



**UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS
TOLERANCE: A Study of the Living Qur'an
in Madura, Indonesia**

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Abstract: This study intends to investigate how Muslims understand and practice religious tolerance teachings with other religious communities in Madura, Indonesia. The knowledge and forms of tolerance practices in the dynamics of the lives of people of different religions in Pamekasan, Madura, are described in this study using a qualitative-descriptive research approach. This research uses observation, interviews, and documentation to examine empirical data in the field. According to field observations and interviews, the findings of this study led to three significant conclusions. First, Pamekasan people understand that religious tolerance is essential for establishing a peaceful life with other religious communities. In other words, society has practiced the teachings of tolerance according to what is understood in the verses of the Qur'an about the importance of coexistence with different religious communities. Second, the concrete form of the practice of the values of tolerance is embodied in socio-religious life, such as social service activities, ritual traditions, and helping each other celebrate religious days. Third, the factors forming the values of tolerance contained in the verses of the Qur'an are the harmony of the four houses of worship in one complex, local wisdom, and the role of interfaith organizations.

Keywords: Religious Tolerance, Interfaith Community, Living Qur'an, Local Wisdom, Madura

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Introduction

RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS threaten society's security and peace in building relationships with fellow human beings. Even though an area has a diversity of religions and different religious understandings, it still tries to maintain harmony and upholds

tolerance between religious communities. This reality shows that each region must face significant challenges in maintaining harmony among citizens with different religious beliefs and understandings. Every region in Indonesia has different ways and mechanisms for handling conflict and practicing the teachings of tolerance to all citizens without exception, with the hope that every citizen is concerned with maintaining harmony regardless of religious background.

The diversity of religions in Indonesia is an extraordinary gift that can become a potential for unity among all religious groups. This can be seen from the diversity of the Muslim community in Pamekasan, Madura, inhabited by many different religions and religious groups. Based on data from the Pamekasan Regency Central Statistics Agency, the number of followers of Islam (87%), Catholic Christians (5%), Protestant Christians (4%), Buddhists (2%), Hindus (1%), and others (1%).¹ This plurality of religions can affect the physical structure of an area, for example, the emergence of new buildings with religious nuances. For example, with the emergence of houses of worship for minorities close together, there is no barrier between one place of worship and another.²

This reality shows the existence of meetings between different religious groups and the interaction of culture and traditions inherent in each religion. This has a tremendous potential to build more intimate interactions between each religion and establish more interactive dialogue among fellow citizens of different beliefs so that no distances or barriers prevent them from living together in diversity. This is because the most sensitive issues in society are directly related to religious issues, which often trigger conflicts between religious communities.³ Minority groups are continually

¹ Badan Pusat Statistik Pamekasan, "Banyak Pemeluk Agama Menurut Kecamatan," n.d., <https://pamekasankab.bps.go.id/statictable/2020/06/25/315/banyaknya-pemeluk-agama-menurut-kecamatan-2019-jiwa-.html>.

² Mukayat Al-Amin dan Khoirul Anam, "Fenomena Pembangunan Rumah Ibadah Agama Minoritas Di Pamekasan," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 15, no. 1 (2019): 36–52.

³ Mohammad Takdir, M Mushthafa, and Rozinah AS, "The Dynamics of Religious Conflict in Indonesia: Contestation and Resolution of Religious Conflicts in The New Order Age," *Al-Adyan: Journal of Religious Studies* 2, no. 2

marginalized in the dynamics of a pluralistic society.⁴ The most crucial thing in religious diversity is that each can accept and respect differences and always uphold more intense friendships to create authentic harmony for others. Of course, this enthusiasm must be accompanied by guidance from religious leaders or clerics so that they prioritize brotherhood and human values as a means of building harmony among citizens.

Likewise, what happened to the life of the people in Pamekasan Madura, most of whom embraced Islam with complete confidence and high dedication? The existence of Islam in Pamekasan Madura as the majority religion does not necessarily make its adherents take actions that lead to marginalization or discrimination against minority religious groups but still tries to maintain a sense of peace and tranquility as good Indonesian citizens who obey state law.⁵ This is because Madurese clerics have an essential role in managing diversity and being problem solvers for religious conflicts that occur in society.⁶

This research focuses on how the people in Pamekasan understand and practice the messages of the Qur'an about the importance of maintaining good relations with different groups by promoting tolerance or mutual respect amidst the diversity of society. This research studies the living Quran in the Pamekasan Muslim community in terms of understanding and practicing the verses of tolerance in every step and everyday activity, not only in

(2021): 103–21, <https://doi.org/10.15548/al-adyan.v2i2.3184>. See also Erie Hariyanto et al., "The Resistance of Madurese Muslim Society to the Development of Non-Muslim Tourism Objects," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 1 (January 30, 2024): 27–50, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i1.1108>.

