

Embracing Diversity: The Role of Islamic Tolerance in Indonesia's Multicultural Society

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Abstract:

Indonesia is a multicultural society religious, ethnic and cultural, so it is necessary to have mutual respect and respect to respond to these differences. Islam is a religion that the Indonesian people widely embrace, so it is necessary to have a tolerant attitude in responding to a multicultural society. Therefore, from this problem, the author is interested in studying the concept of tolerance from an Islamic perspective. The method used in this writing is the study of literature by examining more deeply both from books, articles and other media related to the theme of writing. From the results of this discussion, it can be concluded that tolerance is a commendable attitude that must be possessed by every human being in daily life, where fellow human beings respect each other within the boundaries outlined by Islam. The teachings of Islam always command its people to maintain good relations with others, including other believers. Islam was born with universal and tolerant teaching values.

Keywords: Indonesian Muslim; Islamic values; pluralistic society; religious freedom; religious moderation.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is renowned for its remarkable diversity, encompassing various ethnic groups, races, cultures, and religions. This diversity is not only a fundamental aspect of the nation but also a source of pride and identity (Utama & Mubarak, 2024). The roots of this diversity are deeply intertwined with Indonesia's strategic location along ancient trade routes, where cultural and religious exchanges have flourished for centuries. From the early days of maritime trade, traders from the Middle East, India, and China, who frequented the Indonesian archipelago, brought not only goods but also new religious ideas and cultural practices that enriched the local traditions of animism and dynamism (Nurhayati, 2017). These interactions played a crucial role in shaping Indonesia's pluralistic society, creating a harmonious blend of indigenous traditions and foreign influences.

Indonesia, as a country with a predominantly Muslim population, carries a unique identity within the context of religious pluralism (Nurman et al., 2022). While not an Islamic state, the influence of Islam in various aspects of Indonesian life, such as culture, law, and governance, is undeniable. The country's constitution and legal frameworks reflect a commitment to religious pluralism, and Islam, as the majority

religion, significantly shapes national discourse and policy (Mazyra et al., 2024). However, it is essential to note that Indonesia's recognition of diverse religious traditions goes beyond Islam. The government officially acknowledges and respects other major world religions, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. This official recognition demonstrates Indonesia's commitment to fostering religious tolerance and inclusivity, as supported by both state policies and societal norms (Ridho & Thibburuhany, 2019). The official recognition of multiple faiths reinforces the idea that Indonesia is a pluralistic society, where different beliefs and traditions can coexist peacefully under the same national umbrella.

Despite the official recognition of religious pluralism, Indonesia's experience with interfaith harmony is not without challenges. The country's religious landscape is often tested by societal tensions, interfaith conflicts, and acts of intolerance (Hutabarat, 2023). In recent years, religious violence and discrimination have occasionally erupted, threatening the fragile unity that has been cultivated for decades. Such incidents serve as reminders of the ongoing challenges in maintaining peace and understanding among the diverse religious groups that coexist within Indonesian society (Pamuji, 2024). These challenges are not unique to Indonesia; they are part of a broader global trend in which religious pluralism has the potential to both enrich societies and fuel conflicts.

Globally, religious pluralism can be seen as both a source of cultural wealth and a potential source of conflict. The Pew Research Center's study (2022) highlights an alarming trend: restrictions on religious freedom, both by governments and societies, have been on the rise worldwide (Saiya & Manchanda, 2022). This growing climate of intolerance affects not only specific countries but also shapes global perceptions of religious communities. In Western countries, for example, the rise of Islamophobia has contributed to the spread of negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. Islam is often portrayed as a religion associated with intolerance, discrimination, and violence. This portrayal has been used to stigmatize Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, which is frequently perceived as embodying these negative qualities (Reus-Smit, 2021).

Such perceptions are deeply at odds with the core teachings of Islam itself, which advocates for peace, coexistence, and mutual respect. At the heart of Islam is the principle of tolerance and the call for peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths (Sulaiman, 2021). The Qur'an itself is clear in its guidance on religious freedom, with one of the most famous verses stating, "There is no compulsion in religion" (Al-Baqarah: 256). This verse encapsulates the essence of Islamic teaching: belief is a personal choice, and no one should be forced into accepting a particular faith. However, the negative stereotypes surrounding Islam are often perpetuated by a small minority of individuals or groups who claim to represent Islam but who misinterpret its teachings. These misinterpretations have led to violence, extremism, and the distortion of the true spirit of Islam (Al-Jazairi, 2017).

