



# ISLAM AND THE VALUES OF MULTICULTURAL DA'WAH: CONCEPT AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

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## Abstract

**Keywords:** Dakwah, Multikulturalisme, Islam, Perspektif.

*Multiculturalism is an increasingly prominent phenomenon in global society, where individuals from various national, cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds interact and influence one another. This makes multiculturalism one of the key characteristics of modern society. This study aims to explore the Islamic perspective on the concept of multicultural da'wah and how Islamic values can be applied within this context. The research method used is qualitative with a literature review approach, where data sources are drawn from various references relevant to the study of multiculturalism. The findings indicate that Islam offers principles and values that can serve as a guide in dealing with multiculturalism, such as the concept of Islamic universalism, maqasid al-shariah, love for fellow human beings, and the concept of ukhuwwah (brotherhood). These findings are expected to provide deeper insight into how Islamic teachings can contribute to creating a harmonious and inclusive society amidst diversity.*

**Kata kunci:** Dakwah, Multikulturalisme, Islam, Perspektif.

## Abstrak.

Multikulturalisme merupakan fenomena yang semakin menonjol dalam masyarakat global, di mana individu dari berbagai latar belakang bangsa, budaya, etnis, agama, dan bahasa berinteraksi dan saling mempengaruhi satu sama lain. Hal ini menjadikan multikulturalisme sebagai salah satu ciri utama masyarakat modern. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pandangan Islam terhadap nilai multikulturalisme dan bagaimana dakwah Islam dapat diterapkan dalam konteks tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan kajian pustaka, di mana sumber data diambil dari berbagai referensi yang relevan dengan kajian multikulturalisme. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Dakwah Islam menawarkan prinsip-prinsip dan nilai-nilai yang dapat dijadikan pedoman dalam menghadapi multikulturalisme, seperti konsep universalisme Islam, maqashid syariah, cinta antar sesama, serta konsep ukhuwwah. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan yang lebih dalam mengenai bagaimana ajaran Islam dapat berkontribusi dalam menciptakan masyarakat yang harmonis dan inklusif di tengah keragaman.

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, marked by rapid technological advancement, social interactions have become increasingly open and interconnected with the wider world. Communities consisting of individuals from diverse national, cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds are now more integrated, leading to mutual influence and cultural exchange. As a result, multiculturalism has emerged as a defining characteristic of global society.

Multiculturalism, within the context of a globalized society, refers to the recognition, appreciation, and embrace of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity within communities. In this context, intensified intercultural interaction underscores the growing importance of integrating multicultural values into Islamic da'wah strategies. Such integration is essential to fostering an inclusive and harmonious society that reflects both religious principles and contemporary social realities.

The emergence of the concept of multiculturalism can be attributed to several underlying conditions. In the context of multicultural politics, Kymlicka identifies two key factors contributing to the rise of multiculturalist ideology. First is the process of population migration to specific regions. Second is the development of minority identities that, at times, become more prominent than national identity. The first phenomenon is evident in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, which have historically served as major destinations for immigrants. The second aspect relates to individuals who perceive their minority identity as more dominant than their national identity (Saripudin, Diah Ernawati, & Erina Sovania, 2023, p. 2).

Multiculturalism also arises as an internal response by a nation to its own anti-integration processes, which are often influenced by external global factors, particularly the global movements for democracy and human rights that frequently transcend national boundaries and overlook a nation's internal integrity. Multiculturalism is derived from the concept of a multicultural society, characterized by the coexistence of multiple cultures within a single community. According to Pattinama (2020), this concept encompasses three main components: first, it relates to the specific cultural conditions of a society; second, it involves cultural diversity; and third, it reflects the attitudes and behaviors adopted in response to such pluralism.

Linguistically, the term *multicultural* is derived from the prefix *multi*, meaning many or diverse, and the word *culture*, referring to traditions, customs, and social behaviors of a group. Thus, multiculturalism denotes the existence of multiple or diverse cultures. Over time, this term evolved into *multiculturalism*, with the addition of the suffix *-ism*, signifying an ideological or philosophical stance. Multiculturalism, in this context, refers to an understanding or worldview that emphasizes cultural diversity and the interactive coexistence of various cultural elements within a single society, while internally comprising distinct and heterogeneous components. Another interpretation views multiculturalism as a philosophical perspective and ideological framework that advocates for the unity of diverse groups, wherein all individuals and communities are afforded equal social and political rights and status within a modern society (Tohirin, 2022, pp. 669–675).

