

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Study

The doctrine of religious pluralism has a negative impact on social life, especially religious life. Because basically, religious pluralism is a problem for all religious communities. Pluralism is a very serious challenge and danger for religious communities as well as carrying extraordinarily dangerous implications for humans and their religious and spiritual lives; Another danger is the conflict between individual and group radicalism which will take root and give rise to other conflicts. Religious pluralism cannot be separated from the Western colonial agenda through the issue of globalization. <sup>1</sup>Among the people, other religions such as Hindus, also fought back and stated that religious pluralism is the ideology of 'radical universalism' which essentially states that "all religions are the same".<sup>2</sup> From here it can be understood that several thinkers from other religions such as Hinduism, do not agree with the doctrine of religious pluralism.

Frithjof Schuon developed the concept of the "transcendent unity of religions" to explain his belief that all religions are different paths to the same God.<sup>3</sup> In the context of Frithjof Schuon's thought, diversity of religions and beliefs reflects transcendent richness that transcends doctrinal or dogmatic differences. In Schuon's view, pluralism is not an end goal, but is a continuous process and requires a deeper understanding

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<sup>1</sup> Khalif Muammar, *Islam dan Pluralisme Agama*, (Kuala Lumpur: CASIS, University Teknologi Malaysia), p. 45

<sup>2</sup> Musa Asy'arie, *Filsafat Islam Sunnah Nabi dalam Berpikir* (Yogyakarta: LESFI, 2001), p. 56-58

<sup>3</sup> Frithjof Schuon, *Light on The Ancient Worlds*, (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004), p. 36 .

and respect for diversity. Thus, Schuon considers it important to study religions and other beliefs in a correct and in-depth way, a broader and more integrated understanding of transcendent reality.

Hamid Fahmy explains in his book, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam*, that this understanding comes from the West. In the West, religious pluralism is one of the agendas for liberalization of thought. Represents theological innovations and final forms of thought brought by liberal religionists. Liberal religious groups in these religions no longer claim that they are perfect and absolute.<sup>4</sup> It is associated with the postmodernist movement, and is embraced by those who accept postmodern philosophical schools, especially deconstructionism.

Furthermore, the idea of religious pluralism is often juxtaposed with the idea of *waḥdatul wujūd*. Usually what is referred to is the statement of Ibn 'Arabi, the initiator of *waḥdatul wujūd* in *Fushus al-Hikam*,<sup>5</sup> Ibn 'Arabi conveys an understanding of *waḥdatul wujūd*, which suggests that all beings are manifestations of one divine reality.<sup>5</sup> While this could be interpreted to support pluralism, Ibn 'Arabi also emphasizes that although different religions and traditions have their own truths, there is one higher truth that unites them all.

The key evidence often referred to is that although religions differ in form and practice, their spiritual essence leads to a single source, namely God. However, this could mean that pluralism in the sense that all religions are equal in truth and there is no one higher truth is a view that

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<sup>4</sup> Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam* (Gerakan Dakwah Gabungan, Orientalis dan Kolonialis), (Ponorogo: CIOS, Cet. I, 2008), p. 101

<sup>5</sup> Ibn 'Arabi, *Fusûs al-Hikam wa Ta'liqât 'Alayhi*, Juz: 2, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabi, 1946), p. 60.

may not be entirely in line with Ibn 'Arabi's thought.<sup>6</sup> Thus, although he recognises diversity, Ibn 'Arabi also invites us to understand that it all leads to a higher divine unity, so there is an aspect of exclusivity in his understanding of spiritual truth.

Regarding the reflection between Religious Pluralism and *Wahdatul wujud*, *Wahdatul wujud* Ibnu 'Arabi emphasized that all existing existences depend on God who is obligatory. This nature is likened to a mirror in which there reflects God.<sup>7</sup> This understanding is seen by some circles as a misguided understanding, because it identifies nature with God.

Misunderstanding of Sufi expressions is very possible. Because every Sufi has his own way of expressing his Sufi experience. The accusation that Ibn 'Arabi promoted the ideology of *wahdatul wujud* in harmony with pluralism is not supported by a single statement in Ibn 'Arabi's work.<sup>8</sup> Misunderstandings in understanding Ibn 'Arabi's expressions are more caused by non-comprehensive studies and manipulation of text interpretation, studies that are full of hidden interests. However, this study shows that Ibn 'Arabi has a high commitment to upholding the law of Muhammad SAW,<sup>9</sup> and only recognizes the truth of the religion of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, namely Islam. His views on the basic values of Islam, monotheism, and *shari'at* and his views on plurality are the same as the views of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibn 'Arabi, *Fusûs al-Hikam....*, p. 65

<sup>7</sup> M. Amin Syukur, *Konteks Tasawuf*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Mahasiswa, 2002), p. 120

<sup>8</sup> Putri Endrika Widdin, "Konsep Kebahagiaan dalam Perspektif Al-Arabi." *Thaqafiyat*, Vol. 19, (2018), p. 97-98

<sup>9</sup> Hanafi Noer, *Sufisme Abadi: Kearifan Kritis Para Sufi*, (Jakarta: Dar al-Jamil), p. 41

authoritative scholars. It acknowledges the truth of Islam and rejects the truth of other religions.

