

The Critics Of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas Toward The Transcendentalism In Religious Pluralism

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Abstract

*Transcendentalism is one of the streams of religious pluralism, the pluralists of this school assume that this understanding is a way out of interfaith meetings because according to them every religion will meet at an esoteric point, even with different exoteric suggestions. This thought continued to spread, with one of the initiators being Frithjof Schuon from which it really separated the esoteric and exoteric dimensions. From there appeared a Muslim thinker named Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas who dared to criticize that understanding with the perspective of Islam. Departing from the background above, the researcher wants to discuss the concept of Religion in the view of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas which is the basis of criticism of transcendentalism. The purpose of this study is to understand in depth about the concepts of religion in Islam in the view of Al-Attas, and to analyze the Schuon version of the transcendentalism concept and western thinkers, then criticized by Al-Attas so as to get points of weakness in that thought. This study uses a type of library research and philosophical approach with a combination of criticism methods to get the results to be achieved, there are several methods used in this study; analysis-critical. So, researcher wants to examine the concepts offered by Al-Attas in understanding and interpreting a "religion" in Islam, namely the term *dyn*, this conception becomes the basis of a good understanding of religion in Islam, there are at least four main meanings: (1) Debt situation or concern, (2) Submission or surrender, (3) Strength of the Law or Judicial Authority, (4) Natural Will or Natural Tendency. The religious conception of the Al-Attas*

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version is proof of dyn-Islam's perfection. Of course, perfect religion has a complete divine and religious foundation and totality in every aspect. Based on this concept, Al-Attas can criticize the understanding of transcendentalism by using ontological and psychological views. If transcendence is viewed ontologically, 'God' there is only rabb, not Ilah. Then, if the transcendent is viewed psychologically as 'the Unity of God' in the esoteric dimension, in this condition transcendence is an experience or religious awareness.

Keywords: *Transcendentalism, Religious Pluralism, Syed Muhammad Naquib AL-Attas, Dyn.*

Abstrak

Transcendentalism adalah salah satu aliran dari pluralisme agama, para pluralis aliran ini beranggapan bahwa pemahaman ini merupakan jalan keluar pertemuan antar agama, karena menurut mereka setiap agama kan bertemu pada satu titik esoteris, walau dengan dimensi eksoteris yang berbeda. Pemikiran ini terus menyebar, dengan salah satu penggagasnya adalah Frithjof Schuon yang darinya benar-benar memisahkan dimensi esoteris dan eksoteris. Dari sana muncul seorang tokoh muslim yang bernama Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas yang berani mengkritik pemahaman tersebut dengan prespektif Islam. Berangkat dari latar belakang di atas, peneliti ingin membahas tentang konsep Agama dalam pandangan Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas yang mana menjadi dasar kritik terhadap transcendentalisme. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami secara mendalam konsep agama dalam Islam pandangan Al-Attas, serta menganalisis konsep transcendentalisme versi Schuon dan pemikir barat, lalu dikritisi oleh Al-Attas sehingga mendapatkan poin-poin kelemahan pemikiran tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian library research dan pendekatan filosofis dengan perpaduan metode kritik guna mendapatkan hasil yang ingin dicapai yaitu membongkar pemikiran seorang filsuf dan pemikir muslim bernama Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. Terdapat beberapa metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yakni: Analisa-Kritik. Dalam pembahasan ini, peneliti ingin meneliti konsep yang ditawarkan Al-Attas dalam memahami dan memaknai sebuah "Agama" dalam Islam yaitu term dyn, konsepsi ini menjadi landasan pemahaman agama yang baik dalam Islam, setidaknya ada empat makna utama yaitu: (1) Keadaan berhutang atau keberhutangan, (2) Ketundukan atau penyerahan diri, (3) Kekuatan Hukum atau Kuasa Peradilan, (4) Kehendak Hati atau Kecenderungan Alamiah . Konsepsi agama versi Al-Attas tersebut menjadi bukti kesempurnaan dyn-Islam. Tentunya, agama yang sempurna mempunyai fondasi ketuhanan dan keagamaan yang menyeluruh dan totlitas dalam setiap aspeknya. Berdasarkan konsep tersebut, Al-Attas dapat mengkritik pemahaman transcendentalisme dengan memakai pandangan ontologis dan psikologis. Jika transenden dipandang secara ontologis, 'Tuhan' di sana hanya bersifat rabb bukan ilah. Kemudian, jika transenden dipandang secara psikologis 'Kesatuan Tuhan' pada dimensi esoteric, pada kondisi ini transenden merupakan pengalaman atau kesadaran agama.

