

# Reading Latin American Liberating Pedagogy from an Islamic Education Perspective

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## Abstract

In Latin America, liberating pedagogy is based on the concern that education has become a tool for oppression. Supporters of this educational concept believe that oppressive education should be dismantled through what is known as liberating pedagogy. The spirit of liberating pedagogy is similar to the idea of Islamic education. Both have the same spirit: freeing people from constraints and oppression. Both are interested in humanization to combat dehumanization, injustice, and oppression. This closeness in spirit stems from Islam's vision and mission of rescuing the Arab country (in particular) and humanity from slavery, oppression, inequality, injustice, and colonialism.

## Abstrak

Konsep *liberating pedagogy* Amerika Latin adalah sebuah ide yang didasarkan pada keprihatinan bahwa pendidikan telah menjadi salah satu medium untuk menindas. Para pendukung pedagogi ini berpandangan bahwa pendidikan yang cenderung menindas itu perlu dibongkar melalui apa yang kemudian dikenal dengan *liberating pedagogy*. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa *liberating pedagogy* memiliki semangat yang sama dengan visi pendidikan Islam. Kedua-duanya memiliki spirit untuk membebaskan manusia dari belenggu dan penindasan. Keduanya juga berkepentingan terhadap humanisasi untuk melawan dehumanisasi, ketidakadilan, dan penindasan. Kesamaan semangat ini bukan hanya karena risalah Islam datang juga dengan visi dan misi membebaskan bangsa Arab (khususnya) dan umat manusia secara keseluruhan dari perbudakan, penindasan, ketimpangan, ketidakadilan, dan kolonialisme.

## Keywords

Humanization, Islamic education, liberating pedagogy

## Introduction

Perhaps no one refuses to say that education is one of the most important factors in shaping society's culture and passing it on to the next generations. Education will shape the character, character, and behavior of a society. Good or bad or the ups and downs of society's culture are very dependent on the pattern of education. It is where the strategic meaning of education for community development lies. This strategic meaning of education is theoretically recognized by Smith, Barry & Carl Bereiter (Smith & Bereiter, 2002), who states that education is the foundation of economic growth, development of science and technology, reducing poverty and inequality in income as well as improving the quality of human civilization in general. Even Victoria M. Dagostino-Kalniz (Dagostino-Kalniz, 2008) dared to conclude that education holds extraordinary power to create all aspects of the environment and can provide the most valuable information regarding the guidance of life in the future and help students prepare for essential living needs to deal with change.

The empirical experience experienced by the Japanese can be used as a justification for the theoretical view above. After Japan carried out reforms in the field of education on a large scale in the Meiji era (1868-1912), Japan had a quality educational infrastructure. As a result, even though it was destroyed during World War II, Japan is now an economic and technological power in Asia Pacific and the World. In other words, the progress experienced by the Japanese nation was greatly influenced by major reforms in the field of education.

In contrast to the Japanese nation, education in Indonesia is still facing internal educational problems, namely: First, the low equity of learning opportunities (equity) is accompanied by a large number of students dropping out of school and the large number of graduates who do not continue their higher education. Second, low academic quality, especially mastery of natural sciences, mathematics, and languages, especially foreign languages. In contrast, mastery of these materials is the basic capital for the ability to master and develop science and technology. Third, low internal efficiency, especially with a large number of students repeating classes and the length of the study period exceeding the standard time. It is clearly a waste and waste of resources, both funds and manpower. Fourth, the low external efficiency of the education system or what is commonly referred to as educational relevance. This low external

efficiency is often blamed for the cause of educated unemployment, which is increasing daily. The low external efficiency level also contributes to public apathy toward education in Indonesia (Faqih, 2007).

Based on these internal problems, it can be said that the conditions experienced by the Indonesian nation today with its multidimensional crisis, one of which is caused by the many problems faced by the education system. Even the culture of corruption, collusion, nepotism, violence, and horizontal conflict, as well as the behavior of the Indonesian elite and society, which are increasingly losing their Indonesian identity, character, and character, are also caused by the failure of the education system to develop all the quality of its resources.

Education in Indonesia is still problematic. Indonesian national education is also faced with new problems and challenges that demand solutions and solutions. While the Indonesian nation is still struggling with issues of educational foundations and paradigms, this nation is also faced with new challenges concerning the development of science and technology, human problems, and globalization. It's like a marathon. Some of the children of this country are still busy discussing strategies and the basis/foundation for starting, while other developed nations have left far behind, chasing each other.

Formulating a firm and precise footing, foundation, or paradigm—especially for education with a very strategic meaning—is more important than using a weak footing paradigm, or even no foundation. The liberating pedagogy (liberatory education) is a concept that needs to be studied and researched so that it can be used as a foothold, foundation, and educational paradigm. According to Gary McIntyre Boyd (Boyd, 1998), the liberating pedagogy contains two important meanings: First, freeing or freeing students from the confines of the learning environment, and second, freeing or freeing students from collective cultural domination and control. Liberatory education aims to develop autonomous human beings, namely human beings who are opinionated, who can weigh and decide for themselves, who can choose what is good, right, and good, who are not easily tempted by irrelevance, who are creative, intellectual, courageous and honest. More than that, the liberating pedagogy aims to liberate individuals, communities, and countries from cruelty, oppression, poverty, technocratic arrogance, and extortion of state assets by unauthorized parties and produce human beings who are critical and responsive to every social phenomenon and able to defend structurally and culturally oppressed people.

