

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM ACCORDING TO NURCHOLISH MADJID THINKING IN THE INDONESIAN CONTACT

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Abstract: Pluralism cannot be separated from the meaning of plurality, if plurality is difference in religious, ethnic, cultural or other issues, while pluralism is a system of values, attitudes and processes that can translate religious reality into sustainable social cohesion. In other words, diversity is something empirical, while pluralism is an ideology or understanding that accepts diversity as a positive value accompanied by efforts to negotiate and adjust between them, without trying to weaken or even destroy one or part of that diversity. The existence of a difference in religion is a reality in society, and a pluralist attitude is an orientation that assumes a sincere acceptance and connection with that fact, rather than eliminating or annihilating or melting those differences into one. This type of research is library research. this research concluded that: According to Nurcholish Madjid, noble Indonesian values are the universal and cosmopolitan values of the Indonesian people which are based on religion or culture as a result of a long dialogue with religion, these values have a strategic role as well as being central in building the unity of the Ummah to foster self-reliance as a nation. The problem of the relationship between religion, citizens and the nation is a matter of ijtihad which is very closely related to social and political contacts which are understood by the ummah itself.

Keywords: Pluralism, Plurality, Universal, Religion, Conflict,



A. Introduction

Religion and society are a unit that has a close relationship and influence each other. Religion contains universal moral values to shape people's attitudes and behavior in responding to life's challenges. Religion can function and work well if religion can reflect on a person's daily behavior to become a better person, because religion is a rule of human life that provides teachings and good values that must be carried out by its adherents, as a consensus dimension of a relationship that builds communication in legal values that exist in the construction of every religion there religion can be interpreted in a dual role, meaning that religion as a cause of conflict can also be a factor reducing conflict. Many religions and cultures in Indonesia then become conflicts between religious communities, this is the mission of mercy for all people does not play a significant role because there is a misunderstanding of the meaning of the values of religious life. In the Indonesian state, humans form and determine the desired style of society, in order for a good and desirable form of society to be realized, diversity in religious life in Indonesia really needs to be maintained, because of that it is a reality that must be grateful for the diversity that exists, if any. one who denies this state of affairs, will get into trouble and will face reality itself.

Pluralism can be found everywhere, in certain societies whether in the office where they work, at school where they study, or whether in the market where they shop. However, a person can only be said to have the nature or understanding of what pluralism is if he or she interacts positively in this pluralistic environment. in other words. Understanding religious pluralism, every adherent of a religion is required not only to recognize the existence and rights of other people's religions, but more than that he must be involved in efforts to understand differences and similarities to encourage harmony in diversity. Nurcholish Madjid, through his ideas on Islam, modernity and Indonesianness, became the starting point for inclusive theology with a spirit of humanity and the destruction of Iskam. Nurcholish Madjid tries to elaborate on liberal religious views, especially in order to unravel interpretations of Islam which are characterized by Indonesianness, inclusivism and pluralism, which are his most prominent ideas.

His understanding of the meaning of Islam and his understanding of the meaning of Allah Nurcholish wants to bring an "inclusive" understanding of Islam. This understanding is

¹ Svamsul Kurniawan, Pluralism of Cak Nur and the Indonesian Nation" in SKH Pontianak Post, May 2007.

a prerequisite for understanding religious pluralism, Nurcholish tries to bring something that is characteristic of Islam to a more general characteristic, in this case an attitude of diversity. On the pretext that the religion brought by the prophets is in essence Islam as well. Nurcholish Madjid's idea above has received appreciation from progressive Islamic groups, Nurcholish's inclusive Islamic idea has become important in the discourse on religious pluralism in Indonesia recently which is rife and is on the agenda of liberal Islamic thinkers, the idea of freedom of thought and openness is the capital for marketing ideas. -their liberal ideas.

This research is a library research or library research, meaning that the data used comes from both primary and secondary sources of literature in the form of books, encyclopedias, journals, magazines and other published papers. The data collection technique in this research is by collecting literature as a source, primary and secondary sources to obtain data related to research problems, then analyze the data obtained. To facilitate this research, steps are needed, including using several methods, namely: the induction method is to depart from specific and concrete facts or events, then generalize them into general conclusions. The deduction method is a method that departs from general knowledge to assess a specific event. The comparative method is examining certain factors related to the situation or phenomenon being studied and comparing one factor with other factors and research is comparative.