Keywords: *Transcendentalism, Plurlism , Syed Muhammad Naquib AL-Attas, Dyn.*

Pendahuluan

The existence of Religious Pluralism because Plurality experiences the transcendence of real material towards the abstract; from a group of people who have different backgrounds to the principle of life that must be believed and held.¹ The concept of transcendence is the basis for the formation of religious pluralism, referring to which religion will meet at one point, leaving aside the "Truth Claim" even removing it. Though the "Truth Claim" is one of the special characteristics of each religion, "the concept of truth or Truth Claim" which is considered as an absolute, which means "truth" for a group may not necessarily be the "truth" for other groups.²

In its development, the plurality of religion is growing rapidly, has the power to be able to live and still exist in the midst of the hustle and bustle of living in society and state. In a plurality of religions, religion often has a double face, having dualism: the first, religion as a source of peace that can reconcile. Second, religion as a chaotic source can even kill a life.³ The author sees that the dual face of religion is born of religious pluralism, an incorrect understanding of the essence of religion itself and about the phenomenon of plurality and pluralism needs to be reviewed. Especially after the emergence of the work from the thoughts of Fritzjof Schuon *The Transcendent Unity Of Religion*,⁴ the book examines the theory of unification of religion in the esoteric dimension, the theory was preceded by Schuon in his thesis on the relationship between religions, that all things have similarities as well as differences with other things.

The existence of the least equation in the presence of these forms. While there is a difference because it is a form of diversity. According to him, the analogy is the same as the world religions, if there are no similarities, we (humans) will not call it religion, if there is no difference then we will not call it a compound word "religions",⁵ in the future, this transcendent theory was criticized by one of the

¹Aris Angwarmase, et. al, *Prospek Pluralisme Agama Di Indonesia: Harapan Untuk Keadilan, Perdamaian dan Keutuhan Ciptaan*, (Yogyakarta: Institut Dian/Interfedei, 2009), 6.

²*Ibid.*, xxvi.

³*Ibid.*, xxii.

⁴This book was translated into Indonesian with the name "*Mencari Titik Temu Agama-agama*" published by Pustaka Firdaus, 1994, while the writer used the 4th edition, 2003.

⁵Fritzsof Schuon, *The Transcendent Unity of Religion*, (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1975), 11.

great Scientists-*Ulama* and Muslim thinker in Islamic thought known as Al-Attas.

Syed Naquib Alatas offers a different understanding of religion than western understanding, especially if it is interpreted in the word "religion", which according to him is inappropriate and only a small fraction represents the meaning of "dyin / deen" in Islam. Of course, the notion of Al-Attas religion brings fresh air to Islam which will become the antithesis and criticism of western understandings such as: Liberalism, secularism, pluralism etc. Al-Attas's criticism of secularism has been widely discussed in other Islamic thinkers as a drug from secular diseases, and there is nothing wrong if we bring a deeper understanding of A-Attas criticizing Pluralism, in this case, there is the term Transcendent Unity of religion as the wrong one stream of Religious Pluralism offered by Schuon above.⁶

In this case, from the side of the study of religious studies, the author looks at what side makes Pluralism very dangerous, which is then responded to by Al-Attas and his own views on the Trendendetalism of the flow of Religious Pluralism. Al-Attas uses psychological and ontological approach for this case.

Dyn Concept of Al-Attas

The term 'religion' that is derived from the Sanskrit, of two syllables, namely; "a" which means no, and "gama" meaning is garbled. So "Agama" means not garbled, or a form/conditions has order and regulations to achieve a certain goal or direction⁷.

Researcher argues that the term is very narrow, in contrast to the concept contained in the *din* that often meant in general as a 'religion' in the form of an extended trust or faith today, but the real concept of religion understood and the explanation are very much different from the *Din* in Islam, because conception (religion) is built on the history of 'religious' in the West,⁸ especially if viewed Islam with the reference in the language of the United Kingdom as 'religion' that if pulled would derived from the sentence "*religi or*

⁶Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysic of Islam An Exposition of The Fundamental Elements of The Worldview of Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 9.

⁷M. Ali Imron, *Sejarah Terlengkap Agama-agama di Dunia*, (Yogyakarta: IRCiSod, 2015), 10.

⁸S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekulerisme*, transl. Khalif Muammar, (Bandung: PIMPIN, 2011), 63.

religere” meaning *return ties*, or *pay attention to carefully*,⁹ ‘binding’, and the reality of the bound attitude and the basic ‘binding’ is not clearly contained in the term, because the concept of ‘bond’ that refers to ‘the bond between man and Gods’ does not mean like a real and fundamental aspect in human life. The special structure is increasingly blurred and confusing when referring to ‘Lord of hosts’.¹⁰ Then in its history ‘binding’ was carried out by ‘coercion’ by one group (lottery) to the general public, for example the existence of colonization which was one of its ‘Gospel’ motto of the spread of religion through invasion to other countries, therefore there was resistance, rebellion and the demand for freedom (Liberalism) is basically not based on self-reliance,¹¹ it can be seen that the meaning of religion (from language and other conceptions) is very limited and confuses ‘absurd’, focused on the ‘restraining bond with coercion’.

