The Concept of Religious Pluralism in The Qur'an: An Analysis of *Maqashidi* Exegesis in The Indonesian Context

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Abstract: Within Indonesian context, religious pluralism has been a polemic among Islamic scholars. Some are not agreed because they assume all religions are equal. Whilst others are agreed with understanding religious pluralism as a form of respect and belief in other religions. This paper discusses the concept of religious pluralism in the Qur'an. By using the thematic method and the maqashidi interpretation approach in the Indonesian context, it is concluded that the Qur'an recognizes religious plurality and recommends committing good for non-Muslims as long as they do not interfere. In Indonesia, the concept of religious pluralism is a social fact that invariably exists and requires interfaith coexistence by maintaining the specific characteristics or teachings of each religion. Seven efforts have at least been made to address religious pluralism in Indonesia which are establishing brotherhood (ukhuwah), egalitarianism (al-musawah), the principles of justice (al-'adalah), the principles of tolerance (tasamuh), the principles of mutual respect, cooperation and friendship, the principles of peaceful co-existence, and wise-constructive-transformative dialogues.

Keywords: Religion, Al-Qur'an, Indonesia, Pluralism, Maqashidi Exegesis

Abstrak: Dalam konteks Indonesia, pluralisme agama telah menjadi polemik di kalangan cendekiawan Islam. Ada yang tidak setuju karena menganggap semua agama itu sama. Sementara yang lain sepakat dengan memahami pluralisme agama sebagai bentuk penghormatan dan kepercayaan pada agama lain. Tulisan ini membahas konsep pluralisme agama dalam Al-Qur'an. Dengan menggunakan metode tematik dan pendekatan penafsiran maqashidi dalam konteks Indonesia, disimpulkan bahwa Al-Qur'an mengakui pluralitas agama dan merekomendasikan untuk berbuat baik bagi non-Muslim selama mereka tidak ikut campur. Di Indonesia, konsep pluralisme agama adalah fakta sosial yang selalu ada dan membutuhkan koeksistensi lintas agama dengan mempertahankan karakteristik atau ajaran khusus masing-masing agama. Tujuh upaya setidaknya telah dilakukan untuk mengatasi pluralisme agama di Indonesia yaitu membangun

persaudaraan (ukhuwah), egalitarianisme (al-musawah), prinsip-prinsip keadilan (al-'adalah), prinsip-prinsip toleransi (tasamuh), prinsip-prinsip saling menghormati, kerja sama dan persahabatan, prinsip-prinsip ko-eksistensi damai, dan dialog yang bijaksana-konstruktif-transformatif

Kata Kunci: *Agama, Al-Qurán, Indonesia, Pluralisme, Tafsir Maqashidi*

INTRODUCTION

The spreading of the idea regarding religious pluralism builds upon the reality of social conflicts that frequently occur in a plural society. Through various conflicts that have occurred in history, liberal Muslims consider religion as one of the causes, at least in justifying the occurrence of violence or social conflict. Therefore Taufik Adnan Amal considers the religious relevance because of the various conflicts that occurred.[1]

Pluralism and plurality are two terms frequently used interchangeably without any explanation as to whether the two terms have the same or different significances. Some argue that pluralism and plurality have the same significance, namely a plural circumstance. In effect, pluralism is not merely a plural circumstance or a recognition that heterogeneity exists in reality. Indeed, pluralism is a demeanor of recognizing, appreciating, respecting, preserving, developing, and enriching the plural circumstances. In the religious context, pluralism refers to the theory that all religions lead to the same aim, namely the God's Blessing. Although they are in different ways.[2]

Islam teaches especially humankind that there is merely one God, namely Allah SWT. There is nothing wrong if an Islamic figure invites humankind to

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[1] Taufik Adnan Amal, *Masalah Keberagaman di Tengah Keberagaman,* dalam *Muhammadiyah dan Politik Islam Inklusif: 70 Tahun Ahmad Syafii Maarif* (Jakarta: Maarif Institute, 2005), 71-72.
[2] Umi Sumbulah, "Pluralisme dan Kerukunan Umat Beragama Perspektif Elite Agama Di Kota Malang", *Journal of Social Science and Religion,* Volume 22, No. 01, June 2015, 3.

respect pluralism. Because the Prophet Muhammad has historically given an understanding of the teachings regarding inter-religious tolerance. Even inter-religious communities may commit partnerships in wars. In the period of the Prophet Muhammad, there were lots of events while Christians joined the Islamic forces to cast out the enemies who would storm Medina.

Concern in religious matters started from the existence of certain groups who wanted to make religious pluralism into an extreme contention where they said that religions were equal. They were no differences. The main principle of each religion is to love the truth as a reason they said. It has implications for the education of its adherents to have morals in distinguishing good and bad. If a Muslim believes that all religions are equal, then the five daily prayers, paying alms *(zakat)*, fasting on Ramadan, and pilgrim to Mecca are worthless. Thus, it is impossible that each religion is equal.

If each religion is considered equal, of course, a lot of Quranic verses need to be deleted. The assumption is that "all religions are equal" if it is accepted by young Muslims, which means they no longer need to pray five times a day and commit to the guidance of Islamic law (Shariat). Islamic youth, in this case, should fortify themselves so they are not lulled and carried away by the contention that "all religions are the same" because it can have an impact on beliefs that eventually can easily change religions. Therefore, at least it needs to be clarified regarding what pluralism in religion is in every member of society, to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings and so that it is not used as a political interest of certain groups.

