# DISMANTLING HEDONISM IN RELIGIOUS RITUALS: Re-seeding Religious Values Towards Social Piety

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to explore the true values of religion that are a reference for humans in religion. This study produces findings indicated by the number of adherents of a religion that merely prioritize personal piety rather than social piety. In their eyes, personal piety seems to be the culmination of religiousness to deny the dimension of social piety that should be a practical area of authentic religiousness. Whereas, Islam is a religion of hanif and rahmatan lil alamien that protects all mankind in its various variants. Islam moves in two dimensions, one with the other inseparable. However, the two must be correlated and fused in one intact frame. The dimensions are vertical and horizontal. These two dimensions, like souls and bodies, depend on each other to reach the complete peak of existence. Because the perfection of religiousness will have a positive impact on the surrounding environment as a form of balance between the two. Religion is not solely for the sake of God Almighty. However, religion is acting praxis in the real world, as the perfect management of religiousness for the achievement of the configuration of personal and social piety. The method used is a qualitative approach to literature studies with descriptive types.

Keywords: Hedonism; Religious Rituals; Social Piety

#### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan dan mengeksplorasi nilai-nilai sejati agama yang semestinya menjadi rujukan dalam keberagamaan. Penelitian ini menghasilkan temuan yang mengindikasikan jamaknya pemuluk agama yang semata mengedepankan makna kesalehan personal dan mengesampingkan kesalehan sosial. Di mata mereka, kesalehan personal seakan menjadi puncak dari keberagamaan sehingga menafikan dimensi kesalehan sosial yang semestinya menjadi wilayah praktis dari pucuk keberagamaan yang otentik. Padahal, esensi keberagamaan dalam Islam bermuara pada nilai-nilai hanif dan rahmatan lil alamien yang mampu mengayomi seluruh umat manusia dalam ragam dan variannya. Islam bergerak dalam dua dimensi, yang satu dengan lainnya tak terpisahkan. Namun, keduanya berkorelasi dan berkelindan menyatu dalam satu bingkai yang utuh. Dimensi dimaksud adalah vertikal/personal dan horizontal/sosial. Dua dimensi ini, bagaikan ruh dan jasad yang saling bergantung untuk mencapai puncak paripurna bereksistensi. Sebab, idealnya kesempurnaan keberagamaan akan memiliki impact positif bagi lingkungan sekitar sebagai wujud dari keseimbangan antarkeduanya. Beragama tidak semata-mata untuk kepentingan Tuhan Yang Kuasa. Tapi, beragama adalah bertindak praksis dalam dunia nyata, sebagai pengejewantahan keberagamaan yang hakiki demi tercapainya konfigurasi kesalehan personal dan sosial. Adapun metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu pendekatan kualitatif studi pustaka dengan jenis deskriptif.

Kata Kunci: Hedonisme; Ritual Agama; Kesalehan Sosial

#### INTRODUCTION

The basic concept of this paper is based on trying to bring back a balanced religion between personal and social piety. The foundation is that religious is not merely personal and ignorant interests for the benefit of mankind. Religion is not enough just a complete self-restoration but also continues on social reconstruction. This is perhaps the original mission of the religious mandate to man as a social being who is considered capable of carrying out all forms of religious moral messages to the surrounding environment.

The combinative religiousness between these two basic elements (personal and social piety) is essential for the common good of others and the next generation. Because religion means manifesting any potential moral good that has settled in the person, then reflected in the form of moral-ethical actions that bring a breath of fresh air in the frame of *rahmatan lil alamien*. Without this moral-ethical impulse, religion only becomes a region of barbarism that is unable to greet other beings in the neighbourhood. A simple example of such a religion can be seen in the religious way of terrorists who are unable to tolerate other people's religion so that people who are different from themselves are considered infidels and need to be exterminated.

Religion thus, is actually what concerns the author in compiling and studying our religiousness so far. Because at first glance, the religiousness of today's society is more concerned with personal religion that is oriented towards self-interest, and it is confined to not knowing about religious issues in general. This has actually long been confused by the *kiai* Achmad Dahlan in practising the essential religion by taking inspiration from the Surah Al-Ma'un. Personal religiousness will not carry the original mission of this religion as mandated to man, instead, personal religiousness will only bring narrowed exclusivity with a dwarf non-concern for religious issues. Unlike the social religion, it will carry this religious mission full of concern for the fate and existence of the social environment.

