# Journal of Values and Character in Counseling

# Keeping The Spirit of Religion Tolerance Through *Tepa Slira* and *Empan Papan*

Aldila Dyas Nurfitri*

Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: aldila_dyas@walisongo.ac.id

## Abstract

The approach in learning and education through culture is an important element in strengthening the relationship between social groups in society, including religion. In Javanese society, there are two values that are full of noble meaning and are relevant to the context of caring for religious harmony through the spirit of tolerance, namely tepa slira and empan papan. Tepa slira guides individuals to share and experience their position as followers of certain religions that they believe to be respected and valued by followers of other religions, while empan papan lead the flexibility of the physical and spiritual birth to adapt to situations and conditions at certain places and times. One effort to preserve or preserve noble teachings can be done through character education, including the Living Values Education Program (LVEP) developed by Tillman. This article provides implications for the application of character education in schools.

**Keywords**: tolerance, tepa slira, empan papan, local wisdom

## INTRODUCTION

Humans are basically homo conflicts, or creatures who are always involved in a conflict, manifest in conflict, contestation, and debate, both voluntary and forced (Susan, 2010). The conflict in question is an expression of the diversity of values, interests, and beliefs as a new form of social change that is contrary to the inherited obstacles (Miall, Rambotham, & Woodhouse, 2002). According to Sabara (2015), as a social institution, religion is one of the variables that often trigger conflicts between groups of people to social destruction. Therefore, religious harmony is needed by the community to minimize the potential for conflict that can threaten the harmony of harmony in heterogeneous community life, one of which is by building a spirit of religious tolerance.

Harmony is a peaceful condition that allows all elements of society to respect and respect each other (Sumbullah, 2015). Harmony is a concept of reference to minimize the occurrence of conflict turmoil that can shake the joints of harmony in society, especially in heterogeneous (plural) societies (Sabara, 2015).

According to Hamdan (in Ismail, 2012), religious harmony is interpreted as a relationship between people and between religious believers based on tolerance, mutual understanding, respect, and respect for equality in the practice of their religious teachings and cooperation in the life of society, nation and state. According to Jamrah (2015), tolerance is an absolute requirement for the realization of harmony itself, so that the relationship between tolerance and harmony is causal.

Religion can basically be used as a tool for social cohesion. In order for religion to function as a tool of social cohesion, there are several dimensions that need to be considered by adherents (Mashudi, 2014), including the collapse of the sectoral ego, patterned simple life, not extreme and mutual respect for others.

The cultural approach becomes an important element in strengthening relationships between social groups, including religion (Sabara, 2015). A cultural approach if explored and implemented further can be a social capital in easing religious conflicts, one of which is through local wisdom. Moordiningsih (2010) explains that local wisdom is understood as understanding, ideas, outlook on life, values, norms, and customs which are owned by a community, considered good, used in a tradition from one generation to the next. The term that can be brought closer to local wisdom, namely traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge, and local knowledge, which refers to the traditions that mature and practices of local communities, original and related to a particular local. This traditional knowledge includes the wisdom, knowledge, and teachings of the community. Knowledge here is also often interpreted in the form of belief, values, and practice. This

traditional knowledge is transmitted in many cases verbally. Some of them are expressed in the form of stories, legends, focal or, rituals, songs, and even laws.

Efforts to study religious harmony are based on the implementation of local wisdom values, as well as efforts to examine the concept of religious harmony based on the wealth that is spread throughout the archipelago. Two of them are the elaboration of the adage *"tepa slira"* and *"empan papan"*, which are full of noble meaning and relevance to the context of caring for religious harmony through a spirit of tolerance.

### Spirit of Tolerance in Two Noble Teachings

*Tepa slira* is derived from the word tepa which means location or place with slira which means body or body, so *tepa slira* literally means location or place on the body (us). *Tepa slira* is part of the concept of raos or taste in Javanese life. According to Jatman (1997), raos is the heart of the Javanese. Raos can mean 'taste' and 'feeling', but it can also mean 'the nature or nature of things'. Raos is not just reason or rationality, but more than that is something related to the mind or heart (Sugiarto, 2015). The word 'thinking', in Javanese, is often pronounced with the term 'bullying' or 'manah' which emphasizes the feelings of the heart as well as a ratio. Therefore, *tepa slira* is actually the result of a dialogue between diversion or manah with the thought process. Raos also gives meaning to all phenomena and becomes an important key of all absolute and not absolute things that in this world there is no absolute at the same time perfect (Sugiarto, 2015).