Then to get a good understanding of *Dyn* must be returned on the description of the Qur’an that has already formed a unity of meaning because the *dyn* is derived from the Arabic language which is the language of the Qur’an itself. As for the business of Al-Attas in interpreting the basic sense of the term and get *dyn* (he) takes from *Lisanun Al-Arab* of Ibnu Manzur, printed in Beirut, in 1968, has 15 volumes.¹²

Term *dyn* with roots in Arabic DYN has a wide meaning that although opposites of each other, but actually corresponds conceptually. The meanings of being a ‘unity’ which includes ‘whole’ intentions who want to be delivered in the word *din* which is inseparable from each other. This showed a strong definition of the nature of human beings is clear evidence will be clarity, detail, and authenticity in search-revealing the truth.¹³

According to Al-Attas, *din* has several main meanings, at least when it was concluded in the four meanings that make the whole picture ‘unity’ to suit the context meant about conviction, belief, behavior, and teachings are followed by each individual Muslims, who transformed into a ‘*Umat*’ as a whole in an actual religion, which

⁹M. Ali Imron, *Sejarah Terlengkap Agama-agama di Dunia...*, 10.

¹⁰S.N.M. Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekulerisme...*, 61.

¹¹S.N.M. Al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin*, (Malaysia: ISTAC, 2001), 36.

¹²S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekulerisme...*, 63.

¹³*Ibid.*, 64.

is different from a mere 'religion',¹⁴ which is perfect and complete,¹⁵ which is then referred to as *Islam*.¹⁶ Islamic perfection is indicated by the descent of the last verse as the closing of Alquran's revelation, namely:

... الْيَوْمَ يَسَّرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي الْيَوْمَ
أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا...

...This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.¹⁷

The four main meanings of Din according to Al-Attas view and based on Alqur'an dan *Lisanun Al-Arab*, are (1) Debt or debt state, (2) Submission or surrender, (3) Strength of Law or Judicial Authority, (4) Natural Willingness or Trend,¹⁸ researcher will explain as follows:

1. Dyn As 'Debt or Debt State'

Din has a verb in the form of Funds (Dana) which give meaning to *the circumstances of the Debtor*, and other meanings that are concerned about *the debt*, which in part mutually contradictory. Here explained that at the time of a person in a State, is called an indebted (*da'in*), obliged to surrender the State bowed himself in and obey the law or rules in the indebted, Any debtor could be said as *dai'in* under certain circumstances. In this definition also brings specific meaning, namely the situation is one who had an obligation or *dayn*, which corresponds to a judgment or *daynuna*, and the awarding of the penalty or *idanah*. And then, then Al-Attas lays out that man owes to God almighty God as the creator, the preserver and the Rangers exist (existential) to human remains (intangibles). Because on the intangible human his substantial, which then give God exists (create):¹⁹

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ ۚ ۲۱ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ
مَكِينٍ ۚ ۳۱ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ

¹⁴S.N.M Al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin...*, 73.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁶S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekulerisme...*, 64.

¹⁷Al-Qur'an, Surat Al Maidah (5), ayat: 3.

¹⁸S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 55.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 68.

عِظَامًا فَكَسَّوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ
الْخَالِقِينَ ٤١

And certainly, did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.²⁰

2. *Dyn as Surrender or Submission*

When human contemplation is aware of the helplessness and neglect, with the feeling of losing money with the basic characteristics of its debt is the creation and existence of the creature. From that, it will create a condition of knowing God and acknowledging as *Rabb*, creator, compassion and other attributes of God. Of the two meanings of this *dyn*, man is aware that there is an obligation to pay, to return debts. And because humans don't sound anything, finally he gives himself to *Rabb* and his owner to humiliate himself before him, but with the intention of fulfilling his orders and prohibitions. This return is like a rain process that continues to provide water and return it back. The other phrase is 'enslaving himself'. The phrase 'dana nafsu' means 'giving oneself' in service.²¹ Service in this concept is *Khidmah* which implies that humans provide services freely, but do not call it *khadim*, because this context is only for *Mamluk* or *malik* (*king*) as the meaning of ownership. Servants in this concept are also referred to as '*abid*' because service is given to God in absolute terms, the service is called worship. This surrender is a voluntary and conscious submission.²²

Surrender was carried out actively and human initiative as a servant ('*abd*) to submit himself to God as the essence of the real self with owners without coercion. In other words, "surrender" is the active movements that occur in man, which is derived from the submission of the heart, and then proven outwardly (researcher: worship the physical look of the eye), and keep in mind that submission different with 'compliance' since compliance just saw

²⁰Alqur'an surat Al-Mu'minun (23), ayat: 12-14.