Socially religious does not merely see the personal self as a subject or object of religious restoration. Furthermore, social diversity means inviting humanity as a whole to jointly repair itself towards social piety in all its aspects.

So, social diversity is a counter to the phenomenon of personal diversity that is empty of meaning. Why is that, the author sees diversity personally as only giving birth to a total hedonism that never

knew of the suffering of other human beings out there. They just enjoy, are happy, satisfied and even spree with religiousness. Thus, they only wallow in the euphoria of religious rituals that do not affect whatsoever the common good. See, for example, the number of Indonesian pilgrims whom each year can ration at least 218,150 people each, that's another with those who are still on the waiting list. Ideally, these pilgrims after returning to the country can have a positive impact on the surrounding environment to show that religion is not only a show of self but also a social show by bringing the common good.

Religious ritual hedonism can be interpreted as a mindset, attitude, action, behaviour, ordinances and habits that are entirely proud, complacent, feel the most righteous, feel the holiest and spree with the religious system. There is never a concern for suffering, poverty, inequality, hunger, injustice and all the other social aspects that do require our involvement as religious beings with a mission of social reparations for the common good. This of course requires a new understanding of religion, to then be practised in the real world. So that religion becomes proportionally connected between vertical and horizontal dimensions.

It is phenomena like this that attract enough of the author's attention to be scientifically examined to the surface as a form of imbalance in understanding and applying religious moral-ethical messages that should be a common ideality.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach to library research with a descriptive type. The source of data from this research is in the form of books that specifically discuss religion and religious in a personal and social context. While collecting data, the author explores the Quran surah Al-Ma'un as a practical paradigm for interpreting personal and social piety. On the other hand, surah Ali Imran verse 112 is also the author's reference in establishing the concept of the meaning of piety. Furthermore, in data analysis, the author uses a description technique by systematically outlining the above arguments from both the interpretation of the Quran and other book authors.

#### **DISCUSSION**

### A. Concepts of Hedonism and Rituals

Democritus (400-370 BC) was a Greek philosopher and the first to introduce hedonism. According to him, pleasure is the main goal in life (Motte, 2019). Thus, it is the view of hedonists that the ultimate goal and the one to be achieved in existence rests solely on pleasure. There is no other foundation that accompanies one's thoughts, attitudes, and actions in interpreting one's way of life, except to simply stop at the measure of pleasure at which there is no end in sight. It becomes a central goal that overrides other values of the various goals that should follow.

On the other hand, hedonism in religion can be seen in the practical realm, for example in the selection of clothing brands that a person uses by using a certain type only for the sake of being more attractive and fantastic, so that the substance in dressing to cover the *aurat* or religious guidance disappears from the original purpose (Pamungkas & Ratmono, 2021).

Meanwhile, worship is a system of rites, feasts, and ceremonies that have characteristics that are always repeated periodically. Adoration fulfils the desire of its adherents periodically to strengthen the bonds between them and the sacred things on which they depend (Durkheim, 2006).

Therefore, religion can be articulated as a unified system of beliefs and practices related to the sacred, that is, things that are set aside and forbidden –beliefs and practices that unite all those who adhere to and believe in them into a moral community (Durkheim, 2006). This is in harmony with Robert N. Bellah, that religion is a set of symbolic forms and actions that connect man with the final stage of his existence (MS, 1996).

Durkheim and Bellah's perspective above is very comprehensive considering that in its definition it explains two dimensions of religion that must solidly converge in a solid individual, namely: belief and practice. It should be underlined that belief, as the author emphasizes in this paper, is concerned with vertical dimensions. Meanwhile, the broader practice is related to real action for religious believers in the surrounding environment. So the coherence between these two is the focus that the author raises as a central issue in this work.

