

## ***Spiritual Practices and Their Impact on Preventing Religious Extremism in Indonesia Yuminah Rohmatullah<sup>a</sup>***

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### **ABSTRACT**

The rise of religious extremism poses profound challenges to the harmony and unity of its diverse religious landscape in contemporary Indonesia. This study delves into the extreme effects of spiritual practices, aiming to understand their potential to mitigate religious extremism. Drawing from an interdisciplinary framework encompassing sociology, religious studies, and psychology, we conducted a comprehensive review of traditional Indonesian spiritual practices, complemented by in-depth interviews with religious leaders and community influencers across various religious groups in Jakarta, Indonesia. This study employed a qualitative approach with steps: a comprehensive literature review of traditional spiritual practices in Indonesia and comprehensive semi-structured interviews with six religious and community leaders. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation from various parties. Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. Our research reveals that spiritual practices, anchored in introspection, tolerance, and the core values of Pancasila (Indonesia's state ideology), serve as powerful counterweights against extremist views. These practices emphasize shared interfaith understanding values and promote a sense of connectedness, thereby creating a resilient barrier against divisive ideologies. Furthermore, communities actively engaged in such spiritual practices demonstrated lower susceptibility to extremist narratives. This research underscores the importance of bolstering such spiritual practices at the grassroots level. It advocates for their integration into community programs and educational curricula as a proactive strategy against religious extremism in Indonesia.

*Keywords: Spiritual Practices, Religious Extremism, Pancasila, Interfaith Understanding, Resilience, Indonesia, Thematic Analysis, Grassroots Level*

### **1. Introduction**

The phenomenon of religious extremism is nothing new. The history of religious extremism is very long, which is also not the monopoly of just one religion. The tendency to excessively practice religious teachings, to be old-fashioned, harsh, rigid and conservative, has existed since before Islam came. Extreme attitudes have infected previous people. Jews and Christians are recorded in the Quran as extreme in glorifying their leaders. The Jews declared Uzair to be the son of God, as did the Christians ordained Jesus as the Son of God. They also created a monkhood or priesthood, which Allah never revealed about.

Incomplete understanding and the motive of wanting to be as perfect as possible in practicing religious teachings are often the main factors for religious believers to fall into extreme religious actions. Extreme understanding is a reality that has emerged throughout the ages (Afroni: 2016, 78).

A 2018 survey conducted by the Wahid Foundation regarding the issue of intolerance and radicalism involving at least 1520 respondents resulted in a figure of close to 49% of the Indonesian Muslim community who are vulnerable to intolerant attitudes, especially among the millennial

generation. These results show that some Indonesian Muslim communities are still intolerant towards other religious groups (Wahid Foundation: 20).

The important message from this survey is that it highlights the religious phenomenon of Indonesian society, which is increasingly becoming more sectarian, and this impacts acts of intolerance to religious extremism and violence in the name of religion (Nurish: 2019, 31).

Actually, Islam has a universal and humanist teaching context, namely the relationship between servants and their God (Hablun min Allah) and relationships between fellow human beings (Hablun min al-Nas). In Islam, teachings that reflect the relationship of a servant with his God are exclusive, primarily found in theologically based teachings (tawhid) (Abshor: 2019:153).

### **2. Methodology**

A qualitative research is done to study the spiritual practices in preventing religious extremism in Indonesia. The data used are the primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained by researchers in the field, while secondary data is sourced from literature. The data collection technique used is observation, interviews with six

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informants, namely religious counselors, religious leaders, academics, and practitioners. The data that has been collected is processed continuously until a correlation is obtained between one data with another and its meaning. This research method uses a psychosocial approach to analyze religious understanding that affects religious extremism to understand spiritual practices thoroughly in countering religious extremism in Indonesia. This study was carried out in three months from September to November.

The following are the six respondents in this study:

**Table 1**

Subject	Gender	Age	Organization	Criteria
1	Female	30	Religious Counselors	Ulama
2	Male	45	TQN	<b>Ulama</b>
3	Male	52	MDK	Ulama/Community Figure
4	Male	40	MMHC	Community Figure/Practitioner
5	Male	42	IPIM	Community Figure
6	Male	30	BAZNAS	Ulama

**3. Meaning Spirituality and Religious Extremism**

**a. Spirituality**

A literature study conducted by Elkins et al. (1988) concluded that spirituality comes from the Latin 'spiritus', meaning the breath of life, so that spirituality is "a way of being and experiencing that comes through awareness of the existence of a transcendent dimension and is characterized by certain values accepted by the individual, other people, nature, life and whatever is considered "ultimate" (Elkins: 1995, 35).

Terminologically, spirituality comes from the word "spirit"; in religious literature, the term spirit has two substantial meanings: (a) The character and essence of human souls are each interrelated, as well as the experience of the interconnection of these souls which is the primary basis of spiritual belief. "Spirit" is the deepest part of the soul and is a means of communication or means that allows humans to connect with God. (b) "Spirit" refers to the concept that all interrelated "spirits" are part of a larger unity (consciousness and intellect).

