

## Internalization of Islamic Egalitarianism in the Novel *Bumi Cinta* by Habiburrohman EL Shirazy

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### Abstract

Equality among Muslims is a must. The equality in question is in the social sphere, and other human relationships as long as it does not involve linking the teachings of tawhid from each belief. Egalitarian awareness or equality is important to be applied to unite various differences in order to create peace and harmony between religious communities in each region. This phenomenon is also depicted in the novel *Bumi Cinta* by Habiburrohman EL Shirazy. Although the novel tells the story of a santri who can be said to be a person who has a strong stance in his religion, but in his place of residence in Moscow Russia, he can still live well side by side with the surrounding community who are not Muslim. How is the form of Islamic Egalitarianism reflected in the novel *Bumi Cinta* by Habiburrohman EL Shirazy? 2. What is the impact of the form of Islamic Egalitarianism reflected in the novel *Bumi Cinta* by Habiburrohman EL Shirazy? This research uses qualitative data analysis techniques. The results of this study indicate that Islamic Egalitarianism reflected in the novel *Bumi Cinta* by Habiburrohman EL Shirazy is the most effective da'wah strategy to increase the number of followers of Islam. Even the followers of Islam are voluntary and forced. Thus, the awareness of preaching in a peaceful way like this should be applied in real life.

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### Introduction

The novel *Bumi cinta* by Habiburrohman El Shirazy is able to hypnotize anyone who reads it. This literary work makes the reader dive into the meaning of each quote of the novel. The language is relatively easy and does not seem heavy, adding to the appeal of this Islamic romantic genre novel. Novel has a meaning as a work of fiction written in the form of a story.

The definition of a novel also differs according to the views of the characters. Among them is Kenney's definition of a novel, which states that a novel is a work of fiction that is very long and is an imitation of actual conditions. Teeuw expressed his opinion on the novel, stating that a novel is a long prose form (around 40,000 words) that is longer than a short story, but not limited by rhyme (Rahayu).

The novels written by Habiburrohman El Shirazy are mostly religious, novels that are able to make readers shed tears because of the beauty of the words in the novel. The novel *Bumi Cinta* tells the story of the struggle of a santri from Indonesia who struggles against his lust in the center of the world's free sex, namely Moscow, Russia. The teachings of Islam that he adheres to make him not afraid of anyone, because he believes that wherever he is, Allah SWT is always with him.

Living a life that is far different from the environment he once lived in does not make Ayyas impose his religious beliefs on his friends. Ayyas thinks very inclusively about differences. One of the lessons learned is about Ayyas' view of equality towards friends of different religions. According to him, in the social sphere anyone can be a friend as long as it does not interfere with the creed he has believed in, namely Islam.

The novel also mentions several characters other than Ayyas who have personalities and lifestyles that are much different from Ayyas. Mentioned in the novel are Devid, Yelena and Linor, Anastasia Palazzo, and many other characters mentioned in *Bumi Cinta*.

This novel is a mega best seller in Southeast Asia. It contains all aspects of education, religion, morals, romance, and history. The novel *Bumi Cinta* really builds the soul of anyone who reads it. This is because all aspects of life are in this novel.

## **Method**

The approach in writing this article is through qualitative methods, namely library research. This is a plus to explain the content in the novel. The dialog in the novel is presented very communicatively and not wordy, making it easier for the reader to understand.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Talking about the title of the related article, there are terms of internalization and egalitarian that must be mentioned first before discussing the substance of the novel *Bumi*

*Cinta*. Internalization is a practical application, and appreciation through guidance, in-depth coaching (Sari, 2019). Egalitarian is a condition that is equal in nature between men and women to realize all the potential that exists to build all aspects of life (Irma, 2022). According to the Indonesia Dictionary (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*/KBBI), the term internalization means the appreciation of a doctrine, teaching, or value so that it is a belief or awareness of the truth of the doctrine or value manifested in attitudes and behavior. Meanwhile, the term egalitarian according to the Indonesia Dictionary (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*/KBBI), shows the meaning of equality or equality.

In the novel that the author wants to explain is about the awareness of social equality of the characters in the novel *Bumi Cinta*. In the structure of society, there are people who compare each other based on race, nation, economic conditions, and abilities (Barir, 20214). Russia is no exception, especially in the city of Moscow, which is considered a developed city center and the main characteristic of this city is freedom. In the novel *Bumi Cinta*, it is also explained that Moscow is the largest free sex and mafia center in the world. This signifies freedom, but there are still some people who are sensitive to the social conditions around them. This sensitivity will later lead to an awareness of equality.