⁴ Gilang Ramadhan, "Majority Religious Politics: The Struggle for Religious Rights of Minorities in Sampang, Madura," *Simulacra* 5, no. 1 (2022): 17–28, <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v5i1.13427>.

⁵ On the issue of law and citizenship, see, for example, Abdul Haq Syawqi et al., "Law Omission in Muslim Society: Inquiring Citizen Rights in the Administration of Islamic Family Law in Madura Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 3 (October 21, 2023): 1757–77, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i3.20048>.

⁶ Limas Dodi, "The Hidden Resolution Approach by Madurese Ulama as A Community-Based Model of Religious Conflict Prevention and Resolution," *Al-Tahris: Jurnal Pem* 21, no. 2 (2021): 285–314.

the same religious community but also with other religious communities. This study of the Living Qur'an was carried out to deepen the understanding (reception) and meaning of the community regarding verses of tolerance related to inter-religious relations in the life of the Pamekasan people, who are very plural, religious differences and religious group differences.

There are several important reasons why this research is interesting to study, and it shows that people understand the meaning of positive tolerance. First, the religious plurality of the Pamekasan people is very varied, and almost all religions officially recognized by the state are adhered to by Madurese or other ethnic groups outside Indonesia. This reality proves that the Pamekasan people greatly emphasize religious harmony and coexistence with other religious groups or communities.⁷ Second, there is a symbol of tolerance practiced by the Pamekasan people in building relationships and interactions with all religions. The symbol of tolerance is the existence of four places of worship in one location, namely Musala (Muslim place of worship), Vihara (Buddhist), Pura (Confucian), and Candi (Hindu). The location of four places of religious worship is the Avalokitesvara Vihara, Candi Hamlet, Polagan Village, and Galis District Pamekasan. Third, the symbol of tolerance is shown by a church in Pamekasan, directly opposite the Agung Syuhada mosque. These two houses of worship are symbols of tolerance and harmony because they are close together and show a spirit of brotherhood.

This research is interesting because the relations and interactions between Muslims and other communities are not only in the form of symbols of places of worship that can coexist without causing large-scale disputes but also in the form of social activities that increasingly build interaction and communication between citizens. Even though most Pamekasan people are Muslim, they can still establish excellent and friendly relations with other developed religious communities, such as Christianity,

⁷ Dina Mardiana, Muhammad Yusuf, and Asyraf Isyraqi Jamil, "Religious Harmony Construct Amid A Plural Community in East Java," *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 28, no. 2 (2020): 192–210, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v28i2.3777>.

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. This can undoubtedly be seen in harmony between religious communities in various religious activities or rituals that mutually support one another, including in traditional ceremonies and celebrations of religious holidays of each religion based on local wisdom.⁸

The practice of tolerance has been implemented in the life of the Pamekasan people, who are very multicultural, even without discriminating against religious backgrounds, which often become indicators of inter-religious conflict. In fact, despite religious differences, the people of Pamekasan respect each other's religious differences and do not discriminate against and persecute people of other religions. This is also reflected in the spirit of tolerance applied by several religious groups that have emerged and developed in Pamekasan. Fethullah Gulen emphasized that tolerance is an attitude of mutual respect that shows compassion, generosity, and patience in dealing with all differences, whether differences of opinion, ideology, ethnicity, or beliefs.⁹

Several previous studies are relevant to research on practicing and understanding religious tolerance in people of different religions. Research conducted by Galang Asmara has four principles of religious tolerance and harmony, namely the principles of mutual respect, maintaining togetherness, appreciating differences, and loving peace among people.¹⁰ Another study related to religious tolerance in families of different religions in the Toraja ethnic group in South Sulawesi. They apply tolerance to families who choose different religions according to their beliefs.¹¹ Likewise, research on the practice of Tolerance in Javanese society is not only influenced by religious factors but also

⁸ Iskandar Dzulkarnain, "Diversity Relationship Based on Local Wisdom in Madura," *UMM International Conference on Pure and Applied Research (UMM-ICOPAR)* 01, no. 01 (2015): 256–62.

