

## **Tolerant and Intolerant Messages: Phenomenology Study of Ulama in West Jakarta**

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### **Abstrak**

Pesan-pesan yang dikomunikasikan secara tekstual dan keliru kemudian diterima oleh individu-individu yang minim pengetahuan agama mendorong perilaku toleran dan intoleran, sehingga berujung pada kekerasan antarumat beragama seperti yang terjadi di Indonesia pada tahun 90-an. Penelitian difokuskan pada pengalaman dan pemaknaan ustadz di Jakarta Barat tentang toleransi dan intoleransi. Metode yang dilakukan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis, melalui wawancara mendalam dengan sepuluh partisipan, kemudian dianalisis melalui horisonalisasi untuk membentuk makna umum dan gambaran mendalam tentang toleransi dan intoleransi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa toleransi beragama dimaknai sebagai kebebasan setiap orang untuk menjalankan ibadah sesuai dengan keyakinannya atas dasar saling menghormati dengan pemeluk agama lain untuk menciptakan suasana yang kondusif bagi kepentingan bersama. Kebebasan ini terbatas pada ruang lingkup masing-masing agama yang diwujudkan melalui gotong royong dalam membantu masalah sosial dan budaya. Intoleransi beragama ditandai dengan sikap tidak menghargai kegiatan ibadah pemeluk agama lain yang timbul dari pemahaman ajaran tekstual agama, fanatik buta, dan ketidakadilan yang menghambat persatuan bangsa dan negara. Intoleransi beragama dirasakan tidak akan terjadi apabila setiap pemeluk agama mau dan mampu menjalankan ajaran agamanya masing-masing. Bentuk-bentuk intoleransi melalui perbedaan pendapat dan pertentangan, destruktif, kebencian dan iri hati dalam menyikapi perbedaan agama. Penelitian ini berimplikasi pada perluasan implementasi konsep toleransi dan intoleransi, serta perubahan kebijakan di negara multi-agama.

**Kata Kunci:**

Ajaran Agama, Peribadatan, Kebebasan Beragama, Toleransi, Intoleransi

**Abstract**

Messages that are communicated textually and erroneously are then received by individuals whose lack of religious knowledge encourages tolerant and intolerant behavior, resulting in interfaith violence as happened in Indonesia in the 90s. The research focused on the experience and meaning of the cleric in West Jakarta regarding tolerance and intolerance. The method to conduct this research is qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, through in-depth interviews with ten participants, then analyzed through horizationalization to form a general meaning and in-depth description of tolerance and intolerance. The results show that religious tolerance is interpreted as the freedom of every person to practice worship in accordance with their beliefs on the basis of mutual respect with other people of different religions to create an atmosphere conducive to the common good. This freedom is limited to the scope of each religion which manifests through mutual assistance in helping social and cultural issues. Religious intolerance is characterized by an attitude of disrespect for the worship activities of adherents of other religions arising from understanding textual teachings of religion, blind fanatics, and injustice that inhibits national and state unity. Religious intolerance is perceived not to happen if every religious adherent is willing and able to carry out their respective religious teachings. Forms of intolerance through disagreement and conflicting, destructive, hateful and envious in dealing with religious differences. This research has implications for the expansion of the implementation of the concepts of tolerance and intolerance, and policy changes in multi-religious countries.

**Keywords:**

Religious Teachings, Worship, Religious Freedom, Tolerance, Intolerance

**Introduction**

The process of religious communication that occurs in the community seems to be ongoing in a nuance of coercion or threat. When a preacher conveys verses from the scripture, he does that somewhat with a tone of threatening or intimidating tone so that there is a sense of compulsion or fear of the worshipers (audience) and make them obedient.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tipikurohman dan E. Mahyudin, "Komunikasi Religi pada Penanganan Covid-19", in E.L.Pambayun (ed). *Dialektika Dosen Indonesia dalam Menyikapi Covid-19: Pendekatan Komunikasi, Psikologi, Pendidikan, Linguistik, dan Agama/Dakwah*, (Indramayu: Penerbit Adab, 2021), 161

In addition, *preachers* or lecturers often deliver and explain the topic or material textually without explaining the context so that the description becomes incomplete. The topic or material presented is also often not neutral or independent, but responsive in the sense that it is related to current issues in the community as illustrated by the news in the mass media (Direct and incidental observation of researchers when Friday prayers at one of the mosques around Srengseng, West Jakarta, March 2019 before the Presidential Election).

Discussion of the topic becomes increasingly incomplete due to the limited time allocation line at the Friday prayer sermon which is relatively short, which is more or less only about half an hour, as well as at other religious lectures that last no more than one hour.

Large numbers of preachers possessing “hardline” thought or affiliation deliberately chose certain verses in the Qur'an and Hadits and convey them with loud and high intonation to emphasize the meaning but sometimes this often mislead the audience with lack of understanding in interpreting the verses because of their limited knowledge.

