

The Struggle for Religious Identity R.A. Kartini and Its Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in the Family

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ABSTRAK

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Religious identity, Islamic teachings, religious education.

This study aims to examine the spiritual journey of R.A. Kartini in finding her Religious identity. Literature research can be classified as a type of qualitative research. This research found that Kartini views religious pluralism as a gift for all levels of society. The struggle in finding Kartini's religious identity is a sign of her awareness of religion. Kartini is a Muslim. Kartini was not a liberal thinker who wanted to deny her religion. She protested the ignorant attitude and non-openness of Islamic teachings at that time. Kartini strongly criticized actions that did not reflect affection by people who embraced religion. Despite adhering to Islamic teachings, Kartini did not want to injure her friends of other religions. He does not only see religion as an objective that is separate from religion itself. Even though the condition of the religious education he received was inadequate at that time, she also admitted that she did not understand her religion. Actually, Kartini only wanted to criticize the religious education system which tends to teach religion by taqlid. In her Letters, it is clear that Kartini's soul continued to struggle to understand religious truth.

1. Introduction

Maintaining religious identity is a religious obligation for a person. This means that apart from providing religious obligations, religion also emphasizes maintaining identity. So that the content between right and wrong in religious identity is needed to maintain the integrity of the identity holder (Imam Sukardi, 2003: 35). However, in social interaction the acknowledgment of truth needs to be controlled so as not to cause a shift between the identities of adherents of other religions. According to Hasse Jubba (2019: 11) through identity, adherents of religions do not only have a feeling of pride in being adherents and are proven through religious practices, but also feel that they have become part of a living system that has clear and firm rules. Unfortunately, religion can also be seen as a sensitive aspect of life. According to Betari and Jony Eko (2018: 19) religion is very vulnerable to experiencing the effects of Rejection Sensitivity. This rejection is closely related because religion is one of the primary social identities that has the power as a belief system that is not falsified according to its respective adherents. Every adherent of a religion believes that their religion is true and considers other religions to be wrong. Thus giving rise to in-group superiority and derogation of out-group beliefs (David Johnson, 2014: 245). This then often results in inter-group

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conflicts that affect social rejection based on religious identity.

More crucial issues can also affect the loss of faith in religion. Based on research conducted by Rizkita Imanina and M. Akhyar (2018: 18) that identity exploration often occurs at the age of Emerging adults and increased doubts about religious beliefs are more likely to be obtained from parents, thus directing emerging adults towards religious distrust. This is where the importance of the role of parents in building religious identity in children. As expressed by Galuh Prawitasari (2019: 84) the transition period from childhood to adulthood allows adolescents to experience a change in identity towards several domains of life, including the domain of religion. At this time then a teenager takes a role in building views that have been formed since childhood into abstract reasoning which is manifested in the form of questions about religious truths obtained since childhood.

The inner thirst for religion as a teenager is indeed difficult to fulfill, this situation made RA Kartini insult religion and its customs. Kartini's understanding of religion became part of her experience and internal confrontation with what happened at her time. R.A. Kartini is known as one of the figures who introduced many theological issues. As a critical religious adherent who has high spiritual depth, she does not even hesitate to make claims against religious phenomena that are inappropriate. according to Aryo Putranto (2022) Kartini's journey to study religion then brought her together with Muhammad Sholeh al Samarani, known as KH. Sholeh Darat or Mbah Sholeh Darat.

R.A Kartini's repentance process took place. The beginning of Kartini's hijrah journey started with her meeting with Kyai Sholeh Darat (Nasar 2021). Slowly but surely, the soul that was rebellious at first, and stubbornly held on to its ideals, increasingly disappeared over time. This is in line with Nadhifah (2017) who tries to express Kartini's ideological views in criticizing Islamic religious education methods which she saw as doctrinal during her lifetime. Moving on from that, the idea of a more inclusive and pluralist Kartini's religious journey has become a necessity, with the hope that society can take lessons from Kartini's religious struggle to be open to existing multiculturalism. Especially more on respect for the dignity of an independent human being. Therefore it becomes important for the author to elaborate more on this issue.

