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The Christian religious education and the Javanese tradition of theory and teaching method: Experiences from the Bible and Ki Hajar Dewantara

Styys Anneke Rantung¹⁰
Universitas Kristen Indonesia, Jakarta

Correspondence:
djoysrantung01@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study examines the intersection between Christian religious education and Javanese educational traditions, focusing on the theories and teaching methods found in the Bible and the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara. The research highlights how biblical figures such as Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Nehemiah, Jesus, and Paul embodied educational principles that align with Dewantara's education philosophy. Both traditions emphasize holistic education, character formation, mentorship, and community-based learning. By drawing from both traditions, Christian religious education in Indonesia can integrate biblical teachings with local wisdom to create a more effective and contextually relevant learning system. This synthesis can strengthen character formation, intellectual growth, and spiritual development while fostering a deeper appreciation of cultural heritage. The study ultimately advocates for a dynamic, inclusive Christian education that respects biblical principles and indigenous educational philosophies.

Introduction

Every community possesses its traditional culture, which contains expressions of local wisdom pertinent to the way of life embraced by its members. This local wisdom encompasses various domains such as social interactions, cultural practices, political dynamics, economic endeavors, and educational principles. Examples of socio-cultural practices include Mapalus in North Sulawesi's Minahasa region¹, Pela Gandong in Maluku², and the widely recognized concept of Gotong Royong in Indonesian society.³ Local wisdom denotes the behavioral approaches individuals and communities employ to navigate life within their cultural milieu.

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¹ Nico Graafland, *Minahasa Negeri, Rakyat, dan Budayanya*, trans. Lucy R. Montolalu (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1991), 37–57

² Andi N. Hasudungan and Lili D. Sartika, "Model Pendidikan Perdamaian Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Pela Gandong Pada Pembelajaran IPS Pasca Rekonsiliasi Konflik Ambon," *Indonesian Journal of Social Science Education (IJ SSE)* 2, no. 1 (2020): 20–32

³ Irfan Maulana, "Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter Gotong Royong," *Jurnal ISEMA: Islamic Educational Management* 5, no. 1 (2020): 127–138.

¹ Within Javanese society, a particular wisdom is primarily applied in education, known as *ing ngarso sung tuladha, ing madya mbangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*. These three expressions constitute the national education motto of the Republic of Indonesia, associated with Ki Hajar Dewantara, renowned as the Father of National Education and a Javanese figure.⁴ Firstly, *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha* signifies the educator's role of setting an example, providing guidance, or demonstrating positive actions to those following behind or under their guidance. Secondly, *Ing Madya Mbangun Karsa* emphasizes the educator's position among the students, where they foster initiative and ideas, engaging in discussions or question-and-answer sessions to develop and implement acceptable notions collectively. Lastly, *Tut Wuri Handayani* underscores the educator's responsibility to guide and direct students towards improvement from behind, ensuring they acquire knowledge to the fullest extent or highest level possible.⁵

On the flip side, the bible presents a progressive development of teaching theories and methods across different historical periods, reflecting an adaptive and context-sensitive approach to education. From Adam to Moses, teaching relied on direct communication and oral tradition, emphasizing divine authority and covenantal instruction.⁶ During the Kingdom of Israel, education became more structured, with priests, prophets, and sages playing a central role in transmitting religious and moral knowledge.⁷ The prophetic tradition introduced rhetorical techniques, symbolic acts, and storytelling to effectively engage audiences and communicate complex theological messages. In the New Testament, Jesus revolutionized teaching by using parables, dialogue, and experiential learning to reach diverse audiences, making spiritual truths accessible and applicable.⁸ Paul further developed a systematic approach to instruction by integrating Jewish tradition with Greco-Roman rhetorical strategies, shaping Christian doctrine and ethical teachings.⁹ These diverse methods highlight a dynamic Bible education model, demonstrating how instruction evolves to meet the needs of different communities and historical contexts. This progression offers valuable insights into contemporary educational theories, emphasizing the importance of contextual learning, narrative engagement, and ethical development in effective pedagogy.