In general, the main mission of religion is to realize social justice, create public welfare, abolish monopoly, give the rights to the poor, strengthen the weak and make human beings equal, there is no distinction between one another, so it is not appropriate to call it a religion if not no concern at all in human life. The fact, there are not many Muslim scholars and scholars who pay special attention to the resolution of contradictory verses related to religious pluralism, either by reinterpreting the verses or by developing a new interpretation methodology.

Until now, a group of Islamic thinkers who are concerned with the idea of religious pluralism usually only cite one or two verses that support religious pluralism and often ignore, even seem to "run" from the verses that hinder the path of religious pluralism. On the other hand, while stating problematic verses from the point of view of religious pluralism, exclusive scholars often deny verses that literally support religious pluralism.

This paper attempts to review the concept of religious pluralism in the Qur'an with thematic methods and maqashidi interpretation approaches. The thematic method will operate on the search for verses of the Qur'an about religious pluralism and will analyze the verses related to it. While the maqashidi interpretation is a type of interpretation that discusses the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, both universally and partially by realizing the values for the benefit of the people. By using the *maqashidi* exegesis method, this paper is expected to be able to provide new insights regarding religious pluralism and make it a foothold for respecting and respecting other religions. In addition, this paper purely uses library research with a content analysis approach that is related to the Indonesian context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Maqashidi Exegesis and The Methodological Construction

Tafsir Maqashidi comes from two words, namely tafsir and maqashidi. Tafsir is an explanation of the verses of the Qur'an that allow it to be interpreted. Tafsir itself has the meaning as a medium to explain the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an from various aspects, both from the historical context and the cause of its descent, by using expressions or information that can point to the desired meaning lightly and clearly. As stated by az-Zarkashi, he said that interpretation is the science of knowing and understanding the content of the Qur'an which was

revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by taking an explanation of the meaning, law, and wisdom contained in it.[3]

While maqashid is a plural form of the term maqshad.[4] Etymologically, this maqashid means wanting something and sticking to it (iradah as-syai' wa al-azm 'alaih). According to Ibn Mandzur, the term qashada means straight, upright, and or does not deviate (istaqama and 'adala).[5] Something that has been thrown (like an arrow) will hit the intended target if it follows a straight path. So, the semantic field of the word qashada includes "to come to something", "to come together" (about the target), and "not to deviate" (straight).

Terminologically, the maqashidi exegesis according to Washfi 'Asyur Abu Zaid is a style of interpretation that discusses the meaning and purpose of the Qur'an, both universally and partially by realizing the values of the benefit of the people.[6] From this understanding, it can be understood that efforts to interpret the Qur'an are more emphasized on the aspect of the purpose of the Shari'a, not just seeking wisdom from the Shari'a. Meanwhile, according to el-Atrash and Abdo Khalid, maqashidi exegesis is a form of interpretation that is carried out by exploring the meaning implied in the verses of the Qur'an, taking into account the objectives contained therein.[7] The two definitions of maqahsidi exegesis above, if drawn a common thread, are both applying the Qur'an as the basis for the objectives of the Shari'a.

Meanwhile, according to Jaser Auda, simply saying that the maqashidi interpretation is an interpretation that considers the maqashid factor based on the perception that the Qur'an is a unified whole. So the small number of verses dealing with the law will expand from a few hundred verses to the entire text of

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[3] Badruddin Muhammad 'Abdullah az-Zarkashi, *al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar Kutub, 1957), Juz I, .13

[4] *Maqshad* merupakan *mashdar mim*, derivasi dari akar kata *qashada*. Sementara *al-qashdu* dan *al-maqshad* mempunyai arti sama, yaitu: asal, tujuan sesuatu, jalan yang lurus (*istiqamah*), adil, moderat dan tidak berlebihan. Lihat: Louis Ma'luf, *al-Munjid f> al-Lughah wa al-A'lam* (Beirut; Dar al-Mashriq, 2003), 632-633.

[5] Muhamad bin Mukarrom bin Mandzur, *Lisan al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.th.), Vol. 8, . 353.

[6] Washfi 'Asyur Abu Zaid, *at-Tafsir al-Maqashid li Suwar al-Qur'an al-Krim* (al-Jazair: Jamiah Abdul Qadir, 2013), .7

[7] Mufti Hasan, "Tafsir Maqashidi: Penafsiran al-Qur'an Berbasis Maqashid as-Syari'ah"*, Jurnal Maghza*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2017, .19.

the Qur'an. Surahs and verses of the Qur'an that discuss faith, the stories of the Prophets, the afterlife, and the universe, all become part of a complete picture.[8] This understanding of maqashidi exegesis cannot be separated from the concept of maqashid as-syari'ah which has previously been discussed in the context of fiqh. However, there is no independent definition of maqashid as-syari'ah so that it is rare for previous scholars to provide a comprehensive definition of maqashid as-syari'ah that includes all the elements contained in it.