2. Literature Review

Literature review understood as a theoretical study that has existed before on the same argument, but has a different perspective or different way of considering discourse. Through previous research studies, it can be seen the differences between the author's research and previous relevant research. Based on the title raised by the researcher, there are studies related to religious identity. Some of these studies are as follows:

First, research by Rizikita Imania and Muhammad Akhyar in 2018 with the title "Description of the Formation of Religious Identity in Emerging Adult Religious Disbelievers". The discussion in this research is to examine the exploration of identity before entering adulthood. One of the things explored is religious beliefs about religious beliefs, where increasing doubts about religious beliefs obtained from parents, directs emerging adults towards religious mistrust. The results of this study indicate that the process of identity formation experienced by the subject is not only seen from the presence or absence of a process of exploration and achievement of commitments, but also external roles that play a role in emerging adults, namely the role of parents and the role of the social environment.

Second, research by Sinta Rahmadania, Achmad Junaedi Sitika, and Astuti Darmayanti in 2021 with the title "The Role of Islamic Religious Education in the Family and Society". The discussion in this research is to examine the role of Islamic religious education in the family and society. The results of this study indicate that Islamic religious education functions in the family and society to form people who believe in and are devoted to Allah SWT in order to create a good life in the family and society. (2) Islamic religious education is the main foundation as a system of moral and ethical education.

The similarities in this research are in the field of study, namely Religious Identity. Both analyze religious identity with qualitative methods and literature studies as data exploration methods. While the difference lies in the object of research study, in this research the object of study is its relevance in the midst of the domination of nation-state identity.

3. Methodology

The type of research used by researchers is literature review. Library research is qualitative research in (Hamzah, 2020:20) Literature research can be classified as a type of qualitative research because it has strong post-positivist philosophical roots.

Qualitative research is a research technique that produces data in spoken or written form and examines a complete, comprehensive, and holistic view of individual behavior observed in a particular context. Meanwhile, in the context of literature, data is taken from a holistic exploration of library materials, then analyzed based on the framework or philosophical paradigm that underlies it.

The technique of checking the validity of the data in this study is contingency analysis. Contingency technique according to Krippendorf (2004: 206) is a technique that allows researchers to infer relationships from general patterns of events in texts. By using this method, the validity of the data and the course of events can be safely and systematically documented and reviewed by the researcher to provide an accurate and systematic description of the observed data. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique used in this research is content analysis. Content analysis aims to describe and conclude the contents of communication both orally and in writing which contain words, meanings of images, symbols, ideas, themes, and all forms of messages that can be communicated.

Data in a study is a source that will be used as material for analysis in answering research problems. Sources of research are various documents that are primary, secondary, and tertiary (Hamzah, 2020:58). Researchers used two data sources, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are library materials which are the main study or research subject. So in this study the data source used was the book *After Darkness Comes Light* published by Narasi. Secondary data sources are documents that can explain primary data or can be used as a reference as complementary data from primary data derived indirectly and can be used as a reinforcement of primary data. In this study, researchers using books, journals or articles related to the character R.A. Kartini.

3.1 R.A. Kartini in The Shackles of Religious Freedom

Living in an environment full of Dutch trade allies. Kartini had to go through many obstacles. Kartini's fortitude and courage to speak up dispelled some of the fears she had felt for years about accepting Islam. Kartini's inner unrest was expressed in a letter addressed to Miss Zeehandelaar dated 6 November 1899: "Is it true that religion is a blessing for mankind? I often ask myself with doubt. Religion must keep us from sinning, but how many sins have people committed in the name of religion!" (Narasi, 2018: 23). Kartini was very much against people who embraced religion doing actions that did not reflect the love of one another. Be it Muslim or non-Muslim. Kartini strongly criticized this act. To Miss Zeehandelaar dated 6 November 1899 Kartini expressed her views on religion: "I can't tell about the teachings of Islam, Stella. The Islamic religion forbids its followers from discussing it with people of other religions" (Narasi, 2018:23). Another letter addressed to Miss Zeehandelaar dated 6 November 1899: "...actually my religion is Islam, only because my ancestors were Muslim...". In that quote, it is clear that Kartini is a Muslim. But on the other hand, because of the inadequate state of religious education at that time, he admitted that he did not understand the teachings of his own religion. Kartini actually criticized the religious education system which tends to teach religion by taqlid. In excerpts from the next letter he also revealed.