Situmorang report that in the context of the *archipelago country* where the community consists of various religions, ethnic groups, cultures, ethnicities, groups, and they spreads in various regions that become one unit (Negara Kesatuan Republic Indonesia/Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), the religious messages above can be developed into tolerant and intolerant issues in religious life. If this is related to the socio-economic situation, especially social inequality, multiculturalism, and the shifting of cultural and religious values in society, it can lead to the radicalization of religion and terrorist.<sup>2</sup>

Tolerance is defined as an attitude of mutual respect and respect between individuals or groups in society even though there are differences in it such as

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<sup>2</sup> Situmorang, Chazali. (2017). Toleransi-intoleransi, multikultural sebagai Fatamorgana kehidupan. *Jurnal Social Security, humaniora kompasiana*. Retrieved from <https://thr.kompasiana.com/chazali/5cad6be095760e4b58709852/>

opinions, views, religion, race, culture, and other differences. The substance of tolerance teaches us to possess good characters, patience, broad-minded, considerate to accept different opinion from others.<sup>3</sup>

In a multicultural society, differences in political, cultural, and religion tend to bring conflicts. Casram stated that religion groups with strong economy background will dominate the weaker ones. On the other sides, the weaker ones develop spiritual and conservative values and modern fundamental concepts to balance the domination.<sup>4</sup>

Religious tolerance is a necessity to guarantee social stability from ideological coercion or even physical clashes in society. Ideal religious tolerance must be built through the active participation of all members of diverse religious communities in order to achieve the same goals on the basis of togetherness, inclusive attitudes, respect and mutual understanding regarding the implementation of rituals and certain doctrines of each religion.

While intolerance is basically the unwillingness of a person or group of people to accept differences that exist in other people or groups. Intolerance is especially prominent in religious or religious fields. Religious intolerance can ultimately lead to radicalism, and finally terrorism violence targeting those who are considered inconsistent and disagreeing.<sup>5</sup>

Azra provides an example of intolerance occurred in Tolikara Papua on July 17, 2015 when Christian group in Mass of Gospel Church in Indonesia (GIDI) disbanded Eid prayer of Islamic group as this is the result of intolerance. Azra also explained that intolerance acts occur not only in developing countries like Indonesia, but also in developed countries. In fact, there are a number of countries

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<sup>3</sup> Khotimah, Khotimah. (2018), "Toleransi Beragama", *Jurnal Fakultas Ushuluddin UIN SUSKA*, No. 2 (2018): 212-222.

<sup>4</sup> Casram. (2016), "Membangun Sikap Toleransi Beragama dalam Masyarakat Plural", *WAWASAN, Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya*, no. 10 (2016): 10.

<sup>5</sup> Zuly Qodir, "Kaum Muda, Intoleransi, dan Radikalisme" *Agama, Jurnal Studi Pemuda* 5, no. 1 (2016): 429-445.

that have become *failed* states because they cannot control religious intolerance which has degenerated into violence between religious groups.<sup>6</sup>

Some of the acts of intolerance are radicalism and terrorism that ever occurred in Indonesia with hundreds of victims as exposed in Bali Bombing on 12 October 2002, JW Marriot Jakarta's Bombing on 5 August 2003, Bombing at Australian embassy in Jakarta on 9 September 2004 and later in 2009 there were two bombings at JW Marriot and Ritz Carlton (both in Jakarta) on 17 July 2009. The media both print or electronic reported that these acts were based on religious motives and perceived as jihad.<sup>7</sup>

Radicalism is a belief that a society needs to be changed drastically in social or political term conducted through violence. Religious radicalism is defined as a belief with strong fanaticism so that its followers are encouraged to commit violent acts in achieving their objectives.<sup>8</sup>

Strong understanding and belief in the truth of the teachings of one's own religion and assuming the teachings of other religions are incorrect tend to encourage someone to become intolerant and adopt radicalism. Besides social political factors, both in national and global scope also influences the emergence of radicalism.

Based on the background, the purpose of this research is to analysis Ulama in West Jakarta experience and interpret religious tolerance and intolerance messages?

## Literature Review

Khotimah states that along with the emergence of the phenomenon of the rise of religions in the world, at the same time conflicts arise among religious followers.

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<sup>6</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Intoleransi Keagamaan", *Jurnal Studi Pemuda* 5, No. 1 (2016): 78.

<sup>7</sup> E.L. Pambayun, The Construction of Terror Communicating of ISIS News In Social Media, *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Ushuluddin*, Vo.19, No.1 (2018), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v19i1.1490>

<sup>8</sup> Faiz Yunus, "Radikalisme, Liberalisme dan Terorisme : Pengaruhnya terhadap Agama Islam", *Jurnal Studi Al Qur'an* 13, no. 1 (2017), 76-94.

In general, conflicts among religious followers are caused by several other factors such as harassment of religion and spiritual leaders of a particular religion, the unjust treatment by authorities, economic jealousy and conflicting political interests.<sup>9</sup>

Azra shows that religious intolerance can be multi-layered. Religious and unhealthy social conditions can occur between people of one religion and people of other religions. It can also occur between different sects, denominations, and schools of thought in one particular religion. Intolerance in one religion is not often more violent than interfaith intolerance.<sup>10</sup>

Religious intolerance clearly cannot be reduced by merely a lack of communication or miscommunication between different religious communities. Though a society is portrayed in harmony, it does not mean the society members are willingly tolerant to others because their unconsciousness still relates to intolerance. They trying to live in harmony is not sincere but merely courtesy.

