

Interpretation of Tolerance Verses in the Ministry of Religion's Thematic Interpretation of Inter-Religious Relations

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Abstract

This study examines the interpretation of Qur'anic verses on tolerance according to the Thematic Tafsir of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI). The background of this research lies in the urgent need for a proper understanding of tolerance in Indonesia's pluralistic society and the importance of having an official government-endorsed tafsir as a reference. The research problems include how Kemenag RI interprets verses on tolerance, the principles of tolerance that can be formulated from these interpretations, and the relevance of such interpretations in today's Indonesian context. This study employs a qualitative method with a library research approach. Primary data is sourced from the Thematic Tafsir published by Kemenag RI, especially the volume(s) relevant to the themes of tolerance and harmony. Data analysis is conducted through a descriptive-analytical approach to understand the interpretations and formulate the principles of tolerance. The findings show that the Thematic Tafsir of Kemenag RI interprets tolerance as a fundamental Islamic value that promotes peaceful coexistence, recognition of differences, and prohibition of religious coercion highly relevant for maintaining harmony in Indonesia. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on Kemenag RI's Thematic Tafsir as the main source, the systematic formulation of tolerance principles derived from it, and the analysis of their relevance in the context of Indonesia's diversity. Its relevance to the Indonesian context is evident in how the Thematic Tafsir aligns closely with the values of Pancasila, particularly the first and third principles on Divinity and Unity. This interpretation serves as an important official government reference for fostering peaceful interreligious life in Indonesia.

Tolerance; Tafsir; Relationship; Ummah; Religion

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji interpretasi ayat-ayat toleransi dalam Al-Qur'an menurut Tafsir Tematik Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia (Kemenag RI). Latar belakang masalahnya adalah urgensi pemahaman toleransi yang benar di tengah masyarakat majemuk Indonesia dan pentingnya rujukan tafsir resmi pemerintah. Rumusan masalah penelitian ini mencakup bagaimana Kemenag RI menginterpretasikan ayat-ayat toleransi, prinsip-prinsip toleransi yang dapat dirumuskan, serta relevansi interpretasi tersebut bagi konteks Indonesia saat ini. Metode penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka (*library research*). Data primer diambil dari Tafsir Tematik Kemenag RI, khususnya jilid yang relevan dengan tema toleransi dan kerukunan. Analisis data dilakukan secara deskriptif-analitis untuk memahami penafsiran dan merumuskan prinsip-prinsip toleransi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Tafsir Tematik Kemenag RI menginterpretasikan toleransi sebagai nilai fundamental dalam Islam yang mendorong koeksistensi damai, pengakuan perbedaan, dan larangan pemaksaan agama, yang sangat relevan untuk menjaga kerukunan di Indonesia. Novelty penelitian ini terletak pada fokus spesifik terhadap Tafsir Tematik Kemenag RI sebagai sumber utama, perumusan prinsip toleransi secara sistematis dari tafsir tersebut, dan analisis relevansinya dalam konteks kemajemukan Indonesia. Adapun relevansinya dengan konteks ke-Indonesiaan adalah Tafsir Tematik Kemenag RI sangat selaras dengan prinsip-prinsip Pancasila, khususnya sila ke-1 dan ke-3 tentang Ketuhanan dan Persatuan. Penafsiran ini penting sebagai rujukan resmi pemerintah dalam membina kehidupan umat beragama yang damai di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Toleransi; Tafsir; Hubungan; Umat; Beragama

INTRODUCTION

From a religious perspective, diversity is a gift and God's will. In line with the word of Allah contained in the Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, that diversity is sunnatullah (Adju & Imran, 2022). If God had willed it, it would not have been difficult to make His servants uniform and of one kind. This would demonstrate His Almighty nature, the desire for humanity to be diverse, ethnically diverse, and nationally diverse, with the goal of making life dynamic, mutually learning, and mutually understanding (Subki, et.al., 2021). In Indonesia there are six religions officially recognized by the state, namely: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism (Nisa, et.al., 2021). However, the religious beliefs and convictions of some Indonesian people are also expressed in hundreds of ancestral religions and adherents of beliefs (Aurelius, et.al., 2024). The reality of the diversity of religions, beliefs, views and opinions that exist in Indonesia sometimes gives rise to conflicts and misunderstandings, both from fellow religions and between religions (Abror, 2020).

Misunderstandings that often occur between religious communities result in the emergence of different perceptions of other religions (Nurhakim, et.al., 2024). Excessive fanaticism is also one of the causes of divisions and conflicts between religious communities (Kurniawan, et. al., 2022). Intolerant actions that hinder peace between religious communities clearly disrupt the stability and security of the state (Saputra, 2023). At least this kind of intolerant action has always occurred recently, the content of which is always based on religious teachings, especially Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia (Rosyad, et.al., 2021). Likewise, what often becomes a seasonal problem every year is intending to follow and observe other religious holidays, wearing symbols and emblems of other religions and participating in other religious rituals (Solikhati, 2017). Long before, the Prophet had practiced peaceful coexistence with diverse communities of different ethnicities, tribes, cultures, and religions. All came together as one and agreed to sign a charter of cooperation, allowing each group the opportunity to practice its own religion and beliefs (Shihab, 2020).