"... How can I love my religion, if I don't know it, I can't know it? The Koran is too holy to be translated into any language. Here no one knows Arabic. People are taught here to read the Koran, but they don't understand what they read". Kartini was desperate because no one could explain to her what she did not understand. This despair was also expressed in a tone of protest in a letter addressed to Abendanon dated August 15, 1902: "... I no longer want to learn to read the Koran, learn to memorize proverbs in a foreign language, which I don't know the meaning of. And maybe my teachers, both male and female, don't understand either" (Narasi, 2018:342). Kartini was dissatisfied with the teacher's teaching method, because the teaching given was dogmatic. Kartini could not love her religion if she was only taught to read and memorize the Al-Qur'an, but she herself did not understand the meaning of everything she read. Criticism of this does not stop. Through another letter, Kartini again expressed her protests.

"... We fasted, starved, did all the things we were told to do. Then the questions arise in our minds, why, for what, for what purpose? These questions keep popping up in our minds. And we say it out loud: We want to know the meaning of the verses of the Koran that we read. What does our prayer reading mean. We want to learn about it. We are sinners – is the Koran too holy for sinners to understand? People are getting desperate, we want to know and no one can tell us. Until then we don't want to do it anymore. We don't want to learn to read books written in a language we don't understand. We no longer want to fast. We didn't want to do anything..."

The above paragraph is included in Kartini's book - *The Complete Writings 1898-1904*, but not in Tot Licht's *Door Duisternis*. This passage was omitted by Abendanon as too sensitive (Cote 2021, 442). The paragraph describes confusion mixed with anger. Kartini seemed to want to get out of the bounds of philosophical questions, but nothing could help her. In fact, he also admitted that he did not understand himself because of his poor religious education at that time. This made Kartini distance herself from Islam, this distance also allowed her to frequently critically question religion. Rationality is needed so that someone is firmer in accepting the truth of something.

3.2 R.A Kartini and Islamic Religious Education

Kartini was a feudal woman who had easier access to European knowledge than Islamic religious knowledge. Very little knowledge of Kartini about Islam. To interpret the Arabic language alone he is still difficult. However, in this case, Kartini could not go out to study religion. There was only disappointment in him because he could not understand the meaning of his religious teachings, especially the meaning contained in the Qur'an. For Kartini, it was as if Europeans were supporting women's freedom in obtaining education. Until finally Kartini founded schools in Jepara and Rembang which could not be separated from the important role of Europeans.

Kartini always believed that education for Bumiputera was very important. And women became the main subject of education. She believes that educated women will educate their children in a more advanced way. Kartini had a great interest in advancing education among the natives. In a letter dated January 21, 1901: "Women as supporters of civilization! Not because women are considered capable of that, but because I myself am also very sure that from women there may be great influences, good or bad that will have big consequences for life: that she is the one who can help raise the level of human decency the most" (Narasi, 2018: 123)

No wonder Kartini criticizes religious education methods that do not support increased understanding. as a smart woman, she protests against educational methods that do not support change for the better. Kartini's aspiration to become an educator is not only external education, but she also pays close attention to the inner. In the same letter, Kartini also stated that: "An educator must also maintain the formation of character ... often I hear people say, that from one person the mind naturally becomes refined, noble. But from my observation, that is not always the case. Civilization and intelligence are not yet a guarantee for decency... Indeed, there are many, even so many of them who strive for intelligence. But what has he done for the formation of their character? There's nothing there!" (Narasi, 2018: 123)

For Kartini, women will one day become mothers, she will be the first educators for the children she has given birth to. If the mother is good, then the baby will have a good body. So, educating prospective mothers is very important so that they can influence their children in the future. It is Kartini's struggle that takes a glimmer of light from Europe that does not conflict with Islamic teachings. The education that Kartini aspires to is education that does not only study a religious science, but also emphasizes moral values. If human morals are noble, love is created between fellow creatures without having to sacrifice religion.