That is, Ibn 'Arabi is against religious pluralism.<sup>10</sup> Starting from this study, it is necessary to instill caution in concluding an assessment of Sufi ideas so as not to cause misunderstandings and ultimately lead astray as has been done by religious pluralists. Therefore, here the researcher will examine whether the statement of the proponents of religious pluralism belonging to Frithjof Schuon that Ibn 'Arabi's views, especially about *Waḥdatul wujūd* can legitimise religious pluralism.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

1. What is Ibn 'Arabi's *Waḥdatul wujūd* and Religious Pluralism according to Schuon?
2. Is *Waḥdatul wujūd* a basic for religious pluralism?

## **C. Purpose of Study**

1. To know *Waḥdatul wujūd* according Ibn Arabi interpretation and Schoun's conception of religious pluralism.
2. To know it is true that *Waḥdatul Wujud* is the foundational concept of religious pluralism as claimed by Schuon.

## **D. Significance of Study**

### **1. Theoretical Significance**

- a. As a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in Aqidah Islamic Philosophy, Ushuluddin Faculty, Darussalam Gontor University.

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<sup>10</sup> Fatima Usman, *Wahdat Al-Adyan*...., p. 18

- b. Contribute to the concept of understanding the pure Oneness of God for facing contemporary challenges and strengthening belief by understanding the thoughts of Muslim philosophers.

## 2. Practical Significance

- a. This research tries to understand the concept of *Wahdatul wujūd* according to Ibn'Arabi with Religious Pluralism in the modern era, which is the thought of Frithjof Schuon. With the concept of the absolute existence of God and covering all existing phenomena according to the Muslim philosopher Ibn'Arabi integrated with a mistaken understanding of Frithjof Schuon's religious pluralism.
- b. To examine the shortcomings and advantages of Frithjof Schuon's concept of Religious Pluralism and juxtapose it with the concept of *Wahdatul wujūd* Ibn'Arabi and prove to religious pluralists that Ibn 'Arabi's understanding of *Wahdatul wujūd* is in line with pluralism is a lie by doing a deeper analysis by interpreting the expressions Ibn 'Arabi about the plurality of religions by relating it to the meaning of *wahdatul wujūd* itself.

## E. Literature Review

A journal written by Abdul Halim Rofi'ie, a student of the Faculty of Law of the University of Brawijaya in the journal *Ulul Albab* Volume 13, year 2010 entitled " *Wahdatul wujūd dalam Pemikiran Ibnu 'Arabi* ", This article discusses the meaning of *Wahdatul wujūd* according to Ibn 'Arabi but there is no discussion about religious pluralism according to Frithjof Schuon which will be correlated with the meaning of *Wahdat Al Wujud* or the mystical philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi where all roads lead to a straight

path to God and view idols or non-Muslim Gods only as manifestations of that reality. In line with the discussion that has been displayed, it is related to the theme of the writing that the researcher will present because the researcher wants to deepen the meaning of the understanding of *Waḥdatul wujūd* either from Ibnu 'Arabi himself or from another Muslim perspective.

Journal written by Syamsuddin Arif Lecturer at Darussalam Gontor University in the *Kalimah Journal of Islamic Thought* Vol. 6, no. 15 entitled " *Konsep Waḥdatul wujūd Ibnu 'Arabi*" , this article discusses the concept of *Waḥdatul wujūd* in general according to Ibn 'Arabi but there is no discussion about the meaning of *Waḥdatul wujūd* conceptually and the meaning of religious plurality according to Frithjof Schuon which could be interpreted as *Hadith* because he is in a form that previously did not exist and then did, with the discussion that has been presented relating to the theme of the article that the researcher will present, the researcher means that the meaning of the concept of *Waḥdatul wujūd* in this journal is taken only from several Sufi figures and Muslim philosophers without taking it from the perspective of Western philosophers.

