the State Islamic College (PTAIN) in Yogyakarta and the Academy of Religious Sciences (ADIA) in Jakarta, IAIN Jakarta, Djakarta Islamic University (UID) and IKIP Muhammadiyah. When IAIN Jakarta was established, he was appointed Secretary of the Faculty of Adab in 1960, and then in 1961, he was asked to open the Department of Comparative Religion as one of the departments in the Faculty of Ushuluddin, and he became the Head of the Department (Djam'annuri, 1993). After some time, in 1964 A. Mukti Ali was transferred to IAIN Yogyakarta and became Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in General Sciences. In addition to teaching at IAIN, he also taught at Gadjah Mada University (UGM), IKIP Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta Tabligh Muhammadiyah Academy, AKABRI Magelang, Adisucipto Air Force, and SESKAU Bandung. Until 1971, A. Mukti Ali was appointed Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Djam'annuri, 1993).

Ibn Arabi

The author feels the need to write a brief biography of Ibn Arabi to provide a more complete picture of Ibn Arabi. The full name of Ibn 'Arabi is Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Al 'Arabi Al-'Thai Al-Tamimi. He was born on July 28, 1165 /560 H in Mursia, southeastern Spain (Khudori, 2016). Ibn 'Arabi's

birth year coincided with the death of the great Sufi Sheikh 'Abd Qadir al-Jilani, which in Muhammad al-Fayyadl's view led to speculation that Ibn Arabi was indeed born to replace the spiritual position of this Sheikh, who in the Islamic world is widely known as a wali, the "Lover of God" (Al-Fayyadl, 2012). This philosopher is more famous with the nickname Ibn 'Arabi, besides that among his students and followers he is known as ash-Syaikh al-Akbar (Great Teacher) or Doktor Maximus for the breadth of knowledge he has in enriching the intellectual treasures of Islam. Another nickname in front of Ibn Arabi's name is Muhyiddin. Not only that, but Ibn Arabi is also often dubbed as Aflatun (son of Plato) because the basis of thought corresponds with the thoughts of Plato, one of the ancient Greek philosophers (Arabi, 1996).

The young Ibn Arabi often made visits to various cities in Spain, the aim was none other than to study and exchange ideas with leading Sufi figures and scholars. One of the most impressive visits was when Ibn Arabi met Ibn Rushd (1126-1198 AD), at which time Ibn Arabi defeated this Aristotelian philosopher in debate and exchange of ideas; something that shows his extraordinary intelligence and breadth of spiritual insight (Nasr, 1986). In Kautsar's view, this shows the fact that there is a strong connection between Sufism and philosophy in Ibn Arabi's metaphysical consciousness (Noer, 1995). Some of Ibn Arabi's experiences in the field of Sufism have a relationship with his philosophical thinking which is then able to make his spiritual experience into a metaphysical view with the path of philosophy as can be seen in his idea of wahdah al-wujud.

Then Ibn Arabi stayed in Mecca for about three years. In this place, Ibn Arabi used his time to sharpen his spirit and write. In Mecca, he also received the inspiration to write Futuhat al-Makkiyah (Mecca Enlightenment), which is now his monumental work (Schimmel, 1996). Not only that, in Mecca Ibn Arabi also experienced a very imprinted moment, namely when he met a beautiful girl around the Kaaba and Ibn Arabi was mesmerized by her beauty. The girl, known later as Nizham, was the daughter of one of the imams of the

Grand Mosque, inspiring him to write a collection of poems which he titled *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, "The Interpreter of Longing". These poems were specifically dedicated to the memory of Nizham, whose beauty awakened Ibn Arabi to the beauty of God in women. However, the collection of poems was criticized by some Aleppo scholars for teaching "eroticism," but Ibn Arabi denied this, saying that he wrote the poems purely for spiritual purposes (Al-Fayyadl, 2012).

At the end of his wanderings, Ibn Arabi finally chose to live in Damascus, in addition to his age. In Damascus, he spent his old age focusing on teaching, writing, and educating his students (Al-Fayyadl, 2012). In Damascus, Ibn Arabi wrote the book *Fushush al-Hikam*, which he claimed to have received directly from the Prophet. In the preamble of this book, it is said, "I dreamed that I saw the Messenger in joy on the last ten days of the month of Muharram in 627 AH, in the suburbs of Damascus and in his hand was a book. He said, "This is the book of *Fushush al-Hikam*. Take it... Convey it to the people so that they may utilize it" (Khudori, 2016).