Swinton defines spirituality as an aspect of human existence related to the structure of significance that gives meaning and direction to a person's life, which helps a person deal with life's changes. This is related to human spiritual (non-religious) needs for several things: structure of meaning (value/structure of meaning) which includes hope, belief, life goals, dealing with guilt and forgiveness; relationships (relationships), which include familiarity and closeness; transcendence (transcendence), including experience and appreciation of a dimension that goes

beyond one's limits or outside oneself (a dimension beyond for self) and the possibility of searching for God without a formal religious structure; affective feeling which includes a sense of comfort, certainty, peace and happiness; and communication which consists of the need to speak, tell stories, listen, and be heard (Swinton 2001, 26).

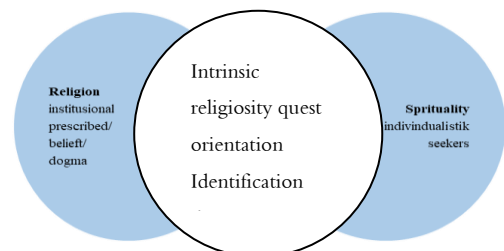
Pargament (2007) defines spirituality as a search for something sacred. Spirituality contains a person's life principles that describe the quality of man's relationship with God. (Paloutzian: 2005, 200). Spirituality is highly closely related to human efforts in searching for a guide to life (a search for anchors).

Spirituality and religion are related to cognitive, emotional, behavioral, interpersonal and psychological aspects, forming a holistic approach to understanding individuals. Many studies have discussed religion and spirituality, which influence a person in human life (Ghufron: 2016, 356). Spirituality is broader than religion but is interrelated with religion (Benson et al., 2003: 208). Hodge et al. (2010: 3) consider spirituality a broader concept, representing transcendent beliefs and values that may or may not be associated with religious organizations. Conversely, religiosity refers to rituals and beliefs, which may be demonstrated in the context of religious institutions. Spirituality can be expressed in a religious context, but a person's religiosity is not always due to spirituality.

**Differences between Religion and Spirituality**  
(Subandi: 2021)

Religion	Spirituality
Institutional (beliefs, dogmas, values) Formal Pray 5 times a day Ramadan fasting Wudhu before prayer Our father in Heaven Hail Mary Prayer Sayyidul istighfar prayer Religious rules Exoteric Skin Knowledge of divinity Rational Sharia	Individual internalization of beliefs and values) Personal Tahajud prayer David's Fast Ablution at any time Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi Abunawas Prayer Religious feelings Esoteric (inner) Contents Experience Deity Transcendental / Essence

Following are the results of Sonja Van Wijk's research explaining the differences between religion and spirituality, depicted in the following chart (Van Wijk: 2016, 46).



Religiosity is perceived as something formal and institutional because it is considered to reflect a commitment to the beliefs and practices of certain (religious) traditions. Meanwhile, spirituality is connoted with personal experiences and is functional, reflecting individual efforts to achieve the goals and meaning of life (Pergament, K.I. (2005, 75).

Spirituality has been considered a special character (connotations) of a person's beliefs which are more personal, less dogmatic, more open to new thoughts and various influences, and more pluralistic than beliefs interpreted or based on formal religions.

According to Ibn Sina, human religion is influenced by the quality of the human internal soul, a pure soul which is achieved with perfect knowledge, both theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge, which leads to self-goodness (Ibn Sīnā: 1998, 107)

According to 'Uthmān al-'Ā'mir, an education expert from al-Jāmi'ah al-Hā'il, explains that the religious aspect (spirituality) consists of five aspects, namely aspects of behaviour, 'aqidāh, morals, and aspects of balance in the afterlife (al-'Ā'mir: 1996,3-4).

According to Miller, a spirituality expert from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, he explains that there are three aspects of religious spirituality, namely meaning, purpose in life and connection (Miller: 2013, 1-6).

Spirituality is directed towards the subjective experience of what is relevant to humans. Spirituality is not only concerned with whether life is valuable but also focuses on why life is valuable. Being spiritual means having more ties to spiritual or psychological things than physical or material ones. Spirituality is self-awakening or enlightenment in achieving the purpose and meaning of life. Spirituality is an essential part of a person's overall health and well-being (Miller: 2013, 1-6).

A sense of holiness embedded in the depths of one's heart/soul is a characteristic of one's religiousness (Shihāb, 2017). Therefore, religious people will always try to find and obtain something that is true, meaningful, good and beautiful and contains the meaning of benefit for all.