B. Method

The aim and objectives of this paper is to examine Nurcholish Madjid's Thoughts in the Indonesian Context and his contributions towards Islam in Indonesia. Analytical method is employed when conducting the research. Thus this paper use qualitative approach and use various literature to analyze the problem.

C. Result and Discussion

Religious Pluralism According to Nurcholish Madjid's Thoughts in the Indonesian Context

The Indonesian nation is a nation that has various tribes, culture, language and religion. and guidelines for human life to achieve happiness in the world and in the hereafter. The phenomenon of religious life anywhere, especially in Indonesia, has its own charm and at the same time draws attention from various groups. Various cases have occurred, from easy

statements to mislead one religious understanding to another, religious blasphemy to interfaith marriage cases. If everyone believes in religion as a way of life, and also believes that religion has universal values, it is dynamic and flexible and oriented towards the future. Any religion does not have any meaning if its adherents do not follow or practice it, it is believed, it is recognized as the absolute truth and becomes a way of life for its adherents, from here one can know the dynamics of religious life for its adherents.²

In the practice of religion by its adherents, ideally the adherents of each religion have an awareness of not justifying what they adhere to when interacting between religious communities, because each religion has distinctive teachings, which characterize and at the same time distinguish it from the others. By not activating religious symbols or not highlighting religious identity, it is an acknowledgment of the differences between these religions and at the same time respecting these differences, the realization of harmony or interreligious roles for the sake of the common good.³

Pluralism cannot be separated from the meaning of plurality, if plurality is difference in religious, ethnic, cultural or other issues, while pluralism is a system of values, attitudes and processes that can translate religious reality into sustainable social cohesion. In other words, diversity is something empirical, while pluralism is an ideology or understanding that accepts diversity as a positive value accompanied by efforts to negotiate and adjust between them, without trying to weaken or even destroy one or part of that diversity. The existence of a difference in religion is a reality in society, and a pluralist attitude is an orientation that assumes a sincere acceptance and relationship to that fact, rather than eliminating or annihilating or melting those differences into one.⁴

Religion and society are a unit that has a close relationship and influence each other. Religion contains universal moral values to shape people's attitudes and behavior in responding to life's challenges. Religion can function and work well if religion can reflect on a person's daily behavior to become a better person, because religion is a rule of human life that provides teachings and good values that must be carried out by its adherents, as a

² Adang Muchtar Ghazali, "Islamic Education in the Dynamics of Religious Life in Indonesia", Journal, Intizar Volume 23, No, 1, 2017, pp, 92-94.

³ Julita Lestari, *Religious Pluralism in Indonesiaq*, (Challenges and Opportunities for the Unity of the Nation, Journal, Study and Social Forum for Academics, Volume 6, No. 1 2019, p, 3.

⁴ Fathur Rohman, et al." *Building Religious Harmony with Gus Dur's Pluralism Values*", Jurnal An-Nuha, Vol, 5, No, 2, 2018.

consensus dimension of a relationship that builds communication in legal values that exist in the construction of every religion there religion can be interpreted in a dual role, meaning that religion as a cause of conflict can also be a factor reducing conflict. Many religions and cultures in Indonesia then become conflicts between religious communities, this is the mission of mercy for all people does not play a significant role because there is a misunderstanding of the meaning of the values of religious life. In the Indonesian state, humans form and determine the desired style of society, in order for a good and desirable form of society to be realized, diversity in religious life in Indonesia really needs to be maintained, because of that it is a reality that must be grateful for the diversity that exists, if any. one who denies this state of affairs, will get into trouble and will face reality itself.⁵

Pluralism can be found everywhere, in certain societies whether in the office where they work, at school where they study, or whether in the market where they shop. However, a person can only be said to have the nature or understanding of what pluralism is if he or she interacts positively in this pluralistic environment. in other words. Understanding religious pluralism, every adherent of a religion is required not only to recognize the existence and rights of other people's religions, but more than that he must be involved in efforts to understand differences and similarities to encourage harmony in diversity.⁶