Historically, Islam has been a religion of peace and a source of cultural and intellectual prosperity. During the golden age of Islam, Muslim communities were at the center of vibrant cultural, scientific, and intellectual exchanges. Muslim scholars and thinkers contributed significantly to various fields, including medicine, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and literature (Brentjes, 2024). The Islamic world was a hub of tolerance, where different religious and cultural communities, such as Christians, Jews, and Muslims, lived side by side and engaged in constructive dialogue (Fancy et al., 2023). The life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provides clear examples of interfaith tolerance, such as his agreements with the Christians of Najran and the Jews of Medina (Bashir et al., 2022). These agreements were based on mutual respect and recognition of each community's right to practice its religion freely. These historical examples underscore the centrality of tolerance and respect for diversity within Islam.

Despite this historical legacy of tolerance, Indonesia, like many other countries, faces ongoing challenges in fostering interfaith harmony. Incidents of religious conflict, discrimination, and the politicization of religion continue to pose serious threats to social cohesion (Daffa & Anggara, 2023). In some regions of Indonesia, local regulations that restrict the construction of places of worship for minority religions have fueled tensions. These laws have led to public protests, riots, and social unrest, as minority religious groups are often left marginalized and excluded from practicing their faith freely (Setiyawan, 2015). Furthermore, extremist groups that misinterpret Islamic teachings have contributed to an atmosphere of fear and division, perpetuating violence and intolerance in the name of religion.

Indonesia's experience is not isolated. Many countries worldwide are grappling with similar issues related to religious pluralism. However, there are also successful examples of nations that have

effectively managed religious diversity (Madung & Mere, 2022). Canada, for example, has adopted a multiculturalism policy that emphasizes equal rights for all citizens to preserve their cultural and religious heritage while promoting integration into society (Achruh & Sukirman, 2024). This approach has been credited with fostering an inclusive and harmonious society that embraces diversity while ensuring social cohesion. The United Nations also plays an important role in promoting interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance. The UN's International Day for Tolerance, observed annually on November 16, is a global initiative aimed at encouraging dialogue and understanding among people of different faiths and cultures.

Education plays a crucial role in promoting tolerance and mutual respect among different religious communities. By incorporating interfaith understanding and tolerance into school curricula, governments can equip future generations with the knowledge and values necessary to navigate a diverse world. In Indonesia, reinforcing the values of Pancasila—the country's official state ideology—can help strengthen national unity and foster interfaith harmony (Badrun et al., 2023). Pancasila promotes the principles of democracy, justice, and social harmony, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and the protection of religious freedom. By integrating these values into educational systems, Indonesia can cultivate a generation that is committed to peaceful coexistence and tolerance (Surahman, 2022).

In addition to formal education, civil society organizations and religious leaders play a vital role in promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding. Religious leaders, in particular, hold significant influence within their communities. Through community-based initiatives, they can help break down barriers between different religious groups, dispel misconceptions, and encourage dialogue (Saleem & Milovanovic, 2023). By fostering open communication and collaboration among religious communities, these leaders can work toward eliminating negative stereotypes and promoting the peaceful values of their respective faiths (Amin & Rosyid, 2019).

The issue of tolerance from an Islamic perspective is critical for understanding how Islamic teachings can contribute to a more harmonious society (Mala & Hunaida, 2023). This research aims to delve deeper into how the principles of tolerance and coexistence in Islam can be applied in the context of Indonesian society and beyond. By examining the core teachings of Islam and how they align with the principles of religious pluralism, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how Islamic values can contribute to the promotion of peace and understanding among diverse religious communities. This research is also relevant to the global discourse on religious tolerance and coexistence. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the importance of fostering mutual understanding among different religious communities has never been greater. By exploring how Islamic teachings can inform efforts to promote religious tolerance, this study seeks to contribute to global initiatives aimed at building a more inclusive and harmonious world.

Indonesia's journey toward achieving religious tolerance is ongoing, shaped by both historical legacies and contemporary challenges. While the country has made significant strides in promoting religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue, much work remains to be done. The key to fostering lasting harmony lies in the collective efforts of the government, religious leaders, civil society, and the broader community. By building on the rich traditions of tolerance found in Islam and other world religions, Indonesia can continue to be a beacon of peace, diversity, and understanding in the region and beyond. Through education, dialogue, and a commitment to the principles of equality and respect, Indonesia can overcome the challenges it faces and create a society where religious harmony is not only an aspiration but a reality (Islam, 2020).