## b. Religious Extremism

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the definition of extreme means 1) the extreme, the highest, the loudest; 2). Very loud, very determined, fanatical. Meanwhile, the meaning of extremity is things (actions) (Big Indonesian Dictionary: 2002, 292). The meaning of extreme is something that is outrageous and goes beyond. While extremism is "an extreme understanding (attitude, treatment, etc.)" (Council Dictionary 4th edition, 2010: 383).

In Sharia terminology, extreme attitudes are often also called *ghuluw*, which means exaggeration in a matter. Or being extreme on a problem by going beyond the limits that have been prescribed (Asqalani: 1998).

The term *ghuluw* is a model or type of religion that causes a person to deviate from that religion (Ibnu Manzur:

1985, 131). Several other terms that have similar connotations to *ghuluw* include *tanattu'* (tough attitude), *ifrat*, (narrowing), *tashaddud* (trouble something) or *takalluf* (forcing yourself).

Meanwhile, the definition of religion is a belief in Almighty God and His attributes and power and acceptance of His teachings and commands (4th edition of the Council Dictionary, 2010: 14).

Extremism shows that religion has a decline in faith and trust in God Almighty. They have extreme overconfidence in the main motives behind global and local violence and terrorist attacks (Rahman, 2018).

According to Adz-Dzaky, there are two types of religion adhered to by humans. First, the extrinsic type views religion as something to be used and not for life, something to use but not to live. Religion is used to support other motives. People with this type of religion carry out the outward forms of religion, not the inner or substantial things (Adz-Dzaky: 2001, 503).

Allport views that this type or method of religion is closely related to mental illness. This kind of religion will not give birth to a society full of compassion. However, on the contrary, it will breed hatred, envy and constant slander. Second, the intrinsic type is assumed to support mental health and community peace because religion is seen as a comprehensive commitment that regulates the entire human life. This type of religion penetrates the individuality of its adherents. Thus, he has the ability to create an environment that is always peaceful and filled with love (Adz-Dzaky: 2001, 503).

According to data released by Europol, among the 706 radical activists arrested in Europe in 2006, more than 2/3 (more than 470 people) consisted of young people aged 26-41 years. In several countries on the continent, especially the UK, the number of perpetrators is much younger, namely between 17 and 19 years old. This indicates that radical ideology strongly appeals to young people, not only in developing countries like Indonesia but also in developed countries (Hilmy: 2017, 178).

The research from the Wahid Foundation in 2016 on members of the Islamic Spiritual Organization (Rohis) of State High Schools in Indonesia showed that 60% of respondents were willing to carry out jihad missions to countries hit by religious conflict. These findings show how young people are a group that is vulnerable to becoming victims of violent indoctrination in the name of religion (Wahid Foundation: 2016).

Often, extremism is attached to a fundamentalist movement. This term was born from the negative stigma towards movements that smack of violence, fanaticism, or even terrorism in realizing or maintaining religious beliefs (al-Shawi : 1993, 9-10).

Fundamentalism in this context is referred to as an attitude of religious extremism (*al-tatharruf al-dini*) which means the opposite of moderateism (*al-tawassuth wa al Itidal*), which is a term to describe a religious group that tends to be rigid in interpreting religious doctrine and is more choose the path of violence to achieve goals. In its development, this understanding is often positioned as an

opposition group in a government that is 'considered' secular.

#### 4. Causes and Characteristic of Religious Extremism

Fundamentalism and religious extremism start with internal factors, namely the tendency to understand and interpret doctrine, then external factors involving history, ethnicity, culture and also political factors. The actualization of doctrine into the social reality of its adherents is what forms the 'pattern of diversity' (al-ta'addudiyah) in the fundamentalist tradition, which prioritizes an attitude of militancy in actualizing religious doctrine so that they give the impression of being very radical which according to Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid has been hegemonized by the authority of the text (sulthat al-nash) (Abu Zaid: 1995, 134).

The tendency to be a textualist, as above, is often based on the motivation to understand and practice religious doctrine purely and free from rational interpretation, which, according to them, is only based on lust. From this perspective, the view that concludes that fundamentalism emerged from a reaction to modernism may be correct. Fazlur Rahman for example, believes that Islamic fundamentalism draws inspiration from pre-modern reformism, especially that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab developed in the 18th century (Rahman: 1979, 162). The Wahhabiyyah movement, in general, tends to be anti-intellectual and develops a style of religious understanding that tends towards the textual.

Generally, extremism is related to efforts to uphold a particular state system to replace the system currently agreed upon by most of the public (Pratt, 2010). In other words, extremism, which then gives rise to acts of terror, is part of group behaviour carried out jointly by a group of people with the same religious and state ideology. Thus, extremism is a collective political movement contrary to the desires and spirit of religion and state held by the mainstream of the people. So, extremism and terrorism are not the behaviour of psychopaths or groups of crazy people but are normal behaviour motivated by something very "noble" in their view.