⁹ M. Fethullah Gulen, *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance* (New Jersey: Princeton University of Press, 2004).

¹⁰ Galang Asmara, "The Principles of Religious Tolerance and Harmony Among the People of Sasak Tribe in Lombok Island, Indonesia," *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 21, no. 1 (2018): 2018.

¹¹ Mansyur Radjab et al., "Religious Tolerance Practices: A Case Study of Families with Different Religions in Toraja Ethnicity South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia" 11, no. 5 (2020): 1145–54, <https://doi.org/10.34218/IJM.11.5.2020.104>.

has much background from social, cultural, and political factors.¹² This research shows that teachers are essential in cultivating tolerance values through cooperation and exemplary attitudes in behavior and actions.¹³ Another research is related to the teachings of religious moderation through the values contained in the Qur'an.¹⁴

Another research that is very relevant to this research is the practice of tolerance in Buneng Village, one of the areas in Blitar Regency.¹⁵ Religious tolerance in a multicultural society must be practiced using a conflict sociology approach to manage conflict and foster inter-religious tolerance.¹⁶ Research on the comparison of tolerance practices between Indonesia and Tunisia is interesting to observe because they have similarities in the ideology of religious moderation, the political history of tyrannical power, and the fight against radicalism movements.¹⁷ There is also research on the application of interfaith tolerance in the life of a multicultural Indonesian society¹⁸ Moreover, the meaning of tolerance from the perspective of the Qur'an and the Bible is a comparison in

¹² Umarwan Sutopo, "Religious Tolerance (Tolerance of Muslim and Buddhist Communities in Sodong Hamlet from an Islamic Perspective)," *Journal of Law and Family Studies* 3, no. 2 (2021): 48–82.

¹³ Imam Tabroni, Diki Muhammad Abdillah, and Siti Nurjanah, "The Role of the PAI Teacher in Implementing the Values of Inter-Religious Tolerance in Students" 2, no. 2 (2022): 779–86.

¹⁴ Rifqi Muntaqo, "Living Hadist Dan Qur'an Dalam Membentuk Religiusitas Anak Sejak Dini Melalui Bingkai Moderasi Beragama Di Purworejo," *Keagamaan: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 3, no. 2 (2022).

¹⁵ Bherta Sri Eko & Hendar Putranto, "The Role of Intercultural Competence and Local Wisdom in Building Intercultural and Inter-Religious Tolerance," *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 49, no. 04 (2019): 341–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2019.1639535>.

¹⁶ Ahmad Suradi, John Kenedi, and Buyung Surahman, "Religious Tolerance in Multicultural Communities: Towards a Comprehensive Approach in Handling Social Conflict," *Udayana Journal of Law and Culture* 4, no. 2 (2020): 229, <https://doi.org/10.24843/ujlc.2020.v04.i02.p06>.

¹⁷ Muhammad Roy Purwanto et al., "Tolerance and Freedom of Religion in Indonesia and Tunisia," *Hamdard Islamicus* 43, no. 2 (2020): 2126–35.

¹⁸ Moh. Abdul Kholiq Hasan, "Interfaith Tolerance and Its Relevance to the Indonesian Diversity: A Study on Ibn 'Ashūr's al-Tahrīr Wa al-Tanwīr," *Ulumuna* 22, no. 2 (2018): 333–62, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v22i2.301>.

analyzing the practice of religious tolerance in a multicultural society.¹⁹

The previous research above shows that no research focuses on teaching and understanding verses of religious tolerance in different religious communities in Pamekasan, Madura. This research is on Madurese people, who are known to be very religious and have much local wisdom that can be learned as a very abundant cultural insight. This research seeks to present sociological and phenomenological facts that characterize the dynamics and interactions of the Pamekasan Muslim community with a diverse community of different religions.