Autonomous humans, who are the ideals of "the liberating pedagogy," are not totally obedient without reserve. Humans whose

attitudes and behavior are regulated by other people, robotic humans who lack creativity, humans who don't dare to express their own opinions and thoughts. An autonomous human is also not a human being who is resigned, fatalistic, and deterministic, who feels that other forces outside of himself control his life. Autonomous people are people who dare to express their opinions and beliefs, have the ability to decide for themselves, have freedom of choice (free will), and have freedom of action (free act). Autonomous humans also dare to take responsibility for all their attitudes and behavior, are always honest with themselves and their environment, and are not trapped in irrational and irrelevant behavior.

The concept of an independent and responsible human being, honest and creative, which is the core of the goal of "the liberating pedagogy," was once used as the central theme of a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Philippines, Popular Education for People's Empowerment (PEPE), which developed a model general education (popular education) on a community basis (community base education). PEPE is a non-profit organization that promotes "popular education" in an effort to build individual independence (Boyd, 1998). They try to reach various layers of society, starting from the urban poor, farmers, professionals, women, indigenous people and so on, by making each individual's uniqueness and the socio-cultural environment an entry point in implementing education.

Individual uniqueness must indeed be the basis and main concern in education. Education cannot ignore the differences between individuals. Individual equalization in the context of education only shows educational practitioners' inability and unwillingness to work even harder. Making individuals—especially in a very heterogeneous Indonesian society—as the basis and main concern in education is not easy. Moreover, attention to individual uniqueness is not only related to the psychological, intellectual, and emotional condition of an individual *an sich*, but also the condition of the individual's socio-cultural environment, as well as projections of the challenges each individual may face in the future.

Indeed, many prerequisites must be met so that individual uniqueness gets a proper place in the administration of education. Starting from adequate understanding and knowledge of the milieu conditions and the socio-cultural environment in which individuals live, educational policies, goals to be achieved, curriculum determination, to the evaluation system. All of this will only be implemented if decision-making processes in the field of education are carried out not only in a centralized manner. The Latin American liberating pedagogy requires a process of decentralization, not only decentralization in the sense of administrative areas, but also reasonable decentralization and autonomy for everyone

involved in education, especially teachers and other teaching staff so that they can also become autonomous human beings, who become important ideals of liberating pedagogy.

Based on these arguments, the discourse on the concept of liberating pedagogy needs to be studied and examined for its validity to be used as an alternative educational model. The study of the numbing concept of education is increasingly important, especially from the perspective of Islamic education. Therefore, this study examines and analyzes the concept of liberating pedagogy from the perspective of Islamic education.

## **Methods**

This study uses the literature review method, in which a number of literature relevant to the concept of Latin American education is reviewed and analyzed. The process of review and analysis uses the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy. Various perspectives of Islamic education are used to decipher the main keywords of educational thought in Latin America, especially on the theme of liberation.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The Liberating Pedagogy Concept**

The concept of liberating pedagogy (liberatory education) in Latin America was inspired by the philosophical thoughts of Paulo Freire (Freire, 1972a, 1972b, 1978, 1993, 2000a; Freire & Macedo, 2005). For Freire, education must be oriented towards recognizing the reality of human beings and themselves (Shor & Freire, 1987). It is not enough that recognition is only objective or subjective, but both (Freire, 2000a). Because the objective need to change inhumane conditions always requires the subjective ability (subjective awareness) to recognize these inhumane conditions in advance (Freire, 2000b), therefore, education must involve three elements at once in its steady relationship, namely teachers, students or students, and the realities of the world (Freire & Macedo, 2005).

According to Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, the liberating pedagogy concept contains two meanings: freeing or freeing students from the confines of the learning environment and freeing or freeing students from collective cultural domination and control (Shor & Freire, 1987). Liberatory education aims to build autonomous human beings, namely human beings who are opinionated, who can weigh and decide for themselves, who can choose what is good, right, and good, who are not easily tempted by what is irrelevant, who are creative, intellectual,

courageous, and honest (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010). More than that, the liberating pedagogy aims to liberate individuals, communities, and countries from cruelty, oppression, poverty, technocratic arrogance, and extortion of state assets by unauthorized parties and produce human beings who are critical and responsive to every social phenomenon and able to defend people who are structurally and culturally oppressed (Schugurensky, 2011).