METHOD

This study employs a literature review approach, aiming to delve deeper into the concept of tolerance from an Islamic perspective. This method is chosen because the focus of the research is not on field data collection but rather on analyzing various relevant written sources such as books, journal articles, research reports, and other media materials. Through a literature review, the researcher can examine and compare existing viewpoints on tolerance in Islam and explore how Islamic teachings can be applied in a diverse social context (Murdiyanto, 2020).

The data collection process involves selecting and reviewing literature that discusses Islamic teachings, religious tolerance, and interfaith relations. Books that explain the fundamental principles of Islam, along with journal articles that study the implementation of Islamic teachings in social contexts, will

serve as primary sources for analysis. In addition, reports from institutions studying religious tolerance, as well as media articles presenting real-life cases, will enrich the understanding of this research. In the analysis, the researcher will identify key themes related to tolerance, such as how Islam advocates peaceful coexistence and the importance of tolerance in fostering harmony among different faith communities (A. Rahman et al., 2022).

Data analysis will be conducted thematically, where the researcher will highlight and discuss key themes emerging from the reviewed literature, including the concept of tolerance in Islam, teachings that support good relations between religious groups, and everyday practices of tolerance. To ensure data validity, source triangulation will be employed, which involves comparing viewpoints from various literature to gain a more comprehensive and objective understanding (M. T. Rahman, 2020). This approach aims to provide a deeper insight into how the values of tolerance taught by Islam can be applied in social life, as well as how Islamic teachings contribute to fostering harmony among religious communities in Indonesia. Through this literature review, the researcher hopes to generate a clearer understanding of the Islamic teachings on tolerance, which not only holds relevance for Indonesian society but also contributes to global efforts to promote interfaith tolerance (Sugiyono, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of tolerance

Tolerance is a fundamental value that underpins harmonious social relationships, particularly in diverse societies. Tolerance is defined as being considerate, respectful, permissive, and allowing. Tolerance, in its broadest sense, refers to an admirable moral quality in human interaction, where individuals respect one another's differences within the boundaries established by ethical, cultural, or religious norms—specifically, in this context, those outlined by Islam (Ashilah, 2020). Tolerance does not merely imply passive acceptance; it also signifies an active recognition of another person's right to hold beliefs and practices that may differ from one's own, coupled with a deep respect for their freedoms (Habermas, 2006).

In English, the word *tolerance* often connotes patience and an open heart, embodying the idea of accepting or permitting what one does not necessarily like or agree with (Kaltsum & Amin, 2023). The related verb *tolerant* emphasizes the attitude of being patient or open to things that may conflict with personal preferences or beliefs (Verkuyten & Kollar, 2021). Salman (2008) explains that the term *tolerance* comes from the Latin *tolerare*, which means to endure or continue interacting with something that is inherently disliked or unsatisfactory (Salman, 2008). This definition highlights that tolerance involves not merely enduring, but also engaging with differing viewpoints or practices. Modern social understandings of tolerance often emphasize not just the acceptance of difference but the active engagement and adaptation to these differences, fostering understanding in diverse societies.

In the Arabic language, tolerance is commonly referred to as *samahah* or *tasamuh* (Nugroho et al., 2023). Lexicographers such as Ibn al-Muandzur and Munawwir define *samahah* as embodying gentleness and facilitation, representing a moral quality that promotes kindness and ease. According to Hikmat ibn Basyir Yasin, *tasamuh* refers to subtlety, gentleness, and ease—qualities that foster love and affection for others, creating an environment where hostility or animosity is eliminated (Adzima & Hisaaniah, 2024). Tolerance, as part of the Islamic concept of *ihsan* (goodness), involves cultivating these virtues, enabling individuals to live peacefully alongside one another despite their differences (Mufi & Elhady, 2023). The deeper essence of tolerance in this sense is not mere endurance but an active engagement in promoting compassion, understanding, and a genuine effort to erase hatred. As Allport (1954) argued, tolerance not only mitigates conflict but also diminishes prejudice, thereby facilitating peaceful coexistence (Verkuyten et al., 2020).

Abu A'la Maududi, a prominent Islamic thinker, defines tolerance as a willingness to respect and acknowledge the beliefs and actions of others, even when we might consider them erroneous. This perspective suggests that tolerance does not require agreement with or endorsement of others' actions or beliefs. Instead, tolerance involves refraining from using coercion or violence to change someone's beliefs or actions (Al-Maududi, 1978). It is a fundamental principle that ensures the freedom of individuals to pursue their own beliefs without fear of oppression. The concept of tolerance, thus, encourages not merely coexistence but mutual respect in a pluralistic society, recognizing the legitimacy of diverse viewpoints (Kymlicka, 1995).