Journal written by Mukhlis Alumni of the Religion and Philosophy Study Program, Postgraduate Program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, entitled " *Legalitas Agama menurut Ibnu 'Arabi* ", This article discusses the form of legality and its connection with *Waḥdatul wujūd* according to Ibn 'Arabi, but there is no such thing yet. discussion about the order of human creation which is very loose in accepting the validity of a religion and the meaning of *Waḥdatul wujūd* conceptually according to Ibn 'Arabi, with the discussion that has been presented relating to the theme of the writing that

the researcher will present. The researcher stated about partiality which is in line with rejecting religious unity and equalizing all religions.

Journal written by Mohammad Harir Saifu Yasyak Researcher Center for Knowledge and Islamic Civilization Studies in Kalimah journal Vol. 15, No.1, March 2017 entitled " *Dampak Doktrin Pluralisme Agama untuk Kehidupan Sosial*", this article discusses the meaning doctrine of religious pluralism. The issue of diversity or plurality in religion becomes interesting because disturbing religious plurality is an effort to claim the truth absolute between mutual religions leaving background and impact on social life, with the discussion that has been presented relating to the theme of the article that the researcher will present however not yet there is discussion about meaning religious pluralism according to Frithjof Schuon, whose doctrine is pluralism. This equipped for become boomerang for meaning *Wahdatul wujūd* according to Ibn 'Arabi, who is a researcher put that forward journaled. This is in line with understanding that doctrine pluralism has a very big impact on life religious, i.e., partiality in responding that pluralism is an understanding that emphasizes theological unity and is not in accordance with the *Shari'ah*.

Journal written by Matthew E. Gladden Cambridge Student entitled "*Pluralisme Agama*." This article discusses the paradigm of religious pluralism which tends to understand religious unity towards One in accordance with the ideology of relativism, but there is no discussion regarding the causes of the emergence of religious pluralism in particular and the impacts that occur with this understanding of religious pluralism, with the discussion that has been presented relating to The theme of the article that the researcher will present means that the meaning of the concept of *Wahdatul wujūd* in this journal is taken only

from several Sufi figures and Muslim philosophers without examining the perspective of Western philosophers in an agreement that not all religions promise salvation.

#### **F. Theoretical Framework**

The approach used is a philosophical approach. Meaning *Waḥdatul wujud* of Ibn 'Arabi and some opinion philosopher Muslims to get used as glass comparative and as answer from meaning religious pluralism of ideas Frithjof Schuon that what is alleged to understand religious plurality is not in line by meaning *Waḥdatul wujud* according to Ibn 'Arabi with interpreting Ibn 'Arabi's expressions about the plurality of religions by relating them to the meaning of *waḥdatul wujud* itself.

Diversity is a reality that cannot be denied. A lot of attention from religious scholars is faced with the phenomenon of *truth claims* which is the basis for the growth of exclusive attitudes among religious communities.<sup>11</sup> The reality of truth claims so far has created barriers of belief and faith in religious plurality. All religious adherents are required to reflect and reconstruct their self-understanding in conditions of plurality which are becoming stronger with the dynamics of religious movements.<sup>12</sup> as an effort to raise awareness towards unity in differences between religious communities.

The essence of pluralism is basically single, and that single thing continues to exist without stopping in giving birth to plurality. Therefore, pluralism cannot be avoided, let alone rejected. Although

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<sup>11</sup> Bambang Tejkusumo, *Dinamika Komunitas Sebagai Sumber Belajar Ilmu Sosial*, Geoeducation, Vol. III No.1, March 2014, p. 39

<sup>12</sup> Syahrin Harahap, *Teologi Harmoni* (Jakarta: Prenada, 2011), p. 152



people tend to reject it, because pluralism is considered a threat to their existence or the existence of their group.<sup>13</sup> Although as quoted from pluralists that in fact, rejection of pluralism is the same as rejecting life itself.

Quoted from *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* regarding the well-known opinion of Frithjof Schuon because of Schuon's inclusive view towards world religions, he developed a draft reason pluralism that focuses on unity transcendence of religions.<sup>14</sup> Unity transcendent is related concepts with experience man in looking for more meaning in life high and reaching spiritual awareness. This concept becomes relevant in the Indonesian context because of religious diversity.<sup>15</sup> Schuon said that unity transcendent is a concept that can become based on understanding and overcoming conflict between religions.

In another form, this philosophy can be explained as follows: Creatures are made and their existence depends on the existence of God, as the cause of everything that exists other than God. Existence other than God would not have existence, if God did not exist there is<sup>16</sup> It is God who exists. This is made to only have existence that depends on the existence of God.<sup>17</sup> Which is made no have exists. Whoever exists only God.

With thereby only There is One existence, that is God's form.