Azra argues that religious intolerance also cannot be indicated by the low level of education and economy in different religious communities. It is a common symptom of religious communities that are less educated or have sufficient economics to not genuinely display aggressive, tolerant attitudes, they are generally peaceful, even though they are more vulnerable to provocation. Religious intolerance also cannot be said as an act of crime. The lack of good faith in understanding certain religious doctrines is evident in almost all incidents of religious intolerance.<sup>11</sup>

According to Azra, an academic study of religious intolerance manifested in violence related to followers of other religions, is as follows:

First; The attitude of intolerance comes from the understanding and praxis of exclusivity towards its own religion, school or denomination. This attitude of

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<sup>9</sup> Khotimah, Khotimah. "Toleransi Beragama", 212-222.

<sup>10</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Intoleransi Keagamaan", 78.

<sup>11</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Intoleransi Keagamaan", 78.

exclusivity is strengthened among sects or denominations that are outside the mainstream that are considered inclusive, accommodating, and compromising.

Second; understanding and praxis of religious intolerance also comes from a literal understanding of the verses in each holy book. Intolerant groups usually hold such verses without looking at the context in the past when the verses of the scriptures were revealed or standardized as well as in the context of present life and the future that is increasingly more complex.

Third; the attitude of religious intolerance is also caused by unfair treatment of other religious communities. All major world religions teach what is called reciprocity ethics which is often called the golden rule. This reciprocity ethics teaches that we must treat others as we would otherwise be treated or as everyone wants to treat ourselves as well as possible.<sup>12</sup>

Azra also explains that there are religious groups who have double standards. They treat that principle only for those in the same race, or one denomination, not for people of other sects or denominations or wider than other religions.<sup>13</sup>

Casram shows that religious tolerance does not mean that someone who already has a belief then converts to interact with someone different belief/religion; nor is it intended to acknowledge the truth of all religions/beliefs, but rather to be in his beliefs. Tolerance is needed to create social balance and cohesion in multicultural societies.<sup>14</sup>

## Research Methods

The fundamental purpose of research using a phenomenological approach is to describe the life experience of a phenomenon and produce a description of the nature of a particular phenomenon. Through a process of in-depth interviews,

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<sup>12</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Intoleransi Keagamaan", 78.

<sup>13</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Intoleransi Keagamaan", 78.

<sup>14</sup> Casram. "Membangun Sikap Toleransi Beragama dalam Masyarakat Plural", 10.

researchers can build a universal meaning of events, situations or experiences and arrive at a deeper understanding of the phenomenon<sup>15</sup>

Data collection in a research that uses a phenomenological approach is usually conducted through interviews with a group of individuals who have direct knowledge of an event, situation, or experience. Interviews were conducted to answer two questions, namely: First; what has the individual experienced in a particular phenomenon? Second; what context or situation usually influences individual experience in the phenomenon?<sup>16</sup>

As stated by Pambayun the sample size in studies using phenomenology often consists of only five to ten participants. This number of participants is common in research through this approach.<sup>17</sup> Based on this, the research subjects or the key informants in this study were twelve religious teachers or scholars who used to give sermons or Islamic lectures as follows: 1. Abd Rachman Sadero , M. Pd.I, 2 . Lutfi Rohman, 3 . Syarifuddin Zuhri , 4 . Syarifuddin Radin , 5 . Khoirudin Masyiq, 6 . Ahmad Zailani , 7. Ahmad Dasuki, 8. Edi Susanto, 9. Kholilurrahman, 10. Rahmatullah, 11. Abdul Cholik, 12. Slamet Riyadi

The process of analyzing data through a phenomenological approach through the description of data that has been transcribed. Here the researcher immerses himself in the data by means of horizontalisation, which is an attempt to search, find, and take from the transcript of various significant statements, which are sentences or words spoken by participants who explain how they experienced a phenomenon.

Significant statements that are in the same tone then grouped into a group of similar meaning called themes. Furthermore, researchers use processes such as coding and categorizing to arrange data. The aim is to develop themes that can be used to describe experiences based on the informants' perspectives.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Morissan, *Riset Kualitatif*, (Jakarta, Prenadamedia Group, 2019), 180

<sup>16</sup> Morissan, *Riset Kualitatif*,. 180

<sup>17</sup> Ellys Lestari Pambayun, *One Stop Qualitative Reseach Methodology in Communication*, (Jakarta: Lentera Cendekia, 2013)

<sup>18</sup> Morissan, *Riset Kualitatif*, 181



## Results And Discussion

### I. Significant Transcription and Statement of Informants

#### 1) Transcription of interview with informant 1 (Abdul Rahman Sadero )

"In 2000, I attended community service in Sindangjaya Village, Ciranjang Cianjur Subdistrict, West Answer, the people are unique and uphold the values of tolerance, because one village with different beliefs (Muslim-Christian) and only divided by the main road. Incidentally I live exactly near the mosque and not far from the church where they worship ... Muslim communities when holding religious activities in the mosque such as recitation and Islamic holidays, they do not turn on soundsystem, except only for Adzan (calling to prayer) ... Many Christian communities also help provide food to support Islamic religious activities ... Likewise when Christian religious activities, they do not use excessive loudspeakers, and the Muslim community also helps in the implementation of their worship, especially in terms of security".