Kartini's views on religion and God began to develop, especially after she had the opportunity to have discussions with her correspondents. Kartini's interest in religion grew rapidly as she faced more and more existential problems. Whether it is related to personal, family, or community issues. Kartini needed spiritual support as support and justification for the choices she made. Kartini's criticisms of religion do not mean that she insults and hates Islam, let alone leaving Islam. This can be read clearly in the letter addressed to Mrs van Kol dated 21 July 1902: "About religion, I will tell it at length in the next letter... Madam, don't hesitate, rest assured that we will always adhere to our current religion... I hope you will receive grace, so that one day we can make our religious form worthy of liking in the view of people of other religions" (Narasi, 2018: 324).

The impression of Kartini's religious upbringing can be seen from her response to Nellie van Kol, a Christian who tried to convince Kartini to convert to Christianity when Kartini expressed her suffering over marriage problems. In the excerpt of the letter, Kartini blatantly adhered to the belief she embraced at that time. For Kartini, religion is not a barrier to maintaining ties between nations and cultures. Because this kind of Universalism supports Kartini's thinking. This view of religious universalism can also be seen directly from several of Kartini's letters. Letter addressed to Dr. Adriani dated July 5, 1903: "We don't care what religion a person embraces or which nation he belongs to, a noble soul is still a noble soul, and a virtuous person is still a virtuous person. God's servant is in every religion, in the midst of every nation" (Narasi, 2018: 482).

This sentence implies that religion is not so important for humans, the most important thing is to do good. Almost the same expression was re-written by Kartini in a letter addressed to E.H. Zeehandelaar dated November 6, 1899: "We are all brothers and sisters, not because we are parents, but because we are the children of the Father of His Son, who reigns above the sky" (Narasi, 2018:23)

religious differences do not reduce mutual respect between them. Regarding the form of religious universalism, Kartini believes that religions should work together for the benefit of humanity. The idea of religion is essentially related to Kartini's interest in contemplating interreligious relations, which is the main challenge to her inner life. Kartini tried to create a basis for universalism that started from the belief in the oneness of God and human brotherhood, where religion was given by God as a mercy so that humans could respect, help and work together.

4. Results and Discussion

Identity of one's belief in something that is final and is believed to provide protection (Sukardi, 2003: 34). Religious identity is not just a physical identity. Religious identity requires a commitment. Unlike other identities, which can change at any time and according to the wishes of the identity holder. Religious identity requires consistency. Kartini was able to maintain her religious identity through a letter dated 6 November 1899, where she declared her religion to her best friend, Miss Zeehandelaar. Although in other letters he expressed criticism of the religion he embraced. Many people choose Islam because they feel more rational and more in accordance with their conscience, but not a few also choose Islam because they have to, there is no other choice, also because their parents have chosen to be Muslim first. Even though following traditions also has good effects, because Allah SWT has given the potential of reason and conscience to humans, it would be better if these two potentials were grateful for by maximizing their use.

The dogmatic belief emerged that religion is a ready-made set of theoretical packages sent down from heaven and valid anytime, anywhere. Criticism of religion, more precisely theology, is the basis of criticism, namely criticism of the society in which religion was born and the world view of those who view it upside down. Kartini, through several of her letters which are published in the book *After Dark Comes Light*, criticizes many theological issues. She expressed her criticism of the Al-Qur'an, which at that time could not be translated into various languages, while not all people could understand Arabic. The criticism even made him reluctant to read the Koran. Kartini could not accept that someone was taught the Qur'an, but what she read was not understood.