Autonomous humans, who are the ideals of "the liberating pedagogy," are not humans who are completely obedient without reserve, humans whose attitudes and behavior are regulated by others, robotic humans who lack creativity, humans who do not dare to express their own opinions and thoughts (Bhattacharya, 2012). An autonomous human is also not a resigned, fatalistic, and deterministic human, who feels that other forces outside of himself control his life. Autonomous humans are humans who dare to say and express their opinions and beliefs, can decide for themselves, and have freedom of choice (free will), and freedom of action (free act) (McLaren & Leonard, 1993). Autonomous humans also dare to take responsibility for all their attitudes and behavior, are always honest with themselves and their environment, and are not trapped in irrational and irrelevant behavior (Castells, 1994). The liberating pedagogy is directed at dismantling oppression because the education system actually dehumanizes humans (Roberts, 2000). In Freirean's point of view, the educational process in various parts of the world today is unconsciously oppressing and shackled because the educational process is increasingly far from reality or even anti-reality.

## **Main Ideas The liberating Pedagogy**

### *The Function of Education is to Free Humans*

According to the thinker of liberating pedagogy, Paulo Freire, liberation education is to make those who are oppressed (the term used by Freire) or shackled to a situation become independent, independent, not bound or entangled in circumstances that dominate them. The concept of liberating pedagogy wants to invite or direct education to form free human beings, autonomous human beings who control themselves, as well as how to direct education so that humans think critically and regard themselves as subjects of the world and reality.

In view of liberating pedagogy, thought language is a core need for education because it is a unit that applies reality to humans because thinking is impossible without language, and both are impossible without the world referred to. Because, humans are a combination of thoughts and actions to humanize history and culture. The liberating pedagogy focuses on the process of awareness (conscientization) of human beings for all their

weaknesses and mistakes both in accepting fate and making efforts to break through to become human beings free from terrible shackles.

Initially, liberating pedagogy was interested in illiteracy or literacy liberation, but in its journey, the direction of liberating pedagogy concept was more than just illiteracy liberation. Literacy is the initial capital to fight the dehumanization process. Demolition of dehumanization can be reduced little by little with literacy. Liberating pedagogy wants humans who are whole and have autonomy towards themselves, reality, and their world. On the other hand, humanizing humans (humanization process) is an ideal human description for liberating pedagogy. The ideal man is that man gains wholeness. The wholeness obtained to become an ideal human being (Humanization) requires self-aware humans. The existence of consciousness in man is obtained by freedom.

The concept of liberating pedagogy in Latin America emphasizes the need for a dialogical critical education method for the poor, oppressed, and ignorant so as to encourage changes in one's character so that one has a democratic character. The concept of liberation education does not invite the oppressed to become oppressors, but rather that the oppressed should not, in trying to regain their humanity, turn into oppressors of the oppressors, but they must re-humanize both. So liberation is birth, and birth is painful. The human born is a new human that can only emerge when the humanization of all human beings conquers the contradictions of the oppressed oppressor. Or in other words, the resolution of this contradiction is what is born when a new human being is born, who is no longer the oppressor and the oppressed, but those who are in the process of achieving freedom. For the oppressed to be able to fight for their liberation, they must stop considering the reality of oppression as a closed universe with no exit. They must view it as a limiting situation that they can change. It must be the driving force or source of motivation for the liberation action.

The concept of liberating pedagogy in Latin America emphasizes the practice of liberation because it frees educators, not just educated ones, from double bondage in the form of silence and monologue. Both were liberated when they started learning, one started to consider himself quite valuable despite being illiterate, poor, and not proficient in technology, and the other learned to dialogue even though the all-knowing role of the educator still overshadowed him. The concept of liberating pedagogy of Latin America is indeed aimed at the oppressed. However, it does not place the oppressed people face-to-face with those who oppress them. This kind of education will cause revenge to one day to replace oppression. The liberating pedagogy is also not a form of generosity or kindness to those who oppress in providing education to oppressed people, especially when it is done to maintain the status quo through the creation and legitimacy of

inequality. The liberating pedagogy is an awareness of humanity that is not from the oppressors but oneself. This awareness is, of course, not to incarnate new oppressors but to help liberate these oppressors. Thus, life will run in peaceful equality.

Regarding liberating pedagogy, education is the essential way to the process of human liberation. Because the supporters of this education often call education the practice of freedom (Freire, 2000c). This concept of liberation is not limited to matters of adult education. The concept of liberating pedagogy also targets revolutionary scientific humanism that can be applied in every effort to educate humans (but not uniformly). What does it recommend for educational content, and what improvements are demanded by the conscientization.

### *Critique of the Bank Style Education Model*

In the education system implemented in Brasilia during the early days of the birth of the liberating pedagogy, students were not seen as dynamic and creative. Still, they were seen as objects like containers to accommodate several formulations/postulates of knowledge. The more content the teacher puts in the "container," the better the teacher. Therefore the more obedient the container, the better it is. So, students only memorize everything that the teacher tells them without understanding. Students are objects and not subjects. Such education is called by Freire (the main thinker of the concept of liberating pedagogy) as "bank style" education.

It is called banking-style education because in the teaching and learning process, the teacher does not give understanding to students but transfers several propositions or formulas to students to save, which will then be issued in the same form if needed. Students are collectors and keepers of several knowledge, but in the end it is the students themselves who are "stored" because of their poor creativity. Therefore bank-style education benefits the oppressors in perpetuating the oppression of their fellow human beings.