Suseno (2001) suggests *tepa slira* is an individual's attitude to control himself based on self-awareness that makes society able to put themselves in social relations based on self-determination and volunteerism. Furthermore, humans as social beings in humans there is the urge and need to relate and interact with others. The form of *tepa slira* is to maintain good relations in all fields. A good relationship in the community is related to the role of each member of the community.

Effendi, Komarudin, & Nandang (2013) stated that *tepa slira* which in Islamic teachings is known as tasamuh. Tasamuh is tolerance or tolerance, which is an attitude like listening and respecting the opinions and opinions of others. Tasamuh is the greatness of the soul, the breadth of the mind, and the spaciousness of the chest. Thus, *tepa slira* in the context of religious communities is the tendency of individuals to respect others, to be empathetic, considerate, have self-awareness and the need to understand the needs of others in terms of embracing a religion that is believed, so as to create harmony, and peace.

Mulder (2001) argues that an individual who has the *tepa slira* has several characteristics, including:

a. *Avoid open conflict,* Individuals must be able to create relationships that are in harmony with others. Harmonious relationships are realized at least even if they occur only from the outside. For this reason, it is necessary to avoid any speech or behavior that allows open conflict with other people.

b. *Knowledge and self-mastery*, Knowledge and self-control cover the way individuals process their sense of self. A strong mind allows the individual not to be disturbed by any event in the phenomenal world and makes the individual concerned patient. Individuals can accept life as it is and adjust to life.

c. *Control of drive and emotions*, Encouragement and emotion control is how individuals are able to control the impulses in themselves and control the emotions that occur in him. Desires and emotions that are not always good and require individuals to be able to hold it. Individuals must be able to master their emotions when happy, sad, or angry in front of others to be more respectful and not offend that person.

Sri Mangkunegara IV in *Serat Wedhatama* described the practice of *tepa slira* as exemplified through Panembahan Senapati's personality, as "*karyenak tyase sesama*" (making good, happy, and peaceful feelings of fellow human beings) (Susetya, 2014). In the context of religious tolerance, people who act in *tepa slira* will be far from ignorant or nosy attitudes towards other religious communities. People who have *tepa slira* will always try to bring peace and social comfort in the midst of the diversity of Indonesian society. Typically, a person who acts as a slira will always have a concern for the suffering, the burden of life, and difficulties faced by other religious communities.

In another form, the concept of *tepa slira* is often pronounced in the form of expectations of others as perpetrators, namely "*dadi wong mbok ya sing tepa-tepa*" (we should behave *tepa slira*) or in other terms "*yen dijiwit wong liya iku krasa lara ya aja njiwit liyan*" (if we are pinched to feel pain, then don't pinch others). Therefore, people who have *tepa slira* will not interfere in the interests of other religious communities and provide space for them to express their freedom to embrace the religion they believe in.

*Tepa slira* places everything that is in the other person can be felt as if it is something that belongs to itself or is experienced. Thus, various conditions, both negative and positive, on others will be identified or felt as values that afflict themselves. The *tepa slira* concept is the relatively dominant underlying tolerance.

The implementation of the *tepa slira* concept feels appropriate as a means of maintaining harmony in a plural society starting with itself (itself) as an implementing unit. *Tepa slira* leads individuals to share and

experience their position as followers of certain religions that they believe in when respected and valued by followers of other religions. Likewise, when adherents of other religions find their positions being disputed, then individuals with the right level of slavery will try to place themselves when in the same situation. People with tepira slira, will make someone more understanding, empathy, positive, and in harmony, so it is not easy to justify the faith of others, do not interfere, do not force the will, and are willing to help with other religious communities.

Another Javanese adagium full of messages of tolerance is "*empan papan*". Javanese people often assume that the truth of an attitude and action is relative, that is, "right" at a certain time and place can be "incorrect" when applied at different times and places (Endraswara, 2016). Therefore, the Javanese also base the truth of that attitude and action in an expression, which is called the *empan papan*.