Based on this, Kartini only wanted to explain her anxiety about the state of religion and society at that time. These criticisms are intended so that people can live a better life by understanding the Qur'an. This is in line with the word of Allah SWT in QS. Shad verse 29 follows:

كُنْتُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبْرَكًا لِيَذَّبَ رَوْحًا أَنْبِيَاءَ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Meaning: (This Qur'an is) a book that We sent down to you (Prophet Muhammad) which is full of blessings so that they live up to its verses and people who have common sense get a lesson. (Religious Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020)

When reading the Qur'an, one must not only recite each letter sequence, pronunciation order and sentence in a verse, but must be accompanied by contemplation (*tadabbur*) on the meaning of these verses, and it is even better if the teachings and stories -the stories contained in these verses are used as *ibrah* (lessons) and implemented in everyday life. Because people who only read the Qur'an without *tadabbur* and think, actually this is nothing but worshiping with His words.

The description of the situation experienced by Kartini is in line with the opinion of Yusron Masduki and Idi Warsah (2020: 217) who state that doubts about religion that a person has received since childhood are a sign that a person has religious awareness. Unbelief is usually caused by mountains of doubt or doubts that can no longer be overcome. Various environmental factors greatly affect the level of trust and experience gained by each individual (Herwansyah and Faza, 2022: 42). Someone who expresses doubts about God or religion, at that time is actually not confused or in denial, but is protesting to God because of the situation he is facing. It could be that the anxiety is caused by several things, such as disappointment and too much suffering that has accumulated. So desperate for the justice and power of Allah SWT. In line with Muhammad Nasib Ar-Rifa'i (1999: 88) who stated that there is no greater doubt than doubt about religion. The real parable is when hypocrites who used to have faith, then they get light. Then they negate faith with hypocrisy, so that they fall into doubt. According to Abdurrahman Wahid (2019: 48) like culture, religion is a defense system in the sense of being a set of beliefs and attitudes that will protect a person against doubts and indecision. So it becomes natural to express opinions and each individual has the right to accept or reject it.

Doubts about religion begin to be felt by someone after they reach maturity in growth and intelligence, so they can criticize, accept, or reject what is taught to them. However, according to Zakiah Daradjat (2005: 116) there are two things that should not be forgotten, namely that anxiety in religion is very dependent on 2 important factors, namely the condition of a person's soul and the social and cultural conditions that surround him. It could be that one's anxiety and disobedience to God and religion is a reflection of a social situation full of suffering, moral decay, chaos and confusion. Or maybe it is also a reflection of freedom of thought that makes religion the target and trend of secularism.

Meanwhile, Rini Nurul Badariah (2019: 20) argues that apart from the two factors put forward by Zakiah Daradjat, it turns out that the contradiction between religious values and the actions of religious leaders and parents is also a factor that causes adolescents to worry about religion. This is because in late adolescence their religious beliefs become more controlled and thought-based. So, of course, there are many religious teachings that need to be scrutinized or criticized, especially religious teachings received since childhood that are authoritarian from other people or even just religions derived from ancestors. A woman or a mother has a role as the main stronghold in the family. Improving the quality of human resources starts with the

role of women in providing education to their children as the next generation of the nation (Tappil and Taufik, 2021: 171). The crisis of religious values makes the family an institution of resilience in human behavior, religion and family support each other in a stable life. Parents have a big role to internalize religious values to children (Tobroni, 2018: 84). If in one family there are strong religious values, then it becomes a quality family and vice versa.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings in the previous discussion it can be concluded that:

1. R.A.Kartini's religious identity was still Muslim, despite the many doctrines from her correspondence friends and the disappointment that was present in her because she could not understand the meaning of her religious teachings. No wonder Kartini criticizes religious education methods that do not support increased understanding.
2. R.A. Kartini's thoughts Islamic religious education in the family is dominated by the cultivation of moral values in children and openness to religious issues. According to Kartini, religion cannot be practiced only individually, but all religions can be practiced together for spiritual or social activities.

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