Students are more like vessels into which the teacher will pour water (knowledge). Therefore, education like this becomes a saving activity. Students as "piggy banks" and teachers as "savers." More specifically, Freire describes several characteristics of education, which he calls the "banking style" educational model: (1) Teachers teach, students are taught. (2) The teacher knows everything, and the students know nothing. (3) Teachers think, and students think. (4) The teacher tells the story, and the students listen. (5) The teacher determines the rules, and the students are regulated. (6) The teacher chooses and imposes his choice, and the student agrees. (7) The teacher does, and the student imagines himself doing through his teacher's actions. (8) The teacher chooses the material,



which is the lesson. The students (without being asked for their opinion) adjust to the lesson. (9) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge and the authority of his position, which he does to hinder the freedom of students. (10) The teacher is a subject in the learning process, students are mere objects (Freire, 1972a).

Paulo Freire categorically rejected this "banking style" education. His rejection was born from his understanding of humans. He rejects the view that humans are passive beings who do not need to make choices based on personal responsibility regarding their education. For Freire, humans are creatures that have a relationship with God, others, and nature. Concerning nature, humans are not only in the world but also in the world. Awareness of togetherness with the world causes humans to relate critically to the world. Humans do not only react reflexively like animals but choose, test, study, and test again before taking action. God gave humans the ability to choose reflectively and freely. In such a relationship, humans develop into a person born from themselves. Starting from such an understanding, he offers an alternative education system as a substitute for the "bank style" education he rejects. The alternative education system offered by Freire is called "problem-facing" education.

According to Paulo Freire, problem-posing education is an alternative to address the nature of consciousness, namely intentionality. Problem-facing education will reject statements and create communication. This concept represents the peculiarity of consciousness, that is, to be aware not only of objects but also to turn to itself so that it splits, that is, consciousness as awareness of consciousness. For adherents of the liberating pedagogy school, the essence of liberating pedagogy can be achieved by raising critical awareness. The critical vision of education towards the dominant system as siding with the common people and the oppressed to create a new and more just social system has always been on the educational agenda. From a critical perspective, education must create space to identify and analyze freely and critically for social transformation. In other words, the main task of education is to "humanize" humans who have experienced "dehumanization" due to unjust systems and structures.

Adherents of liberating pedagogy schools suggest that education should be carried out in a dialogical manner. This dialogical process is a method included in the big agenda of liberating pedagogy, which calls for a process of awareness (concentration) of the unequal reality in its environment. In this case, he calls problem-facing education the antithesis of bank-style education. In banking-style education, students can become objects determined by the teacher so that reality becomes far away. For adherents of liberating pedagogy schools, teachers and students are both conscious subjects of education, and reality is the object. The teacher should be a facilitator, motivator, friend, and transformer in the process,

with students dialogically finding awareness of the realities and problems that arise. Faced not only memorizing the material that has been created but understanding. It is on this shared awareness of inequality and reality that teachers and students can become part of a social transformation in their environment.

Problem-facing education is an alternative education offered in the concept of liberating pedagogy. Problem-facing education proposed by Freire was born from his conception of human beings. Humans themselves are used as the starting point in education to the problem. Man does not exist separately from the world and its reality, but he is in the world and with the world's reality. Students must confront that reality so that there is awareness of that reality. Such a pedagogical context is based on the understanding that human beings can create in reality and free themselves from cultural, economic, and political oppression.

Awareness grows from the struggle over the reality faced and is expected to produce critical behavior in students. Freire divides four levels of human awareness: (1) Intransitive Awareness, where physical needs only bind a person who is unaware of the history and immersed in the oppressive present. (2) Semi-Intransitive Awareness, or magical awareness, occurs in mute cultured societies where society is closed. The feature of this consciousness is fatalistic. Life means living under the power of others or living in dependence. (3) Naive awareness, at this level, there is already the ability to question and recognize reality. However, primitive and naive attitudes still characterize it, such as: identifying oneself with elites, returning to the past, being willing to accept ready-made explanations, strong emotional attitudes, lots of polemics, and arguing but not dialogue. (4) Transitive Critical Awareness transitive critical awareness is characterized by the depth of interpreting problems, confidence in discussions, and acceptance and rejection. Dialogue is dialogue. At this level, people can reflect and see causal relationships.

For supporters of liberating pedagogy, liberating pedagogy is education that fosters transitive critical awareness. Indeed, he does not mean that a person is able to reach that highest level of awareness, but learning is a process of moving from the awareness of students at present to a level of consciousness above it.

In such a learning context, the teacher-student contradiction (the difference between the teacher, who is the source of all knowledge, and the student as someone who knows nothing) does not exist. According to proponents of liberating pedagogy, the problem-facing educational method does not create this teacher-student activity dichotomy; he is not "absorbing" at times and "telling" at others. The teacher always "absorbs" when he prepares lesson materials and dialogues with students. He will not regard intelligible objects as private property but as objects of reflection by

his students as well as himself. In this way, the educator facing the problem continuously renews his reflections in the students' reflections. Students who are no longer obedient listeners have become critical reviewers through dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents lessons to students as material for their thoughts and retests their previous thoughts when students present the results of their own thinking. The role of a problem-solving educator is to create, together with the students, an atmosphere in which knowledge at the incantation stage (*doxa*) is replaced with true knowledge (*logos*).