In Arabic, tolerance is known as tasamuh or samahah, which means making things easier and being lenient. Tasāmuh in Arabic comes from the equivalent word تسامح And سَمَاحَة means broad-minded, noble, forgiving and friendly (Jamarudin, 2016). Tasamuh can be interpreted as commendable behavior that prioritizes an attitude of mutual respect for differences (Putri & Witro, 2022). The Quran does not explicitly mention the words tolerance or tolerance. However, in Islam, the need for religion is inherent in human nature, inherent from birth. Islam itself has taught tolerance since ancient times, even since its arrival on earth (Ghazali, 2016). The verse that is often used as a concept in tolerance regarding freedom of religion in the Qur'an is Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256,

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمَرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

There is no compulsion to (enter) religion (Islam); Indeed, the right path is clearer than the wrong path. Therefore, whoever disbelieves in Thaghut and believes in Allah, then indeed he has held on to a very strong rope that will not break. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256)

As social beings, it is natural for humans to live side by side despite differences (Nasution, 2021). Because human nature is different and not all are the same, especially since the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13) The Qur'an contains teachings to live peacefully with others without interfering with each other's religious beliefs. Furthermore, intolerance can also lead to restrictions on the interpretation of religion for individuals who adhere to other religions (Hasbiyallah, 2018). Therefore, this kind of interpretation and thinking gives rise to extremism among religious communities.

Thematic interpretation is one of the interpretation models introduced by scholars of interpretation to provide answers to new problems that occur in society through the guidance of the Qur'an (Fauzan, et.al., 2019). In thematic interpretation, a mufassir interprets by collecting all or part of the verses from several surahs that talk about a particular topic, and then linking them to each other (Sholihat, et.al., 2023). Considering the many tolerance issues faced by society, this method is very relevant to use. The researcher took the thematic interpretation of the Ministry of Religion, because the Thematic Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) has several advantages, including its ability to answer the challenges of the times, produce an understanding that is easier to digest, and reject the existence of contradictory verses of the Quran.

Interpreting the Qur'an in a more popular language is also called interpretation. The process of interpretation will never know the word "end" (Fauziah, et.al., 2022). This is proven by the birth of various interpretative works from various perspectives, from classical to contemporary (Supriadi, 2017). Based on the problems above, the researcher is interested in focusing on a deeper study of the research entitled "Interpretation of Verses of Tolerance in the Qur'an According to the Ministry of Religion's Thematic Interpretation of Inter-Religious Relations."

If we look at previous research, namely research Saifudin (2019), that perception of the existence of dualism (*ta'arud*) between tolerant verses and war verses has become a discourse in the study of the Qur'an. Islamic intellectuals such as Ibn Sallamah, al-Shami, and Abdullah Bin Baz acknowledged the existence of *ta'arudh*, and therefore they also stated that the tolerant verses have been *naskh (mansukhab)* by the war verses or the sword verses as a way to resolve the conflict. Different from previous research, this research explains tolerance based on the Thematic Interpretation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs which interprets tolerance as a fundamental value in Islam that encourages peaceful coexistence, recognition of differences, and prohibition of religious coercion, which is very relevant to maintaining harmony in Indonesia. The novelty of this research lies in the specific focus on the Thematic Interpretation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs as the main source, the systematic formulation of the principle of tolerance from this interpretation, and the analysis of its relevance in the context of Indonesian diversity.

METHODS

This type of research is library research by collecting data and researching from books and other works. The research conducted using scientific methods contains two elements, namely observation and reasoning. In this study the author uses a descriptive method in answering the questions that will be asked in this study, because in analyzing data descriptively, namely logically

connecting various theoretical statements with existing phenomena and presenting them as they are. The research method with comparison in terms of interpretation is called *maudhu'i*, namely the interpretation of the interpretation method that uses an approach to collect the main themes contained in various verses and surahs in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an which in this case focuses on verses about tolerance. The interpretation published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in thematic form as primary material to be studied. Any interpretation and opinions of interpreters on each interpretation are secondary data sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Verses About Tolerance With Non-Muslims And Statehood

The verses that contain tolerance towards non-Muslims are as follows:

1. QS al-Baqarah verse 256

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

There is no compulsion to (enter) religion (Islam); Indeed, the right path is clearer than the wrong path. Therefore, whoever disbelieves in Thagbut and believes in Allah, then indeed he has held on to a very strong rope that will not break. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

2. QS al-Hajj verse 40

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ فَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفُتَّتْ صَوَامِعُ وَيَعٍ وَصَلَوَاتُ وَمَسْجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

(Namely) people who have been expelled from their hometowns for no good reason, except because they said: "Our God is only Allah". And if Allah had not rejected (the violence of) some humans by others, Christian monasteries, churches, Jewish synagogues and mosques would have been destroyed, in which the name of Allah is often mentioned. Indeed, Allah will surely help those who help Him (religion). Indeed, Allah is truly All-Powerful, All-Mighty.