"Tolerance in Islam is an attitude and belief that has been taught by God through His Words. That is an attitude of doing good to anyone, even if it is not in accordance with our wishes (QS, 5: 8 and 48), but in my opinion, an attitude of tolerance means only limited to respecting or appreciating other religious communities, but not to follow or justify their religion and worship, both in the form of words and actions ... Tolerant in religion is the attitude of respecting other beliefs and understandings for harmony in religious life. This can be interpreted by giving freedom of followers to carry out their worship according to what they hold "... this attitude is shown by the people in the village of Sindang jaya, District Ciranjang

Cianjur, West Java, which is an attitude with the implementation of tolerance values. My experience related to religious intolerance is, recently there was a leader of a well-known campus, reprimanding / prohibiting male employees from wearing Isbal (lengthening and trailing clothing below the ankle) and female employees using veils, as the leader indicates them exposed with radicalism ..the employees feel uncomfortable for they think that what they believe is their rights". "Intolerance is an inverted understanding of the concept of tolerance, that is, not appreciating, not respecting the activities of worship beliefs of other religions. In my view, Islam respects and appreciates the activities of other religions, but in terms of belief, (monotheism, aqeedah, and worship ) then it cannot be considered equal that all religions are the same. ".

(**Note:** A complete transcript of the interview with 12 informants was uploaded in the "supplementary file" section").

**Table 1**  
**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>                                     | <b>Intolerance</b>  |
|--|---|
| - Muslim-Christian are close to each other           | - Prohibit Muslims from wearing Isbal pants                   |
| - Musholla and the church are located close together | - Prohibit employees from wearing the veil                    |
| - Musholla and the church are close together         | - Do not respect the religious activities of other religions. |
| - Lowering the microphone sound during the teachings | - Islam in terms of aqidah is not the same as other religions |

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Christian community supports Islamic teaching</li> <li>- Respect each other's beliefs</li> </ul> |  |
|---|--|

2) Transcript of interview with informant 2 : ( Lutfi Rohman)

"My experience of tolerance; I have a non-muslim neighbor who offered his house for studying Islam; I have a neighbour who always brings a basket cake on Chinese New Year and I also give them special dish during Eid Fitr. We do that without wishing happy holidays and it is a mutual respect. Tolerance in religion, especially Islam, is an important value, as in the verses in Al Quran man was created to know each other, each other and all are in the same degree, except those who fear (Surah Al Hujurat: 13). However, tolerance in Islam it is not tolerance in the sense of freedom and in Surah Al-Kafirun regulates the limits of tolerance in religion. Tolerance in life is very important, because we are faced with many differences, so that each difference must be responded to gracefully and tolerantly in the sense of mutual respect and give freedom to people who are different from us, for their beliefs and opinions " "I found intolerance experience during the 2019 Presidential Election. This happened when my brother put up a banner for one of the Presidential / Vice Presidential Candidates and there was a neighbour who felt superior asking for the banner to be taken down from my parents' house. Blind fanaticism and ignorant thinking can lead to intolerance. This attitude arises because of internal factors of religious followers who understand religious teachings textually. In addition, this also occurs because of external factors like unjust law and the views of community leaders. who hurt Muslims, such as the Sukmawati case that insulted the Prophet Muhammad."

**Table 2**

### Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance

| Tolerance  | Intolerance  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighbour providing his house for Islamic teachings</li> <li>- Giving special dish for Imlek and Eid Fitr</li> <li>- Values are of great concern and importance which humans are created to know each other and all are on the same level</li> <li>- Mutual respect and give freedom to people who are different from us for their beliefs and opinions</li> <li>- Difference is a necessity and good for us</li> <li>- By letting people doing worship without disturbing is a very tolerant attitude</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tolerance that mixes the teachings of one religion with other religions, such as participating in other religious observances.</li> <li>- Blind fanaticism and ignorant thinking can lead to intolerance</li> <li>- Occurs because people understand religious teachings textually</li> <li>- Occurs because of unjust law and the views of community leaders who hurt Muslims</li> </ul> |

#### 3) Transcription of interview with informant 3 : ( Syarifudin Zuhri)

"I always try to socialize the vision and mission of Allah SWT through studies for the implementation of tolerance in the Unitary Republic of Indonesia with the Al Qur'an and Al Hadith approaches ... In the application of religious tolerance I give priority to the equality of religious

values and try not to touch differences. For example, I am the member of the inter-religious whatsapp group called SOL (School of Life) and we discuss about life without touching our differences. Tolerance in religion is a manifestation of the upholding of the vision and mission of Allah Swt in the Qur'an and sending His Prophets and Apostles, which is to forbid and condemn disputes, hostility, destruction, malice, and hatred in human life.

**Table 3**  
**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>   | <b>Intolerance</b>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritize the equality of religious values and don't touch the differences.</li> <li>- Join whatsapp group SOL (School of Life) consisting interreligious members where we are free to argue with his beliefs without touching religious differences</li> <li>- forbid and condemn disputes, hostility, destruction, malice, and hatred in human life</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The perpetrators of riots and dissension and other cruel and unjust acts</li> <li>- Disputes, conflicts, destruction, hatred, and envy in responding to religious differences</li> <li>- Religious intolerance means</li> <li>- Violateing Islamic values.</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| - The Qur'an as a collection of verses of Allah justifies all the holy books before the Qur'an |  |
|--|--|

#### 4) Transcription interview with informant 4 (Rahmatullah)

"When a Muslim implements Islamic teachings, it is certain that people of other faiths are not allowed to disturb, and vice versa. But in the case of 'social relations' such as community service and helping others in need are encouraged as fellow citizens. When it comes to worship, then there is no word of tolerance, as stated in the Qur'an Surah Al-Kafirun verse six 'For you is your religion, and for me is my religion'. Therefore, when there is a Muslim say Merry Christmas, then personally I feel sorry and sad, because it a mixed *ubudiyah* ... It is not right, when a Muslim follows a religious ceremony of another religion, it is also not proper if there are other religious communities following and carrying out our religion ceremony.