#### *Humanization (Humanizing Humans)*

For supporters of the liberating pedagogy concept, humanization is the central problem for humans. Humanization is something that must be fought for, because history shows that humanization from dehumanization is a real alternative. Humanization is human nature, therefore, humanization is a right that needs to be fought for. This nature is often denied; however, it is recognized from this denial. Humanization is denied through deprivation of the right to justice, extortion, and oppression, all of which is a deviation from human nature to be a true human being; however, humanization itself is also recognized and defended by the longing of the oppressed for freedom and justice.

The thoughts of the supporters of liberating pedagogy about humanization are motivated by the situation of inequality in their place of origin sparked their enthusiasm to raise awareness among the public so that they can see the source of the causes of this inequality. Why is it that in the structure of society some enjoy pleasure but some others have to cry and mourn their oppression? Could it be because the oppressed deliberately allow themselves to be oppressed or because they are powerless?

Indeed, basically, not every human being has the same courage to be able to realize his liberation. In this case, the supporters of liberating pedagogy classify society as part of the recipients of education or can be called students in a social context into 3 parts: (a) students magically aware (semi-transitive) is an educational concept when people assume that the fate that befalls them is a destiny that has been arranged by God the Creator. The character of students with this typology is characterized by an attitude of accepting and escaping from brutal realities and cruel oppression; (b) while naïve education is experienced by those who have seen and understood the causes of chaos in their lives, but they do not yet have the awareness to rise up and sue and try to fight for their rights; and (c) it is different from critical education which the supporters of liberating pedagogy want to call out, critical education educates people to be sensitive to the reality and problems around them.

Humans, with magical awareness in general, can only "adjust" themselves to the environment. While a "naïve" conscious human is only trying to renew, unlike the two, a critically conscious human will always think about how to "change" the current situation towards a better state. To form public awareness with critical awareness, the community must understand the reality that they are part of a situation of oppression; inseparable from that, the community must also be willing to sacrifice and struggle to achieve this freedom.

Massive efforts need to be made, just like a mother giving birth to a baby, so to be a free human being also means having to be able to fight the pain of childbearing by solving the contradictions of the oppressors that lead to a new human being. The achievement of this is a form of humanization. This kind of understanding is a must, but not everything to achieve freedom, it must be the driving force for freedom itself. For supporters of liberating pedagogy in Latin America, a free human being is a real human being, a free human being who is able to become a subject, not just an object that only receives treatment from other parties. The vocation of an actual human being is to become a conscious human being, who acts to overcome the world and the reality that oppresses and perhaps oppresses it.

In essence, humans can understand their situation and environment armed with thoughts and practical actions, and they will be able to change situations that are not in line with their way of thinking. a true man must be able to overcome the circumstances that ensnare him. If a person simply submits without even a fight to the situation then that means he is being dehumanized. When the oppressed with their self-awareness are able to free themselves from all forms of oppression, then at that moment what is called "liberation" occurs. It was very important for the oppressed to realize that when they accepted the struggle for humanization from then on, they also accepted the responsibility for that struggle. They had to understand that being free was not only fighting to be free from hunger but to be a free human being, as quoted by Freire from Fromm in *The heart of Man*, namely: ...Freedom to create and to construct, to wonder and to venture. Such Freedom requires that the individual be active and responsible, not a slave or a well-fed cog in the machine... it's not enough that man are not slaves. If social conditions further the existence of automatons, the result will not be love of life, but love of death (Freire, 1972a).

That is, the freedom to create, build, question, and experiment. This kind of freedom requires active and responsible human beings, not slaves or dead screws in machines... it is not enough just that humans are not slaves. if social conditions lead to an automaton life, the result will not be a love of life, but a love of death. Suppose you want to realize this freedom in

education. In that case, it should be an absolute requirement that the transformative teacher must be a revolutionary leader or teacher who is able to apply intentional education, namely the teacher and students (leaders and people) observe reality together because both are the subject is not only in the task of uncovering that reality in order to be able to know critically but also in the task of re-creating that knowledge. When they acquire knowledge of this reality through joint thought and activity, they will automatically realize themselves as the permanent re-creators of knowledge. In this way, the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be as expected: not an apparent participation but wholehearted involvement.

This joint involvement is a prerequisite for the success of transformative education, teachers and students must learn together and in line in a dialogic process and do not force one party to accept knowledge deposits as a piggy bank that must be filled. Both (teachers and students) learn together to humanize one another. This opinion is based on the assumption that when a person becomes an active subject in his existence, his daily life is reality-oriented. On this basis someone will form a kind of practical intuition in their life.

*The Liberating Pedagogy of Latin America: An Islamic Education Perspective*

The concept of liberation, which is one of the main key words, an important element of the concept of liberating pedagogy, can be viewed from the following verses of the Qur'an: First, Al-Qur'an Surah Ali Imran verse 110, which reads: You are the best people who were born for humans, command those who are good, and prevent what is evil, and believe in Allah. If the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them, among them there are those who believe, and most of them are the wicked (Ali Imran: 110).