#### B. The Phenomenon of Religious Hedonism

The example is seemingly religious religion even though it contains a tendency to social prestige is a title that is pinned down after the hajj. We know that the number of Muslims every year who perform the hajj is always increasing in quantity. Hundreds or even tens of thousands of rations of prospective pilgrims (CJH) were given to Indonesia by the Saudi Arabian government.

It's just that what needs to be considered is that the number of CJH is always increasing every year, but it does not also bring moral winds to Indonesia as the country with the largest Islamic population in the world. That is to say, the greater the number of pilgrims who have finished worshipping and fulfilled their Lord's call in Mecca and have returned to the motherland, should bring great changes to the social and physical environment, with indicators of improving moral and social life in general. However, the reality is that religious life has been increasing, but it has also been accompanied by an increase in behaviour that is contrary to religious principles; KKN, crime, criminality, murder, rape, fornication, name profiteering, illegal logging, buying and selling people, buying and selling positions and so on.

The second phenomenon is the construction of mosques and forums for recitation assemblies as well as symbols of religiousness. All of this can be said to be a mere symbol if its existence does not have a better impact on human behaviour and society in general. Almost on every street corner, we see a magnificent mosque building, but who would have thought that behind that the magnificent mosque was never crowded to worship every time, and it only became a lonely dead chunk of worshippers. Such a fact can be proved by the rampant demand for the construction of mosques on the outskirts of the highway which almost exist every three to four kilometres (Durriyah & Anwar, 2017).

The mosque stands majestically as if it were a museum that is only visited every season by worshippers, not as originally expected to always be a place that is crowded with religious broadcasts to a moral and noble society. Ideally, the construction of the mosque is accompanied by the awareness of the people to flock to enliven it, so that the mosque really becomes a place of social change of society in the religiousness system.

If at the substantive level, religion is unable to provide an alternative and change people's lives from the nature of barbarism, this kind of religion only becomes a symbol of identity that has no meaning and even moves further away from the true ideals of religion. The way of diversity cannot extend social goodness and piety (Riadi, 2014) to the surrounding environment. It seems more proud of the boulders of mosques that stand everywhere at no small cost, but never proud to enliven the magnificent building for their grandeur and action.

The next phenomenon that is no less interesting is the proliferation of Sharia regulations in various regions that are considered more religious and moral (Jati, 2013). Look, the current result is that sharia regulations do not have fangs to provide the best for the community. It is merely a symbol whose existence is the same as its absence (*ujuduhu ka adamihi*) and is no different from the regulations or laws that did exist before. This all goes back to the perpetrators of the bylaw enforcers. If only for styles, this bylaw is only a fragmentation of a major blunder that does not have any effect on the benefit of mankind.

Indeed, this seems to be the case today, it is present in a vacuum that has no meaning on a practical level, but society seems to be proud of its existence. This is where it is essentially religious when it only looks at and internalizes it from the symbolic and mere sign side without entering the deeper arena of the truly real nature of religion. About this shari'a bylaw, it is interesting to quote the opinion of Abdul Munir Mulkhan as follows.

First, it is imperative to distinguish between Shari'a as a whole of God-revealed Islamic teachings and historical sharia. Second, there is no need for the enactment of historical Sharia into the constitutional and legislative system. Third, the right for all people who claim to convert to Islam to represent themselves in choosing the

constitutions and laws that will govern their lives as citizens (Mulkhan, 2002).

In short, religion symbolically will not come to the essence of the essential truth desired by religion itself. It would not be wrong if Karl Marx wrote and stated that religion as the opium of society is incapable of providing a functional sociological alternative to the interests of society itself, and religion at its tipping point becomes dead at the hands of man himself. It is, then, true that Nietzsche once shouted that god had died from human civilization (Nietzsche, 2003). This is a nil religion that is not functional at all for the community and the surrounding environment.

In essence, religion is not only a dead slogan that has no power controller, but it can overcome everything with every time and space. For example, religion for officials is not to commit acts that are contrary to applicable regulations and the values taught by religion. Religion for the police is not to commit and violate laws enacted by the state and indiscriminately in the rule of law.