A lack of understanding of religion causes extreme attitudes toward religion because it is done only by reading religious texts contextually without interpreting and looking at Ulama's views and other scientists' perspectives. Supported by their fanatical attitude towards their sect, making it difficult for them to accept the truth from other people (Afroni: 2016).

Besides that, religious hardline figures are fanatical towards the leaders they trust. When the bonds of religious adherents and religious figures are under the damaging influence of another group or are perceived to be attacked, this experience can activate adaptive, reactionary, defensive, and response (Counted, 2017). This process results in social divisions within religious communities.

The religious attitudes of individuals or groups of people are closely related to the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). According to Freud's psychoanalytic

theory, forming experiences and delusions, including religious attitudes accompanied by fanaticism, can encourage individuals or groups to commit acts of violence in the name of religion. On the one hand, religion is expected to be an umbrella for peace and unity, but on the other hand, religion can be a source of prolonged conflict. The essence of religion, according to Freud, is an illusion. An illusion is a belief that we hold and must always be true. Some examples include someone's belief in changing the ideology of the nation and state into the ideology of the caliphate, the belief that they will enter heaven if they succeed in killing infidels, and many more analogies that we can encounter in everyday life (Saifullah: 2019).

The issue of fanaticism has a vulnerable impact on acts of extremism such as suicide bombings. These actions and actions are classified as extraordinary crimes which not only involve issues of politics, security, economics, media, education, law, human rights and religious ideology but also involve gender issues and social psychology issues. One of the psychological theories that can explain the problem of extremism is Freud's view of religion, which is represented through an illusory condition, namely a human way of thinking that is contaminated with reality and biased evidence (Saifullah: 2019).

This movement then formed a school of religious thought which tended to interpret religious texts (scripture) rigidly and literally. The tendency for this type of interpretation, according to people who are usually considered fundamentalists, is necessary in order to maintain the purity of doctrine and its implementation, as well as being driven by the belief that the complete application of the doctrine is the only way to save humanity from destruction (James: 1994, 2).

In the Islamic tradition (read: Middle East), the term fundamentalism is known as al-ushuliyyah al-islamiyyah or, in other terms, al-tatharruf al-dini or al-tatharruf al-islami (religious extremism). Al-Tatharruf comes from Tharf (side), namely being on one side, either the right or the left. When an extreme movement tends to side with the authorities or the majority, it is called the Extreme Right. On the other hand, if the movement struggles and voices the interests of the small people, minorities, marginals, or oppressed and so on, it is called the Extreme Left (Hanafi: 1996, 5-7).

Imam Ali Shamsi's perspective stated that seven things can give birth to religious extremism in human life, including 1) Ignorance; 2) Media misdirection; 3) Historical generalization; 4) Neglect of justice; 5) Poverty; 6) Politicization of religion; 7) Interpretation of religious texts (Ali: 2014, 10). The solution given is of course the opposite of what is available from these seven things.

Azyumardi Azra is of the view that the phenomenon of religious extremism is like a problematic chain of human life (Azra: 2016). So, the solution that can be given is the efforts of community members who consciously try to untangle the tangled threads in their respective lives right down to the level of the government system they face.

**5. Spiritual Practices in Preventing Religious Extremism**

Religious extremism and radicalism, accompanied by violence and terrorism, are contemporary discourses that modern humans endlessly discuss. The multi-dimensional crisis experienced by modern humans is often blamed on religion as the source and cause of the problem. Religion is seen as failing to fulfil its image as a peacemaker for human life on earth (Yakin: 2018. 115).

Extremism of religious views that fuel acts of violence and terrorism is often used as clear evidence of religion's destructive potential, which then causes suffering to humans and each other. The anomaly above seems to confirm the paradoxical role of religion. On the one hand, religion is believed to be a bright path to peace of mind, provides salvation, and spreads love to all creatures on the earth's surface. On the other hand, the history of religion proves how human tragedies often begin with religious conflicts, which then become the source and cause of destruction and misfortune in human life. It is understandable when Karl Marx thought that religion was opium, an addictive ritual that further symbolizes human powerlessness in facing the reality around them (Sure: 2016, 1).

Islam is a religion of civilization. Islam is not a violent or fascist religion, as some Western circles accuse it of. On the other hand, Islam rejects tyranny and terror. Islamic teachings command respect for fellow humans despite different religions and skin colours. A Muslim is like a bee. He eats good food and produces good things. When he lands on a flower, he doesn't damage it. That's how Allah has given these people a parable as someone who provides kindness with love, not a spreader of evil and violence (Afroni: 2016, 75-78).

According to M. Amin Abdullah, the weaknesses of religious education so far have been primarily concentrated on cognitive theoretical religious issues and less concentrated on the problem of how to change cognitive religious knowledge into "meaning" and "values" (spirituality) that need to be internalized within the participants. Educate through various methods, media and forums (Tobroni: 2019, 149-150).