3. QS al-Hujurat verse 13

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O people, indeed We created you from a man and a woman and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing.

The verses on tolerance in the state are as follows:

4. QS Ali 'Imrān verse 64

قُلْ قُلُوبُ يَاهِلِ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا آزِبًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

Say: "O People of the Book, come (adhere) to a sentence (decree) that there is no dispute between us and you, that we worship none but Allah and we do not associate anything with Him and neither (nor) do any of us take others as gods other than Allah." If they turn away then say to them: "Behold, we are those who have submitted (to Allah)."

5. QS al-Maidah verse 48

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝

And We have sent down to you the Koran with the truth, confirming what was before it, namely the books (which were revealed previously) and the touchstone for the other books; So decide their cases according to what Allah has revealed and do not follow their desires by abandoning the truth that has come to you. For every nation among you, We give rules and a clear path. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one people (only), but Allah will test you regarding what He has given you, so compete with each other to do good deeds. Only to Allah will you all return, then He will tell you what you have disputed over.

Based on the place of revelation, the five verses above are classified as Madaniyyah surahs, namely revelations that were revealed when the Prophet was in Medina. However, not all Madaniyy surahs contain Madaniyy verses. There are also surahs classified as Madaniyy but contain several Makkiyyah verses in them. Examples of Madaniyy surahs are: 1) Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256; 2) Al-Hajj verse 40; 3) Al-Hujurat verse 1; 4) QS Ali 'Imrān verse 64; 5) Al-Maidah verse 48. Regarding the editorial "*ya ayyuhannās*" is found in two places, namely verses 21 and 168. Madaniyyah verses generally contain the establishment of detailed rules and laws regarding worship, civil transactions, and punishments, as well as the prerequisites for a new life in establishing the building of an Islamic society in Medina (Sudarto, et.al., 2023). Madaniyyah verses regulation of political and governmental affairs, strengthening the principles of deliberation and justice in deciding laws, regulating relations between Muslims and adherents of other religions inside and outside the city of Medina, both in times of peace and in times of war (Sudarto, et.al., 2023).

Allah commands war by enjoining jihad, for there are reasons that permit it (such as disturbance, aggression, and expulsion). He then establishes the rules of the treaty to stabilize security and solidify the pillars of peace. This requires that the Madani verses be long and concise, and have eternal and non-temporary dimensions and objectives, which are required by the factors of stability and tranquility in order to build a state on the strongest and most solid foundations and pillars (Zuhaili, trans. 2013).

Not all verses in the Quran have asbabun nuzul. According to Jalaluddin As-Suyuti, asbabun nuzul is something that occurs at a certain time or period and becomes the cause of the revelation of one or more verses of the Quran. Surah al-Baqarah verse 256 is one of the verses in this discussion that has asbabun nuzul. That is, with the revelation of this verse, Allah emphasizes that a person is not allowed to force others to convert to Islam, including their own children, as some of the Ansar companions did to their children (at-Thabari, trans. 2007).

Ibn 'Abbas said, "Once there was a woman who gave birth to several babies but none of them survived. She also vowed that if only one of her children survived, she would make him a Jew. When the Banu Nasir were expelled from Medina for breaking their agreement with the Prophet, several sons of the Ansar went with them. Knowing this, the Ansar said, 'We will not let our children leave Medina with the Jews (at-Thabari, trans. 2007).

Ulama's Views Regarding Tolerance Verses

The themes are the principle of religious freedom, respect for other religions, building brotherhood between Muslims and non-Muslims, religious harmony and each community has its own worship traditions.

1. Supporting Scholars

a. QS al-Baqarah verse 256

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 256, contains the central theme of the prohibition against forcing people to convert to Islam. Scholars view this verse as part of respecting beliefs and differences in religion. It emphasizes the natural nature of the universe and correct and upright thinking. All of this can lead to faith in the existence and oneness of Allah Ta'ala, leading to conviction in Islam as a religion and way of life. A life of direction in this world and the afterlife.

Scholars who support the prohibition of forcing people to convert to Islam as explained in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256, namely Az-Zuhaili, trans (2013). According to him, this verse states that one should not force someone to convert to Islam, because the evidence for the truth of Islam itself is clear. Therefore, faith is a form of willingness. Apart from that at-Thabari, trans (2007) became a cleric who supported the prohibition of forcing people to convert to Islam, because when interpreting this verse with the narration that there was a woman who lived alone without a child, then she decided within herself that if there was a child living with her she would make him Jewish.