**Table 4**  
**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>  | <b>Intolerance</b>   |
|---|--|
| - Muslims implement Islamic teachings, other religious communities may not disturb, and vice versa. | - When it comes to worship, then there is no word of tolerance, as stated in the Qur'an Surah Al-Kafirun verse 6 |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In term of socialization, we are encouraged to help each other for togetherness.</li> <li>- we are required to be able to create a conducive atmosphere in carrying out religious guidance and teachings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>' For you is your religion, and for me is my religion'</li> <li>- If someone from certain religion follows other religions' ceremony</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

5) Transcription of interview with informat 5 ( Khoirudin Masyid )

"I let others celebrate their holidays, in the sense that I don't need to participate, for example, when Christians celebrate Christmas I let them celebrate and for me even without wishing them happy holidays is also a form of tolerance. Tolerance in religion is an obligation that Allah conveyed through the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which of them is in surah Al Kafirun verse 6, 'For you is your religion, and for me is my religion'. This verse is very clear, that we are prohibited from disturbing or obstruct others from performing worship according to their respective religions, but don't also confuse the principle of Tawhid in Islam with the excuse of tolerance. They may not expect us to wish them as they want us to respect them by letting them do their worship. I see that there are still many of our brothers and sisters who still cannot accept differences, so that there are still many people prohibiting worship or destruction of houses of worship. For those who behave like this, let us leave it to law enforcers, because their actions do not only damage the religious values but also against the law, then leave it to law enforcement "... My opinion

about these people, 'if we reciprocate, then the question is, what's the difference between us and them?'"

**Table 5**  
**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>  | <b>Intolerance</b>  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muslims let Christians celebrate Christmas according to their teachings, and Muslims don't have to wish a Merry Christmas</li> <li>- Tolerance is an obligation Allah conveyed through the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which means for you your religion, and for me my religion</li> <li>- Do not disturb or obstruct other people to worship</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some people cannot accept the difference, so there is a prohibition of people to worship or the destruction of houses of worship,</li> <li>- The act of injuring religious values and breaking the law.</li> </ul> |

6) Transcription of interview with informant 6 ( Ahmad Dasuki)

"When I convey religious messages to the public, I am happy I can share Islamic values with others, and quite a number are interested in the concept of our religion ... Alhamdulillah some people have finally converted to Islam. Tolerance is a good thing, and good to do as a single manifestation of our nation Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in diversity). But keep in mind that tolerance has limits regarding humanity and



culture, not to aqeedah ... So I refer to the concept of ulama through the path of sanad from my teacher, one of them from the Salamun Taufiq, so wishing a Merry Christmas could be an apostate of qauli. Tolerance is a good thing, and good to do as a single manifestation of diversity or diversity. But keep in mind that tolerance has limits regarding humanity and culture, not to aqeedah ... So if I refer to the concept of ulama through the path of sanad from my teacher, one of them from the Salamun Taufiq, so wishing a Merry Christmas could be an apostate of qauli and qolbi ... in the bahailul period there are already Haram fatwas ... and that is such excessive tolerance. On the contrary, intolerance can hinder our unity and it can also cause people to mock and assume our religion is radical."

**Table 6**  
**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| Tolerance   | Intolerance  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tolerance is a good thing, and good to do as an embodiment unity in diversity</li> <li>- Tolerance has limitations regarding to humanity and culture, not to aqeedah.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inhibits national unity and results in people mock and consider Islam is radical</li> </ul> |

7) Transcription of interview with informant 7 (Ahmad Zailani)

"My experience of tolerance ... since I am not a religious figure widely known to the public, but only in the scope of the community, I have been asked to lead prayer and Yasinan (recite surah Yaasin), which has become a culture in my area, maybe even in Indonesia. The event is routinely held every month and also attended by non-Muslim residents. I refused the request with consideration to keep their feelings. For me, to keep them comfortable means I implement tolerance. Tolerance is freedom in practicing religion or worship without any obstacles or pressure from other people or other religions or other elements ... Religious tolerance means we as Muslims keep our non-Muslims brothers safe in doing their worship where Muslims are majority. Intolerance is a situation or condition that can damage religious relations, society, and can even damage state relations. Therefore, Intolerance causes friction of belief and physical friction, as it occurred in several regions in Indonesia."