The word of God above is a statement from God that the people of Muhammad saw, namely the Muslims, are the best people among mankind on earth. Al-Qurthubi in his commentary quotes a hadith from Bahz bin Hakim that when reading this verse the Prophet Muhammad said "You are the perfecter of the 70 people, you are the best among them and the noblest in the sight of Allah 'Azza wa Jalla (At-Tirmidhi). According to al-Qurthubi and Ibn Kathir, this predicate is the same as the predicate "ummatan wasathan" which Allah mentions in His words: "And thus (also) We have made you (Muslims), a just and chosen people the just and the elect, for they will bear witness to the deeds of those who deviate from the truth both in this world and in the hereafter] so that you may be witnesses of human beings and that the Messenger (Muhammad) may be witnesses of you. And We do not determine the *qibla* which is your *qibla* (now) but so that We know (so that it is clear) who is following the Messenger and who

is defecting and indeed (the change of Qibla) feels very heavy, except for those whom Allah has guided; Allah will not waste your faith. Indeed, Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to mankind (al-Baqarah, 2: 143).

According to Ibn Abbas, as quoted by al-Qurthubi, the group of people with the title of the best *ummah* referred to in verse are people who emigrated from Mecca to Medina, took part in the Badr war, and participated in the Hudaibiyah agreement. However, Umar bin Khaththab said that anyone who does charity like them is at their level. In phrase "*kuntum khairu ummah*", this expression is addressed to the people of the Prophet Muhammad. The word "*kuntum*" (*fi'il madhi*) is not intended to describe the condition of the Muslims in the past but means (*antum*), meaning: this is how God formed you. It is the same as God's word: "wa kâna Allâhu samî'an bashiran." What of course does not mean that God used to be All-Hearing and All-Seeing, whereas now this is not the case. Therefore, az-Zamakhsyari in his commentary al-Kasyâyât Juz I/392 stated that Muslims are the best people in the knowledge of Allah. It can also be interpreted that the Muslim community was mentioned among earlier people as khairu ummah. Regarding the need not to argue about whether the best among Muslims, the first or the last, al-Qurtubi in his commentary quotes a hadith history that the Prophet Muhammad said: My people are like rain, it is not known whether the first or the last is better." (Abu Dawud Ath-Thayalisi and Abu Isa At-Tirmidhi from Anas bin Malik).

The pronunciation of "*ukhrijat li al-nas*" is the characteristic of *khairu ummah*, which means shown or won over humans. This shows that the Muslims were not resurrected for the sake of Muslims alone, but for all mankind. As the Prophet Muhammad was sent to all mankind, Muslims also follow his (Prophet's) struggle to carry the message of Islam to all mankind. Abu Hurairah mentioned the superiority of the Muslims who became the best people among mankind in his words: We are the best among humans, we direct them to tread the climbing path towards Islam. And quickly, the best people who always guide humanity to the path of Islam, carry out Islamic da'wah to all corners of the world, open various areas for the upholding of Islamic sovereignty, and find that people from various nations, languages, countries and customs accept Islam as their belief and rule of law for their lives.

They direct the minds of mankind in a logically argumentative way as taught by God so that they always invite people to think with concrete evidence, namely da'wah bil wisdom (An-Nahl, 16: 125), "Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good lessons and refute them in a good way. Verily, your Lord is He who knows best who has strayed from His ways and He who knows better those who are guided (An-Nahl: 125).

If there are physical obstacles to da'wah, they bravely get rid of these physical obstacles with jihad fi sabilillah. And because they are superior humans, even in wars of thought and physical wars they always excel. God guarantees their superior quality in His words: "O Prophet, stir up the spirits of the believers to fight. If there are twenty patient people among you, they will surely defeat two hundred enemies. And suppose there are a hundred (patient) people among you. In that case, they can defeat a thousand of the disbelievers, because the disbelievers are a people who do not understand (al-Anfâl, 8: 65). It is clear that the quality of the best *ummah* compared to disbelievers, or other *ummahs*, is that one Muslim can defeat 10 (ten) infidels. It is in prime condition, in the condition of the Muslims there are weaknesses, God still gives a guarantee that the Muslims will be able to defeat the strength of the infidels whose number is twice their strength. And the reason the disbelievers lost is that they are a people who do not understand.

Imam Mujahid, as quoted by al-Qurthubi, said that the superiority of Muslims is conditional on fulfilling the characteristics mentioned in verse. There are three characteristics possessed by the people who carry the prophet Muhammad which accompanies the predicate of God's grace as the best people: (1). Ordering those who are ma'rûf, (2). Prevent from evil, (3). Believe in God, as contained in the text: "You command those who are good, and prevent what is evil, and believe in Allah (Zaini, 1997).

Those are the three qualities that are the elements of the goodness of Muhammad's people. In this case it is necessary to understand that faith in God must come before two other things, namely *amar ma'ruf* and *nahi munkar*. Likewise, the best *ummah* must have faith in the message of Islam. Because the activity of *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* is not determined by the community's traditions, but by the Shari'a that God revealed.