This research focuses on how the understanding of the Muslim community in Pamekasan Madura towards the teachings of religious tolerance is based on the values contained in the Qur'an, including QS. Al-Kafirun 1-6, QS. Al-Baqarah: 25, QS. Al-Mumtahanah: 8-9, and QS. Al-Hujurat: 13. This research also attempts to describe the forms of interaction between the Muslim community in Pamekasan and people of other religions in teaching religious tolerance. From people's understanding of the importance of tolerance based on the values contained in the Qur'an, it can be seen in the forms of religious tolerance teaching practices when interacting with other religious communities. Several verses in the Qur'an that are directly related to religious tolerance become important data in describing the understanding, meaning, and tolerance practices of the Madurese when interacting with other religious communities. So, it is essential to understand the values of religious moderation (tolerance) contained in the Qur'an and hadith.²⁰

This study uses a qualitative method to elaborate the understanding, meaning, and practice of religious tolerance teachings in the Pamekasan Madura Muslim community when

¹⁹ Muhammad Hifdil Islam, "Tolerance in Perspective of Qur'an and Bible (Comparative Analysis of Religious Tolerance in Diverse Communities)," *Humanistika* 03, no. 02 (2017): 45–58.

²⁰ Hanan Asrowi Muhammad Mansur, Indal Abror, Mahatva Yoga Adi Pradana, Muhammad Yusuf, Lahfiz Safutra, Muhammad Rizky Romdony, "Internalisasi Nilai Al- Qur'an Dan Hadis Dalam Memahami Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia" VII (2023): 207–22, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2022.4295>.

interacting and dealing with other community groups of different religions or religious groups within the Muslim community. This research aims to answer questions about thoughts, knowledge, and social experiences related to the dynamics of life in a multicultural society, especially the Madurese community.²¹ In addition, this research also seeks to find the practice of teaching religious moderation based on what is understood in the verses of the Qur'an about the values of tolerance, which are essential to be taught to Muslim communities when living side by side with other religious groups.

Three data collection techniques were used in this study. First, observation. This observation method allows researchers to examine the dynamics of people's lives more closely, related to understanding and practicing religious tolerance. Second, the interview method. Interviews were carried out to collect data from informants in more depth (in-depth interviews). For example, the Pamekasan people, interfaith leaders, and people of different religions are part of the Pamekasan Regency. Third, the documentation method. This method is taken from several references, such as books, journals, and research reports to support the previous method.

Meanwhile, the analysis used in this research is descriptive analysis concerning the results of observations and interviews. Data analysis has several stages: data reduction, display, and verification. When analyzing data, researchers used qualitative descriptive analysis to process data in the field.

Evidence of Madura Community as a Tolerant Society

This research was conducted in Pamekasan Madura as an essential object in understanding the practice of tolerance based on understanding the verses of the Qur'an, which became an essential study in this research. The choice of this location is not without reason because each region has its character in building good interactions with fellow human beings, especially in communities of different religions. This data shows that Pamekasan, as a

²¹ Agus Salim, *Teori Dan Paradigma Penelitian Sosial: Dari Denzin Guba Dan Penerapannya* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2001).

Gerbang Salam City, has extreme religious values and is not easily trapped by religious understandings that conflict with religious teachings.

The existence of Islam as the majority religion in Pamekasan, which is almost 90%, does not necessarily cause concern from religious leaders and the Muslim community themselves. The existence of other religious communities is a reflection and symbol of harmony among religious communities. It does not make relations and communication between religious communities in Pamekasan tenuous or disconnected from these religious differences.²² The Madurese people place great emphasis on ethics as part of the tradition and as learning in every Islamic educational institution.²³

The data on the strength of religious practices among the Madurese community proves that Pamekasan is not concerned about all forms of religious differences. However, it must be admitted that other religions began to flourish and develop in Pamekasan with their variants and patterns. In Huub de Jonge's view, Islam as a religion practiced in Madura has always remained and has been eroded by various expansions from outside; even its traditions and culture have always remained the same due to the times. This means the Madurese people can maintain a harmonious and peaceful life by fostering good relations with all religious communities.²⁴

Another development that has emerged in the life of the Madurese people, especially in Pamekasan, is the construction of houses of worship that cover all religions. This fact regarding the emergence of new buildings with religious nuances, including houses of worship, is a historical necessity that continues to exist in the religious life of society. For example, with the emergence of

²² Mien Ahmad Rifai, *Manusia Madura: Perilaku, Etos Kerja, Penampilan, Dan Pandangan Hidupnya* (Yogyakarta: Pilar Media, 2007).

²³ Ach. Nurholis Majid and Fitrah Sugiarto, "Socio-Religious Education of the Tenggka Tradition in the Madura Community," *INFERENSI: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 16, no. 1 (2022): 25–42, <https://doi.org/10.18326/infs13.v16i1.25-42>.