Actually, Maqashidi exegesis wants to explore the maqashid (purpose, wisdom, intent, dimension of the deepest meaning and significance) behind the text, while still respecting the text (yahtarim an-nushush), so that on the one hand it is not trapped in the attitude of the desacralization of the text (ta'thil). an-nushush) and 'text worship (`ibadat an-nushush) on the other hand.[9] The formulation of the concept of maqashidi exegesis is important to put forward, considering that some researchers misunderstand maqashidi exegesis, by assuming that this maqashidi interpretation is the same as maqashid as-syari'ah. Even though these two terms are two different things, not only in terms of the composition of the phrases but also in terms of the meaning of the terms and concepts to be conveyed, even though they are related to one another.

Ontologically, the concept of maqashidi exegesis can be mapped into three hierarchies. First, maqashidi exegesis as philosophy (maqashidi exegesis as the philosophy of interpretation). That is, maqashid values have been used as the basis for philosophy and spirit (spirit) in the dynamic process of interpreting the Qur'an. The assumption is that maqashid itself is always dynamic, it moves along with the

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[8] Jaser Auda, *Membumikan Hukum Islam melalui Maqasid Syariah*, terj. Rosidin dan Ali Abd Mun'im, (Bandung: Mizan, 2015), 299.

[9] Abdul Mustaqim, *Argumen Keniscayaan Tafsir Maqasidi Sebagai Basis Moderasi Islam,* . 6. Naskah ini disampaikan pada saat pengukuran sebagai guru besar pada tanggal 16 Desember 2019 di UIN Yogyakarta.

dynamics of human civilization. Second, maqashidi exegesis as methodology. Maqashidi exegesis as a methodology necessitates the importance of reconstructing and developing the interpretation of the Qur'an based on maqashid theory. Maqashid as-syari'ah a theory of interpretation is used as an analytical tool to understand the Qur'an. Thus, maqashidi exegesis will emphasize the importance of the maqashid as-syari'ah explanation to realize the benefit for humans. Third, maqashidi exegesis as a product (as a product of interpretation). Maqashidi exegesis as a product of interpretation means a product of interpretation that tries to focus on discussing the maqashid of each interpreted Quranic verse. This third level hierarchy is applied not only to legal texts, but also to narrative verses, theological verses, proverbs, and socio-political verses.[10]

As-Syathibi, an Islamic scholar who is agreed upon by all groups as the proclaimer of knowledge, did not mention the definition of maqashid as-shari'ah. For this reason, most of the definitions of maqashid as-syari'ah that are found today, are mostly put forward by contemporary scholars, such as Ibn 'Assyria. He divides maqashid as-syari'ah into two parts, namely: 'amm and khass.[11] Meanwhile, Abdul Mustaqim describes several constructions of maqahsidi exegesis methodology as an approach to understanding the Qur'an, including the following;[12] Understanding maqashid al-Qur'an (Quranic goals) includes the values of personal, social-local benefit (*ishlah al-mujtama'*) and universal-global benefit (*ishlah al-'alam*).Understanding the principle of maqashid as-syariah, namely realizing the benefits that are framed in ushul al-khamsah (hifdz ad-din, an-nafs, al-'aql, an-nasl, al-mal) plus two more points, namely hifdz ad-daulah (defense of the homeland) and hifzh al-bi'ah (care for the environment).Develop the dimensions of maqashid min haits al-'adam (protective) and min haits al-Manifest (productive). Collecting thematic verses to find maqashid (kulliyah and juziyyah). Consider the context of the verse, both internal and external, macro and micro, the context of the past (qadim) and the present (jadid). Understand the

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[10] Abdul Mustaqim, *Argumen Keniscayaan Tafsir Maqasidi Sebagai Basis Moderasi Islam,* 33-41.
[11] Muhammad Thahir Ibnu 'Asyur, *Maqashid as-Syari'ah al-Islamiyah* (Kairo: Dar as-Salam, 2009), 50.
[12] Abdul Mustaqim, *Argumen Keniscayaan Tafsir Maqasidi Sebagai Basis Moderasi Islam*, 39-40.

basic theories of Ulumul Qur'an and Qawa'id exegesis with all the complexity of the theory. Consider the linguistic aspects and features of Arabic (through nahwu-sharaf, balaghah, semantic, semiotic, pragmatic, and even 'hermeneutic' approaches). Distinguish between the dimensions of wasilah (means) and ghayah (goal), ushul (principal) and furu` (branches), at-tsawabit and al-mutaghayyirat. Inter-connecting the interpretation results with theories of social science-humanities and science, so that the conclusions of the interpretation products are more comprehensive and reflect the integrative-interconnective paradigm. Always open to criticism and do not claim that the findings of his interpretation as the only truth.

Understanding Religious Pluralism

The word pluralism in Arabic is commonly referred to as *at-ta'adudiyyah*. However, this word was not very popular among Muslims until approximately the last two decades of the 20th century. As a response to recent political developments, the issue of pluralism, in turn, occupies a position of concern and is the most popular in contemporary Arab Islamic thought.[13] Etymologically, pluralism comes from the root word "plural" which means "lots of".[14] In popular scientific dictionaries, pluralism is defined as "a theory which says that reality consists of many substances".[15] As for the terminology, the term pluralism (pluralism) according to Victoria Neufeldt has two meanings. First, the existence of different groups in terms of ethnicity, cultural patterns, religions, and others in

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[13] Anis Malik Thoha, *Tren Pluralisme Agama: Tinjauan Kritis* (Jakarta: Kelompok Gema Insani, 2005), 180.