This research argues that the theory and methods of education in Javanese tradition, as developed by Ki Hajar Dewantara, are also reflected in the educational experiences found in the Bible. Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational concepts, such as *ing ngarso sung tulodo* (leading by example), *ing madya mangun karsa* (motivating from the middle), and *tut wuri handayani* (encouraging behind), align with teaching principles present throughout various historical periods in the Bible. In both Javanese tradition and the Bible, education is not merely about transferring knowledge but also about shaping character, morality, and wisdom, with teaching methods adapted to the community's needs and social context. This demonstrates that value-based and exemplary education approaches hold relevance across cultures and eras. Therefore, the research question is: What can be learned from Ki Hajar Dewantara's

⁴ D. Soeratan, *Ki Hajar Dewantara* (Jakarta: Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, 1989)

⁵ I Made Sugiarta, I B. Putu Mardana, and A. Adiarta, "Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara (Tokoh Timur)," *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia* 2, no. 3 (2019): 124–136. See also, Heri Suparlan, "Filsafat Pendidikan Ki Hajar Dewantara dan Pengembangannya bagi Pendidikan Indonesia," *Jurnal Filsafat* 25, no. 1 (2015): 56–74

⁶ Heinrich Ruer, "Oral Tradition in the Old Testament," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, 107–120 (1991)

⁷ Arthur W. Meyer, "Schools of the Prophets in Old Testament Times," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 1, no. 1 (1930): 93

⁸ Yohana H. Liud, Jerry Atang, and John E. Nendissa, "Exploring Jesus' Teaching Methods: Effective Strategies for 21st-Century Education," *Journal Didaskalia* 7, no. 2 (2024): 74–84

⁹ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010)

educational theory and methods, as well as from the experiences in the Bible, that can contribute to Christian religious education in Indonesia?

Ki Hajar Dewantara: Theory and Method

Ki Hajar Dewantara, as a Javanese educator, promotes a theory and method of education. First, *Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha* means: *Ing Ngarso* signifies 'in front,' while *Sung Tuladha* denotes 'as an example or role model.' This educational method entails that when a teacher is in front, they serve as an example or role model for their students. In this position, they provide guidance. Being a role model means individuals must always be aware of their thoughts, words, and actions. Their words and deeds must be consistent, sound, and correct. They must set a proper example for their students or others following their words.¹⁰

Indeed, an educator or teacher must set a good example for their students or pupils, not a bad one. In reality, being a good role model is both easy and challenging. It is easy to set an example if the educator knows what is good and evil and is always aware of their words and actions, ensuring they align. If they are aware, the actions or good examples they demonstrate will follow. The difficulty arises when the educator does not know what is good or bad and is unaware of it. They may do something without knowing or realizing whether it is good or bad. Such mistakes or shortcomings of the educator result in poor judgments from the students or others towards the educator. The respect or reverence from the students towards their educator will diminish or disappear altogether. If the respect and reverence from the students towards the educator are no longer present, then what is done in the context of education will be significantly diminished in meaning or may even be meaningless altogether.

Therefore, educators need to remind each other about their words and actions. Those who provide reminders can come from the same profession, such as fellow teachers, parents, or neighbors. An educator, teacher, or parent who educates students or children still requires education from various sources to carry out their educational responsibilities towards others. This way, the quality of education will be maintained, resulting in high-quality outcomes.

Second, *Ing Madyo* means 'in the middle,' and *Mangun Karso* signifies 'as a pioneer or initiator.' So, *Ing Madyo Mangun Karso* implies that when a teacher or parent is in the midst of their students, they communicate or engage in dialogue with the students to explore ideas and discuss them collectively. The educator allows students to speak or share their ideas and knowledge. The educator does not monopolize the teaching time but allows the students to express their ideas, knowledge, or ways to address and solve specific issues.¹¹

Here, the principle of *gotong royong* also applies in solving problems or acquiring knowledge, where the role of the educator is to encourage the students. In this case, the educator must possess an understanding from various sources so that they have many ideas or pieces of knowledge to share with the students. A wealth of knowledge is necessary for educators so that they have many questions to pose. This enriches the students' knowledge and enhances the quality of learning.