Religion for *kiai* is to be a role model or *uswah* for all circles and not to be stuck with practical and sectarian political interests. Religion for academics is to speak according to conscience based on the interests of the ideology of science, not in the interests of power for a moment by being the mouthpiece of the government in diffusing science. Although in the archaeological concept of Michel Foucault's thought knowledge with power is like walking intertwined in the same real world. That is, knowledge can produce power (discourse of power), and power can give birth to knowledge (power of discourse) (Foucault, 2012).

The point is that religion is not only speaking loudly in Mosques, Churches, Temples, Viharas, and Shrines, but furthermore, then that, religion must be able to enter the field of practically seeing, responding to and solving all social and environmental problems that are the main problems of religious people today. Religion is not only a personal consumption like the analogy of people eating ice cream, but religion is to be a caliph on earth with all its positive activities and have a positive influence on the surrounding environment. Religion is not only a matter of heart and mind but more than that there needs to be practical follow-up on the ground as a manifestation of the evidence of our true diversity and as human existence on earth.

Religion is to be a good transforming agent for the universe as a vessel of our being in it. Religion is not only silent in places of worship away from crowds and social problems, but religion is testing all the propositions of our religious understanding by making nature and all its people the objects of our practice of religion (Muhammad, 2019). Religion is not an inner work that is untouched by the confusion of reality outside of it, but religion is capable of solving the problem of the confusion of reality that we shelter in. Religion is both a cornerstone of critical thinking and impracticality. Thinking is to act systematically and act practically to strengthen the critical mind. Thinking and acting are dialectical dimensions that are impossible to

divorce from each other. He will supply each other's strength for the energy of the next steps.

Why are all these phenomena of lame reality the responsibility of those who are religious? Religion is moral, ethical, ethical, a great way of thinking, acting, and morals. How is it said to be moral or ethical, if its existence has never been practised and carried out on the face of the earth between others and the environment? Moreover, it only becomes inexhaustible lecture papers discussed and discussed in various places that are considered sacred.

Religion is thus the work, deeds and practical actions that can be felt by every human being, without having to be distinguished between religion, and what is not. Religion means that it has been finished with symbolic attributes that distinguish one from another. Religion has embraced elements of human identity that often sniff and outwit us into acting humanely towards it. Religiousness is acting humanistically on behalf of human beings by not distinguishing who they are, where they are from, what race they are in, what ethnicity they are, and so on.

### C. Religion and Ritual Hedonism

Do you (people) know who lies about religion? That is the one who rebukes the orphans and does not advocate feeding the poor, Then woe to those who pray, (i.e.) those who neglect their prayers, Those who do riya, and are reluctant (to help with) useful goods (QS: Al-Ma'un, 1-7).

From the narration of the above verse, it is clear the difference between the vertical dimension and the horizontal dimension. Prayers in this verse category fall into verticality, while orphans and the poor fall into the category of horizontal dimensions. This verse explains the phenomenon that there is a human being or society who is diligent in carrying out the religious rites of his relationship with God. However, on the other hand, he never cared about the joints of marginal social reality for which he was also responsible.

They only favour the worship of God, and never know what is happening in the neighbourhood. Supposedly, relationships with God and relationships with others fill each other. Religiosity towards sociality is inseparable. A person's religiousness must be reflected in his or her life of togetherness. In this *surah* it is asserted that prayers that do not encourage the perpetrators to seek to help the betterment of the poor and those who need help such as orphans are futile.

So, the weak or *mustadl'afin* should get priority for those of us who feel religious (Rohimat & Hakim, 2020). This is evidence and the manifestation of the essential diversity following religious guidance. No religion has an interest in God alone, but it must touch on the social realities that are the praxis of religion itself.

In that sense, religion is only in the area of articulation scattered in the discourse of conversation here and there while accompanied by a cup of warm coffee in the style of civet coffee that will be left unattended when the chunk of coffee can no longer be enjoyed. That is, religion with the principle of coffee *cangkrukan* in *Warkop* will not have positive implications for its adherents. Instead, it will only become a burden of identity that cannot be accounted for its existence for itself and the social environment of society. In simple language: Americans are advanced because their behaviour is Islamic, Japanese people are rich because their behaviour is Islamic, while Indonesians are poor because their behaviour is not Islamic (Rakhmat, 1999).