Spiritual education encourages the soul to create peace of mind to achieve inner enlightenment. The aim is to present a spiritual man, namely humans who have enlightened hearts, pure souls, have enthusiasm/ghiroh in religion, have concern for others, compassion, a sense of love, gentle harmony (not radical) in thoughts, behaviour and actions, willingness, tolerance and experience a spiritual pleasure (Tobroni: 2019, 149-150).

Table 3  
Dimensions of Spirituality (Bennet: 2007)

No.	Dimensi SpritulitaNo.No	Dimensi Spritulitas	
1.	<i>Aliveness</i>	8	<i>Joy</i>
2.	<i>Caring</i>	9	<i>Love</i>

3.	<i>Compassion</i>	10	<i>Respect</i>
4.	<i>Empathy</i>	11	<i>Sensitivity</i>
5	<i>Eagerness</i>	12	<i>Tolerance</i>
6.	<i>Expectancy</i>	13	<i>Willingness</i>
7.	<i>Harmony</i>		

The aim of spiritualism in Islam is the relationship between humans and God, namely:

- a. Increasing the quality of faith and taqwa,
- b. Improving the quality of worship,
- c. Improving the quality of morals and,
- d. Achieving true peace and safety in the world and the hereafter

Religion and spirituality are two different things, even though they intersect closely. In a person's spiritual life, religion is the visible outer part (exoteric, external), while spirituality is the inner part (esoteric, internal). Religion here can be worship/ritual practices, teachings of right and wrong, and so on. Meanwhile, spirituality is an individual's subjective experience related to holiness or the search for the meaning of human existence in the world (ugm.ac.id/: 2008).

Individuals who profess spiritual beliefs have spiritual rituals and activities called spiritual practices. An individual's spiritual motivation is always followed by follow-up in the form of spiritual practices as an effort to increase awareness of spirituality. According to Rothberg and Taniputera (2012), inner life cannot be separated from spiritual practice. When an individual develops spiritual practices, he grows awareness to solve his problems.

Spiritual practice is a path, whether we look at it from practical communal, contemplative practices, practical learning and service practices, which can increase a person's awareness of himself, ability to accept himself and others and overall life satisfaction. As explained in the following scheme:



Source: Researcher Analysis

For this reason, according to the results of the researchers' interviews with respondents, it is necessary to prevent extreme religious practices through spiritual practices. From the results of these interviews, researchers classified prevention into four clusters, namely:

1. Communal Practices: building spiritual community, self-awareness, self-discourse and conflict resolution. By doing:

a. Moderate religious spiritual practices (wasatiyah) as a whole are moderate in thought, movement and religious traditions and practices. The success of religious moderation in the lives of Indonesian society can be seen from the high level of the four leading indicators, as well as several other indicators that are in harmony and interconnected.

b. National commitment. By accepting Pancasila as the state ideology, the 1945 Constitution as the constitution, and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as the choice of state form.

c. Tolerance is the attitude and behaviour of a person who accepts and respects the existence of other people, including the right to believe and expresses religious beliefs as an attitude in dealing with differences. Tolerance is the most critical foundation of democracy (Syaifuddin, 2020: 44).

d. Non-violence, namely not condoning acts of violence, including using violent methods in the name of religion to bring about change (kemenag.go.id).

e. Acceptance of traditions is religious understanding and behaviour that adapts to local culture or the Indonesian context, which has various cultures and various religious beliefs that are accommodative or compatible (Kemenag.go.id). Accommodative religious and spiritual practices will accommodate local culture and traditions. Moderate people tend to be more friendly in accepting local traditions and culture in their religious behaviour, as long as it does not conflict with basic religious teachings.

f. Moderate Muslim religious and spiritual understanding and practice with the characteristics: (1) Tawassuth (taking the middle path), namely understanding and practice that is not ifrâth (exaggerating in religion) and tafirâth (reducing religious teachings); (2) Tawâzun (balanced), namely a balanced understanding and practice of religion that covers all aspects of life, both worldly and spiritual, firmly stating principles that can differentiate between inhiraf, (deviation) and ikhtilaf (difference); (3) I'tidâl (straight and firm), namely putting things in their place and carrying out rights and fulfilling obligations proportionally; (4) Tasâmuh (tolerance), namely recognizing and respecting differences, both in religious aspects and various other aspects of life; (5) Musâwah (egalitarian), namely not being discriminatory towards others due to differences in one's beliefs, traditions and origins; (6) Syûra (deliberation), namely every problem is resolved by deliberation to reach consensus with the principle of placing benefit above all else; (7) Ishlâh (reformation), namely prioritizing reformative principles to achieve a better situation that accommodates the changes and progress of the times based on the general benefit (mashlahah 'ammah) while still adhering to the principle of al-muhafazhah 'ala al-qadimi al-shalih wa al-akhdu bi al-jadidi al-ashlah (preserving old

traditions that are still relevant, and implementing new things that are more relevant); (8) Aulawiyah (putting priorities first), namely the ability to identify more critical things that must be prioritized to be implemented compared to those whose interests are lower; (9). Tathawwur wa Ibtikâr (dynamic and innovative), always being open to making changes following current developments and creating new things for the benefit and progress of humanity (10). Tahadhdhur (civilized) upholds noble morals, character, identity and integrity as khairu ummah in the life of humanity and civilization (MUI: 2021, 12-15).