[14] John M. Echols dan Hassan Shadily, *Kamus Inggris-Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2005), 435. Compare with Marsen, Martin H, *Oxford Leaner's Pokcet Dictionary*, (Oxford University, 1999), Third Edition, .329.

[15] Pius A. Partanto dan M. Dahlan Al Barry, *Kamus Ilmiah Populer*, 604

a country; and second, policies that support the protection of these groups within the State or society.[16]

While religious pluralism comes from two combinations of words, namely pluralism and religion. The word "pluralism" comes from English, pluralism. The word is thought to have come from the Latin, *plures*, which means "some with different implications.[17] Terminologically, the notion of pluralism envisions the creation of intra-religious dialogue and communication to bridge the gap between ignorance and mutual misunderstanding between the different cultures of the world, and each culture provides views in its language. This pluralism does not aim to defeat each other nor to force an agreement on the existence of a universal religion.

Meanwhile, the meaning of pluralism is substantially not only understood to mean plural/lots of, but – more than that – pluralism takes an attitude to acknowledge each other as well as to respect, maintain, and even develop or enrich situations that are plural or many.[18] According to Syamsul Ma'arif, pluralism is an attitude toward mutual understanding and respect for differences in order to achieve inter-religious harmony. For Ma'arif, in interacting with these various religions, religious people are expected to still have a strong commitment to their respective religions.[19]

In the concept of Pluralism, Diana L. Eck as quoted by Zuhairi Misrawi said that pluralism contains three important points. First, pluralism is an active engagement amid diversity and difference. Second, pluralism is more than just tolerance. At this point, pluralism does not only talk about the importance of respecting others, but also requires an effort to understand others with a constructive understanding. Third, pluralism is not relativism. Pluralism is an attempt to find a common commitment among various commitments (encounter commitments). It is undeniable that every religion has its commitment, but from

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[16] Victoria Neufeldt, *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (New York: Mc Millan, 1995), 1040.

[17] Abd. Moqsith Ghazali, *Argumen Pluralisme Agama*, 66.

[18] Ngainun Naim dan Achmad Sauqi, *Pendidikan Multikultural: Konsep dan Aplikasi* (Jogjakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2008), 75.

[19] Syamsul Ma'arif, *Pendidikan Pluralisme di Indonesia* (Jogjakarta: Logung Pustaka, 2005), 17.

the various commitments, a common commitment is sought to focus on the common interest, namely humanity.[20]

The meaning of religion is interpreted in various ways by experts. Etymologically, religion comes from Sanskrit which consists of two syllables, namely "a" which means no, and "gama" which means chaotic. From this understanding, religion means a regulation that prevents humans from chaos and leads humans to an attitude of order and order. Another opinion says that religion comes from two syllables, namely "a" which means "no" and "gam" which means "go" or "walk". From this linguistic aspect, it can be understood that religion means not leaving, staying in place, eternal, and being passed down from generation to generation.[21]

Thus, many experts define the two combined words in the form of "religious pluralism". According to Abd Moqsit Ghazali, religious pluralism is a system that positively views diversity or pluralism, as well as being optimistic by accepting it as reality (sunatullah) and trying to do the best possible based on that reality. Religious pluralism is a necessity, as is a linguistic and ethnic plurality. According to Komarudin Hidayat, religious pluralism does not hold the view that all religions are the same, religious pluralism is more inclined to the attitude of giving room for recognition and appreciation of the truth of other religions while living and believing in the truth and superiority of their own religion.[22]

Frans Magnis-Suseno gave the opinion that respecting other people's religions has nothing to do with the saying "all religions are equal". Religions are clearly different from one another. The existence of differences in the Shari'ah

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[20] Zuhairi Misrawi, *al-Qur'an kitab Toleransi*: *Tafsir Tematik Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (Jakarta: Pustaka Oasis, 2010), 184-185.

[21] Abd. Moqsith Ghazali, *Argumen Pluralisme Agama*, 41-42.

[22] Komarudin Hidayat, *Wahyu di Langit Wahyu di Bumi, Doktrin dan Peradaban Islam di Panggung Sejarah* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2008), 229.

shows that religion is not the same. Every religion has its own particular context, so it is impossible for all religions to be congruent and exactly the same. What is desired from the idea of religious pluralism is the active recognition of other religions. Other religions exist as the existence of a religion that is embraced by the person concerned, and every religion certainly has the right to life.[23]

In Alwi Shihab's view, religious pluralism can be mapped into four concepts.[24] First, there is a demand for each religious believer to be involved in an effort to understand the differences and similarities in order to achieve harmony in religion. Second, pluralism is not the same as cosmopolitanism, which means it refers to a reality where various religions, races, and nations can coexist in one location, but only one form of positive interaction between residents in the field of religion. Third, pluralism is not interpreted as relativism, namely the doctrine that all religions are the same. Fourth, pluralism is not syncretism, namely creating a new religion by combining certain elements or components of teachings from several religions to become an integral part of the new religion.

The Concept of Religious Pluralism in the Qur'an

To comprehensively examine the concept of religious pluralism in the Qur'an, there are at least three indicators that deserve attention, namely;

Freedom in Religion, In the Qur'an, the concept of religious freedom is often mentioned. To choose a religion according to the will of each individual, of course, based on the mind that will have consequences for what he chooses. Among the verses that discuss religious freedom are mentioned in QS. al Baqarah [2]: 256;

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

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[23] Abd. Moqsith Ghazali, *Argumen Pluralisme Agama*, 67.