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<sup>13</sup> Budi Handrianto, *Islamisasi Sains (Upaya Mengislamkan Sains Barat Modern)*. Jakarta: INSIST. (2019), p. 11

<sup>14</sup> William, C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al- 'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany; State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 7

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>16</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an Tafsir Maudhu Terhadap Berbagai Pertanyaan Umat*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), p. 20

<sup>17</sup> Husaini, Moulvi SAQ. 1977. *Ibnu al-Arabi*. Lahore: SHM Ashraf (Jakarta: Gaya Media Pustaka), p. 359

Being besides from God's form is form shadow. This form consists of four types, namely: *first*, Allah SWT; *second*, Universal Reason which is also called *al Haqiqat al Muhammadiyah*; *third*, the Universal soul which emanates to all souls; and *fouth* the Universal Body, also called *al Haba'/hayula*.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, this research uncovers the concept of *Waḥdatul wujūd* Ibn 'Arabi regarding the unification of existence between God and creatures, it can be understood that the concept of *Waḥdatul wujūd* Ibn 'Arabi is not in line with the meaning of religious pluralism according to Frithjof Schuon.

## **G. Methods of Research**

### **1. Kind of Research**

This research methodology takes a descriptive quantitative approach since concepts and reality must be described to be revealed and understood. This strategy aims to shed light on how perception affects Muslim women's fashion purchases in Yogyakarta. The descriptive character of this research involves documenting, evaluating, and interpreting the existing circumstances to depict the situation as it is, devoid of engineering or human intervention. The goal of this study's descriptive analysis is to gather as much information as possible about how two independent variables and one intervening variable affect one dependent variable, specifically the impact of lifestyle,

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<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Husyan al-Thabatabai, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Volume XIV (Beirut: Muassasah al-Ilmi li al-Mathbu'at, 1991), p. 323

religion, and fashion trends on decisions to buy Muslimah clothing in Yogyakarta.

## 2. Source of Data

Research is conceptual *Waḥdatul wujūd* Ibn 'Arabi as an answer to overcome the problem of understanding religious pluralism by using data.

The primary data source in a study is from reference original figures made by making observations from books written by Ibn 'Arabi and Frithjof Schuon. Data is collected directly from the first source, namely about *Waḥdatul wujūd* Ibn 'Arabi and Frithjof Schuon's religious pluralism.

Secondary data sources taken from journals that discuss about *Waḥdatul wujūd* of Ibn 'Arabi and religious pluralism according to Frithjof Schuon and books other people's work is discussed, especially about two characters.

## 3. The Technique of Data Collection

In formulating data collection techniques, the author uses the method:

### a) Inventory

The author collects all works, books, journals, and from all sources that have authoritative truth in discussing the concept of *Waḥdatul wujūd* Ibn 'Arabi and Frithjof Schuon's Religious Pluralism.

### b) Critical evaluation

To strengthen the results of the research analysis, the author makes a comparison between expert descriptions of Ibn 'Arabi and Frithjof Schuon.

c) Synthesis

By determining the opinions that enrich and suffocate, the author will design a synthesis to classify between good and inappropriate.

#### **4. The Technique of Data analysis**

In this research the author uses analysis with several procedures that can support the researcher's work. The procedure in question is:

a) Descriptive method

The analysis carried out in this method starts with general thoughts, and then comes to specific conclusions.

b) Critical Analysis Method

The analysis was carried out to find out *Waḥdatul wujud* on Ibn 'Arabi and his correlation with Religious Pluralism according to Frithjof Schuon.

#### **H. Systematic of Writing**

The writing of this research is divided into four chapters consisting of several sub-chapters according to the material to be studied. To facilitate a comprehensive understanding of this scientific work, it has been systematically arranged as follows:

**Chapter I:** Discussion related to Introduction, Problem Background, Problem Formulation, Research Objectives, Literature Study, Theoretical Framework, Research Methods, Systematic Discussion, and Bibliography.

**Chapter II:** This discussion contains two sub-chapters. *First*, we will discuss the biography, brief history, and basic thoughts of Ibn 'Arabi as well as the concept of *Wahdatul wujud* starting from the definition, goals and ways of achieving it according to Ibn 'Arabi's perspective. *Second*, biography and history short of Frithjof Schuon, History and developments and concepts base religious pluralism, factors, and methods overcome understand religious pluralism.

**Chapter III:** This chapter contains a fundamental discussion or basic ideas of the research subject. This chapter is an analysis of Ibn 'Arabi's thoughts regarding the concept of *Wahdatul wujud* and its relevance to facing contemporary problems, namely Religious Pluralism, both from the perspective of Sufis and Islamic law and from the West.

**Chapter IV:** The last chapter is the conclusion which contains a brief statement about the research results of the concept of *Wahdatul wujud* Ibn 'Arabi with Religious Pluralism. And Suggestions: opinions about the possibility and use of further research results.