The spirit of religious moderation is a strategy to find common ground and a peaceful path between two extreme poles in religion

2. Contemplative Practices include meditation, centring prayer, examination, consciousness, and solitude. Namely by:

a. They are carrying out moderate Sufism movements in addition to moderation in thinking. Moderate Islam is also visible in the area of Sufism. As many people understand, the concept of esoteric teachings manifested in Sufistic spirituality does not have a negative meaning. Sufistic spiritual practice does not mean slums, deprivation, poverty and so on, but a moderate Sufi is a person who always presents divine values in every step by doing:

- a) Spiritual practice by practicing tariqah through dhikr and riyadhoh which will perfect worship, improve muamalah and give birth to akhlaqul karimah. Among the noble moral characteristics are shabar, hilmi (polite), luthfi (gentle) and rahmah (compassion), which can prevent extreme understanding.
- b) Moderate Sufistic spirituality is building a life full of happiness; namely, Qalbiyah happiness is through makrifatullah through good morals and physical happiness through health and fulfilling material needs (Darlis, 2017: 226).
- c) Practising in an integrated manner between Islam, faith and ihsan.
- d) Spiritual practices carried out both horizontally and vertically.

Table 4

Horizontal	Vertical
The desire to transcend one's ego or self-esteem	God, soul, universe, supreme power or something else
The embodiment of something that cannot be seen	Helps individuals find meaning and purpose in life
A passion to serve others and the earth.	The desire to make a difference and help to make the world more meaningful
The manifestation of something that can be seen	Become a complete and meaningful individual

Source: Ajala EM: 2013

3. Learning Practices include lessons, learning modules,

spiritual reading and the Enneagram (development of relationships with other people)

a. The world of education is a 'comfortable space' for the seeds of radical ideology and religious terrorism to grow. It is a place of self-forging that has excellent potential for the birth of superior individuals who are moral, civilized, peace-loving and religious based on holistic, comprehensive human values. So it is essential to make efforts to prevent religious extremism with the following spiritual practice steps:

- a) Deepening and understanding of religious aspects of peace, harmony and humanity, which, of course, is not just intellectual-cognitive based but instead emphasizes aspects of "appreciation" (affective) and "practice" (psychomotor).
- b) Mainstreaming morality (good character) as practice (charity), not just intellectualism, considering that in substance, there is no single religious teaching that authorizes "violence" in resolving conflict. Religion can only be understood through the eyes of people who believe based on correct faith practices (as per Nietzsche's criticism of religion). The understanding is that the sacredness of religion controls and shapes profane aspects (Daniel L: 2001, 271)
- c) Practices in Islamic boarding school educational institutions as a source of initial understanding. Fiqh should be taught to understand the methodology of the four schools of thought imams do not only explain the opinions of one school of thought. So that society is not filled with doctrine but with a complete understanding.
- d) Grounding spiritual practices and teachings of religious moderation in various lines and institutions (Talim Council and building pilot religious moderation villages in 1000 in 33 provinces).
- e) Empowerment of the Majelis Taklim, Government Apparatus in collecting zakat through daily routines by collecting funds of IDR 1000/day, which are used for the welfare of the people in financing education, social and MSMEs (DKI Baznas).
- f) Peace Ambassadors was founded in 2016 by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) through the Counter-Propaganda Sub directorate formed by Cyber Peace Ambassadors spread across 13 (thirteen) provinces. Cyber Peace Ambassadors are empowering Indonesia's young generation in facing the spread of terrorist ideologies and intolerant radical ideologies that lead to religious extremism in cyberspace.
- g) Now, peace ambassadors have developed in 13 provinces. The peace ambassadors consist of millennial children or the younger generation. The number of peace ambassadors is 453

participants. They have published 1,783 articles, 824 infographics and 134 counter-propaganda videos. They have compiled counter-propaganda content against narratives built by intolerant and radical terrorist network groups to prevent religious extremists. (BNPT Activity Journal: 2021, 125 ), network groups to prevent religious extremists. (BNPT Activity Journal: 2021, 125

As mentioned, the essence of the spiritual realm is not material or bodily but rather a metaphysical concept whose study is through psychological deepening often based on the realm of religion. Islam as a religion revealed by Allah SWT is also inseparable from spiritual teachings that symbolize a Muslim's personal piety. As Allah says in QS.Al Fajr: 27-30

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

Allah will say to the righteous, "O tranquil soul!, Return to your Lord, well pleased 'with Him' and well pleasing 'to Him'. So join My servants, and enter My Paradise." (QS.Al Fajr: 27-30).