²⁴ Huub De Jonge, *Madura Dalam Empat Zaman: Pedagang, Perkembangan Ekonomi Dan Islam: Suatu Studi Antropologi* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1989).

houses of worship for minorities close together, there is no barrier between one place of worship and another. A unique phenomenon in religious life in Pamekasan Madura is the existence of the Avalokitesvara Temple in Polagan Village, Galis District, Pamekasan Madura. The existence of this temple is located around 17 kilometers from the city of Pamekasan, which was built in the 17th century AD.²⁵ This temple is a *prima donna* for the community because apart from being a place of worship, it is also a religious tour with uniqueness and distinctiveness compared to other places.

What is interesting about this Avalokitesvara Vihara temple? If seen with the naked eye, this temple is no different from other temples in several regions in Indonesia. However, this temple symbolizes tolerance and harmony in Madura's religious life. This Vihara symbolizes tolerance because there are four houses of worship harmoniously together without any disputes between adherents. This monastery is a place of worship for adherents of Buddhism and Confucianism, as well as Hindus and Muslims. The existence of this Vihara is a symbol of tolerance and harmony for religious people in Pamekasan Madura because there are four houses of worship built in one complex. People can live in harmony without feeling that anyone is being competed.²⁶ "Among these places of worship, they are not far apart, even close to each other, which are only limited by walls. The surrounding community, which is Buddhist and Hindu, can freely perform their worship in this place. This Vihara has presented itself as a symbol of social harmony regardless of religious background."²⁷

The description of the life of the Madurese people regarding the teachings of tolerance can vary depending on various factors,

²⁵ Felicia Tania, Lintu Tulistyantoro, and Linggajaya Suryanata, "Studi Ikonografi Panofsky Pada Ornamen Interior Vihara Avalokitesvara Pamekasan, Madura," *Dimensi Interior* 15, no. 1 (2019): 7–15, <https://doi.org/10.9744/interior.15.1.7-15>.

²⁶ Mohammad Takdir, "Potret Kerukunan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal: Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Harmoni Dalam Ungkapan 'Rampak Naong Bringen Korong' Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Madura," *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 16, no. 1 (2018): 73, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v16i1.2057>.

²⁷Interview with Kosala Mahinda on April 23, 2023.

such as education, life experience, religion, and culture. However, in general, the Madurese, especially the Pamekasan people, have a robust tradition of tolerance in accepting religious and cultural differences as a historical inevitability. Among the evidence is the existence of four places of worship at the Vihara, religious groups, and two places of worship facing each other, namely the Mosque and the Church. The portrait of the community's religious life still considers the values of local wisdom and culture in accommodating all the various needs and interests of different religious communities. In this case, religion and culture are central to building harmony among groups of people of different religions.²⁸

The Understanding of the Madurese Society of the Teachings of Tolerance

This section analyzes how the Pamekasan Muslim community interprets and understands the verses of tolerance as a basis for building relationships and interactions with people of other religions or religious groups. It is essential to know that the existing verses of the Qur'an understood by the Muslim community can be translated and implemented in concrete actions by truly emulating the attitudes and behavior of the Prophet Muhammad when living side by side (coexistence) with other religious groups. This means that the Qur'an is not only read and recited according to the tastes of its adherents but also internalized and applied in daily life, especially when interacting and building partnerships with people of other religions.

Tolerance is accepting different views and respecting each other's different views, opinions, and beliefs. So, tolerant people can appreciate and respect different views regarding attitudes towards something. Tolerance is often translated as patience and broad-mindedness. Showing excellent tolerance means showing patience and total spaciousness. Tolerance also contains the trait of

²⁸ Hadi Pajarianto, Imam Pribadi, and Puspa Sari, "Tolerance between Religions through the Role of Local Wisdom and Religious Moderation," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7043>.

endurance, which gives strength always to prioritize the values of respect for others.²⁹ According to Socrates, tolerance is understood as knowledge that produces wisdom, and wisdom is obtained from the results of inclusive and tolerant dialogue. This model of tolerance has an ethical-philosophical meaning that reflects an attitude of peaceful coexistence regardless of differences in beliefs.³⁰

The meaning of tolerance in Islam reflects respect for human values as the primary basis for interacting with others. Tolerance is closely related to humility, generosity, friendliness, and courtesy in respecting others as fellow human beings or God's creatures.³¹ The attitude of respect for others in Islam is a fixed price reflecting the spirit of faith without harboring seeds of hatred for others. Tolerance is a reflection that a person can control himself, impose his own will, and ignore the existence of others.³²