²¹S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 57-58.

²²*Ibid.*, 60-61.

the subject to something though her heart is demanded. So the level of 'surrender' is higher than on the 'submission'.²³

3. *Dyn as Judicial Authority or Strenght of Law*

All of the above, the definition may only arise and may occur in a society that is constituted and engaged in marketing in the town called *mudun* or *mada'in*. Then came the *Medina* which means a city, having a *judge*, *ruler* or Government, also known as *dayyan*. From here, Al-Attas emphasizes that there are important linkages between the *Medina* conceptually with the origin of the word *din*, the meanings of this gives an overview with regard to social life in a regular civilization, have laws, regulations, justice, and authority.²⁴ When humans are conscious and voluntary to submit to God, it is called *The True Submission*,²⁵ but it turns out this is a natural tendency, humans as creatures who have debt, are weak helpless, and worship God as a form of service, all of which will be felt as normal obligations and part of scientific will. In the religious context (Islam) humans have a natural condition called *Fitrah*.²⁶ *Fitrah* humans are worshiping Allah as His command below:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ٦٥

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.²⁷

As for *Fitrah*, it can be meaningful as a pattern based on God's law, the Sunnah of Allah and it is an order that fights chaos. In Islam, the true nature of man is to become a *Khalifatu-Allah* who is not bound by a social contract, or adheres to a social doctrine, even though he lives in a social life with all social laws, but actually it is a private contract that is maintained in his soul between himself as servant and God as Rabb-God. And actually, from the beginning, this was a contract made by every soul. The problem is, in every soul, there are positive and good qualities, which each other compete with each other, but at one point the soul knows which means of salvation in

²³S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam & Filsafat Sains...*,17.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 65.

²⁵S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam....*, 60.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 60.

²⁷Alqur'an surat Az-Zariyat (51), ayat: 56.

the form of religion (Islam).²⁸

4. *Dyn as Natural Inclination or Natural willingness or Trend*

The meaning in this context *Dyn* deals conceptually with the *maddana* that has the intention of building, foster city, build civilizations, purify, humanizing, and from this was born the term meaningful *tamaddun* civilization and improvement in social culture. From the main definition of *State debt*, the researcher obtained more ideas about thoughts as mentioned above. From that notion, there is an assertion about 'how to act or way of behaving' that is required in the regulations or the authority contained in the concept of *din*, *Medina* and *tamaddun*. It is a tendency that is natural from a human being to establish a law-abiding community, as well as trying to realize a fair Government.²⁹ And actually the human being as a 'miniature kingdom' for himself, he is like *Mahall* or *makan* (place), for *dyn*, which is called a country or *madinah*.³⁰

From the above, there can be seen that the 'term' of Western culture business brought influence, renew, and make changes. The change took place on the dimensions of the understanding, not just the outside aspect, which implicates the life of the people, even on the foundations of the universe.³¹ Thus, the Muslim should return the use of the term and the usage of the terms in the Qur'an, which uses the updated Arabic language and in Islamization with the use of birth and inner (thorough).³²

Moreover, if Islam as a view of life-not just the world's view of human consciousness towards the physical world with his involvement it is historically, socially, politically and cultural or commonly referred to with the term in the Arabic phrase *Nazrat al-Islam li Al-Kawn*. This phrase is not suitable to describe the Islamic *Worldview*, because in fact, Islam is not based on philosophical speculation largely deduced from observations of the sensorial experience of data, of all the things that can only be seen by the eyes, or *kawn*, which is the world's experience the sensorial world and the things of creation.³³

²⁸S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekulerisme...*, 176-176.

²⁹S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*,67.

³⁰S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekulerisme...*,177.

³¹S.N.M Al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin...*, 99.

³²*Ibid.*, 102.

³³S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 32.

Islam is different from other religions, the difference can be seen from the foundation of revelation that has since been explained. Because in general, what 'West' is understood about religion is 'culture', they understand that the essence of religion is 'culture'. Obviously this is a mistake, they forget that religion comes from God, the implication is the use and application of the understanding into Islam, which will certainly be a statement that '*Islam is a product of culture*' but just the opposite, Islam as the only religion that is in *tanzil* by Allah SWT created '*Islamic blindness*' in the world. His understanding is the culmination of truth that can be achieved by human beings, liberating mankind from ignorance, misguidance, and peace.³⁴

In the concept of *Din al-Islam*, the revelation was instrumental in bringing the same message those are; recognize, acknowledge, and worshiping God (*ilah*) were actually the real true God, without equating him with all allies, opponents, or similar, or character a likeness to him; and as a confirmation the final truth that brought the last Prophet, Muhammad, as done by the previous prophets before.³⁵ this concept is encouraged so that the reader understands Al-Attas's reason 'why he can criticize the concept of Transcendence'.