Spiritual education can be carried out in line with religious education. So far, spirituality education has often been neglected, so religion has only become a form of dogma and rituals in society. Religion without spirituality is like a container without contents, whereas spirituality without religion is content that is not covered by a container. "Because spirituality is not given enough attention, religion tends to become radical, so this creates the potential for SARA conflict, radicalism and intolerance in society in Indonesia, which is increasing day by day (Iswahyudi: 2022).

Islam means peace and prosperity. The expression that is often conveyed when meeting others is the expression of peace (*assalamu'alaikum*). Likewise, the end of our daily routine worship (prayer) is an expression of peace (in the form of greetings). Therefore, spiritual value will be obtained if a Muslim has the proper perspective, reference, and method for carrying out religious laws, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. His spiritual journey was certainly not only when he received the order to pray through Isra and Mi'raj. But instead, all phases of his struggle until the establishment of Islam (Agustiawan: 2017, 49)

Spirituality in Islam is a down-to-earth spirituality that is integrated with the dynamics of human life in everyday life. Spirituality in Islam is not a dimension at odds with worldly life. In fact, this spirit, which is an awareness of a Muslim's relationship with Allah, must be carried wherever a Muslim goes, in any condition, and in carrying out any activities and affairs (Iswahyudi: 2022).

Religion, as the final statement of the meaning of life, must always teach virtue and wisdom in facing chaos. For this reason, religion assumes the task of creating an established order while affirming the meaning of life (Juergensmeyer : 1994, 15).

4. Service Practices, which include serving our world and our project, namely the efforts carried out. Empowering the role of religious figures in spiritual practices by making the following efforts:

- a. Counterradicalism, namely enlightenment of the people so that they are not influenced by radical/extreme understandings, either through education or da'wah.
- b. Deradicalization, namely raising awareness of those who already have radical/extreme behaviour, especially those accompanied by violence, so they return to having a moderate, wise and polite understanding and attitude.
- c. Strengthening the attitude of moderation (*wasthiyyah*) of Muslims (Q. S al-Baqarah verse 143) (Abdillah, 2017: 77).

The problem, then, is why religion can make its adherents dare to enter the sacred area of life. Substantially, it can be said that there has been a conversion from vertical absolutism to horizontal absolutism. Extremism in the appreciation of the Divine, the Determinant of human life and death, can, in fact, produce a fatalistic, deterministic religiosity in which a person or group of religious people feels they have the legitimacy of representing the Absolute in determining a person's life and death. (Juergensmeyer: 1994, 159)

In concrete form, we can see this fatalistic religiousness in the tendency of certain (religious) groups to eliminate other groups, even physically. According to Haryatmoko, it is necessary to take a firm distance and a critical attitude in observing the above issues by paying attention to three main mechanisms that have a significant role in explaining the link between religion and extremism and radical religious attitudes, namely the format of religious interpretation of social relations (ideological function), religion as an identity factor, and the ethical legitimacy of social relations.

First, the function of religion as ideology (Juergensmeyer: 1994, 159). In this function, religion is seen as an element that holds society together because it contains specific formulations in interpreting social relations. This stage is an ideal framework for the ideals of the desired society, which represents God's will, including issues of injustice and social inequality. Second, religion as an identity factor. This section is defined as belonging to a particular class or social group which is characterized by guaranteeing social stability, providing status, outlook on life, way of thinking and ethos. This can be stronger if it is linked to certain ethnic identities such as Muslim Aceh, Catholic Flores, Hindu Bali, and ethnic or personal differences can give rise to inter-religious conflict. Third, religion becomes the ethical legitimation of social relations (Hidayat: 1996, 15-20).

This third mechanism is not a kind of soteriology of social relations but a coherent social order supported by religion. In the form of religious interpretation of the three structures of social relations above, an essential element is the transparency of interpretation and dismantling elements of illusion, personal or group interests, and motivation.

(Hidayat: 1996, 15-20). This is possible to avoid misuse of religion, which leads to the formation of exclusive group interests. The exclusivity that leads to a struggle for the text's authority is usually always under the pretext of protecting itself from contamination and maintaining the purity of the teachings. Transparency measures also mean dismantling all forms of authority struggle for the truth of the meaning of the text.

Therefore, the contextualization and implementation of Pancasila values in life is very strategic in countering religious extremism because the cultivation of these values not only produces intelligent, skilled people but also maintains, develops and actualizes the nation's philosophical values, as a local genius as well as a national characteristic and identity. (Ruslan: 2007, 13) which is always imbued with and based on national values originating from Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.