Religion only became a transcendental religion incapable of descending on a practical field where man was supposed to be the target and target of everything. Religion has only become utopian ideas far away and never touches on the issue of reality that should be a wet field of the pragmatic territory of diversity. In other words, Islamic theology is not to be debated, but more importantly than that how it functions in the life of human social reality (Thahir, 2004).

### D. Vertical Dimensions of Religion

The dimension of *hablun min Allah* in religion is a starting point that cannot be ignored for that matter. It is the first step for religious believers to move on to the next journey. We know that man comes from Him and will certainly at his peak return to Him. It is this kind of a breath of constancy that underlies it all not to melt the *hablun min Allah* in all its forms. It is like an umbrella that overshadows us in every step and circumstance. However, also do not forget that not only are we constantly under the umbrella that overshadows, but we need to step into the next arena along with that umbrella as a manifest that we are at home under His protection. Thus, the dimension of *hablun min Allah* so keen and deeply ingrained in every religious human being will radiate concrete steps in applying the spirit of the restoration while under His protected umbrella.

With this, of course, the relevance of *hablun min Allah* is not only for the master of religion, more than that there must be concrete action on the ground as the foundation of the existence of truly religious human beings. How not, *hablun min Allah* invites us all to not just stop there and be satisfied with Him. But the next step is how our religious *dzauq* under the umbrella can also be felt and enjoyed by all mankind and the surrounding environment, whether religious or not.

Hablun min Allah dimension is less than perfect if it is not accompanied by its mate dimension, namely: hablun min annas. This dimension has a more practical and applicable realm than the first realm. It is an epic application of religion in real life. Diversity without hablun min annas will become dry and minus meaning by not having concrete implications for human life and the surrounding environment. Hablun min annas is a physical form of the application of the umbrella analogy above. If you can borrow the term ideology – ideology has lagged – hablun min annas are the foot of how the ideas that will be practised in the field can work as they should. Religious

ideas and the way we are religious need to be applied in the social environment of society and the physical environment. That leg is currently *hablun min annas*.

## E. Horizontal Dimensions of Religion

The hablun min annas dimension is the path and at the same time the way we manifest the diversity of the heavens towards the social earth on which we embody the essential meaning of religion. It is not enough if our diversity only stops at the dimension point of hablun min Allah without being accompanied by hablun min annas. Because God passed down religion to man, not to God. Religion and religion are purely for the benefit of mankind as caliph fil ardl. So, with this, hablun min annas are God's policy in a religious package that cannot be separated from its existence in carrying out religious missions for the interests of mankind and the surrounding environment. This can all be analogous to a human body with two dimensions filling each other; On one side there is the spirit and on the other side there is the body.

It is said to be a perfect human being if these two elements (soul and body) can unite in one whole one another cannot walk independently. he – hablun min Allah – needs to hablun min annas, and also vice versa hablun min annas need to the exist of hablun min Allah. Religion and religion also in the author's frugality need to unite these two dimensions that come together– but for various other things –as if they separate in social destiny for religious human beings. Man only understands it in the form of one of them and marginalizes the other side. This way of religion is what the author thinks needs to be reinvigorated with a critical paradigm approach—especially from the perspective of the social sciences or in nicer terms prophetic social sciences (Wulansari & Khotimah, 2019).

#### F. Two-Dimensional Integration Towards Social Piety

In simpler language hablun min Allah can be translated with the concept of vertical dimensions, while hablun min annas with horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension is purely our relationship with the Almighty. That is, this dimension of religious man looks upwards as a servant of the Lord in Power. While the horizontal dimension of the religious man looks sideways or flattens in the same position as himself. In this degree between vertical and horizontal must blend solidly in the religious man as a manifestation of the manifestation that religion is not only for the sake of God the Giver of religion, but more than that religion is how to provide functional integrative solutions for the benefit of mankind along with the surrounding environment. Religion from a critical perspective is not merely a spiritualistic hedon, but also has a sideways effect as an expression of the religious experience contained within the vertical dimension. At this level of concept, it is necessary to quote Nurcholish Madjid's statement about religious procedures that are balanced between vertical and horizontal dimensions.