Devid, who was Ayyas's friend in the past, was known as a religious, steadfast and intelligent child during his school days. However, circumstances have turned him into a free person who is not bound by religious rules. The friendship relationship that still makes the relationship between Devid and Ayyas intimate until the city of Moscow, Russia. Devid helping Ayyas signifies an awareness of equality despite their different beliefs and lifestyles.

Inside the apartment, Ayyas meets Yelena and Linor. Two beautiful Russian women who make any man admire their beauty. Yelena, who is an accomplished sex worker, makes herself known to masculine men from various countries. Linor works as a journalist, but the free lifestyle inherent in Mokswa residents greatly affects her daily habits. The figure of Ayyas who is firm in his religious stance faced with such a woman in one apartment is certainly not easy. The test of a man's faith is tested because of a woman. Every day Ayyas prays to Allah SWT to be kept away and protected from the slander of women.

Even though Yelena is a top sex worker, there is anxiety in her heart. This means that Yelena has everything-popularity, finances, a beautiful face-but she considers herself

not equal to others. Equality means people's inner peace. This is a quote from Yelena when she feels discouraged by her own work;

“Tiada Yelena, bodoh kalau kau mengatakan wajahmu bahagia! bukan ini jalan yang kau inginkan sesungguhnya. Kau harus jadi manusia yang dihargai sebagai manusia yang mempunyai jiwa dan kehormatan, bukan sebagai onggokan daging yang diperjualbelikan. Lalu apa bedanya dengan onggokan daging babi yang dijual sekiloan di pasar-pasar?”

“No Yelena, it's foolish to say your face is happy! This is not the way you really want to be. You should be a human being who is respected as a human being with a soul and honor, not as a lump of meat for sale. Then what's the difference between you and the lumps of pork sold by the kilo in the markets?”

From this quote, Yelena wants to be treated as a human being, she wants to be respected and loved as she should be. She wants to be considered equal to others and doesn't want to be belittled by customers and people around her.

Although Yelena considers herself dirty, because of her humanity she is willing to help Ayyas as Devid's friend. Yelena did this because she felt sorry for Devid's friend who had just come from Indonesia. She helped sincerely without asking for payment, because she knew that students who came to Russia must not have sufficient financial conditions. Yelena's good deeds were a kind of welcome for Ayyas. According to him, the good deeds he did to atone for his sins, he also wondered why he believed in sin, when he only believed in God. Yes, Yelena is an atheist.

Over time, Ayyas had gotten used to interacting with Yelena and Linor, although Linor was usually cold to Ayyas. But there were some things that Ayyas disliked about Yelena and Linor. Usually in the apartment, the clothes they wore were disrespectful in Ayyas' eyes. Ayyas always reprimanded their way of dressing, to avoid slander.

Yelena is an atheist who has previously embraced several religions, namely Buddhism, Koghucu, Orthodox, and once Islam. Although Yelena is an atheist, she treats Ayyas well and does not look at where he comes from. All of this is done because Yelena values differences and realizes equality between human beings. As the following quote shows, Yelena has no religion.

“Tidak, dulu memang aku pernah memeluk agama. Pernah Budha, Ortodoks, Konghucu, dan Pernah islam. Aku sekarang tidak memeluk agama satupun. Aku pernah memeluk islam karena mantan suamiku agamanya islam” “Kamu jangan kaget. Di sini

banyak yang tidak beragama. Menurut pengalamanku, agar hidup kita mudah kita tidak memerlukan agama dan Tuhan”. Ayyas berkata “Itu tidak benar. Agama Justru hadir untuk menyelesaikan masalah yang mendera umat manusia!”

“No, I have had my share of religions in the past. I was Buddhist, Orthodox, Confucian, and once I was Muslim. I do not have any religion now. I once embraced Islam because my ex-husband was Muslim." "You should not be surprised. There are many non-religious people here. In my experience, to make our lives easy we do not need religion and God". Ayyas said, "That is not true. Religion is here to solve the problems that plague mankind!".”

From the quote above, Ayyas appreciates all kinds of religions. He views that the social environment and life will be fine as long as he has a religion. Egalitarian or equality will appear by itself when a person understands religion and appreciates it and is sensitive to existing social conditions.

In the black world (Prostitution) that Yelena lives in, she still has the naruni to change for the better. In *Bumi Cinta*, when talking and discussing with Ayyas, she feels valued and more humanized. This is different when Yelena talks to her friends like Olga Nikolayento, Rossa, Kezina, and Mavra who always discuss the black business. Ayyas upholds humanity wherever it is and whatever the circumstances.