Religious Pluralism

According to the bearers of the concepts of pluralism and multiculturalism, they claim that the two concepts are not (parts) of relativism and in no way bring (teach, spread) the idea of relativism. they also have an official definition of "pluralism" (not religious pluralism). Pluralism is a theory in tune with relativism and suspicion of truth, sometimes understood as a doctrine that: there is no right opinion, or all opinions are equally true.³⁶ here researchers see contradictions between claims and definitions they have, as this hypothesis is one of the weaknesses of the concept of religious pluralism.

Dagobert D. Runes on Dictionary of Philosophy,; pluralism *this is the doctrine that there is not one (Monism), not two (Dualism) but many ultimate substances. From the earliest Ionian fundamentals of air, earth,*

³⁴S.N.M Al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin...*, 64-65.

³⁵S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 36.

³⁶Hamid Fahmy Zarkasy, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam (Gerakan bersama Misionaris, Orientalis dan Kolonialis)* (Ponorogo: CIOS ISID Gontor, 2nd edition, 2010), 104.

fire and water, to the hierarchy of monads of Leibniz, the many things-in-themselves of Herbart and the theory of the many that "works" in the latter day Pragmatism of James and others, we get a variety of theories that find philosophical solace in variety rather than in any knowable or unknowable one. See Dualism, Idealism, Materialism, Monism, Political Philosophy (Laski). -- L.E.D.³⁷

Religious pluralism is the result of efforts to provide a foundation for Christian theology to be tolerant of non-Christian religion,³⁸ in other words, that religious pluralism is present because Christians are intolerant people before the coming of this concept, then forced to other people to follow the rules of the pluralists.

Al-Attas was able to formulate various concepts in Islamic point of view, one of which can be antithesis the Western thoughts like Religious Pluralism that is being discussed by researcher at this time. The use of the word 'view' a meaningful glance, researchers would like to express the views of Al-Attas about Religious Pluralism or 'how Al-Attas looked at Religious Pluralism, in particular, the concept of transcendentalism owned the West.' As a form of introduction and connectedness to the next part, the researchers present the opinions of the disciples of Al-Attas, an 'ideological' son who was also graduating ISTAC Malaysia, namely Dr. Hamid Fahmy Zarkasy, M.A, M.Phil, he argues that:³⁹

"Religious Pluralism is a theological innovation and form of thought brought by the liberal theologian, liberal groups within these religions, not to mention the claim that their religion is perfect and absolute, in the application of religion, then this argument its argued that all religions are the same point and in the same validation."⁴⁰

Researcher see that the consequences of Religious Pluralism theologically dangerous, there are no limits to the faith because of all the same term or quote Schuon as "Transcendent Unity in religion", the concept is similar with exposure to Dr. Hamid Hamid

³⁷Dagobert D. Runes, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1942, Available at <http://www.ditext.com/runes/p.html> accessed on 15.00, 2 March, 2019.

³⁸M. Legenhausen, *Pluralitas dan Pluralisme Agama*, Trans. Arif Mulyadi and Ana Farida, (Jakarta: Shadra Press, 2010), 5.

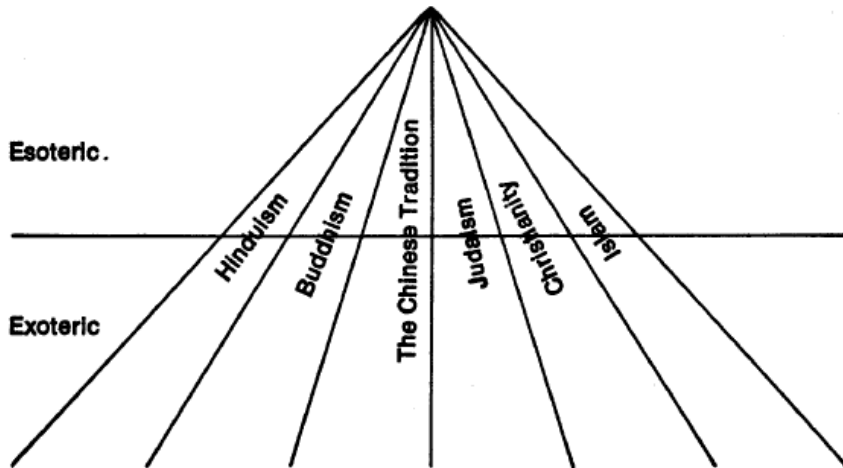
³⁹Hamid Fahmy Zarkasy, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam...*, 104-105.