**Table 7**  
**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>   | <b>Intolerance</b>   |
|--|--|
| - I was asked to lead the prayer and Yasinan which was attended by non-Muslims, but I refused to protect their feelings. | - If a minority group establishes house of worship in the middle majority group settlements.                 |
| - Freedom of practicing religion without any obstacles or pressure from  | - A situation or condition that can damage religious relations, society, and can even damage state relations |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| other people from different religions.   | Intolerance causes friction of belief and physical friction, |
| - Keep our non-Muslims brothers safe in doing their worship where Muslims are majority | as it occurred in several regions in Indonesia               |

8) Transcription of interview with informant 8 : ( Edi Susanto)

"I teach Islam subject in school and one day a teacher for another religion subject was not present. Then, during religion class, I paid attention by giving assignments according to the students' religion through cooperation with local worship house, so that these students obtained suitable religious lessons. Tolerance provides an opportunity for religious followers to worship according to their beliefs. But at the same time they must also realize that they must not disturb with the public interest to avoid misunderstandings. Tolerance in religion must be implemented because of the sunnatullah, God created differences, and we as Muslims can inform about Islam to people from different religions with noble attitudes and character, hoping they will be interested to our belief."

**Table 8**

**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>                                      | <b>Intolerance</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| - I gave assignments according to students' religions |                    |
| - Tolerance provides an opportunity for religious     |                    |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| followers to worship<br>according to their beliefs<br>- We must not disturb with the<br>public interest to avoid<br>misunderstandings<br>- Tolerance in religion must be<br>implemented because of the<br>sunnatullah, God created<br>differences,<br>- We inform about Islam to<br>people from different<br>religions with noble attitudes<br>and character, hoping they<br>will be interested to our belief |  |
|---|--|

9) Transcription of interview with informant 9 ( Syarifuddin Radin)

'I personally experienced tolerance in terms of social life with our non-Muslim brothers such as visiting sick neighbours, helping one another when a community member was struck down by a disaster, doing community service on certain days. In short, we do good to others in matters called 'muamalah', or 'human relations'. In my view, all religions teach tolerance to their people as in Islam Qur'an Surah Al Kafirun states that for you your religion, and for me my religion. It means develop and allow your religion in your own room, do not enter to the room of other religions ... The problem is, there are individuals who do not understand their religion and then spread their religion to another room and consider

them to be lost sheep ... So, if everyone carries out their respective religious teachings, then intolerance will not occur.”

**Table 9**

**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>   | <b>Intolerance</b>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social life with non-Muslims brothers</li> <li>- do good to others in matters called 'muamalah', or 'human relations</li> <li>- In Islam, Qur'an Surah Al Kafirun states that for you your religion, and for me my religion</li> <li>- develop and allow your religion in your own room, do not enter to the room of other religions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- if everyone carries out their respective religious teachings, then intolerance will not occur</li> </ul> |

10) Transcription of interviewees 10: ( Dr. Kholilurrahman, MA)

"My experience in terms of tolerance is that I can interact or socialize flexibly with our non-Muslim brothers and sisters, without justifying their belief ... Whereas my view of tolerance is, that in religion, it means that it involves aqeedah, of monotheism, meaning believing that God is " He neither begets nor is born" as stated in Surah Al Ikhlas verse three so there is no tolerance about aqeedah. When it involves with social interaction, Islam teaches tolerance in a very broad sense. In connection with the above, if there is a Muslim participating in other religious worship

activities, such as wishing a merry Christmas, then it is not the understanding to tolerance in an Islamic perspective.”

**Table 10**

**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>   | <b>Intolerance</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interact or socialize flexibly with our non-Muslim brothers and sisters, without justifying their belief</li> <li>- Aqeedah, of monotheism, meaning believing that God is " He neither begets nor is born"</li> <li>- When it involves with social interaction, Islam teaches tolerance in a very broad sense.</li> </ul> |                    |

11) Transcription of interview of informant 11 (Abdul Cholik)

"Tolerance based on my experience is when followers of religion, especially Islam, are given freedom in carrying out their worship, praying five times a day, in mosques or in homes. While religious tolerance, in my view, is very important and recommended, both in Islam and non-Islam: In Islam our guide to tolerance is Surat Al-Kafirun, which states, for you your religion and for me my religion, regarding experiences related to intolerance, when followers of one religion prevent other followers from carrying out their worship, for example when Muslims destroy churches or non-Muslims destroy mosques, that's where intolerance occurs ... So, in my opinion, intolerance in religion is forbidden and in Islam this is

mentioned in the Qur'an Surah Al An'am verse 108, which means "And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge."

**Table 11**

**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>   | <b>Intolerance</b>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Freedom in carrying out their worship</li> <li>- Tolerance in religion is very important and recommended</li> <li>- Quran Surah Al Kafirun (for you your religion and for me my religion) is a guidance for religion tolerance for Muslims</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When followers of one religion prevent other followers from carrying out their worship</li> <li>- When Muslims destroy churches or non-Muslims destroy mosques</li> </ul> |

**12) Transcription of interview with informant 12 : ( Slamet Riyadi)**

"I have a lot of experience related to interfaith religious tolerance which, as long as I served in the military. Despite the differences, we respect each other and many of my men are non-Muslim. When we serve in areas that are predominantly non-Muslims we also always respect each other. When there are religious events, we help, not in terms of religious worship rituals, but help prepare events, such as setting up places, sound systems, and other technical matters. This occurs in different religious activities,

Islam and other religions. My experience in terms of intolerance I found in discussions with fellow Muslims who have different denomination from me. At the time I could see for myself how they only rely on high pitch tone and muscle. They won't budge and do not respect the opinions of others. According to them, their opinion is right. I see this attitude as the seeds of intolerance that seem to grow and further if people like this are given the power, it would be dangerous for religious survival."