In Moscow, Ayyas also met his thesis advisor assigned by Prof. Tomskii, Anastasia Palazzo. She was known to be a very beautiful woman, intelligent, and very rational in making decisions. The man who won her heart was the luckiest man. Prof. Anastasia is an orthodox believer who is also firm in her religion. Prof. Anastasia also admired Ayyas' thinking. She even began to fall in love with the Indonesian man who was not as handsome, but his thoughts were very broad. In religion, both of them have their own principles, but in social reality, human interaction is peaceful. Even the distance between the mentor and the mentee does not appear between the two. Both are like friends who are processing together to achieve success in education.

Although Yelena is an atheist, she is very caring as a social being with Ayyas. Her high social spirit makes Yelena happier to be friends with Ayyas than with her mafia gang. As the following quote,

“Atau jangan-jangan dia bertemu kelompok rasialis yang ekstrem, yang tidak menyukai bangsa ber-ras non Rusia. Ia sangat celaka bila bertemu dengan kelompok itu”, tiba-tiba bel berbunyi. Dari pintu ia bisa melihat siapa yang datang. Ia sedikit kecewa, ternyata bukan Ayyas, tapi Linor.”

“Or maybe he met an extreme racist group that dislikes non-Russians. He would be very unfortunate if he met such a group,” the bell suddenly rang. From the door he could see who had come. To her disappointment, it was not Ayyas, but Linor.”

Yelena and Linor are polar opposites, Yelena who loves her friendship with Ayyas, but Linor hates Ayyas because Ayyas is a Muslim. Linor really hates Muslims. According to Linor, the existence of Muslims creates discomfort on earth. Yelena is well aware of Linor's disposition to dislike Muslims. Yelena only answered briefly and did not argue with Linor at all. Although Yelena has no religion, she thinks that humans are the same everywhere, regardless of race, skin color, and religion. Wherever humans are the same, there are good and bad.

As time went by, Ayyas met Muslim people in Moscow, Russia. Ayyas was thrilled when he found a mosque in Moscow. At the mosque he met Imam Hasan, the Imam of the mosque. Despite coming from different regions, the emotional connection between Ayyas and the Imam was close and immediate. This can be established because of the egalitarian awareness of fellow human beings between the two. The emotional closeness is based on the nature of the two who trust each other, as quoted below;

“Kalau begitu kau bisa satu mobil dengan aku. Aku mau ke *The White House Residence*. Ada seorang teman lama saat kuliah di Birmighan dulu.” Ayyas menjawab “Terima kasih, Imam. *Jazakumullah Khairo*.”

“Then you can share a car with me. I am going to The White House Residence. I have an old friend from my time in Birmighan.” Ayyas replied “Thank you, Imam. *Jazakumullah Khairo*”.”

Before leaving Ayyas, Imam Hasan advised Ayyas that he should always fear Allah SWT, because the trials in Moscow were not easy. It is the freest country in the world. Moscow is known as the center of free sex and the world's biggest porn site accesser.

Prof. Anastasia Palazzo is known as a smart, independent woman who is difficult to conquer. The few men who ever pursued her were rejected because Prof. Anastasia was not interested in them at all. Unlike Ayyas, day after day of discussion with Prof. Anastasia, suddenly the feeling of love came to the beautiful professor's heart. It was her not-so-tall body, pale skin, and broad insight that caused the attraction to the man's figure regardless of his family background. The following quote is proof that Doktor Anastasia's love for Ayyas does not see who Ayyas really is.

“Apakah ia tampan? Tidak. Para pemuda Rusia menurutnya lebih tampan dan gagah. Pemuda itu masih kalah gagah. Apakah ia cerdas? Mungkin. Tapi Doktor Rusia yang tampan dan masih muda yang menurutnya lebih cerdas dari Ayyas. Doktor muda itu pernah mendekatinya melalui Profesor Tomskii, namun ia sama sekali tidak tertarik kepadanya. Ia bahkan muak dengan suara yang keluar dari mulutnya. Apakah karena Ayyas kaya? jelas tidak. Ia tahu pemuda itu pasti tidak kaya, lazimnya para mahasiswa Indonesia hidupnya pas-pasan. Ia yakin Ayyas tidak jauh keadannya dengan mereka. Terus kenapa ia tertarik dengan Ayyas? Ia sendiri tidak bisa menjawabnya.”

“Is he handsome? No, he was not. The Russian youths were more handsome and dashing in her opinion. He was still less dashing. Was he intelligent? Perhaps. But it was the handsome, young Russian doctor that Ayyas thought was more intelligent. The young doctor had approached her through Professor Tomskii, but she was not interested in him at all. She was even disgusted by the sound that came out of his mouth. Was it because Ayyas was rich? Obviously not. He knew that the young man was definitely not rich, most Indonesian students were mediocre. He was sure Ayyas was not far from them. So why was he interested in Ayyas? He himself could not answer that.”