Lastly, *Tut Wuri* means "from behind," and *Handayani* means "making full efforts to provide encouragement and guidance." This implies that "as a teacher from behind, making full efforts to provide encouragement and guidance to their students." This encouragement also serves to guide the learning process away from incorrect directions. The educator's moral

¹⁰ Kornelius Hutagaol, Lisy M. Saija, and Debora C. Simanjuntak, "Model Pembelajaran Kooperatif Ing Ngarso Sung Tuladha," *Jurnal Padeagogik* 1, no. 2 (2018)

¹¹ Dwi Zulaicho and Imam Z. F. Al Hamidy, "Rekonstruksi Makna Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo, Ing Madyo Mangun Karso, Tut Wuri Handayani oleh Ki Hadjar Dewantara," *Journal of Islamic Education Studies* (2021): 4342

encouragement towards their students is aimed at the right goals. In the term "encouragement," there is also the meaning of nurturing and guiding, similar to that of an educator. This caregiver or educator must consider their role as significant.¹² They must constantly monitor their students' progress towards the desired goals. If their students develop in the wrong direction or deviate from the expected growth, the educator must correct their form and direction of development according to the educational objectives.

Here, education entails encouraging and guiding, which implies mentoring³⁶ like a shepherd guiding their flock to green pastures or leading them to still waters, as mentioned in Psalm 23:1-3: "The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie in green pastures, leads me beside quiet waters, and refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake." Here, encouragement, guidance, and direction are carried out with love, resulting in sincere guidance towards the students with warmth, closeness, peace, and respect, fostering mutual respect between the educator and the educated.

From¹ the above explanation, it is clear that the three local wisdoms of Javanese society, namely *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mbangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*, represent the methods or approaches used by educators in carrying out their teaching duties. First, it is to provide an example or demonstrate what should be taught. Second, the demonstration method is one of the engaging and effective methods employed by educators or parents. Educators take the initiative to impart knowledge to their students by demonstrating or providing examples of the knowledge to be conveyed. In family education, what is presented is good behavior or exemplary conduct. In the classroom, what is shown typically are relevant stories or illustrations that support the knowledge being imparted, and third, providing support from behind for the students.

The Experience from the Bible

In the stories of the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, God, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles employ specific methods or approaches in conveying commandments, prohibitions, or teachings to humanity. I published a book entitled *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Majemuk*. It states, "From the beginning, in the world of Israel's narratives, which can be found in the book of Genesis, knowledge is a gift from God to humanity".¹³ In the act of 'giving,' there lies a method or approach employed by God, which is conveyed orally when God instructed Adam and Eve. The content of this knowledge comprises commandments and prohibitions.

God gave them the Cohen. God created humanity (Adam and Eve) and placed them in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:15 states, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." In this giving of commands, God employed a method or approach. God communicated the rules to the first humans orally, as God directly spoke to them (Adam and Eve) while they were together.

The elements of education began when humanity was created and tasked with managing and utilizing the Earth, as created by God. In the words 'to work' and 'to take care of' (nurture), there is an educational aspect, indicating that there were methods used, both by God Himself and by humans, in cultivating and nurturing the world created by God. God commanded

¹² Monika Claramita, "Revealing Tut Wuri Handayani" — A Student-Centred Learning Approach — by Ki Hajar Dewantara from the Early 20th Century: A Literature Review," *Jurnal Pendidikan Kedokteran Indonesia: The Indonesian Journal of Medical Education* 5, no. 1 (2016): 1–14

¹³ Djoys Anneke Rantung, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Majemuk* (Yogyakarta: Lintang Rasi Aksara Books, 2017), 7–8

them to develop and nurture in a specific way, ensuring that the garden became a continuous source of life for humanity, and to maintain the sustainability of the Garden of Eden. Adam, or the first human, had to learn through life's experiences (learning by doing). Thus, the source of education, with God as the educator and the methods used, began with the first human. This process continued through their descendants.¹⁴

Education continued through the patriarchs, namely Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God called Abraham and made His promise, which can be understood as a verbal communication with a direct responsibility to bear descendants as numerous as the sand on the seashore (Gen. 12:1-3). In fulfilling this call, Abraham undoubtedly had to learn through specific methods to become successful. God's promise to Abraham was not merely to grant him numerous descendants; Abraham needed to cultivate it. There is also an understanding of education through his life, and the Lord guided, accompanied, and blessed Abraham. In this guidance and companionship from the Lord, there are educational elements for Abraham. The same happened with Isaac and Jacob; they, too, were guided, accompanied, and blessed by the Lord.

During the period of slavery in Egypt, the presence and promises of God were fulfilled. The Israelites were educated with regulations, particularly regarding the correct worship of God. God never abandoned them. On the contrary, the Israelites were unfaithful to God by worshipping idols or other gods besides Him. The slavery of the Israelites in Egypt became a whip that educated them to remain faithful to God. This harsh education taught the Israelites about the laws of God and about the God who liberated them from slavery in Egypt. Education for Israel produced the spirit and ability to be free or to liberate themselves from slavery in Egypt.