According to az-Zamakhsyari, the mention of faith in God in this verse also means faith in everything that is required by faith in God, such as faith in His Messenger, His Book, the day of resurrection, the day of reckoning, rewards and punishments, and so on. . According to him, if it is not accompanied by faith in it, it will not be counted as faith in God. He underlies it with the words of Allah, "Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers, and intend to distinguish between (belief in) Allah and His messengers, by saying: "We believe in some and We disbelieve towards some (others)", as well as intending (with those words) to take the (middle) path between those (faith or disbelief) (An-Nisa: 150-151).

In the present context, the interest of some Muslims - because of their shallow understanding of the Islamic faith as their way of life - to ideologies and life systems other than Islam, such as socialism, communism, secularism, capitalism, and others which are worldviews that are contrary to Islam , can make them slip from faith in the real God. And

in turn, they will not find a happy and prosperous life under the auspices of Islam. Especially getting the title of the best people.

In reviewing this verse, Ibn Kathir in his commentary includes a hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad that Durrah bint Abi Lahab said that someone asked the Prophet Muhammad when he was addressing the pulpit: "Who is the best person, O Messenger of Allah? The Prophet Muhammad replied: "The best human being is the one who reads the most, is the most pious to God, is the most active in enforcing good and forbidding evil and who likes to stay in touch.

From this, it can be understood that the best person is the one who has the most understanding (because of his reading activity) and has the most piety attitude, namely carrying out God's commands and His prohibitions. That's in private. Communally, he plays a role in upholding *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, namely forming a system so that God's commands and prohibitions become general standards in society to regulate interactions between individual members of society. Also, he is most fond of doing *silaturrahim*, increasing relations between close relatives which is one of the obligations of Islam. He is a person who always does good in the view of Islamic law, both for himself and mankind. Al-Qurthubi quotes a hadith which states that the Prophet Muhammad said: "The best people are those who live long and do good deeds and the worst people are those who live long and do bad deeds.

In the context of liberation, Ali Imran verse 110 above lays out three pillars for the vision of Islamic education, namely humanization (*ta'muuna bi al-ma'ruf*), liberation (*tanhauna 'an al-munkar*) and transcendence (*tu'minuna billah*). . humanization means humanizing humans, eliminating material, dependence, violence and hatred from humans, by fighting three things, namely dehumanization (technological, economic, cultural or state objectivity), aggressiveness (collective aggressiveness and criminality), loneliness (privatization and individuation) (Ainusyamsi & Hosni, 2021). Meanwhile, liberation has the meaning of liberating, which has social significance with the aim of burdening humans from the cruelty of structural impoverishment, technological arrogance, exploitation of abundance, oppressive domination of structures, and hegemony of false consciousness (Husni, 2016).

Transcendence has a theological meaning, namely divinity, meaning faith in God. Transcendence aims to add transcendence by ridding oneself of hedonism, materialism and decadent culture (Manshur & Husni, 2020). In short, it wants humans to recognize God's absolute authority. In the context of liberating pedagogy, the element of liberation (*tanhauna 'an al-munkar*) contains a spirit of liberation. Liberation is the creative meaning of *nahi munkar*. Liberation in the concept of liberating pedagogy is in accordance with the principle of liberation. Liberation in the



concept of liberating pedagogy is in the context of knowledge, knowledge based on transcendental noble values (Husni, 2021). Suppose liberative values in social science are understood in the context of theological teachings. In that case, liberative values in the concept of liberating pedagogy are understood and positioned in the context of education which has a prophetic responsibility to liberate human beings from the cruelty of poverty, the exploitation of abundance, the domination of oppressive structures, and false consciousness hegemony (Bisri & Husni, 2020). Furthermore, if Marxism with its liberative spirit actually rejects religion which it sees as conservative, the concept of liberating pedagogy actually seeks to rely on the transcendental prophetic values of religion which have been transformed into an objective-factual science (Nurunnisa & Husni, 2018).

The aim of liberation is empirical reality, so liberation is very sensitive to oppression or structural domination issues. The phenomenon of poverty born from economic inequality is an important part of the liberation project. Liberation places itself not on the field of abstract human morality but on empirical, concrete human reality. There are four targets of liberation, namely the knowledge system (education), the social system, the economic system and the political system, which shackles humans so that they cannot actualize themselves as free and noble beings (Husni, 2020).

From the perspective of Islamic thinkers, liberation, one of the elements of the liberating pedagogy concept, can also be studied from the thoughts of Ali Shariati (Shariati, 1998). He believes liberation in Islam cannot be separated from pure monotheism. Islam provides a deep spiritual interpretation of the universe, a lofty, idealistic as well as logical, and understandable interpretation. This pure monotheism is the starting point of Islamic theology of liberation which is full of humanist values. This humanist value is reflected in the process of Adam's creation which reveals the nature of a human being who is free, independent, noble, but at the same time fully in harmony with the reality of the earth as well as divine and idealistic.