[24] Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif: Sikap Terbuka dalam Beragama (Bandung: Mizan, 1998), 41-43.*

"There shall be no pressure on religion. The right way is distinct from the wrong way. Whoever rejects false gods and believes in God has grasped the most reliable handle — which never breaks. God is the Listener, the Knower.."

This verse was revealed regarding a helper (anshar) who had several sons. His parents ordered their children to embrace Judaism and some were ordered to embrace Christianity. When Islam came, their parents forced their children to convert to Islam, then Allah prevented this coercion so that the verse was revealed so that they chose by themselves to embrace Islam.[25] By referring to this asbabun nuzul, it can be understood that coercion in religion is not justified in Islam.

According to Ibn Kathir, the verse above emphasizes that Allah is the Most Just in all things. He has the right to guide whom he appoints and mislead who should be misled. In other words, if Allah SWT wants all His creatures to believe in Him, of course, Allah can do it easily. He has willed the entire universe and its contents in a balanced way, there are right and wrong, good and bad, and so on.[26] Meanwhile, in the view of Quraish Shihab, Allah has the power to do what He wills. However, God allowed humans to choose their path in life. If Allah does not allow that to happen, no matter how hard Islam is forced to follow, it will not work and run well. For example, coercion to enter Islam is successful, but Allah will not accept it, because Allah does not want the faith that begins with coercion. [27]

Zuhairi Misrawi quoted Imam al-Wahidi's opinion when explaining the history of the revelation of al-Baqarah verse 256 above. He explained that there

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[25] Abu Ja'far at-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Muassisah al-Risalah, 2000), Vol. 5, 407.

[26] 'Imaduddin Abu al-Fida' Ismail bin 'Umar Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub 'Ilmiyah, 1998), Juz I, 521.

[27] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), Vol. 5, .513.

are at least four reasons behind the revelation of the verse.[28] The first relates to the story of the woman helper (anshar) who did not have children. The woman promised that if she later had children she would be converted to Judaism. When the Ansar heard this, they said, "We will not allow our children to become Jews." Then the verse came down in response to freedom in choosing a religion. The second, is the story of a man helper (anshar) who has a small black child. In this story, the child is described as Subaih. His father forced the child to embrace Islam, but then Allah revealed the verse as an answer that a father has no right to force his child's choice of religion.

Third, is the story of a man from the Anshar group who is usually called Abu al-Husayn. He has two sons. Once upon a time, there was a group of merchants from Syria who came to Medina with oil. When they were about to leave Medina, they came to the two sons of Abu al-Husayn and invited them to convert to Christianity. In the end, the two children converted to Christianity and went to Sham with the merchants. This incident was reported to the Messenger of Allah, Then he said, "Do I ask for the two children back? In response to this incident, then Allah revealed the verse and the Messenger of Allah said that God had taken the two children away, and both of them were first called disbelievers.

Fourth, the story tells of a man from Anshar who came from the descendants of Salim bin 'Auf. He has two children who embraced Christianity before the Prophet was appointed as an Apostle. The two children went to Medina, met with Christians, and brought food. Then the father went to his two sons and said, "By God, I will not allow you to embrace Islam". Then what happened was that the two children were reluctant to convert to Islam, and a verse was revealed about no compulsion in religion. Then the father let the choice of the two children.

Looking at some of the stories and chronology on *asbabun nuzul* of the verse, it becomes clear that religion is a choice. Allah gives His creatures the choice to choose a religion according to what its adherents want. Coercion in

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[28] Zuhairi Misrawi, *al-Qur'an kitab Toleransi.*, 224-225.

religion is something that is prevented.[29] There is no compulsion in adopting religious beliefs because Allah wants everyone to feel at peace.[30] Thus, the consequences received by humans are based on the choice of their respective beliefs. Humans are given reason and conscience to choose their respective religions.

Sayyid Qutb in the interpretation of *Fi Dzilal al-Qur'an* asserts that the sentence *"la ikraha fid-din"* is expressed in an absolute negative form, "there is no compulsion to enter religion (Islam)". This expression for the form of "nafyul jinsi" negates all kinds, that is, affirms all forms of coercion in the world in the reality of people's lives.[31] That way, humans are given reason and conscience to choose their respective religions, so that the consequences they receive are based on the choice of their respective beliefs.

Another verse that describes freedom of religion is revealed in QS. al-Kahf [18]: 29 the following;

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ

سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

And Say, "The truth is from your Lord. whomever wills, let him believe. And whoever wills, let him not believe". We prepared for the wicked a fire; its curtains will surround them. When they plead for relief, they're relieved with water like molten metal that roasts their faces — a horrible drink and an unbearable home..

Explicitly, in this verse can be understood that God has a very great nature in responding to the reality of one's belief and unbelief. Choosing to believe and not to believe or kufr is a choice that both have their respective implications.

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[29] Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir al Wasith* (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 2001), 148.
[30] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al Misbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al Qur'an* (Jakarta : Lentera Hati, 2002), Vol. 1, 551.
[31] Sayyid Quthb, *fi Dzilal al-Qur'an,* (Ttp: tp, t.th), Juz I, 354-355.