The noble values of Indonesianness are the universal and cosmopolitan values of the Indonesian people which are based on religion or culture as a result of a long dialogue with religion, these values have a strategic role as well as being central in building the unity of the Ummah to foster self-reliance as a nation.⁷. The problem of the relationship between religion, citizens and the nation is a matter of ijtihad which is very closely related to social and political contacts which are understood by the ummah itself. Therefore, liberal Islam is more suitable to use the "silent syari'ah" approach. Nurcholish Madjid explained three thoughts related to religious pluralism. First, religion is an ideology that recognizes the existence of other religions and is mature in dealing with diversity. Second, that the idea of religious pluralism is a religious principle that recognizes freedom of religion, living with the risks that each adherent of religion will bear. Third, religious pluralism in Islam is not a doctrine that assumes

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⁵ Toto Suryana,"The Actualization Concept of Interreligious Harmony" Jurnal, Ta'lim Vol, 9, No.2, 2011, hal, 134.

⁶ Subhan Imam, The Hustle and Discourse of Pluralism in Yogya, Yogyakarta; Kanisius, 2007, p, 29.

⁷ Nurcholish Madjid, *Religious Society*, Jakarta, Paramadina, 2000, p. 90

that all religions are the same and all are true, but Islam only gives recognition to the extent of each individual's right to exist or exist with the freedom to exercise each so that tolerant life can be realized in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, which consists of hundreds of tribes, nations, religions and beliefs, various customs and various religious organizations, both in Islam itself and in other religions, differences and pluralism within the framework of unity are facts that cannot be denied, therefore the understanding of pluralism or pluralism must be seen as a positive thing. Abdurrahman Wahid emphasized the importance of openness to find the truth anywhere. According to Gus Dur, the various incidents of riots that occurred under the guise of religion in several places were the result of an attitude of religious exclusivism. According to M. Amin Abdullah, the diversity of religions living in Indonesia, including the diversity of religious views, is a historical fact that cannot be denied by anyone. According to Amin Abdullah, all religions are different. No religion is the same. Different in doctrines, institutions, institutions and leaders, types of people, holidays, places and times that are considered sacred by their adherents, and so on. Besides these differences there are similarities, meaning that in each religion there are elements that have similarities, such as a sense of justice, a sense of humanity, concern for a bad environment, helping marginalized people, the poor. These similarities are not relative, but absolute. Absolute in its basic idea, but relative in its execution and implementation.⁸

To discuss pluralism or pluralism, it is necessary to know the meaning of pluralism first. Pluralism can be seen from two sides, namely the practical level and the ideological level. At a practical level, pluralism can be translated as an attitude of respect for differences in reality in mutual respect between different parties, we often hear another term for tolerance, in Islam we know the term "Tasamuh a'la al ikhtilaf" (openness in differences of opinion) while in At the ideological level, the notion of pluralism is an idea that assumes that all religions equally promote kindness and peace in their followers. Here it needs to be explained that all religions push together toward goodness and peace even though the substance of each religion is not the same or different. Thus pluralism in essence has the same meaning as

⁸ Umm Sumbulah et al. *Religious Pluralism The Meaning and Locality of Patterns of Inter-Religious Harmony*, Malang; Maliki Press, 2013, p, 34.

⁹ Chess Widiatmoko," Religious Pluralism" according to Nurcholish Madjid in the Indonesian Context, Intellectual Journal, 6 No.1 2017, p. 66.

tolerance, between people of one religion and people of other religions, not influencing each other and looking at each other. upholding a sense of brotherhood to the extent that is justified by their respective religions, especially in Indonesian contact, this is not something new but must continue to be endeavored. The realization of pluralism in Indonesia can be seen in the existence of Pancasila which is the ideology of the Indonesian state in which the first precept reads "Belief in the One and Only God" in which this precept can be understood that Indonesia is not affiliated with one particular religion, including Islam which is the majority of the Muslim population. , but acknowledges the existence of other religions recognized by the Indonesian government, with the principle of "Unity in Diversity". In general, according to Alwi Shihab, understanding religious pluralism is that each adherent of a religion is required not only to recognize the existence of other people's religious rights, but actually must be involved in efforts to understand differences and similarities in order to achieve harmony in diversity. In diversity.