During the leadership of Moses, God stated the law to the Israelites, namely the Ten Commandments or the Torah law, by directly expressing it through His appearance (Ex. 20:1-17). The law had to be obeyed, but it had to be understood beforehand. Here, the Israelites had to study it. The Israelites underwent a learning process regarding the law of the Lord so that they understood it. After that, they implemented it. However, this does not mean there were separate stages of education and implementation. Instead, it co-occurred—as they endeavored to understand the law, they practiced it daily. Thus, education also took place during their journey to the land of Canaan. This education occurred in their daily lives.¹⁵

During their journey or escape from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan, the Israelites were educated by God by being given regulations for their worship of Him. Education through these regulations made them understand what God desired. But sometimes the Israelites did not follow God's instructions; they did not believe in God, so they experienced difficulties and suffering. God's command, through Moses, states, "Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life" (Dt. 6:1-2). This Bible verse shows that Moses was the one who taught about God's commandments. As an educator, Moses became the teacher for the Israelites. Meanwhile, the educator and source for Moses was God Himself.

¹⁴ Karl Barth, *Theologia Perjanjian Lama 1* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1988), 26–29

¹⁵ Sri Wisnadi Wahono, *Di Sini Kutemukan*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1987.

The commandment from the Lord to obey His statutes contains an imperative for learning, indicating that the Israelites must study and understand what the Lord desires for them at that time and in the future, in the promised land of Canaan. The learning activities regarding the statutes of the Lord took place throughout their journey towards the promised land. They learned these statutes through direct experiences in their lives and through the servants of the Lord, such as Moses, the priests, the Judges, and Moses' successor, Joshua. The Torah became the curriculum for the religious education of the Israelite nation. Here, it is stated that the nature of God is that He is one.¹⁶

The knowledge about God was acquired by studying Him through daily life experiences and memorizing His commandments. In addition to the memorization method, direct worship or participation in worship ceremonies also contributed to this understanding. Here, it can be said that the Israelites used the *Ing Madya Mbangun Karsa* method with God as the educator. God invited the Israelites to follow His will. In Canaan, under the leadership of Joshua and the emergence of Judges, various regulations regarding worship and daily life were established. The Israelites encountered other beliefs in Canaan, sometimes leading them to follow and worship other gods. This behavior resulted in reprimands from God, who conveyed His regulations to them. Through Joshua and the Judges, the commandments of the Lord were taught to the Israelites.¹⁷

During the time of the Israelite ancestors, it can be said that various religious education methods were employed, similar to the methods of *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha*, *Ing Madya Mbangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*. God and the Israelite forefathers, starting from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, sometimes took the lead, setting an example for the people of their time. At other times, God and the Israelite forefathers were among the Israelites, inviting them to obey His commandments. And there were times when they were behind, providing guidance and encouragement to move forward (to the promised land).

Furthermore, when the Israelites reached and occupied the land of Canaan, led by Joshua and the Judges, Israel became a kingdom under the rule of Saul, and subsequently David and Solomon, followed by other kings. Alongside this development, prophets emerged to proclaim the teachings of the Lord. David, as a king, was also known as a writer. The Book of Psalms is attributed to David's authorship. He taught the difference between living under God's will and living contrary to it. The teachings of his ancestors still influenced David's teachings, particularly emphasizing the fear of the Lord. In Psalm 10:10, it is stated, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; those who practice it have a good understanding."

Like David's teachings, Solomon, the son of David who succeeded him as king and authored the Book of Proverbs, also emphasized the importance of fearing the Lord. He stated, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). Both figures imparted their wisdom through the books they authored (Psalms and Proverbs). Solomon also emphasized divine wisdom, stating, "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints" (Prov. 2:6-8). Additionally, the author of Proverbs expressed, "Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors" (Prov. 8:34). Proverbs 16:22 affirms, "Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly." Furthermore, it advises, "Listen to your father who

¹⁶ Wahono, *Disini Kutemukan*, 100-114

¹⁷ Wahono, 115-126.

gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old" (Prov. 23:19). ¹¹ The Book of Proverbs is rich in wisdom and practical advice.