Then, two years after writing *Fushush al-Hikam*, Ibn Arabi still had time to complete the manuscript of *Futuh al-Makkiyah*. Finally, he died in 638 AH/1240 AD at the age of 78 years (Taftazani, 1985). Regarding his death, there is no explanation that can be ascertained. It is reported that Ibn Arabi was killed by a group of jurists who strongly challenged his teachings. However, none of his biographers were able to confirm this story. Ibn Shamah, one of the most reliable recorders, wrote that Ibn Arabi was "buried well" (Addas, 2004).

Mukti Ali's scientific-cum-doctrinaire method in understanding Islam

Mukti Ali is a fairly productive intellectual recorded. During the 60s to 90s decade, he produced more than 30 works. Of these many works, according to Singgih Basuki, it is concluded that the style of Mukti Ali's thinking contained in his writings is based on three ethos, namely science, humanity, and

Indonesianness. Then his scientific ethos is known as the scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach, which combines normative and scientific approaches. His humanitarian ethos is then known as "Full human development", and his Indonesian ethos is known as agreeing in disagreement and interfaith dialog to create interfaith harmony (Basuki, 2013; Rahmadi, 2015).

In his book entitled "Methods of Understanding Islam," Mukti Ali first revealed how important a methodology is in the history of the growth of science (Ali, 1991). Islam is a multi-dimensional religion, so one method cannot be chosen to study Islam. Islam has dimensions related to the relationship between man and God, which are studied using philosophical methods; dimensions related to the problems of human life on earth, which are studied using natural science methods; dimensions related to the formation of society and civilization, which are studied using historical and sociological methods; and other dimensions. Since Islam is a religion, the above methods must be complemented by doctrinal methods. In short, it is not enough to study Islam in all its aspects using scientific methods alone, nor is it enough to use doctrinal methods alone (Ali, 1991).

Based on Mukti Ali's observation is that the approach to Islam is still very lame. Scientists, including orientalists, approach Islam with scientific methods only. As a result, their research is interesting, but they do not actually understand Islam as a whole. They only know the outer aspects of Islam.

On the other hand, our scholars are accustomed to understanding Islamic teachings doctrinally and dogmatically, which are often not related to the reality of life in society (Muslim et al., 2021). As a result, their interpretations are difficult to apply in society. This is what causes others to have the impression that Islam is outdated and not following the present. For this reason, according to him, a comprehensive religious approach must be used, which is called scientific-cum-doctrinaire, or what is also called an integral, holistic,

comprehensive, religio-scientific, scientific-religious, and synthesis approach (Ali, 1987).

The scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach offered by Mukti Ali combines normative and empirical approaches in the study of Islam. By using this approach, Islam can be analyzed and interpreted doctrinally, historically, and empirically. As explained above, he does not use the normative approach alone in the study of Islam because this approach only refers to religious texts in understanding Islam. The normative approach must be combined and integrated with the empirical approach, by considering and understanding historical, social and cultural conditions in studying and analyzing Islam in people's lives.

When Islam comes and begins to interact with the life of a community, of course they already have traditions and culture because they have been there first. Therefore, Islam, local traditions and indigenous culture blend together in a process of acculturation. By using a scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach, Islam can be examined from a number of interdisciplinary approaches and from a number of dimensions that cannot be separated or underestimated. Mukti Ali calls this approach a holistic approach (Ismail, 2012). In principle, the scientific-cum-doctrinal approach is not something new, because it has been carried out by scholars in the previous Islamic scientific tradition known as the study of *asbabun nuzul*, which examines the causes of the revelation of the Qur'anic verse associated with environmental conditions, and *asbabul wurud*, which is the cause of the birth of the hadith. As he admits, Mukti Ali attempted to develop this approach in a broader context (Ali, 1977).

Important to note is that, without ignoring the importance of normative Islam, all parties must realize that Islam itself has lived in contact with various fields, such as politics, art, culture, and others. Therefore, understanding Islam is not only enough to study its normative teachings, but also how Islam is understood, implemented, and its contact with the social, political, economic,

and cultural environment, or civilization in general throughout its history. This also requires the provision of social and cultural sciences and even natural sciences to understand Islam and Muslims (Asrar, 2022; Minhaji, 2013).

The scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach, furthermore, does not only apply to the research aspect of understanding Islam, other religions are not spared either. In this case Mukti Ali talks about the science of comparative religion. According to Mukti Ali, the science of comparative religion must be positioned in relation to other branches of the science of religions, such as the history and philosophy of religion (Ali, 1975). From this, it can be seen that Mukti Ali wants to show the relationship and interrelated aspects of several scientific fields in understanding religion, to find a clear picture and understanding of religious experience and its development, and analyze its similarities and differences (Rahmadi et al., 2014). However, the challenge, according to Mukti Ali, is the difficulty of using an objective attitude in the scientific method used. In addition, most researchers in Indonesia differ in concocting concepts, which has implications for the different results achieved (Ali, 1975). Therefore, according to Mukti Ali, the science of comparative religion must be used correctly, namely by being carried out objectively (not one-sided), not polemical, and collaborating with the social sciences of humanities (Rahmadi, 2015).

Ibn Arabi's philosophy of God

From the beginning, Ibn Arabi was haunted by deep anxiety about God. A series of moments in his spiritual journey, at least, are signs, cues, and clues of how Ibn Arabi indeed keeps complicated and not easy fundamental questions about God. Furthermore, Ibn Arabi began to ask about the nature of things. Ibn Arabi contemplated the nature of everything deeply, and this led him to fundamental questions about "being" and the nature of "being", which Ibn Arabi later called wujud (Al-Fayyadl, 2012).

Then 'existence' in Ibn Arabi's view such as this nature is a reality that although it appears diverse, it is still one, namely God as the only reality and the real reality. If so, then everything other than Him cannot be said to exist in the true sense. From this fact, the question arises as to what Ibn Arabi actually meant by wujud, and what is the essence of wujud itself as mentioned earlier. However, before arriving at wujud or "exist" itself, Ibn Arabi experienced a kind of ambiguity, which caused his thinking to be paradoxical (Khudori, 2016). Ibn Arabi doubted that either everything that exists or existent existence is a being, because neither existing nor existent existence has being in itself. Therefore, neither is a being itself. As proof of this, neither existing nor existent existence is permanent, changing, and can become non-existent. This becomes clear in Ibn Arabi's famous statement, "He is but not He" (Huwa la Huwa). Therefore, Ibn Arabi concludes that existence must be necessarily existent, and it is self-existent. This necessarily-existent form is the "reality of divinity", which is al-wujud in its most literal sense, namely "Allah". "Allah" is al-wujud, and therefore in a passage in Futuhat, Ibn Arabi writes (Al-Fayyadl, 2012; Akbar, 2016; Sharify-Funk, 2018): "There is nothing in 'al-wujud' but Him. So contemplate as I contemplate, and you will find Him as He is".

Starting from that, Ibn Arabi began to provide a separation between the existent and the truly existent. The separation is an explanation that the proper form is only God, while the form seen in this universe is the form in a metaphorical sense. To explain the ontological relationship between God and the universe, Ibn 'Arabi, among others, uses the mirror symbol as an example, where the universe is a mirror for God. This symbol, in particular, explains the reason for the creation of nature, namely that this creation is a means to show Himself. He wants to introduce himself through nature. He is a "hidden treasure" (kanz makhfi) that cannot be recognized except through nature, as the qudsi hadith states. 'Kuntu kanzan makhfiyyan fa ahbibtu an u'rafa fa khaluqtu

al-khalq likay u'rafa' (I am a hidden treasure and I want to be recognized, so I created creatures so that I can be recognized).

Furthermore, to explain the relationship of the One to the many and varied in the universe. That is, the mirrored God is one, but the images of Him are as many and varied as the number and models of the mirrors. Therefore, what appears in the mirror is Him alone, not at all other than Him, but the images are not the real Him (Khudori, 2016).