So thus, it is understandable that religious pluralism is an understanding that considers all religions to teach the truth to followers of their respective religions and it is hoped that understanding will arise, so that there are no claims that one's religion is the most correct and other religions are wrong, meaning that the claim is not stated in in front of other religions if they interact even though it is true that their religion is the most correct, and other religions have truth from other angles, a view like this can only be expressed when everyone, including Umar Islam, realizes that it is impossible to unite the religious understandings of all human beings in a global world that is so broad.¹²

Pluralism or pluralism historically-sociologically is a phenomenon and a fact that cannot be avoided. Nurcholish Madjid stated that human pluralism is a reality that happens God's will and in accordance with the sunnatullah, everything in the world was created by God intentionally full of diversity, this is in accordance with the verses of the Qur'an surah al-Maidah verse 48:

"...We give clear rules and paths. If God wills, He will surely make you one community (only), but God wants to test you against what He has given

¹⁰ Syarifuddin Jurdi, *History of Wahdah Islamiyah*; *An Movement of Islamic Organizations in the Transitional Era*" edition I, Yogyakarta; Acana creations, 2007, pp, 78-79.

¹¹ Alwi Shihab, Inclusive Islam, Towards an Open Attitude in Religion, 5th edition Bandung; Mizan, 1990. p, 41.

¹² Hamiruddin, "Dakwah and Debate on Religious Pluralism", Tabligh Da'wah Journal, 13, No, 1 (2012), 5

you, so compete in doing good deeds. Only to God do you return everything, then He will tell you what you have disagreed about" ¹³

The verse above gives an affirmation about pluralism in social life between human beings which does not need to be upset, and they make them compete for goodness, and that it is God who will explain why humans are different, later when they return to His chest. The verse above is the core and at the same time an understanding of pluralism according to the Islamic view. The concept of understanding human pluralism is very basic in Islam, borrowing Murcholish Madjid's term, pluralism must be understood as a true meeting of the diversity of different civilizations.

Pluralism or pluralism in this life includes sunnatullah which cannot be avoided by religious people, as Islam's high appreciation for religious pluralism. The Qur'an views religions before Islam as religions that must be respected. One form of appreciation is the concept of Ahlul Kitab and Islamic doctrine as a concept that shows the demand for Muslims to be tolerant of adherents of other religions. the existence of principles that recognize the existence of other religions in the concept of the Ahlul Kitab, the holy book of the Qur'an is a book that teaches religious pluralism (*religius plurality*)¹⁴ Islam is a religion that recognizes the existence of pluralism, wherein Islam is essentially firm in believing in the truth of Islam and does not interfere in the affairs of other religions, Islam as a religion has a mission as rahmatan lil alamin for all nature and all creatures. In the opinion of Syafi'i Maarif, religious pluralism is not contrary to Islamic teachings, by quoting the verses of the Qur'an surah Al Baqoroh, verse 62:

"Indeed, those who believe, the Jews and the Sabians, (anyone among them) who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and do good deeds, they will receive a reward from their Lord, there is no fear for them, and not sad". 15

Alwi Shihab quoted the opinion of Al Razi, one of the commentators of the 12th century, while strengthening it with Al Thabary, the three signs stated in the verse above are the essence of Islamic teachings. Likewise the opinion of Al Zamakhsary who lived in the twelfth century, also held that view.¹⁶

¹³ Indonesian Ministry of Religion, Q.S, Al Maaidah, verse, 48, page, 168.

¹⁴ Nurcholish Madjid, Islam, Modernity, and Indonesianness, Bandung, Mizan, 1992, p. 184

¹⁵ Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Q.S, Al Bagoroh, verse 62, page, 19.