⁴⁰"*Pluralisme agama adalah inovasi teologis dan bentuk dari pemikiran yang dibawa oleh agamawan liberal, kelompok liberal dalam agama-agama ini, tidak lagi mengklaim bahwa agama mereka adalah sempurna dan absolute,.... dalam aplikasinya terhadap agama , maka pandangan ini berpendapat bahwa semua agama adalah sama benarnya dan sama validnya". Ibid.*

Fahmy Zarkasy, M.A M.Phil Next, Understand Pluralism at least has two different mainstream but its end is the same, namely: first, Transcendent unity of religion; the protest is a stream or flow in the form of protest against the currents of globalization, and second, Global theology as a major supporter of the hands and the length of the current globalization movement which in fact is the spearhead of the Westernization movement at this time.⁴¹

Trancendentalisme

Understanding the core in *Transcendent Unity* in religion belongs to the order form contains Schuon 'religious' with two separate dimensions. Huston Smith in the preface of this book describes the form of the separation of the dimensions:⁴²



(Picture 1.1: Exoteric and Esoteric dimensions of Separation)⁴³

The dichotomy and dimensions above are the main discussions of the Transcendent flow, a brief explanation of each dimension:

a. Exoteric Concept

Exoterism in Schuon's view is an external, formal, dogmatic, ritual, ethical and moral aspect of religion. This dimension is in

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 105.

⁴²Frithjof Schuon, *Mencari Titik Temu Agama-agama...*, 11.

⁴³*Ibid.*

cyberspace, the cosmos is created. God is only regarded as the creator and maker of law, not as the essence of divinity.⁴⁴ Schuon thinks that all paths are right and legitimate, there is nothing wrong with each individual 'salvation'. Trust in this context is very relative, this notion rejects religious universality because the doctrine is considered impartial and does not benefit all parties, because according to Schuon there is no owner of the truth in which none of the facts are unique and certainly axiomatic.⁴⁵ The effect of this concept is very clear, that is, there should not be a truth claim, because every 'form' of religion becomes the path to salvation.⁴⁶ But it must be known that exoterism is God's will as it is, not to blame, but is needed.⁴⁷

So exoterism is a dimension that already exists, rejecting the truth claim from one circle, all roads can be used as a path of truth.

b. Esoteric Concept

Esoteric are things that only a few people can know about and do from a certain group of adherents. So, Esoterism is a view whose essence is aimed at an intellectual elite with a limited number, in the esoteric dimension, there is the possibility of opening esoteric universalism, but can only be done if there is a contract between civilizations in it.⁴⁸ Esotericism is like a soul, and exoterism is the body of religion. Exoteric is different, but all religion is believed to originate from the same esoteric point, it exists above the exoteric dimension as a meeting point for all religions.⁴⁹ Its essence is total truth, which is infinite, not displaced by 'physical' or outside world. This understanding is sought after, one of which is the concept of *tasawuf wahdatul wujud*, understanding the hierarchy of forms for Allah is even misunderstood as a hierarchy of forms of religions. This understanding that only takes half of the Sufi will cause misunderstandings and contradictions, especially from different exoteric dimensions based on speculation, mythology, and culture in the world, because "he said" putting all beliefs together.

⁴⁴Hamid Fahmy Zarkasy, et.al, *Pluralisme Agama: Telaah Kritis Cendikiawan Muslim...*, 14.

⁴⁵S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 64.

⁴⁶Hamid Fahmy Zarkasy, et. al, *Pluralisme Agama: telaah Kritis Cendikiawan Muslim...*, 15.

⁴⁷Frithjof Schuon, *Mencari Titik Temu Agama-Agama...*, 49-51.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 79-81

⁴⁹Hamid Fahmy Zarkasy, et. al, *Pluralisme Agama: Telaah Kritis Cendikiawan Muslim...*, 16-17.

Schuon argues that theoretical ideas are not the same as the whole of their own truths, because theoretical ideas do not only cover one aspect that is intrinsic or not essential,⁵⁰ he himself argues that a theoretical idea does not cover total freedom, because the idea results from speculation, and only concentrate at one point in the truth of esotericism, even though the truth of exoterism influences the level of esotericism. Then, there are several probabilities of the criticism that Al-Attas gave to transcendentalism below.