In addition, because al-wujud is God, and God is al-wujud, then at the same time according to Ibn Arabi, al-wujud is single, or one, or one. This view of the singleness/unity/oneness of al-wujud has made Ibn Arabi touted as the initiator of the wahdat al-wujud teaching (Al-Fayyadl, 2012), which means the teaching of the singleness, unity, or oneness of al-wujud. It should be noted, although the idea of wahdat al-wujud was coined by Ibn Arabi, according to Chittick in his book, Ibn Arabi himself, in fact, formally never used the words wahdat al-wujud in his writings. Sadr al-Qunawi (1209-1274 AD) was the first to use the term wahdat al-wujud, although not as a technical and independent term. However, Ibn Arabi's teachings on reality can give meaning in that direction (Chittick, 2005; Noer, 1995).

Wahdat al-adyan as a logical consequence of Ibn Arabi's philosophy of godhead

It has been mentioned earlier that God wants to be known so He does a tajalli or "Reveals Himself". In further explanation, Ibn Arabi says that God does not manifest twice in the same 'form' to one place, meaning that God manifests continuously to his creatures in different forms without stopping. It is said that God manifests each time up to thousands or even hundreds of thousands of times, the same as the number of breaths we breathe each time and the same as the number of spirits that exist in the world. In the context of wahdatul adyan, such a concept of tajalli leads us to an axiomatic understanding that the

diversity of religions is a consequence of the infinite appearance of God's *tajalli* (Arabi, Volume I, 2002).

Ibn Arabi did not see the problem of diversity as a source of confusion or trouble. Rather he saw it as one of the signs that God prioritizes His *al-Rahman* nature over His wrath, which is then an aspect of the happiness of all creatures (Chittick, 1994). With this, it is confirmed that the main cause of the diversity of creatures, including religion, is God Himself (Arabi, Volume I, 2002). In more detail, it is explained that religious diversity is nothing but the result of how humans respond (Arabi, Volume VI, 2002). Humans as the locus for God's *tajalli* are different in terms of their readiness and ability to accept that.

Tajalli includes a kind of relationship between God, who interacts and humans, who respond. From that comes different beliefs. Different beliefs give rise to different *shari'ah*. Different *shari'ah* because of different circumstances. Circumstances are different because times are different. Times are different because of different movements. Movement is different because of different orientations. Different orientations because of different interests. Different interests due to different *tajalli* of God. If we look at history, the prophets as conveyors of *shari'ah* do have different horizons, and the revelations that were revealed to the prophets were in response to the situation at that time. According to Hassan Hanafi, revelation is not something that is outside the context, but remains in a context that will change depending on the era. Therefore, differences in ethnicity, race, nation, and others implicitly require different *shari'ah* (Bahri, 2012).

In order to give a more understandable picture, Ibn Arabi supposes a vessel or container of water, where the vessel's color and shape affects the water's color and shape. This metaphorical view was inspired by Junayd al-Baghdadi's metaphorical view. According to Prof. Media Zainul Bahri, who quotes from Prof. Syafa'atun Almirzanah, it is said that although Ibn Arabi uses such metaphors, it does not mean that he equates religions. Ibn Arabi supposes

water is God's essence, while the vessel's color and shape are religions. It is thus certain that the manifestation of al-Haq depends on 'readiness'. It is only natural that we see a religion that is monochrome or limited to a color only, even that color is opaque. There are also religions that have bright colors, but differ from each other in quality, and so on (Almirzanah, 2009).

Furthermore, regarding the diversity of religions, Ibn Arabi supposes Islam to be a religion that is like the Sun, while other religions are distant stars, and their light is much dimmer than the Sun's. When the Sun appears, its light covers the light of the stars. For Ibn Arabi, the advent of Islam was a kind of 'covering' of the previous religion. However, one should not deny the existence of the shari'ah of the previous religions brought by the prophets and messengers, because they are like the stars whose dim light is overshadowed by the light of the Sun. In this case we can read Ibn Arabi's point that although the various shari'ahs have one goal, namely the path to God, but the shari'ah brought by the Prophet Muhammad (Islam) is the path that we must take and follow (Chittick, 1994).

Still in relation to other religions, the author sees Ibn Arabi criticizing them, such as Christianity and Judaism. For example, Ibn Arabi said that in the Gospel there had been many changes made by the adherents of their own religion, such as the stories of the prophets that were not the same as the stories contained in the Qur'an, thus causing people's reading afterward to produce wrong readings. Ibn Arabi's other criticism is of the polytheism in their religion that associates God with others. Such as claiming that Jesus is the son of God and also God Himself (Arabi, Volume VII, 2002).