In pluralistic societies, where religion, ethnicity, and culture may vary significantly, tolerance plays an essential role in maintaining social peace and preventing conflict (Taiba et al., 2023). Tolerance allows different individuals or groups to coexist peacefully, respecting one another's rights and freedoms even when those differ from one's own. Amnesty International emphasizes that in a globalized world, fostering tolerance is critical to reducing violence and building more inclusive, harmonious communities (Ernada, 2024). In this sense, tolerance is not a passive, neutral stance but an active engagement in recognizing the value of diversity and facilitating peaceful coexistence.

Islam, as a religious tradition, places great emphasis on the value of tolerance (Yazdani, 2020). The teachings of Islam encourage Muslims to live in harmony with people of different faiths, stressing mutual respect, understanding, and kindness. Islam's core principles, such as *al-jud* (nobility) and *sa'at al-sadr* (open-heartedness), call upon believers to be gentle and considerate in their interactions, particularly with those who may hold differing religious or cultural beliefs (Ahmed et al., 2022). The Qur'an and the Hadiths contain numerous verses and sayings from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that encourage respectful interactions with others, demonstrating that Islam does not just tolerate diversity but actively embraces it as part of its ethical framework (Thani et al., 2021).

A striking historical example of tolerance in Islam can be found in the life of Prophet Muhammad, who is renowned for his respectful and peaceful interactions with both Muslims and non-Muslims. Notably, the Prophet entered into agreements of peace with the Christians of Najran and with the Jewish communities in Medina, ensuring that religious minorities could practice their faith freely and live alongside Muslims without fear of persecution (Erşahin, 2021). These agreements, such as the Constitution of Medina, exemplify Islam's commitment to interfaith cooperation and coexistence, showing that tolerance is an integral part of Islamic social ethics (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Mumtahanah: 8). These historical precedents underscore the notion that in Islam, acceptance of religious and cultural diversity is not merely tolerated but is actively promoted as a means of fostering social harmony (Riaz et al., 2023).

Despite the strong emphasis on tolerance within Islam, the real-world application of this value can sometimes face significant challenges. Instances of religious discrimination, intolerance, and violence are often reported, sometimes even in Muslim-majority countries (W. Z. W. Hassan et al., 2021). This disparity highlights the importance of re-examining and reinterpreting the principles of tolerance in a contemporary context. It is crucial for Muslims to understand that tolerance does not mean uncritical acceptance or passive endorsement of all practices, but rather, it is a call for justice, respect, and compassion in dealing with differences (Setiyawan, 2015). This is in line with the broader social discourse on tolerance, which recognizes that the concept is a dynamic process requiring constant redefinition and negotiation in response to shifting societal and political contexts.

Tolerance, at its core, is not just a moral ideal but also a practical necessity in today's increasingly interconnected world. In a global society where cultures and religions intersect more frequently than ever, the importance of fostering understanding and reducing prejudice becomes even more apparent (Aderibigbe et al., 2023). Tolerance serves as a means of mitigating radicalism and extremism, which can arise from misunderstanding and fear of the "other" (Farinelli et al., 2023). By understanding and applying the principles of tolerance, individuals and communities can contribute to the creation of a more peaceful and inclusive global society, where diversity is not a source of division but a catalyst for mutual enrichment.

Education plays a key role in promoting tolerance, especially among younger generations. Through education, individuals can be taught to appreciate the value of diversity and the importance of respecting differences. Curricula that emphasize the principles of tolerance and intercultural understanding can help instill these values in students, preparing them to engage with the world in a more open and accepting manner (Sukenti & Hermawan, 2024). Educational institutions, therefore, have a significant responsibility in shaping the future of societies that are peaceful, just, and inclusive (Surahman, 2022). Educational efforts must go beyond theoretical instruction on tolerance, incorporating practical activities and experiences that help individuals internalize these values and apply them in real-world settings.

Tolerance is a cornerstone of peaceful coexistence in diverse societies. Within the framework of Islamic teachings, tolerance is not a passive act of acceptance but an active practice that involves mutual respect, understanding, and compassion (Hermawan & Rahman, 2024). By embracing the principles of tolerance, Muslims can contribute to a more just and harmonious society where differences are not feared but celebrated. Through education, social engagement, and interfaith dialogue, tolerance can be fostered,

helping to bridge divides and promote a world where people of all beliefs and backgrounds can live together in peace (Al-Jazairi, 2017).