The results of research by the ALVARA research institute in collaboration with the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) in 2019 revealed three typologies of Muslims in Indonesia in viewing Pancasila. The first typology, 39.43% of nationalist-oriented Muslims, this group believes that Pancasila does not conflict with Islamic sharia. The second typology of religious nationalist Muslims, namely 47% of this group, believes that Islam is an inclusive and peace-loving religion, this group supports the implementation of Sharia Regional Regulations. The third typology, namely 18.10%, is religiously oriented, this group has the perspective that the use of violence is permitted in upholding good and evil, and they reject non-Muslim leaders (Ditasman: 2022, 93).

From the results of this research, it can be concluded that there is still quite a large group of Muslims in Indonesia, namely 10.18%, who justify using violent methods in religion. Meanwhile, the 2018 Indonesian Ministry of Defense Survey results revealed that 23.4% of university students and 23.3% of high school students agreed with the caliphate state. Furthermore, 18.1% of private employees, 19.4% of civil servants and 19.1% of BUMN employees do not agree with the Pancasila ideology. In fact, it is surprising that 24% of educated groups agree to carry out jihad to uphold the Islamic state or caliphate (Ditasman: 2022, 93).

To prevent radicalism and religious extremists, it is necessary to understand the 4 National Pillars of the National Consensus of the Indonesian Nation, which include Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. "From these four pillars, the character of national identity will emerge divinity, humanity, unity, democracy, justice, purity and multiculturalism, and patriotism. Pancasila, as an open ideology, basically has the same universal values as other ideologies, such as civility, respect for human rights, prosperity, peace and justice.

The slogan *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* means "diverse but one". This term comes from the book *Sutasoma* written by Empu Tantular. This understanding of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* shows that the Indonesian nation has many tribes,



religions, races, arts, customs, languages, and so on, but is still one united nation and country (United by the same flag, national anthem, currency, language, etc). The words *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* are found on the national symbol of the Republic of Indonesia, namely the Garuda Bird. At the feet of the Garuda Bird, Pancasila holds a ribbon that says "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (khairuman, 2020).

The pluralism of the Indonesian nation is recognized as what makes this nation unique because it consists of various tribes and languages, with cultural diversity. This pluralism could potentially disintegrate if one and the other do not feel like they are part of the entity called Indonesia. Therefore *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* has become the motto of the Indonesian nation to raise awareness that we have diversity but are all one, a determination that has been proclaimed since the Youth Pledge. Without it, every region, every ethnic entity, tribe and group will feel like they can stand alone without an Indonesian state platform.

Pancasila and the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* are the right ideologies to regulate the life of the nation and state. Pancasila, as the basic belief of the state ideology, contains the values of divinity, humanity, unity, democracy and the value of social justice. Apart from that, Pancasila also has religious values, family values, harmony, democracy and justice.

## 6. Conclusion

The understanding of religious extremism always carries authority and a monopoly on "truth". The argument is built on "truth" claimed by denying other groups who are considered different and contradictory.

Amid increasingly complex and pluralistic global life, religious life is increasingly being challenged to solve humanitarian problems. The ability to answer humanitarian concerns shows religion's role in increasingly mature forms of social relations. If this is the case, the desire to make religion an ethical basis for overcoming violence is not just a utopia. Religion is no longer an empty dream that always hides its good intentions and always prioritizes the political ambitions of its adherents, but religions with various differences will always be maintained, and social coherence and harmony will be built.

What is needed, then, is practical spirituality. A philosophy of religious thought and practice that tries to position humans at the centre of the circulation of universe subjectivity that is completely transcended to Divine spiritual awareness, which emphasizes and appreciates the noble values of universal humanism and is concerned with environmental issues, social ethics and the future of humanity. Apart from that, we also respect similarities and recognize each other's uniqueness (de-absolutizing truth) to create a plurality with relatively absolute claims and beliefs. Therefore, spiritual values will be obtained if a Muslim has a correct (moderate) perspective, accurate references, and correct methods of carrying out religious laws. So, spirituality in Islam is a down-to-earth spirituality that blends with the dynamics of human daily life in line with the values of Pancasila as basic beliefs.

## 6. Implication

Hopefully, this article will raise awareness that religion and spirituality are two different things, even though they have a very close relationship. In a person's spiritual life, religion is the visible outer part (exoteric, external), while spirituality is the inner part (esoteric, internal). Religion here can take the form of worship/ritual practices, teachings of right and wrong and so on. Meanwhile, spirituality is an individual's subjective experience regarding purity.

Spiritual education and practices can be conducted in line with religious education. So far, spirituality education has often been neglected, so religion has only become a form of dogma and rituals in society. Religion without spirituality is like a container without contents, whereas spirituality without faith is content that is not covered by a container. "If spirituality is neglected, then religion tends to become radical and extreme. This creates the potential for ethnic, religious, racial and inter-group (SARA) conflicts to emerge. Therefore, I hope this article shows that, in religion, moderate spiritual practices (*wasathiyah*) are essential to creating a harmonious society within the framework of tolerance and diversity.

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