A quick or less in-depth reading of Ibn Arabi's wahdatul adyan will come to the conclusion that Ibn Arabi is inconsistent in his ideas, on the one hand he recognizes the existence of religions as a form of God's immanent tajalli or tashbih so that there are many shari'ah, but on the one hand he criticizes the teachings contained in other religions, so it seems contradictory to the previous

acceptance. To avoid this misunderstanding, it needs to be emphasized that Ibn Arabi accepts the diversity of religions due to the diversity of shari'ah, but historically there have been changes made by adherents so that there is distortion and turning away from the original truth. Ibn Arabi's criticism lies at that point.

Rethinking Mukti Ali's scientific-cum-doctrinaire and reviving Ibn Arabi's ideas in seeing cases of intolerance

Diversity or plurality of humanity is a reality that has become God's will. According to Nurcholish Madjid, if in the Qur'an Surah al-Maidah verse 13 it is mentioned that humans were created to be nations and tribes so that they know and respect each other, then the plurality increases to pluralism, which is a value system that views positively optimistic towards plurality itself, by accepting it as a reality and trying to do the best possible. Plurality is actually an unchanging rule of God (sunnatullah) that cannot be resisted or denied (Madjid, 1992).

In addition to multicultural factors, another crucial problem is the way religion is understood. This problem will always continue because of the fundamental difference between the nature of religion itself and social reality. Religion is absolute because it comes from an absolute ontological reality, namely God, while humans are relative and limited (Hamsah, 2021; Arroisi, 2022). So when religion is constructed by humans, the absoluteness of religion experiences a process of relativization, maybe even distortion. Ironically, the resulting construction process is often colored by absolutizing claims so that it can ignite tensions in internal and interfaith interactions. The universal nature of religion that crosses geographical, linguistic, ethnic, ideological and other boundaries is reduced to pieces of understanding in such a way that it appears legitimate. This condition can potentially cause internal and inter-religious tensions that can turn into disputes and conflicts that are counter-productive and detrimental, even damaging to religion itself (Basuki, 2013).

In order to enlighten the views of Indonesian society and form a critical attitude, Mukti Ali introduced the scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach described earlier. This approach will bring religious people in general and Muslims, in particular, to accept the discourse of modernity and be critical, open, tolerant, sympathetic to intellectual freedom, sensitive to social problems and interfaith dialogue (Ali, 1991; Sahin, 2018). Then the question is "Why does the author have to collaborate Mukti Ali's thought with Ibn Arabi?", "Isn't Mukti Ali's scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach enough, with the multi-approach that is incorporated in it?". The author wants to answer that related to the scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach still needs to be developed and collaborated with other scientific disciplines, because Mukti Ali himself admits that the operational steps of the synthesis method in this approach are not final, so further study is needed (Basuki, 2013). Even Mujahid Abdul Manaf stated that applying this approach is still elite and difficult (Manaf, 1994).

Meanwhile, the reason for juxtaposing Ibn Arabi's thought is the many misconceptions that are still deeply rooted in Ibn Arabi's thought. Especially on the concept of *wahdatul wujud* and *wahdatul adyannya*. The author wants to straighten out the misunderstanding at the momentum in the midst of the program to strengthen religious moderation by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Because the author sees that Ibn Arabi's thought finds a point of relevance to the current commodernity-religious issues. In addition, the rise of interest in religious studies characterized by Sufism, both in *taklim* assemblies and social media, is a fitting step to introduce Ibn Arabi's thought and its relevance. In addition, collaborating the two figures' thoughts will further enliven the treasures of Islamic science and integrate-interconnect the sciences.

Ibn Arabi's ideas related to *wahdatul adyan* deserve to be popularized again as well, as a solution in the form of ideological-esoteric understanding in seeing cases of religious intolerance. We are well aware that there is indeed a tendency in religious people to justify their respective religions (Truth claim).

That is a natural thing. But the mistake lies in the enthusiasm that is passionate and has implications for denigrating and making distance with other people of different religions, moreover, even those who are of the same religion but of different sects do not escape it. Indeed, belief in the truth is based on God, who is the only source of truth. However, a floating understanding, less radical or deep, will lead to the wrong way of religion.