**Table 12**  
**Significant Statements Regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>  | <b>Intolerance</b>  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We respect each other</li> <li>- We help preparing the religious event, not in terms of ritual worship, but setting up places, sound systems, and other technical matters</li> <li>- we perform mutual respect for differences in religious views as long as the differences are not basic principles in the teachings of Islam</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussions only rely on high pitch tone and muscle and no one budges and does not respect other opinions because he thinks that his opinion is always right and this may be the seed of intolerance.</li> <li>- If intolerant people are given the power, they will threat religious survival.</li> </ul> |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intolerance is totally incompatible with the teachings of any religions</li> <li>- Limited knowledge and practice or following some teachers (or religious leaders) blindly in matters of beliefs and it may lead to misunderstanding</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## II. Meaning Formed from Significant Statements about Tolerance and Intolerance

**Table 13**  
**Meaning Formed from Significant Statements**  
**regarding Tolerance and Intolerance**

| <b>Tolerance</b>  | <b>Intolerance</b>   |
|---|--|
| 1. Everyone is free to practice worship according to their beliefs, without pressure and interference on the basis of mutual tolerance and respect. | 1. When followers of one religion obstruct and interfere with followers of other religions to practice their worship<br><br>2. Inhibiting the unity of the nation and state, and causing |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>2. Muslims and non-Muslims interact and mingle in a conducive atmosphere, without justifying each other's beliefs.</p> <p>3. Develop and allow your religion in your own room, do not enter the room of other religious communities,</p> <p>4. Doing good things like forgiving among followers of different religions during religious holidays</p> | <p>people to mock and consider Islam as radical</p> <p>3. Situations and conditions that can damage religious relations, society, and even damage state relations because religion is a matter of individual belief</p> <p>4. Disputing, fighting, destroying, hating and spiteful in responding to differences in religious life</p> |
|---|---|

### III. General Themes Grouping Tolerance and Intolerance

Table 14

#### General Themes of Tolerance and Intolerance

| Tolerance   | Intolerance   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. <b>Tolerant Characteristics:</b><br/>Mutual respect and give freedom to others who are different from us, both religion and opinion.</p> <p>2. <b>Tolerant Consequences:</b><br/>Creating an atmosphere conducive to carrying out</p> | <p>1. <b>Intolerant Characteristics:</b><br/>Not respecting and appreciating the worship activities of followers of other religions, because they understand the teachings of religion textually, blind fanatics, and injustice</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>the teachings of each other's religion, being equal and getting to know one another for the common good.</p> <p>3. <b>Limits of Tolerance:</b> With regard to humanity and culture, but not on principles / aqeedah</p> <p>4. <b>Tolerant Actions:</b> Good deeds to people of different religions in social / community matters</p> | <p>2. <b>Consequences of intolerance:</b><br/>Cause tension and disputes between people of different religions, so that it can inhibit national and state unity.</p> <p>3. <b>Limits of Intolerance:</b> If followers of religions practice their own religious teachings, intolerance will not occur</p> <p>4. <b>Intolerant Actions:</b><br/>Behaviour that is contrary to religious teachings such as the perpetrators of riots and disputes, disputes, damaging, hating, and slandering.</p> |
|---|--|

#### IV. In-depth Description of Tolerance and Intolerance

Table 15

**In-depth Descriptions of Tolerance and Intolerance**

| Tolerance   | Intolerance  |
|---|--|
| In a multi-religious society, everyone is free to practice worship according to his beliefs on the basis of mutual respect with other people of different religions. Muslims and non-Muslims can interact and | Religious intolerance is characterized by an attitude of disrespect for other religious worship activities. This attitude arises because of understanding religious teachings textually, blind fanatics, and injustice. As |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>minge in a conducive and equal atmosphere and get to know one another for the common good. Nevertheless, there are limits where the process of religious development and propagation must continue to take place within the scope of the teachings of each religion, in the sense of not reaching into the scope of other religions. Tolerable acts of religion appear from helping each other in social issues such as visiting sick people, social work, and sharing food on religious days.</p> | <p>a result, tensions and disputes arise between people of different religions, which can inhibit national and state unity. The limit of intolerance is perceived if a minority group establishes a place of worship in the midst of a majority group settlement; a Muslim follows another religious worship, or other religious communities carry out Islamic worship. The act of intolerance in religion is interpreted as all behaviours that are contrary to religious teachings such as immorality and wrongdoing such as Muslims destroy churches, non-Muslims destroy mosques; fight, hate, and envy.</p> |
|---|--|

## Discussion

Based on the results of interviews with twelve informants, in their daily lives, they are clerics who usually give Islamic lectures, it revealed their experience, awareness, and interpretation of the phenomenon of tolerance and intolerance in religion. From the explorations of the awareness structures of the informants, it is tracked and identified four major themes that the informants interpreted during dealing with the phenomenon of religious tolerance and intolerance: the

characteristics of tolerance and intolerance, the consequences of tolerance and intolerance, the limits of tolerance and intolerance, and acts of tolerance and intolerance.