Tolerance in Islamic Perspective

In Islam, followers are consistently encouraged to maintain good relationships with others, regardless of their faith. Islam is rooted in universal principles that promote tolerance and coexistence (Gazi, 2020). This is evident in the teachings of the Qur'an and the example set by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who upheld the values of respect and peaceful interaction with people of all beliefs (Salamun & Ab Rahman, 2022). One of the key verses that illustrates this is found in Surah Al-Baqarah: 256, which states, "There is no compulsion in religion." This command emphasizes the freedom of belief, reinforcing that faith cannot be imposed on others (Daruhadi, 2024). It is a clear directive from Allah that each person has the right to follow their chosen path in religion, marking one of the most fundamental aspects of tolerance in Islam.

This principle of religious freedom is not only a theoretical concept but is actively embedded in the daily life and social practices of Muslims. It removes the barriers of intolerance, fostering an environment where people from different faiths can live in harmony, free from fear or discrimination. The concept of tolerance in Islam is not limited to personal interactions but extends to all aspects of society, creating a foundation for cooperation, mutual respect, and peace (Sukenti & Hermawan, 2024). This is particularly significant in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, where diverse beliefs and cultures coexist. Tolerance allows people to transcend the differences that often lead to division and conflict, enabling them to build strong, cooperative relationships based on common goals and shared values (Setiyawan, 2015).

One of the most striking examples of tolerance in Islamic history can be found in the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). During his time in Medina, he established a society that was a model of interfaith cooperation and mutual respect. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) made agreements with various Jewish and Christian tribes, guaranteeing them protection and the freedom to practice their faith. The Constitution of Medina, which was drafted during his leadership, stands as a testament to the Prophet's commitment to creating a pluralistic society (Arjomand, 2009). It laid out principles for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among different religious communities, ensuring that each group could maintain its traditions and beliefs while contributing to the collective well-being of the state (Al-Jazairi, 2017).

This example is not just historical; it carries significant implications for contemporary Muslim societies. In the modern world, where religious intolerance has led to numerous conflicts, the principles set by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) offer a blueprint for how to navigate the complexities of interfaith relationships. His approach serves as a reminder that, despite religious differences, humanity shares a common bond, and peaceful coexistence is both possible and desirable. Furthermore, the Qur'anic teachings and the Prophet's practice underscore the importance of dialogue and understanding rather than confrontation and division (Nurhayati, 2017).

One of the key factors that promote tolerance in Islam is the recognition of the dignity of every human being, regardless of their faith or background (Sukenti & Hermawan, 2024). The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes the concept of humanity's shared origin and the equality of all people before Allah. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) reminds humanity that diversity in race, ethnicity, and religion is a sign of Allah's creation: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another." This verse highlights the beauty of human diversity, encouraging people to see each other's differences as opportunities for learning and growth rather than as sources of conflict (Al-Qur'an 49:13).

Moreover, Islam calls for justice and fairness in dealing with others, particularly those who are marginalized or in the minority. The concept of justice in Islam is rooted in the belief that every individual has the right to be treated with fairness, regardless of their faith. This commitment to justice is further exemplified by the protection and rights granted to non-Muslims in Islamic governance. The Prophet's Charter of Medina clearly outlined the rights of non-Muslim citizens, ensuring their protection, religious freedom, and participation in the welfare of the state. The protection of religious minorities, as seen in early Islamic governance, is not merely a political arrangement but a deeply ingrained value that reflects the moral and ethical teachings of Islam (Amin & Rosyid, 2019).

In modern contexts, this Islamic principle of justice and protection for minorities remains highly relevant. As we see in many parts of the world today, the rights of religious minorities are often under threat (Hermawan & Rahman, 2024). Whether it is through direct violence or systemic discrimination, the challenges faced by minority communities are numerous. In light of this, Muslim societies can draw upon the teachings of Islam to ensure that tolerance and justice are not just theoretical ideals but actively practiced in contemporary society. By adopting the Prophet's example and the guidance of the Qur'an, Muslim communities can work to create inclusive societies where all people, regardless of their faith or background, are treated with dignity and respect (Ridho & Thibburuhany, 2019).

The role of Islamic education in fostering tolerance cannot be overstated. Education in Islam is meant not only to impart knowledge but also to instill values of compassion, respect, and understanding. By emphasizing the importance of empathy and mutual respect, Islamic education plays a critical role in promoting tolerance among Muslims and within society at large. Furthermore, Islamic schools and institutions can serve as platforms for interfaith dialogue, where students of different faiths can engage with one another, exchange ideas, and work together to promote common values (Surahman, 2022).