Tolerance towards other people must reflect an emotional control that does not impose the will on any differences in beliefs. In the view of Imam al-Ghazali, controlling emotions and anger over the emergence of different views and beliefs can be done in several steps. First, they understood the meaning of virtue in forgiving and controlling anger by God's word in QS. Ali Imron verses 133-134. Second, fear of Allah's punishment for angry people. Third, the impact of hostilities should be avoided. Fourth, imagine bad facial expressions, like when a dog is angry. Fifth, always be mature in identifying the causes of anger. In every practice of life, tolerance is as much as capable of controlling blind fanaticism for dogmatism and exclusivism, which are real threats to the upholding of human values in the world.³³

²⁹ Adi Ekopriyono, *The Spirit of Pluralism: Menggali Nilai-Nilai Kehidupan, Mencapai Kearifan* (Jakarta: PT. Elek Media Komputindo, 2005).

³⁰ Andrew Fiala, *Tolerance and the Ethical Life* (New York: Continuum, 2005).

³¹ Tayla Kapelles, "Distinguishing Between Attitudes towards Muslims and Tolerance of Islamic Practices" (Australian Catholic University, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.26199/acu.8y719>.

³² Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum Al-Din* (Beirut: Dar a-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2002).

³³ Ngainum Naim, *Teologi Kerukunan: Mencari Titik Temu Dalam Keragaman* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2011).

From the interviews with informants about the meaning of tolerance in verses of the Qur'an, several significant findings were found indicating that the Pamekasan people have an open understanding of how to treat different religious communities based on knowledge learned from the values contained in the Qur'an. Based on interviews with informants about the meaning of tolerance and community understanding in interacting with other religious communities, they said, "As human beings, we must live in harmony." Madurese people realize that the difference in life is part of God's provision, and humans cannot deny it.³⁴

Then, how do they understand the importance of religious tolerance towards other religious groups? Based on the results of interviews with informants, it was said that recitation activities carried out in villages, educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and community activities had the same understanding of practicing the teachings of tolerance contained in the Qur'an. "I understand the meaning of tolerance from every religious recitation activity carried out on Islamic days, such as the birthday of the Prophet and other religious activities that many Muslims attend. Community enthusiasm for participating in religious activities is genuine in Pamekasan because they believe that religious activities can encourage increased faith and piety to Allah."³⁵

Then what about people's understanding when interpreting the verses of tolerance in the Qur'an? First, the verse of tolerance, used as the basis and foundation of public understanding, is QS. Al-Baqarah verse 25 reads, "There is no compulsion to (enter) religion (Islam)." This verse emphasizes that everyone has the right to have a religion based on their own beliefs, and everyone must have the right to decide their beliefs without coercion from other people. "I interpret this verse as a choice for everyone to choose Islam or another religion, even for religion. Religious matters are private, and only that person has the right to decide whether or not he or she wants to have a religion. What is important, in my opinion, is that every religious community does

³⁴Interview with Hamdani, 26 May 2023.

³⁵Interview with Muhammad Syamsul Arifin, 20 May 2023.

not discriminate against or insult people who have decided on a particular religion.”³⁶

The second verse, which is used as the basis for understanding tolerance, is QS. Al-Mumtahanah verses 8-9. This verse reads, “God does not forbid you to do good and be fair to those who do not fight you in religious matters and do not expel you from your hometown. Verily, Allah loves those who act justly.” “I understand this verse that Allah does not forbid his people to help and cooperate with other religious communities as long as they do not interfere with religious matters. I used to give sadaqah to my neighbor, who happens to be a Buddhist, and he kindly accepted what I gave him. Moreover, later on, my neighbors also did the same thing.”

The third verse related to religious tolerance is QS. Al-Kafirun verses 1-6. This verse reads, “You disbelievers: I will not worship what you worship. Moreover, you are not a worshiper of the God I worship. Moreover, I have never been a worshiper of what you worship. Moreover, you are not a worshiper of the God I worship. For you, your religion, and to me mine.” “I understand this verse as an affirmation that we do not need to interfere in other people’s religions and must hold fast to our beliefs. I understand that religion is a private matter, and there is no need to force others to follow the religion we believe in.”³⁷

Fourth, the fourth verse, the basis for understanding religious tolerance in the Pamekasan Madura community, is QS. Al-Hujarat verse 13. This verse reads, “O humanity, verily We created you from a male and a female and made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you.” “I understand this verse that differences in religion, culture, ethnicity, and language are not a barrier to getting to know each other and doing good to everyone. Because what God values is not position and wealth, but piety.”³⁸