Tolerant characteristics can be said to have been evident in everyday life, because Indonesians are generally known for their friendly nature, as expressed by an informant as follows:

"Tolerant in religion is an attitude of respect for the beliefs and understandings of others for the realization of harmony in religious life. This can be interpreted by giving freedom to followers of other religions in carrying out their worship according to what they hold". On the contrary, intolerance is an inverted understanding of the concept of tolerance, which is an attitude of not tolerating, disrespecting the religious activities of other religions. In my view, Islam highly respects the activities of other religions, but in terms of belief, (monotheism, aqeedah, and worship) Islam cannot be considered equal and true compared to other religions".

However, Kadri says that at certain moments such as general elections, both legislative and regional head elections (Pilkada) and presidential elections, the public is easily ignited emotions regarding issues of tolerance and intolerance, even to the point of causing conflict in society.<sup>19</sup> This was revealed by an informant who said

"I found intolerance experience during the 2019 Presidential Election. This happened when my brother put up a banner for one of the Presidential / Vice Presidential Candidates and there was a neighbour who felt superior asking for the banner to be taken down from my parents' house".

According to Azyumardi Azra's study of religious intolerance manifested in violence related to followers of other religions, partly due to the understanding and

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<sup>19</sup> Wahab N.K. Dialektika Komunikasi pada Debat Pilpres 2019 dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an, *El-Madani: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam*, Vol.1 No.1 (2019), 49-60, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53678/elmadani.v1i01.49>

praxis of religious intolerance also stemmed from a literal understanding of the verses in each holy book. Intolerant groups usually hold such verses without looking at the context in the past when the verses of the scriptures were revealed or standardized relating to the context of life in the present and the future.

The experience of the informants regarding to the phenomenon of religious tolerance and religious shows that tolerance has its limits, as the informant stated as follows.

"However, tolerance in Islam is not excessive tolerance and use all means, so this is the importance of Surah Al-Kafirun to be comprehended 'for you your religion and for me my religion'. All the verses in this Surah regulate the limits of tolerance in religion ... That is to develop and allow your religion in your own room, do not enter the room of other religion".

This tolerance limit according to Islamic perspective, as stated by the informants, seems as though Islam is an exclusive and closed religion. Indeed, Islam is a very tolerant religion, as stated by the informants as follows:

"Islam has taught how people should be tolerant to others, even to our own parents who incidentally are non-Muslims, we must also perform good deeds, as this was taught by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. In Islam, tolerance is limited by aqidah, as stated in the Qur'an Surah Al Mumtahanah verses 8 and 9.

The strict limit of tolerance in accordance with Topikurohman and Mahyudin that religious communication is needed to see how far this tolerance applies in society. Tolerance does not mean that someone who already has a belief then converts to interact with someone different belief/ religion; nor is it intended to acknowledge the truth of all religions/beliefs, but rather to be in his beliefs. Tolerance is needed to create social balance and cohesion in multicultural societies.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Topikurohman, B., Kecerdasan Komunikasi Spiritual dalam Upaya Membangun Perdamaian dan Toleransi Beragama, *El-Madani-Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam*, Vol.1, No.2, (2020), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53678/elmadani.v1i02.128>

If the theme of tolerant action is interpreted as mutual help to help in social problems such as visiting the sick, shared social work, and sharing food on religious days, then intolerant action is the opposite of tolerance - all behaviours that conflict with religious teachings such as heinous and unjust acts; Muslims destroy churches, non-Muslims destroy mosques; fight, hate, and envy.

Regarding tolerant actions, one informant revealed his experience "My experience of tolerance; I have a non-muslim neighbor who offered his house for studying Islam; I have a neighbour who always brings a basket cake on Chinese New Year and I also give them special dish during Eid Fitr. We do that without wishing happy holidays and it is a mutual respect." Another informant share his experience "Once I was asked to lead the prayer and yaasinan (recite surah Yaasin) but I refused because there are some nonmuslims attended that event." And another told his experience "When there are religious events, we help, not in terms of religious worship rituals, but help prepare events, such as setting up places, sound systems, and other technical matters."

Regarding intolerant actions, one of the informants shared his experience, "During discussion, they only rely on high pitch tone and muscle. They won't budge and do not respect the opinions of others. According to them, their opinion is right." Another informant said, "Intolerance cannot be measured simply by not wishing a Merry Christmas, but there is more important thing than just wishing. For example, even if we do not wish a Merry Christmas, we give freedom to those who celebrate it, I think this is tolerant " ... while the forms of intolerant actions are disputes, conflicts, destructive, hateful and malicious in responding to religious differences ".

## **Conclusion**

Based on research and discussion in the previous section, it can be concluded as follows: Ulama in West Jakarta interpret religious tolerance as the freedom for everyone to perform worship according to his beliefs on the basis of mutual

respect with other people of different religions to create conducive atmosphere. This freedom is limited by the scope of religions which manifests through mutual respect in social and cultural issues.

Religious intolerance is characterized by attitudes not respecting and appreciating the religious activities of other religions as this occurred because of understanding the teachings of religion textually, blind fanatics, and injustice that inhibits national unity. If followers of religions practice their own religious teachings, intolerance will not occur. Intolerant action is behaviour that is contrary to religious teachings such as the perpetrators of riots and disputes, disputes, damaging, hating, and slandering.



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