Al Attas Critics Toward Trancendentalism In Religious Pluralism

If the 'transcendent' meaning refers to ontological condition does not include one of the ten categories, the Lord is, strictly speaking, not God's religion (examples: *the gods*) in the sense that it may be there is something called 'unity' religions on the level. At the level of a God known as the *rabb*, not as *gods*; and recognize God as the Lord does not immediately imply the unity or equality in the recognition it deserved the truth will be known.⁵¹

If the transcendent meaning refers to the psychological conditions at the level of experience and awareness of the 'beyond' or 'pass' mostly among men, the 'unity' is experienced and understood in transcendent level that is not religion, but experience and religious consciousness, as for the *religious experience* is a form of response to the presence of God who is perceived by a religious community,⁵² or the response is reflected in the presence of strong religious emotions can only be achieved on a relative basis by a few individuals among humans, such a response in the form of admiration, respect, or '*mysterium et fascinosum*' in God.⁵³ However, religion is actually meant for the whole of mankind, but on one side of the human as a whole can never achieve the 'one point' that is the same or at the level of the transcendent which occurred at the point of Confluence and unity between religions.⁵⁴

Al-Attas explained in the point that it is;

"Only Islam that recognizes and affirmative God's Oneness in

⁵⁰Frithjof Schuon, *Mencari Titik Temu Agama-Agama...*, 45.

⁵¹S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 35.

⁵²Ajat Sudrajat, *Pendidikan Agama dan Kesadaran Beragama*, (Yogyakarta: Staff UNY, 2014), 1-5.

⁵³Djamari, *Agama dalam perspektif sosiologi*, (Jakarta: DEPDIKBUD, 1988), 68.

⁵⁴S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 35.

absolute terms without having to arrive at a level transcendent to do so; without confusing the recognition and affirmation of the traditional forms of belief (belief) and practices described as 'religion'; without garbled the introduction of the affirmation and cultural creations and inventions by ethnic interpreted in imitation of a religious revelation"⁵⁵

The Exoterism Context makes a vague understanding, which is finally confined by various outward consequences of its own limitations, that limitation is comprehensive in the form of religion in the exoteric sphere,⁵⁶ very different from Islam, which is not limited to the alhiriah aspect, because it relates directly to spiritual aspects.

So, in a perfect religion, of course, there is the conception of the Godhead is perfect. Researcher was written and explained the concepts of religious foundations, according to Al-Attas previous section. As continuing Al-Attas explained again the concept of God in the context of Din-al-Islam as resistance or criticism of transcendentalism. The perfection of the religion of Islam is the result of what has been in the reveal God to the Prophet Muhammad as the last Prophet/Prophet of the end times according to the Qur'an. God is God Almighty, eternal, Omnipotent, and eternal. Its existence is of the essence, he was the one in the essence, do not require *division* or *separation* in his essence.⁵⁷ So, when his servants wanted to 'meet' or reach a high level of faith in Islam without any need to distinguish between dimensions of faith because it is all one unit that can be way up on the stage.

God in Islam is not a place of quality or quantity, not divided into parts, or something that is composed of constituent elements, the absolute Essence. He is transcendent, with his transcendence that does not make the transcendence not make, unable for Him to be present everywhere (Omnipresent).⁵⁸ Presence and his absolute, regardless of the creature is, in this context of God (Allah) will always be there, without having to reach the point of *esoteric* ala Schuon.

As the researchers write above, then if there is no Division of the horizontal dividing line between Esoteric and Exoteric, of course Islam had a better conception of *Transcendentalism* in the understanding of *Pluralism Religion*, it's *keeping a continuous vertical*

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁶Frithjof Schuon, *Mencari Titik Temu Agama-Agama...*, 53.

⁵⁷S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 37.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 38.

line from the exoteric to the esoteric; a continuous straight line that we identify as a 'Straight' would be Islam-Iman-Ihsan,⁵⁹ without then the existence of inconsistent in three stages of spiritual exercises, so that the reality of transcendental truth known in the case of Islam can be found, achieved, and accessible to everyone.⁶⁰

Then this is very different conception of the Division as Schuon to be said that any religion can reach the same point even if the path is different, because in the stages of spiritual version of Islam expressed by Al-Attas 'Islam' itself that the only basis, The offer for humans to achieve 'religious experience' of Islamic verse, so that it can get to the next stage, according to the three levels described above. Tasawwuf is a part of the Islamic religion, it is an external and internal aspect, Sufism is evidence of the practice of Shari'ah or the law ordered by Allah SWT. What then is an exaltation of Ihsan from an 'abd in the form of *Ibadah* (worship), when in this condition 'abd will be illuminated by intellectual wisdom so that the spiritual understanding of reality will be built with wisdom and knowledge that Allah ST gives directly to 'abd.⁶¹