From the quote above, equality in feelings is a definite thing that is owned by individuals regardless of physical, economic conditions, faces, and so on. When love is in the heart of an individual, any barrier and division of levels from any aspect will collapse by itself, due to the cause of harmony and equality.

In accordance with the incident of Anastasia Palazzo's unrequited love for Ayyas, there is a statement that love is blind, even emphasized in the English term Love is so blind, if someone loves his partner more, he should see the person he loves more as the saying "do not know, do not love". Thus, if you already know intensely, you will really love something or someone. But the experience of falling in love is different, the more one falls in love, the more blind one becomes (Agung, 2014).

After reading some history books on Stalin and Lenin, Ayyas imagined how difficult life was at that time. The authoritarian and ruthless government made people suffer and experience fear. The authoritarian regime severely damaged the peace of society during Lenin and Stalin's time. Ayyas envisioned that time because Ayyas thought that the people at that time were also his fellow human beings. They should also get the same rights from the government, but the government at that time was very cruel and authoritarian. In this case, egalitarian consciousness emerged spontaneously in Ayyas' heart and mind.

Ayyas immediately thought of Allah. That humans were created by Allah to worship Allah SWT, to do good on earth for His sake. He immediately remembered Allah's words to



protect the lives of other creatures. Safeguarding human life includes safeguarding all of humanity.

His obligation as a human being is to help others, Ayyas was actually a little disappointed when he found out that Yelena worked as a sex worker, Ayyas took more care of himself and limited himself to Yelena. One day Yelena was assaulted by her three customers. Yelena was lying on the side of the road, suddenly an old beggar named Aunt Margaretta noticed it. Bibi helped as much as possible so that Yelena didn't die on the side of the road. Bibi asked people along the road for help, but no one paid any attention to her. Not long after, Ayyas showed up and auntie asked for his help to save a life. Ayyas was cautious, fearing it was the mafia in disguise. But Ayyas' humanitarian streak kicked in and helped the dying woman who was none other than Yelena.

From the description above, we can conclude that every human being has the instinct to want to do good. Atheists like Yelena, even when dying, still call on God for help.

It is even mentioned in any religion to have respect for others. This is because humans are social creatures and each individual must work together. Even Ayyas mentioned the prophet's character who got along with fellow humans despite different religions. Rosululloh still behaved well with Jewish worshipers and polytheists as long as they did not fight Islam.

After what happened to her, Yelena decided not to return to that despicable job. She felt that when she worked at the deed her dignity was degraded, her soul was not human, and she was treated very lowly. After meeting Aunt Margaretta and Ayyas her humanity was revived and she felt respected and valued. This signifies the equality between human beings to equally humanize people.

When Ayyas tells Yelena and Linor about God, Yelena and Linor do not seem to believe him. Ayyas still continues to enlighten Yelena about God, the following quote is stated by Ayyas

“Pertolongan Allah dan kasih sayang Allah di duniaa tidak hanya untuk orang-orang taat saja. Orang maksiat pun mendapatkan cipratan kasih sayang dari Allah. Contohnya adalah pemuda mabuk di atas. Dia tetap diselamatkan oleh Allah. Semestinya kasih sayang Allah membuat siapapun insaf dan terjaga. Karena kasih sayang Allah untuk seluruh makhluknya di dunia ini.”



“Allah's help and love in this world is not only for the obedient. People who sin also get a splash of love from Allah. An example is the drunk young man above. He was still saved by Allah. God's love should make anyone aware and awake. Because Allah's love is for all His creatures in this world.”

This is evidence of the equality that exists within the social sphere. Allah never differentiates between His servants other than their piety. Differences in race, face, skin color do not cause discrimination in the acceptance or rejection of a practice. In fact, even a sinner will be forgiven by Allah as long as he is willing to repent and ask for forgiveness from Him.

### **Conclusions**

From the various statements that have been stated above, the novel *Bumi Cinta* presents several quotations related to awareness of the equality of fellow human beings. As explained in surah al Hujurat verse 13 that Allah made humans on this earth various nations in order to know each other. However, the noblest people are those who fear Allah SWT. Different perspectives are normal, but having the perspective of demeaning others is not justified. This is because, apart from the aspect of faith, the position of humans on the face is the same. So it should be an attitude of mutual respect and humanization. In the novel it is also mentioned, although any profession that surrounds us is negative, then never feel that he is the most righteous. Because it is very easy for Allah to reverse the heart so that a servant obeys Him.

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