¹⁶ Alwi Shihab, Inclusive Islam, Towards an Open attitude in Religion, p, 79

By paying attention to the arguments of the commentators above, it seems clear that indications can be captured that Islam is hinted by the Qur'an to acknowledge the existence of religious pluralism in the context of acknowledging its existence as a social reality, and not recognizing the substance of its teachings.¹⁷ Nurcholish Madjid gives the meaning of pluralism as a value system that provides a positive and optimistic view of pluralism by accepting it as a reality and doing good to others based on that fact. Alwi Shihab distinguishes between pluralism and cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism refers to a reality in which various religions, nations, races live side by side in a certain location. However, there was no positive interaction between them.¹⁸

If it is concluded that the two views of both Nurcholish Madjid and Alwi Shihab regarding pluralism are that Islam has given space to all religions that live in a place where they are given space to acknowledge their existence, the space that is meant here is not the area of having to recognize the truth of religions outside of Islam, but only recognize the reality of diversity, especially diversity from a sociological perspective, such as cultural diversity, traditional views and so on. The Al Qu'an itself has given recognition of the existence of pluralism, meaning that pluralism is a reality of life that must be accepted as part of Allah SWT's scenario. Which of course still adheres to the guidelines of the holy book Al Qu'an and the Prophet's Hadith for Muslims as a whole. Pluralism, according to Nurcholish Madjid, which is recognized by Islam, is not based on religious doctrine by assuming that all religions are true and that they will both go to heaven, because if this doctrine is used as a reference, there will be indications that are "contradictory" to Islam. This strengthens pluralism in Islam not in the context of acknowledging and accepting that all religions are equal and correct, but Islam only recognizes the existence of pluralism outside the context of the doctrine of the priesthood.

Above, Nurcholish Madjid stated that pluralism or pluralism is sunnatullah, many verses of the Qur'an state that pluralism is something that is desired by Allah, therefore anyone who tries to reject pluralism means rejecting sunnatullah. Because social life is plural, there

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¹⁷ Alwi Shihab, Inclusive Islam, Towards an Open Attitude in Religion.

¹⁸ Alwi Shihab, Inclusive Islam, Towards an Open Attitude in Religion, p.,41-42.

¹⁹ Nurcholish Madjid, *Islamic Doctrine and Civilization*; A Critical Study of Issues of Faith, Humanity, and Modernity. edition, fourth Jakarta; Paramadina, 2000, p. 160.

²⁰ Johan Setiawan, Nurcholis Madjid's Thoughts About Religious Pluralism in the Indonesian Context, Zawiyah Journal, Islamic Thought, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2019, p, 31.

should be no coercion, including forcing someone to believe. According to Nurcholis Madjid, we should not force people to embrace one particular religion. Existing religions as long as they are truly standard and have holy books must be tolerated and also given the right to exist. Even the Qur'an requires them to carry out their teachings. Based on this, historically the people who have learned the most about pluralism are Islamic societies, therefore Islamic countries are multi-religious. When we see plurality or plurality as a positive concept, then we enter the concept of pluralism which is supported by the Qur'an.²¹

The Qur'an has provided clues about the existence of pluralism in surah Al-Hujurat verse 13

"O mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Mighty. know"²².

This means that pluralism is a reality of life that must be accepted as part of God's scenario²³. This emphasizes that pluralism in Islam is not in the context of acknowledging and accepting that all religions are equal and correct, but Islam recognizes the existence of pluralism outside the context of religious doctrine. Therefore, pluralism, according to Nurcholish Madjid, is included in the sunnatullah category which the religious community cannot but because of its certainty. So high was Islam's respect for the diversity of religions before, that the Qur'an looked at the religions before Islam as religions worthy of respect. As one of these awards is the concept of Ahl al-kitab in Islamic doctrine, as a concept that shows the demand that Muslims be tolerant towards adherents of other religions. The Qur'an is a book that teaches religious plurality. With this, does Islam recognize the truth of other religions? According to Nurcholish Madjid, this is a wrong view. The view of Islam towards the views of other religions only gives recognition to the extent of each individual's right to exist (exist) with the freedom to practice their respective religions.²⁴

Nurcholish Madjid does not recognize all religions as the same, Islam's clearer view of other religions only gives limited recognition of each's right to exist, meaning that it only

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²¹ Lutfi Assyaukani, *The liberal face of Indonesian Islam*, p., 139-141.

²² Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Religion, Q.S. Al-Hujurat (49) matter. 817

²³ Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Doctrine and Civilization: A Critical Study of Issues of Faith, Humanity, and Modernity*, IV edition, Jakarta, Paramadina, 2000, p. 160

²⁴ Nurcholish Madjid, *Modern Islam and Indonesianness*, p, 69.

recognizes its existence With the freedom to practice one's own religion,²⁵ This is confirmed again in surah al-kafirun verse 6:

"To you is your religion and to me is mine." ²⁶

An attitude that is clearly related to efforts to realize various good things for society.

Thus religious pluralism is based on that all religions are given the freedom to live with the risks borne by their respective adherents.²⁷ It is this attitude of uniqueness that creates the uniqueness of Muslims in their association with people of other religions, namely tolerance, openness, fairness, justice and honesty.²⁸

So, pluralism that is recognized by Islam according to Nurcholish Madjid is not on religious doctrine with the assumption that all religions are the same and true that all will go to heaven, pluralism in Islam is not in the context of recognizing and accepting a religion that is the same and correct, but Islam recognizes the existence of pluralism outside of Islamic doctrine according to conditions of modern society.

Humanity is still divided into various groups so that there is practically no society in this world without plurality. *being united*) something is relative and tentative.

In Nurcholish Madjid's view, in essence, the pluralism of society or pluralism is not enough to just recognize and accept the fact that society is plural, but fundamentally it must be accompanied by a sincere attitude to accept the fact that pluralism or pluralism is God's grace to humans, from here it will enrich growth. culture through dynamic interaction and exchange of diverse cultures.²⁹ By declaring that society is plural, consisting of ethnic groups and religions, it only illustrates the message of fragmentation.

It can't just be a negative good, seen only for its use to eliminate fanaticism. realism should be understood as "a true affinity for diversity in the bonds of civility", in fact, furthermore pluralism must be understood as a necessity for the safety of mankind, among others, through the monitoring and development mechanisms it produces.³⁰

²⁵ Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Doctrine and Civilization: A Critical Study of Issues of Faith, Humanity, and Modernity*, IV edition, Jakarta, Paramadina, 2000, p. 79

²⁶ Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Religion, Q.S. Al-Kafirun (109), matter. 1112

²⁷ Nurcholish Madjid, Islam, Modernity, and Indonesianness, 1992, p. 79

²⁸ Nurcholish Madjid, Islam, Modernity, and Indonesianness, 1992, p. 81

²⁹ Suryadi, Nurcholish Madjid's Inclusive Theology (Thoughts on Religious Pluralism and Liberalism), Jurnal Mantiq Vol.2 No.1, May 2017

³⁰ Nurcholish Madjid, *Horizon and Community Religiosity*, Jakarta, Paramadina, 1999, et.1, p. 62-63

So pluralism is actually a rule of Allah or (sunnatullah) which cannot be changed so it is also impossible to resist.³¹ From this perspective then try to deconstruct the meaning of Islam as an attitude of surrender to God. Islam as a formal religion and is the product of history and Islam as a product*common platform, kalimatun sawa' religions*.³² In the current context of social and state life, the value of pluralism or pluralism must be further developed.

D. Conclusion

Pluralism is a reality of life that must be accepted as part of God's scenario³³. This is emphasized by pluralism in Islam not in the context of acknowledging and accepting that all religions are equal and true, but Islam recognizes the existence of pluralism outside the context of religious doctrine. So high was Islam's respect for the diversity of religions before, that the Qur'an looked at the religions before Islam as religions worthy of respect. As one of these awards is the concept of Ahl al-kitab in Islamic doctrine, as a concept that shows the demand that Muslims be tolerant towards adherents of other religions. The Qur'an is a book that teaches religious plurality. With this, does Islam recognize the truth of other religions? According to Nurcholish Madjid, this is a wrong view. The view of Islam towards the views of other religions only gives recognition to the extent of each individual's right to exist (exist) with the freedom to practice their respective religions.

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³¹ Nurcholish Madjid, Islamic Doctrine and Civilization, Jakarta, Paramadina, 1995, p. IXVII

³² Suryadi, Nurcholish Madjid's Inclusive Theology (Thoughts on Religious Pluralism and Liberalism), Jurnal Mantiq Vol.2 No.1, May 2017

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