Ali Shariati views that Islam should be able to provide its adherents with a rich culture (Shariati, 1998). Not entirely spiritual like Indian culture. Not completely mystical like Chinese culture. Not completely philosophical like Greek culture. And not completely materialistic like Western culture. However, Muslim culture is an integration of faith, ideals and spirituality, but full of life and energy with its prominent spirit, namely equality and justice. According to Ali Shariati, Islam's religion condemns poverty, which is described by persistent effort (*jihad*) and justice (*'adalat*). Islam pays attention to, for example, bread, in the sense of providing clear rules and recommendations in earning a living and meeting the needs of

the *ummah*. Islamic eschatology is based on active life in the world, in the sense that heaven or hell which Muslims in the hereafter will occupy, cannot be separated from the active life they experience in the world, both vertical life with God, and horizontal life with fellow humans and nature. Allah respects human dignity, and who made Islam a realistic religion, the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w was not like other prophets like Buddha, Confucius, or Zoroastrian, Prophet Muhammad was equipped with weapons. It becomes a symbol that Islam is close to struggle, close to reality, close to real action to eradicate tyranny.

In Shariati's view, Tawhid is not only interpreted as oneness of Allah, which is contrary to shirk, which means associating partners with Allah. But in the sociological realm, monotheism also means the unity of the *ummah*, regardless of the rich or the poor, the people or the rulers. Because according to him, rulers throughout the ages have created a world vision that is polytheistic in the realm of religion, and materialistic in the realm of science. In simple terms, it can be understood like this: in the past, at first, humans were taught by God about monotheism, humans lived in the same circle, regardless of social classes. However, over time, when power was formed, a polytheistic view was formed. One ruler in the past, created visions of idols, and so elsewhere. The concept of God, which was pure before, has become materialistic, so it is not surprising that in many cultures in the past, one God has become many gods, which interpret human activities.

Thus, Islamic teachings consider it necessary to re-create an ummah that has one vision, which stands on the vision of monotheism, so that only by looking at it in this way, true humanism can be realized. This vision is what can realize Islamic teachings which never look at the differences between the rich and the poor, between the people and those in power, because everyone is equal before God, except in matters of piety (Ainusyamsi & Husni, 2020). Everyone is God's representative, from the same God, and God's representatives in the world, must create absolute brotherhood, built on a solid foundation of faith.

If this theology is understood, then the ummah will fight for its fate so that it is not enslaved both physically and in ideas, by tyrants. In the feudalistic tradition, the people give absolute obedience to the ruler. This happened not only that the people depended on the rulers, but there was suppression of ideas where the people felt they were slaves who always had to join the authorities. The simplest example, occurred when in the time of Moses and Pharaoh. Living as slaves and second-class people who were always oppressed both physically and ideas by the Egyptians, the Israelites had become a society that was unable to think freely. Only Musa, an Israelite who is able to appear as a free man, throws a discourse on his people that they have the right to live freely. Musa saw the prolonged

oppression after oppression that his people experienced, but during that time, his people did not rebel, because they too had been oppressed by ideas.

Another example is Ibrahim, who, with his freedom of thought, could appear as a pure monotheist. Unwilling to follow the flow of ideas in his time that worshiped idols, Ibrahim rebelled. There is a struggle against oppression and seeking liberation that Ibrahim did. Not freeing his people from oppression as in the time of Musa, but more broadly, namely freeing humans in ideas from the oppression and stupidity of polytheism and other forms of polytheism. And in the end, Abraham throughout the ages, is remembered as the father of monotheism, whose influence is still being felt today.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of liberating pedagogy in Latin America, in essence, has the same spirit as the vision of Islamic education. Both of them have the same spirit, namely to free humans from shackles and oppression. Both are interested in humanization to fight dehumanization, injustice and oppression. This similarity in spirit is not only because the message of Islam comes with the vision and mission of liberating the Arab nation (in particular) and humanity as a whole from slavery, oppression, inequality, injustice and colonialism. Analysis of the concept of liberating pedagogy in Latin America in the perspective of Islamic education can also be carried out by analyzing the Qur'an in Ali Imran verse 110, where the verse emphasizes that Muslims are the best people who carry the mission of *ta'muruna bi al-ma 'ruf*, *tanhauna 'an al-munkar*, and *tu'minuna billah*. The mission of *ta'muruna bi al-ma'ruf* is a humanization mission; *tanhauna 'an al-munkar* is a mission of liberation, and *tu'minuna billah* is a mission of transcendence or awareness.

Humanization means humanizing humans, eliminating materialism, dependence, violence and hatred from humans, by fighting three things: dehumanization, aggressiveness, and individuation. Meanwhile, liberation has the meaning of liberating, which has social significance with the aim of burdening humans from oppression, the cruelty of structural impoverishment, technological arrogance, the exploitation of abundance, the domination of oppressive structures, and the hegemony of false consciousness. Transcendence has a theological meaning, namely divinity, meaning faith in God. Transcendence aims to add transcendental by cleansing itself from the currents of hedonism, materialism, and decadent culture. In short, it wants humans to recognize God's absolute authority.

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