In many cases, this belief in the truth leads to a coercive attitude towards others with different beliefs. The coercive attitude then mostly becomes a movement and makes calls to join and agree with it. Movements based on truth claims usually lead to other attitudes, such as extremism and aggressiveness. Extremism is an exaggeration in attitude, while aggressiveness is an exaggeration in physical action (Yunus, 2014; Kruglanski et al., 2021). Such attitudes do not only exist in movements affiliated with the majority religions such as Islam and Christianity, but certainly also in movements that claim to be of other religions.

For Muslims, reading Ibn Arabi will provide flexibility of understanding in forming an attitude of tolerance. There are at least five paths described by Ibn Arabi. First, the path to God (*sirath Allah*) in which there are many paths to God, either based on revelation or elaborated by human thought. In this path humans have the freedom to choose to obey or reject His orders. However, it is promised that those who obey or follow His commands will be given happiness and salvation, and vice versa. Second, the noble path (*sirath al-'Izzah*) is a path that is difficult to travel or access because it is reserved for someone who first purifies himself. Third, the path of God (*sirath al-Rabb*). Fourth, the path of blessings and favors (*sirath al-Na'im*) is the path blessed by God. This path is like the path given to Prophets Abraham, Moses, Noah, Isa. Fifth, a special path (*sirath al-Khas*) is given to the Prophet Muhammad (Arabi, 2002; Bahri, 2012).

Looking at the five paths described by Ibn Arabi, the author sees that the first path is the path taken by the majority of religious people, including Islam. Because it is easy and provides an aspect of freedom of will or choice. So that it does not eliminate the human aspect. The aspect of free choice is then what rationally creates a variety of paths, shari'ah, schools, and others in religion. The diversity of the path is then seen by people who are intolerant of the other side of the path (the second path, and so on) so as to give birth to an exclusive and narrow understanding. The different paths taken are considered not God's al-Rahmah and al-Rahim, but deviations that should not be allowed to exist. Such an intolerant attitude will continue to other aspects, including social humanity.

In terms of the value of the idea of wahdatul adyan Ibn Arabi provides a basic concept about building attitudes in seeing differences in everyday life. Wahdatul adyan is not competent in resolving religious intolerance from the anthropological side, which includes economic, legal, political, cultural, and other issues, but is only relevant to matters relating to how to understand religion. Nonetheless, Ibn Arabi's ideas make a major contribution to date in the scope of modern religious discourse.

According to Nicholson, Ibn Arabi wanted to tell us that there is no better religion than the religion of love (Nicholson, 1966; Chittick, 2013; Herawati, 2020). They are loving all differences as a blessing and part of God. Even those who disagree with us, such as those who worship idols, are basically religious while still aiming at God. A person who is religious with love sees such a servant is still in essence, worshipping God Almighty. However, he has a different view and chooses a different path that does not have to be judged for its correctness (Bahri, 2012).

Conclusion

One of the actual ideas and methodologies that can be used as a basis in modern religiosity is the scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach and the idea of

wahdatul adyan, especially in terms of religious moderation issues in the midst of a plural society. Although Ibn Arabi's idea is only ideological-apologetic, but Mukti Ali's idea is methodological, making a more comprehensive formulation. Mukti Ali agreed that good values in religion are universal, and harmony and peace are noble aspects that must be upheld. From Ibn Arabi's side, all religions and diversity in the universe are a form of God's tajalli, a form of his Rahman and Rahim nature. All differences have one purpose and are included in the One True God.

The scientific-cum-doctrinaire approach is applied to scrutinize Islam and various other religions, with the expectation that it will foster interfaith literacy, encourage inter-religious cooperation, and contribute to the promotion of religious moderation. Adopting this method combines a comprehensive examination of religious doctrines with a scientific perspective, aiming for a nuanced understanding that transcends dogma. The goal is to facilitate a more inclusive and informed dialogue among adherents of different faiths. In this context, a notable parallel can be drawn between the perspectives of Mukti Ali and Ibn Arabi. Both figures, albeit in different historical and cultural contexts, are committed to fostering understanding and moderation within the realm of religious discourse. Their respective contributions may offer valuable insights and methodologies for contemporary discussions on religious pluralism and cooperation

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