When choosing faith that is the best way. Meanwhile, choosing kufr is the worst way. However, God gives complete freedom to His creatures to choose between the path of faith or kufr.[32]

> In his commentary, al-Maraghi said:
> "Whoever wants to believe in Him and enter the circle of the believers, and does not make excuses with something that does not matter, then believe. And whoever disbelieves and casts it behind his back, his affair is left to Allah, and I will not drive away those who follow the truth and believe in Allah; and to what has been revealed to me, only because of following the desires of your lusts. Indeed, the Messenger does not need to follow their wishes and he does not care about you or their faith. And the matter is up to every human being, and in the hands of God is taufik, neglect, destruction, and error. One does not benefit from the faith of the believers, and will not benefit from the disbelief of the disbelievers." [33]
> Another opinion from al-Qurthubi that Allah SWT said to His Messenger,

"O Muhammad, tell the human race, what I bring to you from your Lord is the truth in which there is no doubt." This passage is a harsh threat.[34] Understandably, the above interpretation indicates that Allah has given the truth, where the essential truth is Islam.

All religions are given the freedom to live at the risk that will be borne by the followers of their respective religions, both individually and collectively. Basically, all religions have the same principle, namely the human obligation to surrender to God Almighty. Through internal dynamics or the intersection of religions with each other, they will gradually find the original truth, so that everything will rest on a common platform or in the terms of the Qur'an it is called the sentence as-sawa'. This is also supported by the statement of QS. al-Maidah [5]: 48 as follows;

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ

بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ

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[32] Zuhairi Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Toleransi*, 285.

[33] Ahmad Musthafa al-Maraghi, *Tafsir al-Maraghi*, (Ttp: Maktabah Musthafa, 1946), Juz XV, 143-144.

[34] Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abu Bakar al-Qurthubi, *al-Jami' li al-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risalah, t.th), Juz XIII, 260.

شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ

جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

We revealed the Book to you, full of truth, confirming what was previously revealed in the Book and prevailing over it. So judge between them according to what God revealed. And don't follow their thoughts that contradict the truth that has come to you. To each, we gave a method and a way of life. If God had willed, He would have made you one community, but He tests you by what He gave you. To compete in righteousness. To God is your return, all of you — then He will inform you of your differences.

According to Jalaluddin Rakhmat, this verse outlines three significant meanings.[35] First, religions are different in terms of the rules of life (shari'a) and views of life (aqidah). Pluralism does not mean that all religions are the same because differences have become a reality. Second, God does not want all of his people to follow a single religion. Religious diversity is meant to test all of its people. The test is how much of a good contribution can be made to mankind. Every religion is told to compete with other religions in making the best contribution to humanity (khairat). Third, all religions return to God, whether Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or others. It is the duty and authority of Allah alone to resolve religious differences in any way.

The difference is the law that applies in this life. In addition to the difference is the divine will as the preservation of life, it is also at the same time to achieve the purpose of the life of creatures on the earth stage. If God wanted unity of opinion, surely humans were created without reason to be like animals or inanimate objects that cannot sort and choose, because then all of them will

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[35] Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Islam dan Pluralisme: Akhlak Qur'an Menyikapi Perbedaan.* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2006), 34.

become one opinion.[36] From this, it is clear that the verses above show the recognition of the existence of other religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. The Qur'an also does not deny all the concepts of its teachings. Even Islam strengthens and strengthens it. Thus, it is very clear that the Qur'an recognizes plurality in religion.

Existence of Respect and Recognition of Other Religions. Differences in beliefs, especially those related to religion, are very natural. Therefore, Islam strongly recommends for all its adherents continue to respect the beliefs of other religions, as emphasized in the QS. al-An'am [6]: 108;

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ

ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

> Don't insult what they worship besides God; otherwise, they may insult God out of hostility and ignorance. Thus, We made the deeds of every community attractive to them. Then they'll return to their Lord, and He will inform them of what they did.

This verse talks about the prohibition of cursing God and the beliefs of others. The prohibition is enforced, in addition to maintaining the sanctity of religions, as well as creating a sense of security and harmonious relations between religious communities. Because humans are naturally very easily provoked by their emotions when their religion and beliefs are mentioned. This is human nature, regardless of social position or level of knowledge, if religion has blossomed in the hearts of its adherents, it is very natural for his heart to be the source of his emotions.[37]

Many other verses encourage people to always respect and acknowledge the beliefs of others. Notice the redaction of the following verses;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ

عَسَى أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ

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[36] Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al Qur'an: Tafsir Maudu'i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 2013), 647.

[37] Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah,* Vol. 4, 236.