During this period, prophets emerged who taught about the curse for those who rejected God's instruction and the blessings for those who faithfully followed His commandments, particularly prophesying about the destruction of Israel. This served as an educational lesson for the Israelites in their daily lives. These prophets had undoubtedly studied the Torah and other commandments from God. The prophets primarily educated their disciples during the zenith of Israel's glory. The use of the term "my son" not only indicates the relationship between a parent and child but also signifies the relationship between the prophets as teachers and their disciples. The prominent prophets during this period included Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah. Their role is exemplified by Jeremiah, who declared God's prophecy to the Israelites that if they obeyed His will, they would receive blessings. Still, if they disobeyed, they would face curses and the destruction of Israel. Subsequently, Israel split into the Northern Kingdom with its capital in Samaria and the Southern Kingdom in Jerusalem.

During the post-exile period in Babylon, when the Israelites returned from exile and resettled in Jerusalem, they were educated to remain faithful and obedient to God alone. The role of the prophets continued with the emergence of Ezra and Nehemiah. The prophets Ezra and Nehemiah played crucial roles in educating the newly returned Israelites from the Babylonian exile. While Ezra faced challenges in his mission among the Israelites, Nehemiah emerged to continue teaching the people. Appointed as the Governor of Judah by the Persian ruler who conquered Babylon, Nehemiah reconstructed the destroyed Jerusalem walls. He reinstated the tithe offerings (Neh. 13:10-14), restored the role of the Levites as priests, enforced Sabbath observance (Neh. 13:15-22), and prohibited intermarriage between Israelites and foreigners (Neh. 13:23-27). Nehemiah also ensured the continuity of ancestral worship practices (Neh. 2:4; 4:4-5; and 5:19).

Nehemiah's teachings or policies, as he also held the position of Governor, sparked fanaticism among the people of Israel (in this case, the Jewish people). In response to this, there arose from the Jewish people individuals who criticized what they deemed to be incorrect and dangerous attitudes. This criticism is reflected in the books of Deutero-Isiah, Trito-Isiah, the book of Jonah, and Ruth. Therefore, Nehemiah instituted reforms across all aspects of life, particularly in the religion of Israel, or specifically Judaism. Preserving Jewish religious traditions was paramount and was the foundation for the Jewish religion in subsequent eras. During the post-exile period, or when the Israelites had returned to Judah, especially in Jerusalem, when the books of Ruth, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were written, there was an increase in the number of books, in addition to the Torah. This proliferation of sources provided more learning opportunities for the people of Israel. Between the return of the Israelites and the arrival of Jesus, or between 538 BCE and ²⁴ the time of Jesus in the early first century CE, the tradition and role of synagogues began to grow and develop. Synagogues became centers of religious worship and education.

During this period, religious education occurred using specific methods. These methods became more organized by providing examples, encouraging and guiding, admonishing, and directing the people of Israel to remain faithful in obeying God's commandments. Meanwhile, the prophets and wise men proclaimed God's glory and faithfulness through the proclamation of His word through writings and teachings in the Psalms and Proverbs by wise individuals such as David and Solomon.

Additionally, Jesus and Paul serve as examples of educational theory and method. Religious education during this period remained closely connected to the teachings of the Old

Testament, as the themes discussed often revolved around God's work of salvation for sinful humanity. During the period between the return of the Israelites from exile and the arrival of Jesus, the tradition of the synagogue emerged and flourished, making it a center for religious activities and religious education. Jesus participated in this tradition by worshiping and learning within the synagogue. As mentioned in [Luke 2:41-52](#) (especially [verse 46](#)), "After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." [17](#) Jesus was in the temple in Jerusalem, conversing with Jewish religious scholars. Also, in [Luke 4:16-30](#) (especially [verse 16](#)), "He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him." Jesus was also in Capernaum (Lk. 4:31). Jesus did what was customary for a child his age: reading books. This means that Jesus learned about Judaism using methods such as memorization, study, discussion, and understanding of the Torah and the books of the prophets, including the book of Isaiah, as well as wisdom books like Psalms and Proverbs.¹⁸

Paul also seems to have followed the learning method practiced by Jesus, namely by visiting places of worship (synagogues). Acts 13:13-49 (especially verses 14-15) states, "From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath, they entered the synagogue and sat down. After reading the Law and Prophets, the synagogue leaders sent word to them, saying, 'Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.' Then Paul stood up." He was also present at another place of worship in the city of Corinth. In Acts 18:8 and 17, it is mentioned: "Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized." So, Paul and Jesus followed the traditional process of teaching and learning in the Jewish religion. What they studied included the Torah and its interpretations, known as Midrash, as well as the books of the prophets. The synagogue served as a place of worship on the Sabbath and as a center for teaching and learning on other days. Regarding the Jewish education system during the childhood of Jesus and Paul, it's noteworthy that Greek methods influenced the curriculum model. Students were typically divided by age; likewise, their lessons were structured accordingly.