If Islam is Exoteric, it is certainly not possible for scholars, highly knowledgeable people to carry out defiance of Islam and certainly always hold fast, have faith in their religion, as well as with other religions (eg Christian).⁶² The Transcendent concept does not apply to servants and people who are true faithful, because, in religion, we need a condition that is 'totality', the totality of carrying out and doing its worship to its God. The dimensions given by Schuon contradict it all because physical and metaphysical things are always

⁵⁹There are other scholars who divide the subject of Islamic teachings into three, namely: faith (aqeedah), Islam (syari'ah), and ihsan (moral). The basic classification of Islamic teachings is based on a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, namely: "One day when the Prophet (PBUH) with the Muslims came a man approached the Prophet and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is meant by faith? "The Prophet replied, "You believe in Allah, the angels, the books revealed by Allah, the day of meeting with God, the apostles sent by God, and the occurrence of the events of human resurrection from the grave to be held accountable for the actions of God ". The man asked again, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is meant by Islam?' The Prophet replied, 'You worship God and do not associate with Him, establish fard prayer, issue zakat assets, and fast in Ramadan'. The man again asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is meant by ihsan?' The Prophet replied, 'You worship God as if you saw Him. If you are unable to see it, rest assured that God sees your deeds of worship' ... (Al-Bayan, Kitab Iman, No.5). See E-book *Kerangka Dasar Ajaran Islam*, (Yogyakarta: UNY, 2011), 4-5.

⁶⁰S.N.M Al-Attas, *Prolegomena To The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 37.

⁶¹S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekulerisme...*, 149-150.

⁶²Anis Malik Thoha, *Tren Pluralisme Agama*, (Jakarta: Perspektif, 2005), 117.

side by side cannot be separated from each other. in religious life there is Comprehension, exclusivity and the total condition of our faith in worshipping God. So it is not limited to the term religion is an institution of trust or "institutionalized religion" but also includes all philosophies and views of life or known as Weltanschauung or worldview.⁶³

If it is said that the esoteric dimension is absolute and can bring together all the teachings, but what if one of the teachings at his command says "We are the right", for example, *Islam Inna dina inda Allahl al-Islam*, which is true in God's eyes is Islam. Of course, as a community, it must be appropriate for the order, otherwise, we will violate and be punished. Of course to reach the esoteric dimension, to live with God, Islam has its own way and it will not be the same as other religions or teachings. And all those beliefs can only arise when it has gained wisdom, namely the knowledge of wisdom that contains truth for itself does not fail any more.⁶⁴

It can be seen that the concepts of esoterism and exoterism which are found in transcendentalism are still in 'dimensions' of doubt, speculation without strong ground. Schuon and other pluralism figures always seek justification so that their understanding is acceptable even though the essence of the 'justification verse' must be eliminated and even rejected. And to understand the concept of dyn in Islam, one must achieve wisdom in order to understand the concept clearly without hesitation, and therefore Al-Attas rejects the vocabulary of Arabic which has the essence of meaning according to the Qur'an without carrying the terms of truth as contained in religious pluralism.

Closing

The criticism described by Al-Attas gives new insights into the term 'god', from which researchers know there are differences in meaning between *rabb* and *Ilah*. If *rabb* only means recognizing God in a mere 'know' attitude with the acknowledgment that is not strict, confession on *rabb* is not based on faith. So this is what exoterism experience in the flow of transcendentalism. The god means acknowledgment of God, with proper recognition based on

⁶³*Ibid.*, 126-127.

⁶⁴S.N.M Al-Attas, *Islam dan Filsafat Islam...*, 64.

faith, without any intention of making an affair. It signifies the One Godhead. Furthermore, Al-Attas's criticism of the transcendence which is viewed from a psychological point of view, he mentioned that transcendence can only be done and achieved by some people, so what is called transcendence is not a religion but only as experience and religious awareness, and this condition is very relative can be achieved by some humans.

In Islam, there is no dichotomy between spiritual and physical (exoteric and esoteric) because both are complementary and influential. Of course, what is done on the exoteric dimension will have implications for the esoteric dimension, from which we can conclude that if the exoteric is different then the esoteric results are also different. So, from there we will not find what is called transcendent unity in religion. And if drawn to the origin, the Ummah must understand the meaning of religion in Islam, namely *dyn*, which has a comprehensive and perfect meaning as the contents of the last verse of Alqur' an which are revealed to the prophet as a sign and tell that Islam has been revealed perfectly. So for us, Muslims have an obligation from Him to believe (*Iman*) in Allah and the Prophet, and have Islam well, so that they can reach maqom Ihsan instead of the 'transcendent' meeting point.

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