O you who believe! No people should ridicule other people, because they may be better than them. And no woman should ridicule other women, because they may be better than them. And don't slander each other; or insult each other with epithets. How bad is it to be called a "troublemaker" after accepting faith? Those who don't repent are unjust. (Surat al-Hujurat [49]: 11)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا

فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"Indeed, the believers, the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever among them truly believes in Allah, the Last Day and does good deeds, they will receive a reward from their Lord, there is no worry for them, and they will not grieve." (Surat al-Baqarah [2]: 62)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا

فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"Indeed, the believers, the Jews, the Sabians, and the Christians, whoever believes in God and the Last Day and acts righteously — will receive their reward from their Lord. They won't fear, and they won't be sad." (Surat al-Maidah [5]: 69)

According to Sayyid Hussen Fadlullah, the verse above describes salvation on the Day of Resurrection that will be achieved by all religious groups with the following conditions: faith in Allah, the Last Day, and good deeds.[38] The verse gives a guarantee like Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Sabians, as long as they want to believe in Allah Almighty and the hereafter, and based on that believe they do good, then they will all enter heaven and be free from hell.[39]

It is the explanation of the verse that makes the commentators pay great attention to religious pluralism, causing a lot of controversies. Some experts state,

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[38] Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Islam dan Pluralisme: Akhlak Qur'an Menyikapi Perbedaan.* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2006), 23.
[39] Nurcholis Majid, *Islam Doktrin Peradaban,* 183.

that these words are difficult to reconcile with the logic of the view that all those who disbelieve in the Prophet Muhammad are "infidels", and unbelievers will not enter heaven and will not be free from hell.

God as the God of man. In the perspective of the Qur'an, Allah is the same as what the People of the Book believe, even the polytheists. This is clearly stated in the QS. al-'Ankabut [29]: 61 and QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 64 the following:

$$وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ$$

"And verily if you ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth and regulated the sun and the moon?" They would answer, "God." So why do they spread lies"? (Surat al-'Ankabut [29]: 61)

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

"Say, "O People of the Bible, let's agree on common terms: we worship none but God, we associate nothing with Him, and we never take anyone as lord besides God." If they refuse, say, "Witness that we're Submitters." " (Surat Ali 'Imran [3]: 64)

The explanation of these two verses shows that Allah is the Lord of all mankind and that is believed by the People of the Book. Humans at the beginning of their creation which came from semen and human ribs, have acknowledged and testified to the divinity of Allah, or – in other languages – the nature of all humans is to unite Allah, as written in the QS. al-A'raf [7]: 172;

$$وَإِذْ اَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِيْ اٰدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَاَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوْا بَلٰى شَهِدْنَا$$

And when Your Lord summoned Adam's descendants, and He made them testify about themselves. "Am I not your Lord?" They answered, "Yes, You are; we testify.".

This verse explains that human nature is to acknowledge and testify to the divinity of Allah SWT. This fitrah then continues until humans are born from their mother's womb. Man's acknowledgment of his nature is actually to refute the reasons of those who do not believe on the Day of Resurrection who claim that they are negligent or that they were born of people who associate partners with Allah. Therefore, Allah confirms that human nature to unite Allah has been inscribed during the Prophet Muhammad's apostleship, and that nature is recognized by humans (Surah al-A'raf [7]: 172-173).

According to Ibn 'Assyria, Allah commanded the human spirit to witness the events of himself which proves the oneness of Allah, the miracle of the process of human creation from a drop of sperm to becoming a human with a perfect body and has sensory responsiveness with amazing veins and nervous system. After that, God asked the human spirit: "Am I not your Lord?" The human spirit answered; "Yes, You are our Lord, we have seen." This answer is an acknowledgement of the spirit of the human person from the very beginning of the divinity of Allah Almighty, and that there is no other God worthy of worship except Him.[40]

Allah has guided humans to believe in Him long before humans were born in the world, namely from the time they were in the womb to adulthood. Therefore, there is no logical reason for humans not to believe in Allah, because from nature Allah has guided humans to always believe in Him. In other words, Allah is the Lord of all mankind and this is believed by them since their mother's womb.

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[40] Muhammad Thahir Ibnu 'Asyur, *at-Tahrir wa at-Tanwir* (Tunisia: Dar al-Thunisiayah, 2000), Juz IX, . 165.

Maqashid Exegesis Approach as the Basis for Understanding Religious Pluralism

So that life can run harmoniously, peacefully, of course, several principles need to be upheld in social relations between religious communities. Based on the author's observations of the verses of the Qur'an, there are at least seven principles that must be adhered to by someone living in Indonesia to build social relations wrapped in religious pluralism, among others;

First, establish ukhuwah (brotherhood) regardless of race, ethnicity, and religion. As God's creatures, humans have a brotherly relationship. Among these types of ukhuwah there are four; ukhuwah 'ubudiyah or brotherhood and submission to Allah; ukhuwah insaniyah (basyariyah) in the sense that all human beings are brothers because they all come from a father and mother; ukhuwah wathaniyah wa an-nasab, namely brotherhood in lineage and nationality; and ukhuwah fi ad-din al-Islam, brotherhood among Muslims.[41]

The meaning of pluralism with maqashidi exegesis in the context of interpretation. QS.al-Maidah [5]: 48 is to establish human relations without having to discriminate against religion, class, or race. By establishing a good relationship, disputes over differences will be degraded and can even stagnate. Therefore, religious pluralism from the point of view maqashidi exegesis refers more to ukhwah wathaniyah, namely establishing relationships in the context of one Indonesian nationality.

Second, egalitarianism (al-musawah) and getting to know each other. Human degrees are the same, it is piety that makes the difference. In this case, the verse that is the reference is QS. al-Hujurat [49]: 13, where the explanation leads to human dignity which is determined by the quality of his piety. Without seeing from the side of asbabun nuzul, the verse talks about the unity of human origin by showing the similarity of human humanity. It is not natural for someone to feel

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[41] Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al Qur'an*, 643-644.

proud and feel superior to others, because essentially all humans are the same, and what makes the difference is their piety.[42]

If viewed from the aspect of maqashidi exegesis, in this verse there is an emphasis on the word lita'arafu, where the word shows the desire of the Qur'an for humans to know each other. When someone knows each other, there will be opportunities to do good, so that there are no disputes or divisions with each other due to differences of opinion or degrees.