Christian Religious Education Reflection

[23](#) Ki Hajar Dewantara, the father of Indonesian education, emphasized a holistic and [30](#) culturally rooted approach to learning. This resonates with the educational practices found in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament and later in the teachings of Jesus and Paul. His educational philosophy, *Tri Nga* (understanding, feeling, and doing) and *Among System* (leadership through guidance and example), aligns with the biblical education model, where learning is not merely intellectual but involves moral, spiritual, and communal formation. This similarity suggests that both traditions recognize education as a lifelong and relational process to shape individuals into responsible and virtuous members of society.

In the Old Testament, education was deeply rooted in divine instruction, with God as the supreme teacher. Abraham is an early example of a learner guided directly by God, who instructed him through revelation and life experiences. Abraham's education was not confined to formal instruction but was integrated into his daily walk of faith, obedience, and covenantal relationship with God. This experiential and relational model mirrors Ki Hajar Dewantara's

¹⁸ Barry Chazan, Roberta Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs, *Cultures and Contexts of Jewish Education* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017)

belief that education should be embedded in cultural and moral values, fostering character development beyond the classroom.

As both a prophet and a teacher, Moses played a role similar to the *Pamong* (educator/mentor) in Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy. Moses was not only a lawgiver but also a role model, guiding the Israelites through a transformative journey of learning and obedience. His teaching method involved oral transmission of laws, storytelling, and the reinforcement of communal memory practices central to Javanese educational traditions, emphasizing the importance of wisdom passed down through elders and mentors. Moses' leadership highlights the *Among System* approach, where an educator nurtures learners with care, leading them towards wisdom and righteousness.

The wisdom literature of the Old Testament, particularly in the writings of David and Solomon, also reflects the educational emphasis on moral and ethical instruction. The Psalms and Proverbs functioned as devotional and pedagogical texts, teaching the principles of faith, discipline, and righteous living. Similarly, Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized *Ing ngarso sung tulodo* (leading by example) and *Ing madyo mangun karso* (inspiring from within), both of which align with the biblical model where leaders and educators shape character through lived example and direct moral instruction. During the Jewish exile, figures like Nehemiah were crucial in restoring religious and moral education. His efforts to rebuild Jerusalem were accompanied by a re-emphasis on Torah study, public reading, and communal instruction—vital practices in preserving Jewish identity and faith. This communal aspect of learning reflects the Javanese emphasis on *gotong royong* (cooperation), where education is a shared responsibility within society.

In the New Testament, Jesus and Paul operated within the Jewish educational tradition, emphasizing memorization, discussion, and communal study of the Torah. Jesus, as a teacher, engaged in dialogue, storytelling (parables), and example-based learning, much like Ki Hajar Dewantara's interactive and culturally relevant teaching methods. Paul, similarly, combined formal Jewish education with Hellenistic rhetorical techniques, illustrating an adaptive and holistic approach to learning. Eventually, Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy and the biblical tradition share a familiar spirit of holistic, moral, and experiential learning. They emphasize the role of educators as mentors, the integration of learning with daily life, and the importance of community in the educational process. These parallels suggest that Christian education in Indonesia can benefit from incorporating both local wisdom and biblical principles in its pedagogical approach.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the educational philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara and the biblical tradition share fundamental similarities in their holistic and character-centered approach to learning. Both emphasize the role of educators as mentors and role models, the integration of moral and spiritual values, and the communal aspect of education. From Abraham's divine instruction, Moses' leadership, and the wisdom literature of David and Solomon to the Jewish educational traditions upheld by Jesus and Paul, biblical education aligns with the *Among System* and *Tri Nga* principles. These parallels suggest that Christian education in Indonesia can benefit from integrating both biblical teachings and local wisdom to create a culturally relevant and spiritually enriching learning experience.

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