*Empan papan* consists of the word empan which means the application and the word board which means place. Four board is a certain attitude, so that attitude is not contrary to the circumstances and rules that occur at this time, here, and such conditions (*saiki, kene, ngene*) (Fikriono, 2012). In other words, *empan papan*s have a meaning that is not much different from the phrase "where the earth is based, where the sky is upheld" (an indonesial phrase).

The concept of *empan papan* requires the flexibility of the body and soul to adjust to the situation and conditions at a certain place and time. A person's attitude and actions must be considered for his purpose, namely to whom, where, how, to what extent the implementation is possible. Therefore, this concept also requires a culprit to be introspective so that he is seated to be on target. No doubt the concept of *empan papan* is also very close to the *tepa slira* concept.

The *empan papan* philosophy is actually related to space and time which are social in nature because both are referred to as social harmony (Irianto, 2013). Being in harmony means understanding his position and knowing how to position himself according to his position. Being psychological because space and time affect the feeling of comfort or discomfort for someone. When or as long as the Javanese do not understand their position -in the context of space and time- then what will happen is the disturbance of a sense of inner calm, because the person violates the principles of what is perceived as social harmony (Irianto, 2013).

The board became a counterproductive value to the understanding of transnational religious organizations that are currently rife where its existence can threaten the integrity of the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation. According to Aksa (2017), transnational religious organization movements generally have ideological characteristics that no longer rely on the concept of state, but rather tend to focus on ideological concepts for the benefit of the people and are dominated by scripturalist fundamentalist or radical thought patterns and sometimes partially adapt modern ideas and instruments.

The diversity of Indonesian society itself is a privilege and is the result of a long-standing civilization of the nation. It is the result of civilization that now forms the characteristics of a pluralistic or multi-ethnic Indonesian nation with a high sense of pluralism in life.

The Indonesian people can integrate because this nation is fortified by an anti-proliferation ideology, where the ideology is created through the creation of a sense of initiative and initiative from the noble values of the Indonesian nation. Pancasila is a crystallization of the nation's culture that can accommodate and bridge all the differences that exist in Indonesian society. Pancasila gives a unique pattern to the Indonesian people, therefore Pancasila cannot be separated from the Indonesian people. Pancasila is universal that can accommodate and not limit the values of existing pluralism. Pancasila is a unified five elements that cannot be separated.

**Revitalization of *Tepa slira* and *Empan papan*: An Effort**

Local wisdom is a legacy from the ancestral past, which is not only found in traditional literature (the oral literature of its speakers, but is found in various views of life, health, and architecture. In dialectics of life-death (*something that lives will die*), without preservation and revitalization, local wisdom will die someday. Probably, the fate of local wisdom resembles the inheritance of ancestral heritage, which after so many generations will be devoured by termites. Now, even the signs of decay of local wisdom are increasingly readable. more pragmatic, which in turn is more aligned with economic pressures and needs.

One effort to preserve or preserve noble teachings such as *tepa slira* and *empan papan* can be done through character education. Indeed, the importance of character education is to teach the values of life, including the value of tolerance has become an awareness for every nation, especially those who have diversity as Indonesia.

One of the efforts to realize character education is the Living Values Education Program (LVEP) developed by Tillman (in Andayani, 2013). One of the goals of this program is to help individuals reflect and apply twelve universal values in life, including simplicity, tolerance, honesty, respect, peace, responsibility, happiness, unity, compassion, humility, cooperation, and freedom.

Besides LVEP, there is also the application of the Character-Based Holistic Education model

(Andayani, 2013). The model has been implemented in more than 700 Semai Benih Bangsa schools (Non-formal Kindergarten) and other formal kindergartens. Through the Semai Benih Bangsa program, nine characters are grown in children, including (1) God's love and all of His creation; (2) responsibility, discipline and independence; (3) honesty / trustworthy and wise; (4) respect and courtesy; (5) generous, helpful and cooperative/cooperative; (6) confident, creative and hard-working; (7) leadership and justice; (8) kind and humble; and (9) tolerance, peace and unity.