Third, justice (al-'is). This principle is basically an implication of piety. The idea of justice is a basic principle to treat people of other religions equally, fairly, and non-discriminatory, both in the management of economic, political, socio-cultural, and educational resources, as well as in the application of the law.[43]

Fourth, tolerance (tasamuh) and competition in goodness (fastabiq al-khairat). Tolerance is an attitude of appreciating opinions (opinions, views, beliefs, habits, and so on) that are different or contrary to one's stance. The roots of tolerance referred to from the text of the Qur'an have several principles; (1) the difference (diversity) of belief is the will of God which is perennial; (2) that the trial and punishment for wrong beliefs should be left to God himself. God knows better who has strayed from His way and who has been guided; (3) belief in a religion of nature. The religion of fitrah does not only mean the religion of Islam, but also means the religion of the origin of mankind which is inherent, and indelibly imprinted on the human soul. This shows that every human being is bound in universal religious brotherhood because each religion of Allah which is embedded in humans is in the form of din al-fitrah (religion of human origin).

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[42] Qurasih Shihab, *Tafsir al Misbah,* Vol. 13, . 261.
[43] Ngainun Naim, *Teologi Kerukunan: Mencari Titik Temu Dalam Keberagaman* (Yogyakarta: Teras: 2011), 54

Thus, as said by al-Faruqi, belief in the religion of nature is the most important breakthrough towards fostering inter-religious relations.[44]

Fifth, mutual respect, cooperation, and friendship. This principle is highly emphasized in the Qur'an because it is seen as equal to respecting one's religion. On the other hand, insulting other religions is the same as insulting one's own religion. This is in line with the explanation of QS. al-An'am verse 108, that cursing is a prohibited act.

Sixth, the principle of peaceful co-existence (at-ta'ayusy as-silmi). This principle is the basis of human relations following the generic meaning of Islam itself, namely peace. Therefore, accepting Islam as a religion consequently accepts peaceful co-existence as the main teaching.

Seventh, a wise-constructive-transformative dialogue (mujlah bi al-hasan). This is a consequence of the fifth principle. In its implementation, Leonard Swidler had ten basic guidelines for interfaith dialogue that can be used as a good interpretation regarding the bi al-lati hiya ahsan dialogue. The ten basic dialogues are; (1) the initial goal of the dialogue process is to change, grow in a correct perception of reality, and subsequently act accordingly; (2) dialogue must be a two-sided project, namely dialogue within its own community, and then dialogue with other communities; (3) every participant who enters this dialogue process must trust the sincerity and honesty of his dialogue partner; (4) in dialogue it is not allowed to make a comparison of our religious ideals with the practice/reality of the religion of the dialogue partner; (5) each participant in the dialogue must be able to redefine himself, because in reality a religion can only be defined by religion itself. On the other hand, any self-definition interpreted by our dialogue partners should be accepted with grace, as an effort to know ourselves better; (6) each participant in the dialogue must be able to refrain from seeking the main points of difference; (7) dialogue can only occur parcum pari, namely between parties of the same level; (8) this dialogue process can only take place on the basis of mutual trust; (9) every person involved in the dialogue must be able to take a critical attitude, at least on himself (his ideas) and the religious traditions he

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[44] Ngainun Naim, *Teologi Kerukunan.*, 54.

believes in; (10) each participant must try to understand the religion of his dialogue partner "from within".

Thus, awareness of plurality will be able to give birth to a tolerant attitude. This tolerance is an important capital for the creation of a peaceful life without conflict. Meanwhile, the number of conflicts, especially those with a religious background, is a big challenge for religions. Under these conditions, awareness and collective will is needed to build a harmonious society in a pluralistic and heterogeneous climate.

CONCLUSION

From the relatively brief explanation above, it can be concluded that everyone has the right to have different views based on science and point of view in understanding everything, especially regarding religious pluralism. The Qur'an recognizes religious pluralism and also recommends doing good to non-Muslims as long as they do not interfere. Harmony and peaceful living will be achieved if the community recognizes the identity of each religion, is tolerant, and recognizes freedom in terms of embracing religion, so that the ultimate goal to be achieved is the realization of mutual understanding, as the basis of life and mutual association in the midst of society.

Meanwhile, the concept of "religious pluralism" is a social fact that always exists and requires coexistence between different religions (in a broad sense) in one community while maintaining the specific characteristics or teachings of each religion. Based on the maqashidi exegesis approach, the efforts built-in responding to religious pluralism include; by establishing brotherhood (ukhuwah), egalitarianism (al-musawah), the principle of justice (al-'is), the principle of tolerance (tasamuh), the principle of mutual respect, cooperation and friendship, the principle of peaceful co-existence, and wise-constructive dialogue.

transformative. From the seven principles developed, it seems that the *maqashidi* tasfir approach has not touched the novelty of findings related to several principles of religious pluralism. Therefore, further research is needed regarding religious pluralism with different methods and approaches.

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