As for Quthb, trans (2000), He is also a scholar who supports the prohibition against forcing people to convert to Islam, explaining this verse, as he sees it as Allah honoring humans by respecting their will, thoughts, and feelings. He entrusts matters concerning specific issues, including guidance and error, to oneself, as a form of responsibility for bearing the consequences of one's actions.

In addition to religious freedom, the freedom to propagate this creed is also guaranteed, and its security from harassment and slander is guaranteed. Furthermore, Islam, as the religion with the highest perspective on nature and life, and the most straightforward methodology and order for human society, is undisputed. According to Sayyid Quthb, any method (order, system) that is not based on God's laws falls under the category of *thagut*.

b. QS al-Hajj verse 40

Surah al-Hajj from verses 38 to 41 contains orders for war. Overall, Surah al-Hajj is classified as *madaniyyah* except for verses 52 to 55. It was revealed in Medina because the order to fight and respond in kind only existed in Medina, which at that time had the power and authority to fight. Verses 39 and 40 are verses that openly encourage the *ummah* to form a society that has power on earth. And that power is used to protect and defend places of worship to Allah (Amrullah, 1989).

At the beginning of the verse, namely *الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ*, the phrase *الَّذِينَ* here confirms the previous verse that those who were expelled from their hometowns were believers who were expelled by the disbelievers of Quraysh of Mecca. The expulsion from their hometowns, the persecution of some of them because of their belief in Allah and His Messenger, and the insults and threats against others, forced them to leave Mecca. Their actions against the believers were without justification. At the end of the verse it is stated, "Indeed, Allah Ta'ala is the Almighty, the All-Powerful." Scholars who support the command to fight if expelled include: Az-Zuhaili, trans (2013). According to him, Allah has the power to help and win over His servants who are obedient and strive in His path.

Even though the teachings of Islam are true, adhering to the religion of the descendants of the people of the book, namely Jews and Christians, is better than not having a religion. Better than arbitrarily deifying objects or creatures. Especially in this day and age. People no longer care about places where people worship God.

c. QS al-Hujurāt verse 13

Surah al-Hujurāt was revealed in Medina with eighteen verses. The overall content of this surah discusses morals and ethics. According to Islam, the most noble people in the sight of Allah are those who are most pious. This does not mean that good manners and good manners are not part of the equipment of piety. Similarly, we live in the modern era, which is often referred to as the age of democracy (Amrullah, 1989)..

The first sentence in this verse is *يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ* meaning 'The scholars who support the statement of this surah are Ath-Thabari trans (2007). According to him, Allah has created you from male and female semen, so according to him, every human being has the same rights. This is also supported by Az-Zuhaili trans (2013), He interpreted this verse as God's call to all mankind: "We created you from a single origin, from a single soul, from Adam and Eve. So, as equals, we must defend ourselves."

Apart from that, this surah contains the words of Allah *لِتَعَارَفُوا*, meaning that some of you will know others in terms of lineage. (Az-Zuhaili trans. 2013). Then continue to the next sentence, namely God willing, God willing, God willing. The most important thing among you is piety. Whoever is adorned with piety, himself is more noble, good and honorable. Allah tells us to abandon the attitude of being proud of each other.

According to Amarullah (1989), interpreting the end of this verse, if we pay close attention, it serves as a deeper warning to humans who are dazzled by national and tribal issues. He believes that humans were not created for hostility, but for acquaintance. And living as nations and tribes can lead to hostility and war, because people have forgotten the value of piety.

d. QS Ali 'Imrān verse 64

According to the opinion of commentators, Surah Ali 'Imrān is the same, as it was revealed in Medina. Surah Ali 'Imrān encompasses two main topics: faith and sharia. Regarding faith, it emphasizes rejecting the opinions of those who deny the message of Islam (Quthb, trans. 2000). This verse is an invitation to worship and serve only Allah without associating partners with Him with anything.

As for Ath-Thabari trans (2007) as a scholar who supports the statement in this verse that the explanation of the Word of Allah God willing *وَلَا تُشْرِكْ بِهِ شَيْئًا* Abu the meaning of this verse is: "Say, O Muhammad! To the people of the book (scribes) 'Let us adhere to the same sentence between us and you!' The same sentence is, we identify with Allah, so we do not worship other than Him, free ourselves from any worship other than Him, and do not associate partners with Him. So it is clear that humans living in this world are free to live their lives without any coercion from other people.

This verse is the essence of the prophets' preaching, namely the oneness of Allah, which is included in the phrase of the oneness of Allah, namely, *وَلَا يَتَّخِذُ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا* (and neither do some of us take others as gods besides Allah). The oneness of Allah Ta'ala as Ilah means not associating anything with Him. Az-Zuhaili (2013). Thus, this verse contains a point of equality and meeting between existing religions, namely submission under the sentence of monotheism. Which means there is no God but Allah Ta'ala, only worship Him and adhere to the Sharia laws revealed by Him.

e. QS al-Maidah verse 48

Surah al-Maidah is classified as a Madaniyah surah, meaning it was revealed in Medina. Specifically, Surah al-Maidah contains rulings on food, hunting, theft, the atonement of oaths, and more. Therefore, it can be concluded that these four Madaniyah surahs, from Al-Baqarah to Al-Maidah, serve as sources for us to understand the principles of Islamic law (Amrullah, 1989).

Hamka supports the explanation of this verse, stating that according to him, the main points of law referred to are regarding social interactions, civil and criminal law, laws in establishing a household, statehood, war and peace. Al-Maidah means a meal, taken from the story of Hawary asking the Prophet Isa Almasih to ask Allah to send them a meal from heaven (Amrullah, 1989).

The Word of Allah (And We The Koran has been sent down to you with the truth, confirming what the previous ones, namely the books (which were revealed previously) and the touchstones for the other books), meaning the Qur'an as the fulfillment and source of law justifying and confirming the previous books such as the Torah and the Gospel, which books contain information that mentions and praises the Qur'an as well as information that the Qur'an will come down from Allah to a servant and His Messenger, Muhammad SAW (Ath-Thabari, trans. 2007).

Regarding the sentence, *لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا*, the meaning is for each of the existing people, each of whom We have given a law which We have made obligatory for them to uphold its laws, and a clear and obvious path which We have made obligatory for them to tread, according to the conditions and circumstances of each community, their nature and characteristics, the potential they possess, and the developments and changes of the times (Az-Zuhaili, trans. 2013). It can be understood that basically the principles of their religion and the religion of previous peoples are the same, namely believing in Allah and recognizing everything that comes from Him.

2. Scholars Who Reject

The cleric who rejected tolerance with people of other religions was Ibn Sallamah. Ibn Sallamah refused by enshrining the verses of tolerance against the verses of war. There are several tolerance verses that Ibn Sallamah considers to be in conflict (ta'arud) with the al-saif verse or al-qitāl verse, and the way to resolve them, in Ibn Sallamah's view, is by using the alnaskh theory. Because the tolerant verses were considered to have come down first, they were deleted and replaced (*mansukhab*) with sword verses or war verses (Safrodin, 2019).

This view is also reinforced by Al-Shami's opinion. According to him, the chronology of the laws of war in the Koran is established in three stages. First, war was originally forbidden to the Prophet and his people. Second, war was then permitted for those who had been expelled and fought against. Third, war was ordered and became obligatory for the Prophet and his people but was still limited, namely against the polytheists who fought them; and the four wars become mandatory to be carried out more broadly, namely against all polytheists without exception so that all religion belongs to Allah (Safrodin, 2019).

The ṣafh verse which contains the recommendation to forgive polytheists at that time was combined with a verse which ordered to fight those who did not believe in Allah SWT and the last day. This view is also supported by opinion (al-Shami, 1993). According to him, the chronology of the laws of war in the Koran is established in three stages. First, war was originally forbidden to the Prophet and his people. Second, war was then permitted for those who had been expelled and fought against.

Then Allah permitted (al-Hajj: 39) the Prophet and his people to fight the polytheists who had been fighting them for a long time, expelling them from their homeland and residence and committing persecution against them after he and his people had turned into a strong community politically and socially (al-Shami, 1993). Permission to fight at this stage was not yet an obligation. The new obligation to fight was ordered to the Prophet and his people in al-Baqarah: 190.

Based on the explanation above, the author leans toward scholars who support tolerance. They support tolerance and respect for differences in opinion and religion. However, tolerance is not necessary in the realm of faith or creed. To maintain and avoid tasyabbuh (following/imitating) rituals of other religions, tolerance has its limits. Active tolerance can be defined as accepting and appreciating all forms of difference with an open heart and appreciating them, while simultaneously navigating them, including in the realm of interpersonal interactions.

The Ministry of Religion's Interpretation of Tolerance Verses in Thematic Interpretation

How does Islam and the Quran view tolerance toward other religions? For greater focus, this is grouped into several sub-chapters. These will be explained below.

1. The Principle of Freedom of Religion

A tolerant attitude in religious life can be realized when there is freedom in society to embrace the religion of one's own convictions. In this context, the Quran expressly forbids forcing others to convert to Islam. This is emphasized in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 256:

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

There is no compulsion in (adhering to) religion (Islam). Indeed, the right path has become clear from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves tagut 79) and believes in Allah has truly held fast to a very strong rope that will never break. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (QS Al-Baqarah: 256)

The verse above clearly states that there is no compulsion in embracing another religion. Allah desires that everyone experience peace (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011). Any form of coercion against humans to choose a religion is not justified in the Qur'an. Therefore, the task of the prophets is only to invite and give warnings without coercion. Because the main destiny of humans is that they are creatures who are given freedom by Allah Ta'ala. They have the right to choose whether to follow the guidance of the right path, namely by embracing Islam or choosing another religious belief. Based on this choice, humans will be asked to account in the afterlife.

The main message here is that every individual and government must respect the rights of others to choose their beliefs. As a consequence of human freedom to embrace a religion according to one's beliefs, the Quran accords due respect to other religions. This will be discussed in the next subchapter.

2. Islamic Respect for Other Religions

To explain Islam's respect for other religions, we can begin by examining several verses that address this issue. Among them is Surah Al-Hajj, verse 40:

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۚ فَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ هَدَمْتَ صَوَامِعَ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

(Namely) those who are driven from their homes without right, only because they say, "Our Lord is Allah." If Allah did not repel (the violence) of some people by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's name is often mentioned would have been demolished. Indeed, Allah will help those who help His (religion). Indeed, Allah is Strong, Mighty. (QS Al-Hajj: 40)

Ibn 'Asyūr explained that if there were no human defense of Muslim places of worship, the polytheists would undoubtedly go beyond their limits and commit aggression against neighboring territories whose inhabitants might adhere to religions other than Islam. These religions, other than Islam, also conflict with the beliefs of the polytheists, and thus, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques would also be destroyed. The polytheists' efforts were solely to eradicate the teachings of monotheism and teachings that conflict with the ideology of polytheism (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011).

This opinion clearly positions religions other than Islam as deserving of equal respect within the Muslim community. Their places of worship and sacred religious symbols must also be given due respect (Mursyid. 2016). Islam's respect for other religions is clearly reflected in the Quran. Within the auspices of a Muslim-majority nation or community, non-Muslims will not be ostracized, insulted, or reviled because of their minority status.

How beautiful is Islamic law and guidance in respecting other religions. From the explanation above, it is clear that the Qur'an highly respects differences and values the principles of pluralism, which is a reality desired by Allah Ta'ala. Surah Al-Maidah verse 48 emphasizes this. The tolerance that Islam seeks to build is an attitude of mutual respect among adherents of different religions without mixing beliefs. The issue of faith is the most fundamental thing in every religion, so it is not an area for tolerance in the sense of merging and uniting (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011).

The main point of the value of tolerance in the interpretation Quthb, trans (2000) and Az-Zuhaili (2013). This means that Muslims are encouraged to have good relations with non-Muslims as long as they do not violate Islamic law."at Islam and there was no attack from non-Muslims. The similarity in their interpretations is that both believe that tolerance between religious communities, in particular, can create a peaceful life. The sentence that clearly demonstrates this, as recorded in Surah Al-Kafirun, is, "For you your religion (believe in and practice it), and for me my religion (let me believe in and practice it).

3. Building Equality Through Brotherhood

Unity and oneness among humankind cannot be achieved without a spirit of brotherhood. In the Indonesian context, brotherhood must be practiced not only among non-Muslims but also among fellow Muslims. Therefore, we will first explain the concept of brotherhood among Muslims. One verse that explicitly states that believers are brothers is Surah al-Hujurat, verse 10:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ۝

Indeed, believers are brothers, therefore reconcile your two brothers (who are at war) and fear Allah so that you may be blessed. (al-Hujurat: 10)

The verses in Surah al-Hujurat generally contain guidance for the Muslim community in particular, and humanity in general. The preceding verses, 11 and 12, contain a code of ethics for Muslim citizens, including the prohibition of harassing and insulting one another. The abused may be better than the abuser. Believers should also refrain from negative thoughts and gossiping about one another (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011).

One reason why Muslims must strengthen the bonds of brotherhood is to prevent trial and chaos in the society they build. This is emphasized in Surah al-Anfal, verse 73. The trial, or chaos, and corruption referred to in this verse can be explained by examining the historical background of society at the time it was revealed.

Community of believers to create peace in the internal environment of their society. If two groups of believers fight, the believers are ordered to stop them from fighting, with advice or with threats and/or with legal sanctions. In other words, other believers reconcile the two warring groups of believers by appealing to Allah's law and being happy with what is contained in it, both in relation to the rights and obligations of both of them equally (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011).

4. Brotherhood with Non-Muslims

The brotherhood commanded by the Qur'an is not only directed towards fellow Muslims, but also towards fellow citizens, including non-Muslims (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011). One of the reasons explained in the Qur'an is that humans are brothers to one another because they come from one source, Surah al-Hujurāt verse 13 confirms this:

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

O people, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Compliant. (QS al-Hujurāt: 13)

This verse invites all humans to help and love one another, because humans come from one lineage, without distinction between men and women, young and old, religious or non-religious. All are required to create peace and security in society, as well as mutual respect for human rights (Tafsir Kemenag. 2011). The relationship between humans and God demands that everyone always maintain relationships between humans and their fellow humans. This is evidence of how much Islam respects and upholds brotherhood.

Several verses also confirm the same thing, including Surah al-A'rāf verse 189 and Surah az-Zumar verse 6, which state that all of humanity was created from one person. Meanwhile, Surah Fatir verse 11, Surah Gāfir verse 67, and Surah al-Mu'minūn verses 12-14 explain the origin of humankind, namely from the ground, then from a drop of semen, and the subsequent processes (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011). With this brotherhood, fellow members of society can cooperate even though there are differences in principles among its citizens, namely differences in beliefs.

5. Religious Tolerance

The verse relating to religious harmony in the Tafsir of the Ministry of Religion is Surah Ali 'Imrān verse 64 below,

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ٦٤

Say (Prophet Muhammad), "O People of the Book, come to a word that is common between us and you: that we worship none but Allah, nor associate anything with Him, nor do we take others as lords besides Allah." If they turn away, say (to them), "Bear witness that we are Muslims." (Surah Ali 'Imran: 64)

According to Fahrurruddīn Ar-Rāzi, the term "People of the Book" in the above verse is divided into three types: first, it refers to the Christians of Najran. Second, it refers to the Jews of Medina. Third, it refers to both of them or to the followers of previous revelations.

The term for the Sabians, who are placed on a par with Jews and Christians who believe in Allah and the Last Day (QS al-Baqarah: 62), is expanded in the interpretation of the Qur'an to also include followers of Zoroastrianism, the Vedas, Buddhism, and Confucianism, thus including them as People of the Book. However, the majority of scholars say that the People of the Book referred to in this verse are Jews and (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011).

What religious communities need to be wary of are things that are prone to causing conflict. The Minister of Religious Affairs has provided technical instructions in the implementation of overcoming vulnerabilities to religious harmony as stated in Decree Number 84 of 1996, which lists at least 8 things that need to be of concern to religious communities, including; 1. Establishment of worship 2. Religious broadcasting 3. Foreign aid 4. Interfaith marriage 5. Celebration of religious holidays 6. Blasphemy 7. Activities of splinter sects and 8. Non-religious aspects that influence (Paradise. 2014). With the government system and policies made by the government, citizens will of course obey and follow existing regulations.

Analysis of the Interpretation of Tolerance Verses in the Thematic Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion

One manifestation of tolerance is the freedom for people to embrace a religion according to their beliefs. The verse that describes this freedom of religion is Surah al-Baqarah, verse 256. Scholars who clearly support tolerance include Sheikh Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, At-Tabari, and Buya Hamka. According to these scholars, this verse was revealed to dispel the public perception that Islam came by the sword and violence. In Islam, all people have the right to choose their beliefs and there is no element of coercion from any source (Mustafa 2015). However, it is clear and obvious which path is right and which is not. Therefore, faith is a form of willingness and awareness of the heart, evidence, and proof, so there is no coercion in it. It is also clear which path is right and which path is wrong. Faith cannot be forced because it is a form of submission and surrender. Therefore, the basic principle of tolerance is freedom of religion (Job 2018).

As a Muslim, choosing Islam as a way of life is true peace and tranquility. Being raised and educated from childhood by a Muslim family is a form of gratitude and favor that Allah gives to His servants. Sayyid Qutb believes that the principle of freedom in this verse is freedom of faith (religion) in line with what the Ministry of Religion expressed in its thematic interpretation. Freedom of will is a human right that because of that belief or intention he is worthy to be called human (Quthb, trans. 2000).

It can be concluded that the main point of verse 256 of Surah al-Baqarah is that a person's religious beliefs must be based on willingness and sincerity, without any coercion. On the other hand, Allah Ta'ala has a mechanism for accountability for the beliefs that humans will accept. The consequence of siding with one religion automatically requires that they be held accountable for their choices on the Day of Judgment. Allah has honored humans by respecting their will, thoughts, and feelings to choose what is best for them. This is, of course, done by adhering firmly to two guiding principles for life: the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Likewise, in every viewpoint, legislation, regulation, system, and tradition, it is appropriate to follow up on what is stated in the Qur'an. Any manhaj (order, system) that is not based on Allah's rules and sharia is categorized as *Ṭagut*. Indonesia, however, possesses diversity and

plurality. Researchers do not disapprove of upholding Islamic law, but rather, Islamic values can be infiltrated into every government regulation and policy (Quthb, trans. 2000).

If everyone possesses religious maturity and maturity, interfaith conflict and division will be minimal, if not nonexistent. The same is true of tolerance. Despite some cases of intolerance, violence, and religious conflict, interfaith relations are generally well-established (Hafidzi, 2019). Not only harmony, but cooperation among religious communities is also beginning to develop. Islam's respect for other religions is clearly reflected in the Quran. Within the auspices of a Muslim-majority nation or community, non-Muslims will not be ostracized, insulted, or reviled because of their minority status (Mustafa 2015).

Verse 40 of Surah al-Hajj contains a command to wage war. This verse is also used by scholars who reject tolerance in their arguments and propagation of their message. The previous verse contains a command from Allah, permitting war against the polytheists who had long waged war against the Prophet and his followers, expelling them from their homeland and homes, and committing injustice against them (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). Scholars such as Ibn Sallāmah who lived in the 4th century H. and al-Shami (d. 942 H.) who lived in the 9th century H. have interpretations that recognize the texts of tolerant verses by verse al-saif. They justify the offensive war of Muslims in spreading the message of Islam on earth, especially at a time when Muslims have become politically and socially dominant and this is considered an ideal meaning. Being patient and forgiving are only tentative (realistic) actions that are not ideal and full of compulsion

According to Ibn Sallamah, al-Shami, and Abdullah bin Baz, the verses replace the abolished verses about tolerance. They agree that the verses about war abolish previous verses containing tolerant verses. The law of war is due to those who are expelled from their homelands without rights, without just cause, and without fault. Another reason for war is the defense and preservation of freedom of worship on earth and the protection of holy places (Az-Zuhaili, trans. 2013). As we continue to witness today, the genocide and war carried out by Israel against Palestinians, Palestinians are obligated to defend their country, and this requirement has been fulfilled.

As for the form of Allah's protection for some humans against others, it prohibits Muslims from attacking other religions. This is a form of prevention from acts of oppression by some humans (Mulyani & Arifin, 2025). It is also Allah's protection for those whom He allows to testify so that they do not deprive those who are entitled to it and so on. So in line with the previous word of Allah in Surah al-Baqarah verse 256, that maintaining places of worship is done because of carrying out the commands of Allah Ta'ala. Although Islam is basically the only true teaching, but maintaining the religion of the descendants of the People of the Book, namely Jews and Christians, is better than not having a religion (Az-Zuhaili, trans. 2013).

The emergence of cases of intolerance presents a challenge in itself. Religious obedience does not yet correlate with mature attitudes that understand, respect, accept, and accommodate those who are different (Nurhakim, et.al., 2024). Exclusivism and extremism, the seeds and forms of intolerance, need to be addressed immediately. The answer to intolerance is not to issue regulations or take problems to the police, but to cultivate and develop religious maturity. Religious tolerance also includes respecting and accepting diversity (Nurhakim, et.al., 2024). The diversity that Allah has created is basically found in Surah al-Hujurāt verse 13. Systematically, the verses above are interconnected and closely related.

Basically and the foundation of all the diverse peoples in this world is confirmed in Surah al-Hujurat verse 13, for this reason there is no one and the same person living on this earth. The output that will be produced if all people practice tolerance will be the creation of religious harmony. There is no insulting, insulting each other and fellow human beings uphold respect for those of different races, tribes, ethnicities, religions or opinions. In the book *Islamic Moderation* by the Ministry of Religion, this verse explains that Allah ordered the Prophet Muhammad to invite the People of the Book, namely Jews and Christians, to have a fair dialogue in seeking the principles of equality in the teachings brought by the apostles and the books that Allah revealed to them, namely the Torah, Gospel and Al-Qur'an (Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion. 2011).

Dialogue is indeed recommended in the Quran. However, in this dialogue, there are certain requirements that must be adhered to by both parties, upholding honor and respecting each other's opinions. Overall, the tolerance that is built before reaching the state is primarily based on God's will, which created humans differently and into groups (Mulyani & Arifin, 2025). The existing diversity is God's nature, and God created humans from the same source. In terms of creation, all humans are equal on this earth.

CONCLUSION

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Thematic Interpretation interprets the verses on tolerance in the Qur'an with a comprehensive approach, emphasizing aspects of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and recognition of differences. This interpretation is based on a search for verses that explicitly and implicitly discuss interactions between religious communities and the importance of avoiding conflict. From this interpretation, several main principles of tolerance can be formulated, including: the prohibition of coercion in religion (QS al-Baqarah: 256), recognition of the existence of other communities and their right to worship (QS al-Kafirun: 6), and the importance of dialogue and justice in social interactions (QS al-Mumtahanah: 8). These principles demonstrate that the Qur'an encourages the formation of a harmonious society despite differences in beliefs.

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Thematic Interpretation of verses on tolerance is highly relevant for Indonesia's diverse society. This interpretation provides a strong theological foundation for strengthening interfaith harmony and reducing the potential for conflict that may arise from differences. The moderate approach promoted by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs through this interpretation serves as an important reference in promoting the values of tolerance amidst contemporary challenges such as extremism and intolerance. Its relevance to the Indonesian context is that the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Thematic Interpretation aligns closely with the principles of Pancasila, particularly the first and third principles on Belief in God and Unity. This interpretation is crucial as an official government reference in fostering peaceful religious life in Indonesia.

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