In the context of global society, Canada is widely regarded as the birthplace of multiculturalism. Canadian intellectuals and policymakers have made significant efforts to define and elaborate on the concept, given that Canada is fundamentally a nation of immigrants. In this setting, multiculturalism plays a vital role. Canadian policymakers emphasize active dialogue among cultural groups, concerted efforts to build community cohesion, and the embrace of an inclusive Canadian identity.

As noted by prominent Canadian scholar Kymlicka, multiculturalism in Canada encourages members of different immigrant groups to interact, share their cultural heritage, and participate collectively in educational, economic, political, and legal institutions." Canada officially adopted multiculturalism as a national policy in 1971. The central objectives of this policy are reflected in language policies, citizenship ceremonies, and oaths introduced for immigrants—measures that

have been broadly embraced as symbols of a shared national commitment.

Indonesia itself is a highly multicultural nation. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik / BPS) in the 2010 Population Census, Indonesia is home to 1,340 ethnic groups and approximately 2,500 languages (BPS, 2010). As a Muslim-majority country with significant multicultural diversity, there is a critical need for a thoughtful, strategic, and wise approach to Islamic da'wah (propagation) in managing this diversity. The richness of Indonesia's cultural and linguistic heritage represents a valuable national asset that must be preserved and protected. This is especially important in the face of the ever-evolving dynamics of globalization, which can pose challenges to cultural stability and continuity.

This paper aims to explore how Islam views the concept of multiculturalism and to identify the Islamic da'wah values that can serve as guiding principles in engaging with multicultural thought. It is hoped that this study will offer insight, particularly for Muslim students and scholars in Islamic higher education institutions on how to interact, build mutual understanding, and contribute meaningfully within the global society.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is qualitative in nature and employs a library research method. The data sources used in this research are drawn from a range of references related to the study of multiculturalism, including contemporary scholarly journals and academic books. In addition, the author refers to several verses of the Qur'an along with their interpretations (tafsir), hadiths, as well as the views of classical and contemporary Islamic scholars and intellectuals. Through the library research method, the researcher gathers relevant data and information to construct a solid and comprehensive conceptual framework, particularly one that addresses Islamic principles concerning multiculturalism.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Etymologically, the term *multicultural* is derived from the prefix *multi*, meaning many or diverse, and *culture*, referring to customs, traditions, and social behaviours. Thus, *multiculturalism* refers to the existence of diverse cultures. The term later developed into *multiculturalism*, with the addition of the suffix *-ism*, indicating a school of thought or worldview that emphasizes interactive cultural diversity within a society, even as it is internally composed of various distinct elements. Another interpretation defines multiculturalism as a philosophical perspective or ideology that advocates for the unity of different groups while ensuring equal political rights and status within a modern society (Tohirin, 2022, pp. 669–675).

Multiculturalism is an idea that describes society as comprising a variety of distinct cultural groups, all of which share equal social status. It emerged as a response to the reality of diversity within communities. As such, multiculturalism calls for an inclusive attitude among individuals and cultural groups—an openness to mutual acceptance and appreciation of differences, and a commitment to overcoming prejudice, discrimination, and notions of superiority between social groups (Pattinama, 2020, pp. 29–45).

A similar perspective is shared by Lawrence Blum, as cited by Lubis (2006), who states that multiculturalism encompasses an understanding, appreciation, and evaluation of one's own culture, as well as a respect for and curiosity about the ethnic cultures of others (Lubis, 2006, p. 174).

Azyumardi Azra offers his view that multiculturalism is essentially a worldview that can be translated into various cultural policies emphasizing acceptance of religious, pluralistic, and multicultural realities within society. Furthermore, multiculturalism can also be understood as a worldview that is ultimately expressed in political consciousness (Azra, 2007).

In contemporary political theory, multiculturalism refers to a series of debates concerning

how political communities should respond to cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and national differences. Most of these theories have been studied within the framework of normative political theory, a broader field of inquiry focused on how laws and political institutions ought to be designed and how political behaviour should be evaluated (List & Valentini, 2016).

Multiculturalism is also part of a broader political movement advocating for greater inclusion of marginalized groups, including African Americans, women, LGBTQ individuals, and persons with disabilities (Glazer, 1997).

According to Dr. Bhikhu Parekh, "Successful multiculturalism requires the recognition and respect of minority rights, as well as ensuring that every individual has equal access to resources and opportunities within society" (Fossum, 2009).

Multiculturalism embodies two contrasting dimensions. On one hand, cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity can enrich social life, broaden perspectives, and stimulate innovation and creativity. This diversity has the potential to foster a more inclusive and dynamic society, where various ideas and practices interact and contribute to collective progress. On the other hand, such diversity may also give rise to tensions and conflicts, particularly if adequate efforts are not made to promote dialogue, mutual understanding, and tolerance among different groups. Injustice, discrimination, and stereotyping can emerge, ultimately leading to social fragmentation and violence.

In this context, multiculturalism presents a complex challenge, where poor management can result in social disintegration. Therefore, it is imperative for multicultural societies to develop policies and practices that support social integration and cohesion. Education that emphasizes the values of tolerance, appreciation of differences, and intercultural dialogue is crucial in creating a harmonious environment. Furthermore, active participation from all groups in decision-making processes is essential to ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and respected.

With an appropriate approach, multiculturalism can become a force that strengthens national unity and advancement, rather than undermining it. The challenges arising from diversity must be addressed with wisdom and a committed effort to build a peaceful and harmonious society.

### **Multiculturalism in the History of Islamic Da'wah**

Islam is a universal religion, described in the Qur'an as *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (a mercy to all worlds). According to Abdurrahman Wahid, the universal teachings of Islam encompass tolerance, pluralism, and brotherhood. He views Islam as a compassionate and open religion, inclusive not only of Muslims but of all people (Faidlunniam, 2020). This dimension of Islamic universalism has been demonstrated throughout history and has contributed significantly to the development of dignified human values.

Historically, multicultural societies have existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is exemplified by the conditions in Medina, a city established by the Prophet that was notably pluralistic and multicultural. The social fabric of Medina comprised diverse identities, including various tribes, clans, and religious groups. More than twenty tribes settled in Yathrib (Medina), among which were prominent Jewish tribes such as Bani Qaynuqa', Bani Qurayzah, Bani Nadir, Bani Tsa'labah, and Bani Hadh (Mulyo, 2023, pp. 1–12). Upon his migration to Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) entered into a treaty with the Jewish communities. This treaty stipulated that both Jews and Muslims were free to practice their respective religions and possessed equal rights to live in Medina. Known as the Constitution of Medina, the treaty comprised 47 articles. Its core principles encompassed values essential for communal life, including equality, fraternity, unity, freedom, religious tolerance, peace, mutual assistance, and the defence of the oppressed.

The Constitution of Medina marked the foundation of the Islamic state of Medina and served as a milestone in the political da'wah of Islam. The historical reality of this

development underscores that in establishing an Islamic state, multiculturalism was an inevitable and essential reality that must be preserved and nurtured to prevent conflict and fragmentation (Fikri, 2015, pp. 27–46).

The renovation of the *Ka'bah* five years prior to the advent of Prophethood serves as a significant historical illustration of multicultural values embedded within the early narrative of Islamic *da'wah*. Following a major flood that severely damaged the structure of the *Ka'bah*, the Quraysh collectively resolved to reconstruct the sacred edifice. Each clan was assigned responsibility for a specific portion of the rebuilding process, and a non-Arab architect named Baqum, of Roman origin, was appointed as the technical supervisor. This arrangement reflected a notable openness to cultural diversity and an ethic of cross-ethnic cooperation.

However, the reconstruction process nearly escalated into intertribal conflict over the honor of placing the Black Stone (*al-Hajar al-Aswad*) in its original position. The dispute persisted for several days and posed a serious threat of bloodshed among the tribes. In the face of this potential crisis, al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah proposed a neutral resolution: that the decision be entrusted to the next individual who entered the mosque through its gate. By divine will, that individual was Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was widely known and respected by his community as *al-Amīn* (the Trustworthy).

Demonstrating remarkable social intelligence and equitable leadership, the Prophet proposed a collaborative approach to resolve the dispute: the Black Stone was placed on a piece of cloth, and representatives from each tribe were invited to lift the stone together by holding the edges of the cloth. This method effectively diffused tensions and prevented conflict, while simultaneously exemplifying Islamic principles of conflict resolution—namely, inclusivity, justice, consultation (*shūrā*), and respect for diversity. This event stands as an important precedent for the formation of a harmonious and pluralistic social order. (Al-Mubarakfuri, 1997: 84–85)

### **Islamic *Da'wah* and the Values of Universalism**

Universalism is reflected in Islamic teachings, particularly in values that emphasize humanity and are harmonized with the wisdom that emerges from the openness of Islamic civilization itself. The universal character of Islamic *da'wah* is evident in various key aspects, foremost among them being its teachings. These teachings encompass a broad spectrum of disciplines, including Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*tawhīd*), ethics (*akhlāq*), and a way of life that demonstrates profound concern for noble human values (*al-insāniyyah*) (Naim, 2016, p. 7).

In the context of the pillars of Islam, prayer (*ṣalāh*) functions as a spiritual mechanism for seeking divine assistance in facing the various challenges and complexities of human life. This is affirmed in the Qur'anic verse: “O you who believe! Seek help with patience and prayer.” (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah 2:153). Fasting (*ṣawm*), on the other hand, serves as a form of spiritual discipline that cultivates patience in the face of hardship and nurtures empathy toward the suffering of others. The institution of almsgiving (*zakāh*), which involves taking a portion of wealth from the affluent, not only purifies wealth but also represents an Islamic mechanism to assist the poor and underprivileged. It aims to alleviate economic hardship, address poverty, and bridge the gap between rich and poor.

The pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) is described as an annual gathering with both divine (*Rabbānī*) and human (*insānī*) dimensions, wherein Allah calls His faithful servants: “That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days” (Qur'an, Al-Ḥajj 22:28). According to Al-Qardhawi (1997, p. 180), the phrase “witness benefits” refers to the humanistic dimensions and social benefits that are integral to the objectives of the *ḥajj*.

### **Universal and Humanitarian Values in Islamic *Da'wah***

The universal and humanitarian values of Islamic *da'wah* are also embodied in ethical

guidelines for conduct and behaviour in everyday life, such as the principle of justice (*al-'adālah*). Islam regards justice as a fundamental principle that governs all dimensions of human existence—political, economic, legal, and social. In its legal framework, Islam commands the implementation of justice even in dealing with one's enemies. This is reflected in the Qur'anic verse: *"Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and transgression..."* (Qur'an, An-Nahl 16:90). Similarly, Qur'an Al-Mā'idah 5:8 asserts: *"...Be just: that is nearer to piety..."*, emphasizing the moral imperative of fairness as a pathway to righteousness.

Concerning the value of equality (*al-musāwah*), Yusuf Al-Qardhawi (1997) explains that Islam honours and dignifies human beings based on their inherent status as humans, not on secondary categories such as lineage, ethnicity, race, skin colour, social status, or position. This foundational view is echoed in the Qur'anic declaration: *"O mankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."* (Qur'an, Al-Hujurat 49:13). Hence, Islam categorically prohibits discrimination and oppression against any individual.

The principle of equality in Islam is also evident in its ritual obligations, which are mandated for all accountable believers (*mukallaf*) regardless of their differences. A prominent example can be found in the communal prayer (*ṣalāh*), where the value of equal standing is clearly visible: every individual has the right to stand in the front row, irrespective of social or economic status. These are but a few illustrations of how deeply embedded the value of equality is within Islamic teachings.

### **The Universality of Belief (*'Aqīdah al-Tawhīd*) in Islam**

In Islamic terminology, the universal values of *da'wah* are encapsulated in the concept of *al-fīṭrah*—the innate nature or primordial disposition of human beings. This is explicitly referenced in the Qur'an, Sūrah al-Rūm (30:30):

*"So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know."*

Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, in his lexicon *Al-Mufradāt fī Ghariḥ al-Qur'ān*, interprets *al-fīṭrah* as a divinely bestowed inclination embedded within the human conscience, which naturally guides individuals toward righteous action (Hakim, 2014).