At the societal level, the practice of tolerance also plays a significant role in national unity and social harmony. In countries like Indonesia, which has a large Muslim population but also a significant number of people from other religious traditions, tolerance becomes the foundation upon which national identity and social cohesion are built. The concept of Pancasila, the five guiding principles of Indonesia, includes a commitment to belief in one God and respect for diversity. This aligns with the Islamic principles of religious freedom and tolerance, ensuring that people from different faiths can coexist peacefully within the same nation (Setiyawan, 2015).

In the context of economic and social cooperation, tolerance enables communities to work together for the common good. When people of different faiths and backgrounds respect one another's differences, they can engage in collaborative efforts to address social issues such as poverty, education, and healthcare. This cooperation benefits everyone, as it promotes a sense of collective responsibility for the well-being of all members of society, regardless of their religious affiliation. The ability to set aside religious differences in pursuit of common goals is one of the greatest strengths of a tolerant society. This cooperative spirit is essential for the development and progress of any nation (Surahman, 2022).

Despite these ideals, the reality in many parts of the world is that religious intolerance and conflict continue to persist. In some regions, religious minorities face discrimination, violence, and marginalization. This is often exacerbated by extremist ideologies that exploit religion for political gain. In light of these challenges, it is important to remember that true Islam, as practiced by Prophet Muhammad (SAW), calls for peace, tolerance, and the protection of the rights of all people, regardless of their faith. It is through education, dialogue, and active engagement with others that Muslims can combat religious intolerance and promote a message of peace and understanding in the world (Amin & Rosyid, 2019).

In conclusion, the teachings of Islam on tolerance are clear and powerful. Islam's emphasis on freedom of belief, justice, and mutual respect provides a framework for peaceful coexistence among different faith communities. The example set by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his dealings with non-Muslims demonstrates the practical application of these teachings in creating a tolerant and harmonious society. Today, as the world faces increasing challenges related to religious intolerance and conflict, the principles of tolerance in Islam offer a beacon of hope for a more peaceful and just world. Muslims are called not only to uphold these values within their communities but also to share them with others, fostering a spirit of understanding and cooperation across religious and cultural divides (Ridho & Thibburuhany, 2019).

In the Qur'an, the concept of tolerance is taught and is an important learning for Muslims. This can be seen from Surah Jonah verse 40:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ

"Among them, there are those who believe in it, and among them, there are those who do not believe in it. Your Lord knows more about those who do bad things."

In addition, verses of the Qur'an that clearly give an overview of how Allah SWT created diverse human beings to coexist with each other can be found in Surah al-Hujurat verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O man, indeed, We have created you from a man and a woman. Then We made you nations and tribes so that you might know one another. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Knowing."

The verse explains that Allah SWT created humans with various tribes and cultures so that they know each other and coexist in peace. Therefore, tolerance in Islam is an important value that must be applied in daily life. This diversity is part of Allah's destiny that must be respected by Muslims because humans are basically created with ethnic, religious, and cultural differences (Abdurrahim, 2005).

Religious freedom in Islam has several meanings that are important to understand. First, Islam gives freedom to every individual to embrace the religion they believe in without any threat or pressure from any party. There is no compulsion for non-Muslims to convert to Islam (Abdurrahim, 2005). Second, even if a person has become a Muslim, he does not have the freedom to change his religion, whether it is a religion that is embraced from birth or a religion that is chosen through conversion. This shows that Islam views loyalty to religion as a commitment that must be cherished. Third, Islam gives freedom to its people to practice their religious teachings as long as they do not violate the limits set by Islamic Sharia (al-Hageel, 2005).

In Islamic principles, religious freedom is not only recognized as a fundamental right of every individual but also as a responsibility to maintain harmony and tolerance in a pluralistic society. Islam teaches that tolerance is not just an attitude of respecting differences but also an obligation to coexist in diversity. Some of the important principles contained in Islamic teachings related to tolerance include: *al-hurriyah al-diniyyah* (freedom of religion and belief), *al-insaniyyah* (humanity), and *al-wasatiyyah* (moderation or balance).

The first principle, *al-hurriyah al-diniyyah*, emphasizes freedom of religion and belief as the basic right of every human being. Allah SWT gives full freedom to each individual to choose his or her beliefs without any coercion. In Surah al-Baqarah verse 256, Allah says: "There is no compulsion in religion (Islam). Indeed, it is clear the right way from the wrong way. Whoever disobeys the taboo and believes in Allah has indeed clung to a very strong rope that will not break. Allah is the Hearer and the Knowing." This verse clearly shows that freedom of religion is an inviolable right, and Allah SWT knows better who is doing damage, so that there is no coercion in religion (al-Hageel, 2005). This principle is an important basis in the context of pluralistic social life, where everyone has the freedom to choose their beliefs.

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"There is no coercion in (adhering) to the religion (Islam). Indeed, it is clear the right way from the wrong way. Whoever disobeys the taboo and believes in Allah has indeed clung to a very strong rope that will not break. Allah is the Hearer and the Knowing."

The second principle, *al-insaniyyah*, emphasizes that humans have a mandate as caliphs on earth, which means that they were created to coexist in differences. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH, through his treatise on Islam, came as *rahmatan li al-'alamin* (mercy for all nature), which means that Islam brings goodness not only to Muslims but also to all mankind regardless of religion or cultural background. As proof, the Prophet PBUH said in a hadith narrated by Abu Dawud: "The merciful will be loved by Ar Rahman (Allah). Love the inhabitants of the earth and anyone in the sky will love you." This hadith emphasizes that an attitude of affection and respect for fellow human beings, whether they are of the same religion or not, is the key to achieving peace and harmony in life (al-Hageel, 2005).

The third principle, *al-wasatiyyah*, teaches Muslims to be moderate in practicing religion. Wasathaniyyah means a balance between two extremes. In this context, Muslims are taught to avoid all forms of extremism in religion, both in carrying out worship and in social interaction. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, in his commentary, explained that the word "wasat" means "justly balanced" or justly balanced, which

reflects the essence of moderate Islamic teachings. This is in line with the view of the great scholar Yusuf al-Qardhawi who stated that tolerance can be born from four main factors. First, the belief that every human being, regardless of religion, culture, and country he adheres to, still has dignity and must be respected. Second, the belief that differences in religion and belief are part of Divine destiny and that Allah SWT has given freedom for mankind to determine its faith. Therefore, it is not permissible to force others to convert to Islam. Third, a Muslim is not given the authority to judge the disbelief of others or their deviations because it is the business of Allah SWT who will judge them on the Day of Resurrection. Fourth, the belief that Allah SWT commands Muslims to behave justly and invite noble morals, even against people who do not believe, such as polytheists, even though Allah SWT also denounces the wrongful acts against the disbelievers (al-Hageel, 2005).

With these principles, Islam not only teaches religious freedom as the right of every individual but also emphasizes the importance of maintaining good relations, tolerance, and justice in common life. The concept of religious freedom in Islam provides a relevant guide for the modern world, where religious and cultural pluralism is an inevitable reality. Islam teaches that despite differences in beliefs, we must still respect each other and coexist peacefully, upholding the principles of moderation and balance in every aspect of life. Tolerance, in the Islamic view, is not just a moral value, but an important foundation for creating a more just and harmonious world, both at the individual and global levels (al-Hageel, 2005).

The concept of tolerance in Islam, as outlined in the Qur'an, remains highly relevant in the context of today's globalized world. In a time when religious and cultural divisions often lead to conflict and misunderstanding, the Qur'anic principles of tolerance offer profound guidance for promoting peace and mutual respect among diverse communities (Jafar et al., 2024). The teachings found in verses like Surah Yunus 10:40, where it is stated that among people, some believe while others do not and that God alone knows the hearts of those who cause corruption, emphasize the importance of accepting diversity in belief and the recognition of humanity's inherent differences. The Qur'an does not call for coercion or force in matters of faith but highlights that everyone is accountable for their actions before God. This passage underscores the importance of individual freedom of belief, a concept that is fundamental in fostering peaceful coexistence in multi-religious societies (Nafisah et al., 2024).

Furthermore, in Surah Al-Hujurat 49:13, Allah's message to humanity is clear: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." This verse is crucial for understanding the divine intent behind human diversity. It presents a vision of humanity where differences in race, ethnicity, and culture are seen not as sources of division but as opportunities for mutual recognition and understanding (Hossain, 2024). This is a significant message in today's world, where globalization has intensified interactions between people of different cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. In such a world, the message of the Qur'an calls for tolerance as a means to bridge gaps, promote peaceful coexistence, and foster international solidarity (Consoli & Myers, 2022).

The Qur'anic concept of freedom of religion is also central to Islamic tolerance. As illustrated in these verses, Islam advocates for the right of individuals to practice their faith freely, without coercion or fear of persecution (ul Hassan, 2024). This principle aligns with modern concepts of human rights and religious freedom, which are enshrined in international laws and conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations (Uddin et al., 2023). Article 18 of this declaration asserts the right of every individual to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, which resonates with the Islamic teachings that emphasize the non-compulsory nature of faith (Salaymeh & Lavi, 2021). In this light, the Islamic tradition contributes significantly to the global discourse on religious freedom, advocating for the peaceful coexistence of diverse religious communities.

In a contemporary international context, where religious intolerance and conflicts based on belief and identity continue to plague many parts of the world, these Qur'anic teachings provide a counter-narrative that promotes peace, cooperation, and understanding (Morrow, 2021). Interfaith dialogue and initiatives based on the principles of tolerance and mutual respect are essential for resolving the growing tensions between different religious communities. Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to engage with others in a spirit of cooperation, respect, and shared values, which can contribute to global efforts aimed at fostering peace and reducing sectarian violence (Setiyawan, 2015).

Additionally, the notion of divine diversity expressed in Surah Al-Hujurat reflects the value of intercultural and interfaith engagement. The idea that humanity is created in different tribes and nations to

"know one another" calls for an appreciation of cultural differences and promotes the building of relationships across boundaries (ul Hassan, 2024). This can be translated into a powerful tool for enhancing international relations and strengthening diplomacy. Just as Islam advocates for peaceful relations between people of different beliefs, modern diplomacy also emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences as a basis for peaceful coexistence among nations. This is particularly important in a world where migration, technological advancements, and cultural exchanges have led to a more interconnected global community (Hassan & Jamal, 2024).

Furthermore, the freedom of religion in Islam, as defined in these verses, is not just about the right to choose one's belief system but also about the responsibility to respect the beliefs of others. This understanding is increasingly important in an era marked by the rise of nationalism and religious extremism, where the right to religious freedom is under threat in many parts of the world. Islam's insistence on non-coercion in matters of faith provides a solid ethical framework for combating religious extremism and advocating for a world where individuals can practice their faith in peace without fear of persecution (Anggraini, 2022).

In practical terms, this concept of tolerance can be seen in the policies of multicultural societies around the world. Nations like Canada, the United States, and many European countries have embraced diversity as a strength, creating legal and social frameworks that protect the rights of religious minorities. Similarly, in Muslim-majority countries, the application of these Qur'anic principles of tolerance can lead to more inclusive and harmonious societies where people of different faiths can live side by side, contributing to the nation's development and social cohesion. The contribution of Islam to global discussions on human rights, religious freedom, and multiculturalism is invaluable, offering timeless wisdom that advocates for peace, justice, and understanding in a world that is often divided by religious and cultural differences (Surahman, 2022).

Moreover, Islam's approach to religious freedom and tolerance can help address global challenges related to migration, refugees, and humanitarian crises. In many parts of the world, migrants and refugees often face hostility and discrimination, primarily due to religious and cultural differences. Islam's teachings on protecting the rights of non-Muslims and offering them the freedom to practice their beliefs can serve as a model for addressing these challenges. In this sense, Islamic principles of tolerance can offer significant contributions to international humanitarian efforts, ensuring that migrants and refugees are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds (Amin & Rosyid, 2019).

The Qur'anic teachings on tolerance provide valuable guidance for the contemporary world. The call for freedom of religion, respect for diversity, and peaceful coexistence is just as relevant today as it was over a millennium ago. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, these principles can serve as a foundation for fostering global peace, cooperation, and understanding (Morrow, 2021). As nations around the world face the challenges of religious conflict, cultural differences, and social division, the Islamic teachings on tolerance offer a universal framework that can contribute to the ongoing efforts to create a more just, inclusive, and peaceful world.

CONCLUSION

Tolerance is a noble attitude that should be embraced by every individual in daily life, where people respect and honor one another within the boundaries outlined by Islam. Islam continuously instructs its followers to maintain good relations with others, including those of different faiths. Islam was revealed with universal values and a tolerant approach, teaching that differences should not lead to conflict but rather serve as opportunities for mutual understanding and respect. Moreover, several verses in the Qur'an clearly emphasize the importance of respect and honor between people. One such example is found in Surah al-Hujurat, verse 13, which states: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." This verse reminds us that human diversity is a creation of Allah meant for mutual recognition and that the most honored in the sight of Allah are those who possess piety, not those who belong to a specific tribe or faith.

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