³⁶Interview with Ubaidurrahman on 22 May 2023

³⁷Interview with Muhammad Cholid on 24 May 2023

³⁸Interview with Muhammad Fadil on 25 May 2023

Forms of Religious Tolerance Practices in the Dynamics of Madurese Community Life

This section describes the forms of tolerance practiced by the Madurese community regarding social relations and interactions with other religious communities. As a religious community, Pamekasan is known for its diversity of religions and ideologies in various religious groups. However, the Pamekasan Muslim community recognizes this as a treasure and potential that must be maintained from generation to generation. Several forms of social and humanitarian activities show how religious tolerance is carried out sustainably and become a teaching that continues to be passed on to the younger generation.³⁹

First, the existence of a house of worship in one complex. The interaction between the Muslim community in Pamekasan and other religious communities in terms of religious tolerance in the region can be quite harmonious. As an area with a Muslim majority, Pamekasan people are open and friendly towards people of other religions. One example of tolerance practices found in Pamekasan is the existence of various places of worship, such as mosques, churches, and temples. The Muslim community in Pamekasan is tolerant of people of other religions who worship at the place of worship and provide support and assistance in their religious activities. "In Pamekasan, four houses of worship are located in the same complex and close to one another. The surrounding community has no problem with the existence of the four houses of worship; they even support each other and maintain a comfortable climate among adherents of different religions."⁴⁰

Second, in various social and cultural activities, Pamekasan people are involved and invite members of other religions to participate. Among them are weddings, where neighbors and

³⁹ Hadi Pajarianto, Imam Pribadi, and Nur S. Galugu, "Youth Religious Moderation Model and Tolerance Strengthening Through Intellectual Humility," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8196>.

⁴⁰Interview with Mahmudi on 16 May 2023.

relatives of various religions are invited.⁴¹ They help each other to expedite activities and do not blame the religion they adhere to. This is a reflection of QS. Al-Mumtahanah verses 8-9 explain, “God does not forbid you to do good and be fair to those who do not fight you in matters of religion and do not expel you from your hometown.” This verse emphasizes the importance of building good relationships with fellow human beings regardless of religion.

Third, in various cross-religious and cultural activities, the Pamekasan people also actively enlivened events inviting other religious communities, such as Christmas, Chinese New Year, and Vesak Day celebrations. This shows that the Pamekasan people have a high awareness and understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect for differences. “I often help on Buddhist religious days when there is a Vesak day celebration. Youths and Buddhists welcome relationships because they can help each other. I feel that they believe in the attitude of Tolerance among Muslims. The same attitude is shown by Buddhists when there is a celebration of the Prophet’s Birthday, and *Isra’ Miraj* assists in various preparations for welcoming the celebration. They help in various fields; some are in the security section, preparing food and drinks, and other activities that support the smooth running of the event.”

Fourth, in addition to practicing tolerance regarding religion, interactions between the Muslim community in Pamekasan and people of other religions can also be seen in daily life. For example, in trading or doing business, Pamekasan people interact with Muslims and people of other religions. In this case, there is no discrimination or unfair treatment based on religion or belief. Local communities collaborate in trade or business activities to strengthen business capital, and cooperation in this business is well established. Moreover, many Chinese descendants who live in Pamekasan have perseverance and honesty in doing business,

⁴¹ Anni Khotijah, Sitti, Hidayati, Nurul & Annisa, “Social Harmonization Values and Local Wisdom in the Cathering Culture of Wedding Ceremonies in Madura,” *ENTITA: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 1 (2023): 15–30, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v5i1.8893>.

so I trust them and have a good attitude in building this collaboration.⁴²

Fifth, Pamekasan people are also open to cultural differences. For example, in traditional events or local traditions, such as *rokat tase'* and *rokat sabe*, members of other religions are also invited to participate in these activities. In other words, the values of religious tolerance are integrated into Islamic teachings and local wisdom.⁴³ This shows that the Pamekasan people are not only tolerant of religious differences but also cultural ones. "The practice of tolerance that is very strong in the Pamekasan community is the *rokat tase'* activity, which is held yearly. I appreciate the government that supports this ritual activity because not only Muslims participate in these activities, but people of other religions also participate in enlivening and carrying out activities together without mutual suspicion and prejudice between one another."⁴⁴