Besides through LVEP and IHF, character education programs that prioritize tolerance are also included in the Transformative and Tolerant Joint Learning Program organized by the Islamic and Social Studies Institute (LKiS) which has three themes, namely: (a) Islam and Gender, (b) Islam and the Politics of Citizenship, (c) Islam and Religious Relations. This program uses four main principles, namely learning from experience, being open and honest, reflection, and dialogic. While the aim is social transformation, respect for human rights, and respect for pluralism (Andayani, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

The spirit of religious tolerance manifested in local wisdom can actually be found in every region of Indonesia. Two of them can be found in the land of Java, namely in the form of noble teachings *tepa slira* and empan boards. *Tepa slira* leads us to "measure one's own body clothes" which means an attempt to put oneself in the condition of others so that we can feel if it happens to him. Whereas empan boards guide us to always look at the contest of situations and conditions in behaving and behaving as religious people.

Efforts to revitalize the values of local wisdom can also be done in various ways, one of them through character education. Character education based on the values of local wisdom not only seeks to make the transfer of knowledge about good values carried out but also so that these values are embedded and integrated into the flow of thoughts and actions of individuals.

## REFERENCES

Aksa (2017). Gerakan Islam Transnasional: Sebuah Nomenklatur, Sejarah, dan Pengaruhnya di Indonesia. *Historical Studies Journal*, 1-14.

Andayani, T. R. (2013). Peningkatan Toleransi Melalui Budaya *Tepa slira. Prosiding Seminar Nasional Parenting*, 397-406.

Effendi, R., Komarudin, S., & Nandang, H. (2013). *Memperbaiki Gonjang-ganjing Akhlak Bangsa.* Bandung: Al-Fikriis.

Endraswara, S. (2016). *Berpikir Positif Orang Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Narasi.

Fikriono, M. (2012). *Puncak Makrifat Jawa*. Jakarta: Noura Books.

Irianto, A. (2013). Reinterpretasi Budi Pekerti Dalam Konstelasi Kebudayaan Jawa dan Jepang. *IZUMI Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya Jepang*. 2 (2). https://doi.org/10.14710/izumi.2.2.

Ismail, F. (2012). *Republik Bhineka Tunggal Ika; Mengurai Isu-isu Konflik, Multikulturalisme, Agama, dan Sosial Budaya.* Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI.

Jamrah, S. A. (2015). Toleransi Antarumat Beragama: Perspektif Islam. *Jurnal Ushuluddin, 23*(2), 185-200.

Jatman, D. (1997). *Psikologi Jawa.* Jakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya.

Mashudi. (2014). Pendidikan Keberagaman sebagai Basis Kearifan Lokal (Gagasan Kerukunan Umat Beragama). *Jurnal Tarbawi, 2*(1), 47-66.

Miall, H., Rambotham, O., & Woodhouse, T. (2002). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation od Deadly Conflict* (Cetakan II ed.). (T. B. Sasrio, Penerj.) Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada.

Moordiningsih. (2010). Optimise Mengkristalkan Kearifan Lokal. Dalam *50 Tahun Himpunan Psikologi Indonesia (HIMPSI): Redefinisi Psikologi Indonesia dalam Keberagaman* (hal. 37-56). Jakarta: HIMPSI.

Mulder, N. (2001). *Mistisisme Jawa.* Yogyakarta: LKiS Yogyakarta.

Sabara, N. (2015). Merawat Kerukunan dengan Kearifan Lokal di Kabupaten Muna Sulawesi Tenggara. *Al-Qalam*. Vol 21 (2).

Sugiarto, R. (2015). *Psikologi Raos.* Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ifada.

Sumbulah, U. (2015). Pluralisme dan Kerukunan Umat Beragama Perspektif Elite Agama di Kota Malang. *Analisa Journal of Social Sciences and Religion*. 22(01), 1-13.

Susan, N. (2010). *Pengantar Sosiologi Konflik dan Isu-isu Konflik Kontemporer.* Jakarta: Prenada Kencana Media Grup.

Suseno, F. (2001). *Etika Jawa: Sebuah Analisa Falsafi tentang Kebijaksanaan Hidup Jawa.* Jakarta: PT.

Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Susetya, W. (2016). *Pemimpin Masa Kini & Budaya Jawa*. Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo.