

The Quranic Approach to Interfaith Dialogue: Navigating Challenges in Pluralistic Societies

Henri Shalahudin¹, Armiya²

¹Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy, ²Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Jl. Raya Siman Km. 05, Siman, Ponorogo, Jawa Timur Kode Pos 63471.

Corresponding author

armiya1908@gmail.com

Abstract: This article discusses the Qur'anic approach to interfaith dialogue in a pluralistic society. The Qur'an as the main source of Islamic teachings provides a foundation for Muslims to interact peacefully and harmoniously with other religious communities, emphasizing the principles of justice, religious freedom, and tolerance. In this study, the author uses a thematic interpretation approach, this paper examines how the verses of the Qur'an can be an ethical foundation in building constructive and respectful relationships between communities of different religions. Amid modern challenges, such as ideological conflicts and religious stereotypes, problems arise in a pluralistic society, where various beliefs and religions coexist, presenting their own challenges for relations between religious communities. Interfaith dialogue is one of the key elements in building understanding, tolerance, and harmony among diverse communities. This study aims to examine how the Qur'anic approach directs its people to interact with diverse communities harmoniously, and to answer the various challenges that arise in a modern pluralistic society.

Keywords: Pluralism, Interfaith Dialogue, Islam, Harmony, *Rahmatan lil alamin..*

Introduction

In the era of increasingly strong globalization, people in various corners of the world are faced with the reality of pluralistic life. The diversity of cultures, beliefs, and religions is no longer limited to certain regions but is present in almost every corner of the world, including in the midst of Muslim communities. This challenge demands a framework for interfaith dialogue that not only respects differences, but is also able to build social harmony without sacrificing the principles of each belief. The Qur'an, as a guideline for the lives of Muslims, provides a strong foundation for interacting with followers of other religions.

With an approach full of wisdom, justice, and respect, the Qur'an directs Muslims to develop constructive dialogue. The Qur'anic approach to interfaith dialogue teaches the importance of religious freedom, recognition of differences, and the need to establish communication full of wisdom and prudence. Muslims can refer to Qur'anic values

to navigate differences and obstacles and to promote peace and cooperation in a multicultural society. The Qur'anic approach to interfaith dialogue is not a form of theological compromise, but rather a method for maintaining peace and avoiding conflict, and a means of mutual understanding without having to sacrifice one's beliefs.

Studies on interfaith dialogue from an Islamic perspective have developed significantly in recent years. Albab (2019) examines the importance of interfaith dialogue as a means of building tolerance and understanding among religious communities. The interpretation of interfaith dialogue in Islam must be viewed from an inclusive perspective, taking into account the values of equality and mutual respect between different religions. This perspective is important for creating a harmonious society that respects differences. (Albab, 2019) Furthermore, Fakhri Hamdani (2024) discusses how Islam views the importance of interfaith dialogue in a social and political context. He emphasizes that

although the Qur'an teaches peaceful dialogue with people of other faiths, the main challenge lies in maintaining one's own religious identity in such interactions. (Hamdani, 2024)

Aadil Hussain (2022) examines interfaith dialogue by combining the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. He emphasizes the importance of an approach based on divine revelation and the Prophet's practices in building communication between religious communities. This study critiques how religious texts can be interpreted to create a space for constructive dialogue without getting caught up in polarization. (Aadil Hussain Wagay, 2022) Dan Rofiqi and Mochamad Ziaul (2022) argue that the Islamic approach to interfaith dialogue is rooted in universal values recognized by many religions. They emphasize the importance of equality and mutual understanding in interacting with individuals from different religious backgrounds. This study also covers the challenges faced in multicultural societies, where religion and culture are often factors that trigger conflict. (Rofiqi & Haq, 2022)

Although much research has been conducted on interfaith dialogue in Islam, there are still some gaps that can be filled, especially in the context of modern pluralistic societies. Many studies discuss interfaith dialogue in theological or practical contexts, but few discuss how the Qur'anic approach can be applied in addressing social and political challenges in pluralistic societies. This study can explore in greater depth how social, economic, and cultural contexts influence the implementation of interfaith dialogue based on the principles of the Qur'an.

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the Qur'anic approach to interfaith dialogue in the context of plural and multicultural societies, with a focus on the implementation of the values contained in divine revelation in overcoming complex social, political, and cultural challenges in the modern world. This study aims to provide new insights into how the basic principles in the Qur'an, such as justice, mutual respect, and equality, can be adapted and applied in interfaith interactions in a pluralistic society, as well as to identify effective strategies and approaches in building interfaith relations without sacrificing each other's religious identities.

This study is also expected to fill gaps in existing literature by offering a more contextual perspective, particularly regarding how the values of the Qur'an can serve as guidelines for building productive, inclusive, and peaceful dialogue in the face of religious, cultural, and political plurality.

Materials and Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research to examine the approach of Qur'anic verses to interfaith dialogue in a pluralistic society through analysis of the context of the verses and related literature. Primary data sources include Tafsir Al-Misbah, Tafsir Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an, Tafsir Qurtubi, Tafsir Ibnu Katsir, and Al-Azhar tafsir, both classical and contemporary tafsir books, while secondary data consists of journal articles, books, proceedings, and recent research on interfaith dialogue and pluralism. The data in this study was collected through a literature study by examining relevant tafsir and in-depth secondary literature on the theme of interfaith dialogue in Islam. The data collection process was carried out by studying and analysing interpretations from various sources that had been collected. In analysing the data, this study used qualitative data analysis techniques described by Creswell (2014), which included several stages. (Creswell, 2014) First, data was collected and selected based on its relevance and relationship to the research theme. Second, the data was then analysed using a coding approach to identify patterns, themes, and categories that emerged from the interpretations and literature studied. The data was further analysed by examining the interaction between the principles taught in the Qur'an and the reality of religious plurality. In addition, this analysis also considered the social and political implications of dialogue. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how verses from the Qur'an can be used as guidelines in building constructive and harmonious interfaith dialogue in a pluralistic society. Through this approach, the study hopes to offer solutions to the challenges of religious pluralism in the modern era.

Results and Discussion

Understanding Pluralism

Pluralism is a concept that recognizes and values the existence of diversity in society, including diversity in culture, religion, ethnicity, and ideology. (Adib Fuadi Nuriz, 2015) In the context of religion, pluralism is often understood as the recognition of the existence of different religions, all of which are considered to have the right to exist and are respected. In general, pluralism is not just tolerance, but includes a deeper and more active acceptance of differences, where various groups live side by side while maintaining their respective identities without forcing or judging each other. (Bawono, 2019) Pluralism encourages space for all individuals or groups to maintain their identities, while teaching the values of mutual respect and cooperation despite deep differences.

Meanwhile, interfaith dialogue is a form of communication or interaction carried out between individuals or groups who adhere to different religions, with the aim of understanding each other, building harmonious relationships, and respecting the differences in beliefs that exist. (Hamdani, 2024) This dialogue aims to create peace and cooperation amidst diversity, and to avoid conflicts that may arise due to ignorance or prejudice against other religions. Through interfaith dialogue, religious people can share their views, values, and life experiences in an atmosphere of respect. From an Islamic perspective, interfaith dialogue is very important. The Qur'an itself teaches the principles of getting to know each other (*ta'aruf*), respecting differences (*ikhtilaf*), and being fair (*adl*) to people of different religions. Therefore, although Islam believes that it is the true religion, the Qur'an directs Muslims to interact peacefully with people of other religions, without reducing their loyalty to their own beliefs. This aims to Increase Tolerance, Build Cooperation, Strengthen Social Peace, and realize social justice. (Rofiqi & Haq, 2022)

The Meaning and Purpose of Interfaith Dialogue

In Arabic terminology, the term (*al-ḥiwār*) is used to refer to dialogue, which means an exchange of opinions, questions and answers, or a conversation between two parties. (Ferdinal et al., 2023) Dialogue

is also regarded as a form of communication aimed at achieving common goals and strengthening unity within society. Essentially, dialogue serves as a means to build positive and constructive interreligious relationships that foster mutual understanding and cooperation among believers. (Adibah et al., 2025) The idea of "dialogue" was first introduced by the Church towards non-Christian religious institutions, and even towards other Christian denominations. The Pope's annual message delivered at the beginning of the year as a call for peace is part of these dialogue efforts. This includes the invitation to hold a joint prayer in Assisi on October 27, 1986, with the aim of achieving world peace. (Shalabī, n.d.)

The theory of interfaith dialogue relates to the ideas of thinkers like Muhammad Abu-Nimer, Hans Kung, and Paul Knitter. Muhammad Abu-Nimer emphasises that interfaith dialogue aims for freedom and respect and seeks to build bridges to reduce tension and hatred between religious communities by prioritising peace and organised cooperation to promote mutual understanding. (Abu-Nimer, 2011) Hans Kung points out that interfaith dialogue must examine the theological foundations of each religion to promote peace. (Hans Kung, 1991) Meanwhile, Knitter sees dialogue as a process of self-transformation rather than a way of changing others' beliefs. (Paul F. Knitter, 2002)

The Catholic Church, centered in Rome (the Vatican), believes that Christianity is the only true religion, while other religions are considered false. Those who embrace Christianity and follow the teachings of the Church are believed to attain salvation and enter heaven, whereas adherents of other religions are deemed misguided and destined for hell. This doctrine of exclusivism was strongly upheld until the mid-twentieth century. After World War II, however, the doctrine began to be widely criticized for promoting intolerance and fanaticism, which often led to discrimination and oppression against other religions. (Arif, 2010) From this point, the Vatican encourages interreligious dialogue and takes every opportunity to convey the Pope's message to the Muslim community. However, at the same time, it actively moves to oppose Islam in its centers of strength, undermine

the foundations of faith in its own countries, and instill doubts about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his divine message. (Shalabī, n.d.) The dialogue between Jews and Muslims aims to eliminate hostility and foster mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect. (Arif, 2025) This indicates an effort to weaken religious conviction through the notions of inclusivism, pluralism, and religious relativism. (Adib Fuadi Nuriz, 2015)

Exclusivism argues that only one particular religion is true and is the only way to God and salvation. Meanwhile, inclusivism acknowledges the fundamental truth of a religion, but still leaves open the possibility that followers of other religions can also obtain salvation through the grace of Jesus, as long as they behave well in life. Pluralism, on the other hand, views all major religions in the world as having equal truth and goodness, in the sense that each can lead its followers to God and salvation. (Arif, 2025)

This pluralistic view then gives rise to the tendency to think that no religion has absolute truth, because religious truth is considered relative. (Akmal Sjafril, 2017) Anis Malik Taha criticizes the emergence of the idea of religious relativism that developed from the idea of pluralism. According to him, those who reject religious exclusivism but believe in relativism are unwittingly trapped in a new form of absolute belief, namely belief in relativism itself. This shows that religious relativism has transformed into a kind of ideology, even resembling a "new religion" that replaces religious absolutism, thereby complicating and exacerbating conflicts between absolute beliefs. (Anis Malik Taha, 2021)

As a basis for interfaith dialogue, the church urges its congregations to engage in dialogue and cooperation with followers of other religions wisely and lovingly, without abandoning their beliefs and identity as Christians. The goal is to preserve and enhance the moral and spiritual values found in various religions, as well as to respect the social and cultural values of each community. However, behind the goal of peaceful and harmonious coexistence, this interfaith dialogue can also be understood as a new form of Christianization packaged as a mission of humanity, peace, and universal brotherhood. (Arif, 2025)

In the modern church context, dialogue no longer merely means an exchange of ideas between two parties but also includes various cooperative activities with other faith communities, such as social work, interfaith meetings, joint prayers, and peace campaigns. (Arif, 2025)

Islam does not recognize a system of missionary work as found in Christianity. However, every Muslim has an obligation to convey the teachings of Islam, even if they only know one verse of the Qur'an or one saying of the Prophet. (Hamka, 2003) Therefore, tolerance (tasamuh) in religious life must be exercised cautiously; it is acceptable only when it does not compromise the purity of one's faith. Furthermore, it is inappropriate for adherents of any religion to target followers of other faiths for conversion. (Hamka & Rusydi, 2002)

Discussion

The main challenges faced in interfaith relations

In the Islamic perspective, interfaith relations face significant challenges that need to be addressed with the principles taught in the Qur'an and Sunnah. One of the main challenges is fanaticism and exclusivism rooted in the belief that only a particular religion is true. Islam teaches the importance of recognizing plurality as part of God's diverse creation. As explained in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, which explains that humans were created in various tribes and nations to get to know each other. However, if a person is too fanatical, it can hinder dialogue and encourage inter-religious conflict. (Qutub, 1980)

But in reality, all religions are oriented that only their religion is the most correct. Assuming that their religion is the only true religion, and this can lead to a condescending attitude towards other religions. If this exists, then there will be tension in relations between religious communities. Islam itself demands that its followers respect each other's religious differences. Therefore, from the existence of interfaith dialogue, a sense of responsibility and mutual respect for each other grows in a pluralistic society. (Lajnah Pentashihan mushaf Al-Qur'an, n.d.) The Qur'an does not directly talk about interfaith dialogue, but with its verses relating to interaction between Muslims and other religions, such as discussing the importance of interfaith dialogue, obstacles to interfaith dialogue,

cooperation between religious communities, and the ethics of interfaith dialogue. (Lajnah pentashihan mushaf al-qur'an, n.d.)

The next challenge faced is misunderstanding of the teachings of other religions, which can lead to negative perceptions and prejudice. Islam encourages its followers to seek knowledge and understand the teachings of other religions with an open heart, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in his dialogue with the Jews and Christians in Medina. (Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, 1994) In dealing with differences in belief, the Prophet always emphasized the principle of respect and tolerance, with the aim of building a harmonious society despite the diversity of beliefs. This practice of the Prophet is a concrete example of implementing Islamic teachings that are open to dialogue and seeking common understanding to prevent misunderstandings that can lead to conflict. (Nasr, 2002) If misunderstanding can cause fear and suspicion, which will then hinder harmony. Misunderstanding can be prevented through increasing religious literacy and an open approach in seeking knowledge about different beliefs.

In addition, there is the challenge of politicization of religion in interfaith relations. Religion and politics have a relationship in Islamic teachings. However, if politics is used with power, it is strictly prohibited. When religion is used as a political tool, it often leads to segregation and tension between groups. Thus causing conflict. Islam views that religion must remain a moral guideline that brings peace, not just a tool to divide society. (Tariq Ramadan, 2001)

And finally, the challenge of globalization and secularization, changing the way of religion and social interaction of Muslim communities. In facing modernity, Muslims are often faced with changes in values that are contrary to Islamic teachings, which if not managed wisely can lead to misunderstanding between Islam and other religions. Islam offers a moderate approach (*wasathiyah*) as an effort to remain open to change without abandoning the basic principles of religion. (Kamali, n.d.) This presents a significant challenge to the way of religion and the pattern of social interaction of Muslim communities. Globalization often ignores the spiritual aspect and emphasizes the worldly

aspect, which is not in line with the principles of Islam, thus eliminating the awareness of the people of their role as caliphs on earth. And Secularization only emphasizes the separation between religion and public life as a private matter and limits its role in regulating social and political life.

In facing the challenges that occur in this era, the Qur'an provides a very comprehensive guide to navigate the challenges posed by pluralism through principles that emphasize constructive, respectful, and non-coercive interfaith dialogue. (Lajnah Pentashihan mushaf Al-Qur'an, n.d.) The Qur'an does not directly speak about interfaith dialogue, but with its verses relating to interactions between Muslims and other peoples such as discussing the importance of interfaith dialogue, obstacles to interfaith dialogue, cooperation between religious communities, and the ethics of interfaith dialogue. This is not only aimed at creating harmonious and peaceful relations between Muslims and other religions.

Principles of the Qur'an in Interfaith Dialogue:

- **Justice and respect for diversity (Surah Al-Mumtahanah: 8, Al-Hujurat: 13).**

1. In Surah Al-Mumtahanah: 8, which explains the command to do good and act fairly. Namely "Allah does not forbid you to do good and be fair to those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your land.

This verse emphasizes justice and kindness in interactions with people of other religions who are not hostile to Islam. Interaction with other communities should be based on justice and kindness, not discriminatory attitudes. This is the basis for building a healthy dialogue, where a sense of justice and respect for the rights of adherents of other religions are maintained. (Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, 1994)

In Tafsir Al-Muyassar, it is explained that this verse encourages Muslims to behave kindly and be fair to anyone who is not hostile to them, even if they are of another religion. And Allah favors those who are just in their words and deeds. In interfaith dialogue, this verse becomes the basis for just and

harmonious relations with people of other religions, emphasizing that differences in belief are not a reason to ignore justice or not do good. (Nukhbatu min asatidz tafsir, 2009)

2. In Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, which explains the Principle of Human Equality as the basis for getting to know each other. "O people, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. This verse emphasizes the concept of diversity as sunnatullah (God's decree) in creation.

This verse teaches that plurality is part of God's plan, and that differences should be a reason to get to know and understand each other, not to fight each other. This verse is a guideline for Muslims to see religious differences as an opportunity to build dialogue and broaden understanding. This principle also emphasizes the equality of humanity that transcends religious, ethnic, and cultural differences.

In Tafsir Al-Baghawi, it is stated that differences in ethnicity, nation and religion are God's will for humans to know and understand each other, not to be hostile to each other. In the context of interfaith dialogue, this verse teaches that differences should be a reason to build common understanding and enrich social life through dialogue and cooperation. (Al-Hasin, 1997) This interpretation provides a strong foundation for respecting diversity and making it a medium for building harmonious relationships. This verse teaches that differences should be a driving force for opening honest and open communication, so that constructive and mutually beneficial dialogue can occur. Every religious, cultural, and ethnic group can contribute to the common good by enriching social and spiritual views in society.

- **Freedom of religion and recognition of the existence of other religions (Surah Al-Kafirun: 6, Al-Baqarah: 256).**

1. Surah Al-Kafirun explains about religious freedom, namely "For you your religion and for me my religion."

The interpretation of this verse encourages a non-inclusive attitude, namely respecting differences without having to assume that other religions must be adjusted to the Islamic perspective. This provides a basis for Muslims to interact with respect and accept the existence of different beliefs without prejudice. (Qutub, 1980)

This verse affirms the principle of religious freedom. In Ibn Kathir's interpretation, this verse is a statement emphasizing that Islam does not impose beliefs and that differences in beliefs must be respected. This interpretation is in accordance with the principle in Islam that every individual has the freedom to choose and follow his religious beliefs. (Ismail, 1999) This verse is a form of declaration of religious freedom given by God to mankind. This verse was revealed in response to an invitation for compromise made by the Quraish infidels to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. They asked the Prophet SAW to worship their idols for one year, and in return they would worship Allah for one year. However, Allah emphasized that it was impossible for the Prophet to worship what they worshiped, and the Quraysh would also not worship Allah seriously.

Surah Al-Kafirun is often referred to as a statement of tolerance, where Allah commands the Prophet Muhammad to convey that Muslims do not force their religion on others and accept that others also have the right to their own beliefs. So through this verse, Allah SWT shows that everyone has the freedom to choose and follow the religion they believe in. Islam teaches that differences in religion are not a reason to force faith or cause conflict. Tolerance of these differences does not mean mixing beliefs, but giving space for everyone to practice their religion according to their respective beliefs, without coercion.

2. Surah Al-Baqarah: 256, explains that "There is no compulsion in religion."

One of the main foundations taught by the Qur'an to navigate pluralism is the principle of religious freedom. The Qur'an explicitly states that "there is no compulsion in

religion." This verse shows that every individual has the right to choose their beliefs without pressure from any party. This principle encourages Muslims to respect the freedom of others in religion and not to impose Islamic teachings. This verse is also an important basis for interfaith dialogue, where each party can interact freely, equally, and respect each other's different beliefs. This freedom is the basis for interreligious dialogue which demands respect for the individual's right to practice religion according to his or her beliefs without pressure or coercion.

In Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, the context of this verse is religion, belief and there is no hatred in Islam. Islam does not allow forcing religion on other people, because true faith comes from sincerity of the heart, not from coercion. In interfaith dialogue, this verse emphasizes that true belief cannot be forced and that dialogue should be open and voluntary. (Al-Qurtubī, 1964)

- **The command to debate in a good manner and avoid conflict between (Surah An-Nahl:125)).**

1. In Surah An-Nahl:125, which means "Call (humans) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good lessons, and refute them in a good way."

This verse encourages Muslims to conduct interfaith dialogue with a wise, non-provocative approach, and based on logical and good arguments. This principle is very relevant in the context of pluralism, where peaceful and wise dialogue is the key to avoiding conflict and strengthening social cohesion. Make Muslims always take wisdom and take a good lesson. So wisdom and a good way will create a constructive dialogue, if there are differences of opinion then it can be discussed peacefully and productively.

This verse shows the importance of a wise method in dialogue and debate. Tafsir Ibn Kathir explains that good da'wah is with wisdom and good speech, not with violence or coercion. In the context of interfaith dialogue, this verse teaches that a wise and gentle approach in discussion can be more

effective in conveying the message of Islam, thus creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and honor between religions. (Ismail, 1999)

2. Surah Al-Ankabut:46 which says, "And do not argue with the People of the Book, except in a good manner, except with the wrongdoers among them."

This verse also provides guidance in discussing with the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) in a good manner, unless they act unjustly or show hostility. In Tafsir Al-Jalalayn, this verse is explained as an invitation to discuss with full respect and kindness, not with insults. This verse teaches the importance of politeness and kindness in interfaith interactions, emphasizing that only those who act unjustly or hostilely should not be treated as such.

- **Recognition of diversity as the will of Allah (Al-Maidah 5:48)**

This verse shows that the diversity in laws and sharia accepted by various communities is the will of Allah. According to in the Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, this verse emphasizes that Allah gives each nation a unique path to achieve goodness, as part of the test of life. Allah creates different paths for each nation as a test to see who has the best deeds. So the interpretation above emphasizes that diversity is part of Allah SWT's plan, so that humans compete in goodness without disturbing and forcing others. (Al-Qurtubī, 1964)

In this verse Allah says, "compete in doing good," which shows that despite differences, every nation should focus on doing good. Tafsir Ibn Kathir states that diversity is not a reason for conflict, but rather to motivate each other in goodness. This is so that humanity does not get caught up in debates about differences but unites in goodness. (Ismail, 1999)

- **Tolerance and justice in dealing with differences (Asy-Shura:15)**

This verse commands the Prophet Muhammad to continue to call for truth and adhere to Allah's commands, while rejecting the desires of those who oppose Islamic teachings.

According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, this verse emphasizes the obligation of the Prophet Muhammad and Muslims to believe in all the books revealed by Allah and to act justly. The Prophet is asked to acknowledge and respect differences in deeds and beliefs, because in the end all humans will be gathered by Allah to be held accountable for their deeds. (Ismail, 1999) The statement, "Allah is our Lord and your Lord" shows that despite differences in religious practice, the God who is worshiped remains one, namely Allah, who is Almighty over all creatures. In this verse, it explains the command for the Prophet Muhammad SAW to continue to call to the right path according to Allah's command, even though he is opposed. The preaching in question is not done in a harsh or coercive manner, but rather by providing a clear understanding and good arguments. The Prophet was ordered not to follow the wishes of those who wanted to mix truth with falsehood or make compromises in matters of faith. And Ibn Kathir also explained that the sentence "Allah is our Lord and your Lord" shows the principle of equality in divinity. Although there are differences in the way of worship and belief, this principle emphasizes that God is one, and all humans are related to the same God, so there is no reason to be hostile to each other in belief.

So from the interpretation above, it can be understood that differences must be faced fairly without judging or oppressing other groups. With tolerance and justice, it is hoped that they can respect each other, without disturbing each other's beliefs.

- **The concept of rahmatan lil alamin (Al-Anbiya:107)**

This verse states that the presence of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent as a blessing for all nature (rahmatan lil 'alamin). The meaning of "mercy" here is grace, affection and benefits given to all creation, not only to Muslims but also to all mankind and the universe.

According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, rahmatan lil 'alamin means that the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent by Allah SWT as a bearer of mercy that encompasses all mankind, jinns, and even all living creatures. The Prophet was sent with teachings full of mercy, which saved mankind

from ignorance, evil, and misguidance. In the teachings conveyed by the Prophet, there are values of goodness, compassion, and rules that prevent damage and encourage welfare. This verse also means that Islam as a religion conveyed by the Prophet contains values that bring peace and justice to the world. (Ismail, 1999)

Al-Qurtubi interprets that Mercy is for all mankind, so whoever believes in it and believes in it, he will be happy, and whoever does not believe in it, he will be spared from what befell the nations, such as collapse and drowning. Ibn Zaid said: What he meant was the ulama in particular. The meaning of "grace" given through the presence of the Prophet Muhammad SAW covers all aspects of human life, from spiritual, social, to moral aspects. The presence of the Prophet among the people brought positive transformation, both in terms of understanding religion, ethics, and legal aspects that uphold justice. According to Al-Qurtubi, this "mercy" is not only given to Muslims, but also to non-Muslims, because the principles of justice and protection of rights in Islam also cover everyone regardless of belief. (Al-Qurṭubī, 1964)

So from the following interpretation, it can be concluded that the Mission of Islam is to bring love and peace. Both in social life, humans are expected to be examples in doing good and being fair even to people of different beliefs. Rahmatan lil 'alamin means that Islamic teachings must include non-discriminatory justice and protect every creature without distinguishing between tribes and nations. (Hadi et al., 2023) In addition, Rahmatan lil 'alamin also includes creatures other than humans, such as animals and the universe. Islam teaches to protect and care for the environment, prohibits destruction, and orders Muslims to live sustainably and with a sense of responsibility towards nature. Avoid violence and always prioritize peace. Even in conditions of war, Islam has strict rules to maintain honor and protect civilians, and prevent destructive actions. (Sa'adah & Muhajarah, n.d.)

Relevance in Modern Context

Interfaith dialogue faces a number of challenges that require a wise approach in order to achieve the main

goal of creating social harmony. These challenges include theological differences, political policies, negative perceptions, and cultural and social barriers that make it difficult to establish mutually respectful relationships. The Qur'an as a guide for Muslims has an important role in directing its people to manage these challenges with principles that create peace, justice, and respect for differences. Some of the challenges faced by modern society regarding interfaith dialogue, such as:

1. Fundamental Theological Differences

Different faiths have strong and different foundations of faith, which can hinder dialogue if not managed well. Often, attempts to equalize views or even impose a certain perspective can exacerbate tensions, especially if there is a perception that one religion is more dominant or that other beliefs are wrong. This requires an approach that respects theological differences without diminishing each other's beliefs.

2. Political and Economic Influence

Politics becomes a source of inter-religious conflict, especially when religious identity is exploited for political or economic interests. Like some government issues or certain political leaders may favor certain religious groups, which in turn creates a sense of injustice for other religious groups.

3. Negative Perceptions and Stereotypes

Today's society tends to have wide access to information, but often this information is accompanied by bias or stereotypes against other religions. The existence of social media often promotes negative views of certain religious groups, creating fear, prejudice, and distrust.

4. Social and Cultural Barriers

The diversity of customs, cultures, and habits of society can be a barrier to constructive dialogue. The tendency to separate oneself based on religion or culture can make interfaith relations less intensive, so that dialogue often only occurs at a superficial level without leading to deeper understanding.

Therefore, in facing the existing problems, the role of the Qur'an is needed as a guideline in building social harmony and preventing inter-religious conflict. provides basic principles for creating social harmony and preventing inter-

religious conflict through its teachings on tolerance, respect, and justice.

Conclusions

The Qur'anic approach to interfaith dialogue is based on respect for freedom, justice, and wisdom in interacting with other religions. These values contribute to creating a peaceful atmosphere in pluralistic societies and fostering social cooperation among communities of different faiths. The Qur'an also encourages Muslims to engage in peaceful and just dialogue and interaction with people of other faiths, while remaining steadfast in the belief that Islam is the path of truth that is pleasing to Allah. As explained in the verses of the Qur'an Al-Kafirun: 6, Al-Hujurat: 13, and Al-Mumtahanah: 8, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of religious freedom, justice, and social brotherhood amidst diversity, without sacrificing the principles of faith. Surah Al-Kafirun, for example, teaches Muslims to respect differences without mixing faith, while Al-Hujurat emphasizes that diversity is a creation of Allah that aims to enrich social life. Through this approach, the Qur'an provides guidance to Muslims to engage in interfaith dialogue with the aim of building peace, mutual understanding, and social cooperation, not to erase the boundaries of faith. The dialogue encouraged by the Qur'an is a dialogue that prioritizes mutual respect while still recognizing that each religion has its own teachings and beliefs, so that Muslims remain steadfast in the belief that Islam is the true religion without negating the rights of others to follow their beliefs.

References

- Aadil Hussain Wagay. (2022). Interfaith Dialogue: A Qur'anic Cum Prophetic Perspective. *South Asian Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(6).
- Abu-Nimer. (2011). *Interfaith Dialogue: A Guide for Muslims*. Int Inst Islam Thought.
- Adib Fuadi Nuriz. (2015). *Problem Pluralisme Agama* (I). Center for Islamic Occidental Studies (CIOS).
- Adibah, U. M., Hidayat, R., Hartini, W., & Azisi, A. M. (2025). Interfaith Dialogue as the Face of Moderation: A Study of Tolerance Movement in Cyber Space. *Al-Adyan: Journal of*

- Religious Studies*, 6(1), 27–46. <https://doi.org/10.15548/al-adyan.v6i1.11351>
- Akmal Sjafril. (2017). *Buya Hamka antara kelurusan Aqidah dan Pluralisme* (II). Afnan Publishing.
- Albab, A. U. (2019). Interpretasi Dialog Antar Agama Dalam Berbagai Prespektif. *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 2(1), 22–34. <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v2i1.223>
- Al-Hasin, A. M. (1997). *Tafsir Al-Baghawi*. Daru thaybah.
- Al-Qurtubī. (1964). *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Juz I (Kairo: , 1964). Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah.
- Anis Malik Thaha. (2021). *Tren Pluralisme Agama*. Institute for the study of Islamic Thought and Civilizations (INSISTS).
- Arif, S. (2010). 'Interfaith Dialogue' dan Hubungan Antaragama dalam Perspektif Islam. *TSAQAFAH*, 6(1), 149. <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v6i1.143>
- Arif, S. (2025). *Islam dan Diabolisme Intelektual* (Ketiga). INSISTS.
- Bawono, Y. P. (2019). Djohan Effendi, Ahmadiyah dan Pluralisme dalam Buku Pesan-pesan Al-Qur'an. *An-Nida'*, 43(2), 240. <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v43i2.12332>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4. ed). SAGE.
- Ferdinal, F., Oktavianus, O., & Zahid, I. (2023). Exploring the Beauty of Islamic Values Through Metaphorical Expressions in Literary Work. *Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam*, 25(2), 421–458. <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no2.13>
- Hadi, N., Wasehudin, Surbakti, N. N., Arum, A. E. M., & Jannah, D. N. (2023). Relevansi Konsep Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin Terhadap Toleransi Beragama. *Darajat: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 6(1), 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.58518/darajat.v6i1.1611>
- Hamdani, F. (2024). Interfaith Dialogue in Islam. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach Sciences and Technologies*, 1(1), 37–44. <https://doi.org/10.62207/c6ahas14>
- Hamka. (2003). *Umat Islam Menghadapi Tantangan Kristenisasi dan Sekulerisasi*. Pustaka Panjimas.
- Hamka, & Rusydi, Y. (2002). *Dari hati ke hati: Tentang agama, sosial, politik* (Cet. 1). Pustaka Panjimas.
- Hans Kung. (1991). *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*. Crossroad.
- Ismail, A. F. (1999). *Tafsir Ibn katsir*, (, 1999). Daarul Thayyib li nasyri wa tauji'.
- Kamali, M. H. (n.d.). *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah*. Oxford University Press.
- Lajnah Pentashihan mushaf Al-Qur'an. (n.d.). *Hubungan Antar Umat Beragama Tafsir Al-Quran Tematik*. Badan litbang dan diklat.
- Nasr, S. H. (2002). *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. HarpeOne.
- Nukhbatu min asatidz tafsir. (2009). *Tafsir Muyassar*. Majmu' al-malik.
- Paul F. Knitter. (2002). *Introducing Theologies of Religions*. Orbis Books.
- Qutub, S. (1980). *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. Dār al-Shurūq.
- Rofiqi, M. A., & Haq, M. Z. (2022). Islamic Approaches in Multicultural and Interfaith Dialogue. *Integritas Terbuka: Peace and Interfaith Studies*, 1(1), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.59029/int.v1i1.5>
- Sa'adah, M., & Muhajarah, K. (n.d.). *DAKWAH ISLAM RAHMATAN LIL ALAMIN UNTUK MEWUJUDKAN TOLERANSI DAN PERDAMAIAN*.
- Shalabī, 'Abd al-Wadūd. (n.d.). *Al-Ḥiwār Bayna al-Ādiyān: Asrārūhā wa Khafāyāhā*. Dār al-I'tisām.
- Tariq Ramadan. (2001). *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*. Islamic Foundation.
- Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. (1994). *Fatawa Mu'asirah*. Dar al-qalam.