Thus, in conclusion, a person is in direct contact with God, personally, and then he should manifest his Divine relationship in a human relationship, socially. This principle is symbolized in prayer: it begins with *takbirat al-ihram* (Takbir that forbids all social actions, during prayer), and ends with *taslim*, greetings, by looking to the right and left or the surrounding environment, as a gesture of self-awareness about this social dimension of life, and as a symbol of humanity (Madjid, 2000).

The vertical dimension has a dual function for human diversity, in addition to functioning as a relationship between the servant and the *khaliq*, on the other hand, it has the function of charging religious energy that can be transmitted to the horizontal region. It is at this level that religious egoism with vertical relationships has a practical meaning that can also be enjoyed by that outside of themselves. Thus, the usefulness of the religious man with his vertical dimension is not solely for himself the *abdun*, furthermore, he distributes his proceeds to the horizontal reality and the surrounding environment by bringing an inclusive divine mission and a *rahmatan lil alamien*. This is where the critical-sociological relevance of a whole religion is with a perfect blend of vertical and horizontal dimensions for religious servants.

Our country is all meat, so people worship meat too much to forget the soul. For example, every day we see, some pray diligently, the hajj every year, but also diligently corrupt, meaning that it is the hajj, the prayer is only meat not up to the spirit. People are screaming everywhere, crying subhanallah-subhanallah and so on, but it's mediocre and unchanged in behaviour. Thinking cannot be just meat, screaming must combine meat and spirit. I see Inul Daratista it's a symbol of the flesh (Noya; interview with Gus Mus on Metro TV).

Religion according to this term is not enough to only have an impact on ourselves and fellow human beings, it must also be able to contribute to the sustainability of the universe as a responsibility for our diversity. If this is indeed what concerns religious people, religion certainly is to make man perfect by carrying out all His commandments. The term *rahmatal lil alamin* (Suryanto, 2017) in religion these days seems to recede in the currents of the times that are more concerned with the greedy desires of humanity that are never finished, and in no way consider the meaning behind the above verse piece.

The passion and refreshment of the essence of religion is an urgent agenda for all of us as religious human beings and have a responsibility to provide the best path for humans and the surrounding environment. To borrow Muhammad Iqbal's term, man is a three-dimensional being with three abilities; that is, awareness of themselves and the world, the ability to choose, and the ability to create (Kursman, 2003).

That is, personal religion is only able to destroy God when he performs his religious ritual practices and is not able to destroy God when he is in the realm of social practice and the surrounding environment. More powerful than that, they do the opposite when the

ritual practice of this religion is in the midst of society. God is in no way involved in religious social activities when it comes to common practices in the social environment of society. This is the meaning of God's death in Nietzsche's philosophy. God is only presented when worshipping and is not presented when in the practices of the social life of the community and the surrounding environment.

Its basic essence, religion and its adherents should be an inseparable whole until the pulse of life. Walking whole is like a roughly human form and the spirit that moves it. He will harmonically walk together achieving perfection with the Divine in every step and heartbeat that surrounds it. If this is the case, then there is no longer any neglect of God's existence in every pulse of life's journey. God is not only presented in the ritual practice of personal religion but God is also presented in every activity outside the personal, aka in the social dimension of society and the environment.

This is the complete edition of the religious practice that is the desire and will of religion itself. So, religion is not divided according to the religious desires of each believer according to self-interest and personal satisfaction. However, religion must be able to unite the two dimensions into a whole and solid whole to achieve perfection with the Divine, the Lord of hosts.

#### CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, the author can conclude that hedonism in religious rituals can be interpreted as a mindset, attitude, action, behaviour, ordinance and habit that is entirely proud, complacent, feels the most correct, feels the holiest and sprees in the religious martyrdom system. There is no visible concern for suffering, poverty, inequality, hunger and all the other social aspects that do require our involvement as religious beings for the mission of social restoration for the common good and benefit.

In a sense, religiousness is not enough just a vertical relationship with the Almighty, furthermore, that religion must be translated in the form of concrete actions and can be felt by all elements of society outside of us. This ending point is actually what the author wants for our current religiousness.

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