Factors Forming the Practice of Religious Tolerance

Even though the Pamekasan people are predominantly Muslim, this does not necessarily negate the existence of other religious communities that live in the Muslim community. Forming an attitude of tolerance in the form of thoughts and actions does not start from a space. However, there is a vital role for religious organizations and institutions in Pamekasan, which are vocal about the importance of living in harmony and peace with other religious communities. Among these religious organizations and institutions are the Nahdatul Ulama (NU), the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB), and other religious

⁴² Abdul Malik et al., "Identity Negotiation of Cina Benteng Community in Building Tolerance," *Journal of Governance* 7, no. 2 (2022): 363–69, <https://doi.org/10.31506/jog.v7i2.15082>.

⁴³ Umi Sumbulah, Agus Purnomo, and Jamilah Jamilah, "Islam, Local Wisdom and Religious Harmony: Religious Moderation in East-Java Christian Village Bases," *El Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam* 24, no. 1 (2022): 21–39, <https://doi.org/10.18860/eh.v24i1.16264>.

⁴⁴Interview with Shodiq, 22 May 2023.

institutions that always maintain harmony among religious communities in Pamekasan.⁴⁵

Religious organizations and institutions in Madura have a significant role in supporting the practice of teaching religious tolerance in interfaith communities. Moreover, Indonesia generally has a very high harmony index every year as an indicator of the realization of tolerance values in people's lives. Some of the activities carried out by religious organizations and institutions to support the practice of teaching religious moderation according to what is contained in the Qur'an regarding verses of Tolerance in Pamekasan Madura are as follows:

They were, first, planting tolerance values. Religious organizations and institutions, such as FKUB, guide the values of tolerance for Muslims in Pamekasan Madura. In this case, these religious organizations and institutions teach Muslims the importance of respecting religious differences and maintaining good relations with people of other faiths. By the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, the values of tolerance are not only imparted to the younger generation but also to all groups that may be able to undermine them. This results from the numerous, rapidly expanding religious organizations or groups with disparate philosophies in Pamekasan.

Second, interfaith dialogue activities are intensely carried out, supported by the Forum for Religious Harmony (FUKB) with interfaith communities. Religious organizations and institutions also frequently hold interfaith dialogues. This activity aims to strengthen understanding of religious diversity and to increase mutual respect between religious communities. Interreligious dialogue is an essential medium in establishing communication with all religious groups. This is because, in Pamekasan, many religious groups or mass organizations have different ideological affiliations.

⁴⁵ Mukhlisi Surya Fajar Rasyid, "BASRA Ulama and Medina Porch of Madura; Portrait of Religious Freedom in Madura," *Al-Ulum: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pemikiran Ke Islaman* 5, no. 1 (2018): 43–58, <https://doi.org/10.31102/alulum.5.1.2018.43-58>.

Third, interfaith cooperation. Religious organizations and institutions also often help build interfaith cooperation. This is done to build good relations and strengthen friendships between Muslims and people of other religions. Cooperation between religions is not in the context of theology or matters of faith but rather relates to strengthening institutional relations or social activities that support the achievement of harmony and peace among religious communities.

Fourth, the implementation of joint activities between religious communities. Religious organizations and institutions often hold joint activities with people of other religions, such as religious celebrations, social activities, or other events. This strengthens relations and increases understanding of tolerance among religious communities. Joint activities in religious organizations or institutions are the most effective means of reducing mutual suspicion or hatred towards other religions because they focus more on social and humanitarian matters regardless of religious background.

Fifth, the provision of places of worship for people of other religions. Religious organizations and institutions also often provide places of worship for people of other religions. This shows mutual respect for religious differences. The provision of places of worship for Muslims in one place or location has been carried out by religious organizations in Pamekasan, as evidenced by the construction of three places of worship in Pamekasan in the same place, namely prayer rooms, temples, and monasteries.

Conclusion

The results of this study conclude several significant findings. First, the Pamekasan people have an understanding of practicing the teachings of tolerance contained in the Qur'an. They interpret tolerance as an attitude of mutual respect and respect between people of different religions in maintaining peace and harmony regardless of religious differences. Second, tolerance among the people manifests in the form of social and religious activities, such as religious day celebrations, social services, business activities, and cultural rituals. Third, the factors that shape the practice of tolerance as an embodiment of an understanding of verses of

tolerance are the existence of houses of worship in one complex, local wisdom values, and the role of religious organizations and institutions in each religion.

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