In his *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī explains that the verse commands the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to devote himself wholly and sincerely to God's religion, understood as *al-fīṭrah*—the natural disposition upon which humanity was created. The term, he notes, refers to monotheistic belief (*tawhīd*), and warns against altering this original spiritual orientation through practices like associating partners with God (*shirk*) (As-Suyūṭī, J. & Al-Mahallī, 2005).

Quraish Shihab (2021) notes that scholars differ on the precise meaning of *fīṭrah* in this context. Some interpret it as the innate belief in the oneness of God (*tawhīd*), a fundamental recognition instilled by God in every human being. Supporting this interpretation is a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

*"Every child is born upon the fitrah, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian. Just as an animal gives birth to a perfect offspring—do you see any part of its body amputated?"* (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, and others through Abū Hurayrah).

Al-Biqā'ī, however, takes a broader view, not restricting *fīṭrah* solely to belief in divine unity. He interprets it as the original creation and natural disposition upon which humans were formed. Citing Imam al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Al-Biqā'ī states:

*"Every human being has been created with an inherent disposition toward faith in God, and even with the potential to comprehend the realities of existence—such knowledge is latent*

*within the soul, made possible by the very capacity for understanding bestowed by God. ”*

From these perspectives, it becomes clear that human beings are, by nature, created with an inherent inclination toward monotheistic belief as taught in Islam. This belief constitutes a universal value that should resonate with every human soul, regardless of ethnicity or nationality.

Nevertheless, even if human beings have not fully grasped this innate belief in monotheism, Islam provides ethical guidance in navigating religious pluralism. The Qur'an offers instruction and principles for coexisting peacefully with followers of other faiths. For instance:

*“There is no compulsion in religion.”* (Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:256). This verse affirms that *da'wah* must not be coercive. Islamic outreach should appeal to personal conviction and conscious acceptance rather than pressure or force.

*“And had your Lord willed, all those on earth would have believed—all of them entirely. Then, [O Muhammad], would you compel the people in order that they become believers?”* (Qur'an, Yūnus 10:99).

This verse underscores that even the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), though divinely appointed to convey the truth, was not authorized to compel belief. Guidance (*hidāyah*) belongs solely to God.

As Hamidah (2015, pp. 321–341) points out, this passage teaches that faith is an act of the servant, yet it ultimately lies within God's sovereign will. Though human beings must choose belief, such belief is only realized through divine assistance. Al-Nasafi, in *Madārik al-Tanzīl wa Ḥaqā'iq al-Ta'wīl*, explains that God, in His mercy, could compel belief universally, but He knows that some will persist in disbelief, and thus He withholds divine support from them. The rhetorical question in the verse reflects the impossibility of coercion in authentic belief, as true faith requires inner affirmation, which cannot emerge through force (Al-Nasafi, vol. 2, p. 43).

In conclusion, it is evident that Islam does not impose faith upon anyone, as truth must be accepted freely and mindfully. Likewise, within the context of *da'wah*, coercion is impermissible, as belief necessitates conscious affirmation within the heart— a condition incompatible with compulsion.

### Universal Teachings in Islamic Sharia Law

The universality of Islamic values is also reflected in the teachings of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *Sharia* law. Within Islamic legal thought lies the concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*— the objectives or higher intents of Islamic law. According to Imam al-Ghazālī, the ultimate aim of *Sharia* is to prevent harm (*mafsadah*) and secure benefit (*maṣlaḥah*), encapsulated in the legal maxim: “Promoting good and preventing harm” (Muhammad Sa'id bin Ahmad bin Mas'ūd al-Yūbī, 1998). *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* refers to the divine wisdom and purposes underlying Islamic legal rulings, with the overarching goal of securing human welfare while eliminating harm. Its foundational principles are grounded in the core Islamic values of justice, equality, and human dignity.

Imam al-Ghazālī classified the *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) into five essential objectives:

1. Preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) – This justifies the necessity of defense and *jihād* in the face of aggression toward the Muslim community.
2. Preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) – This underpins the Islamic law of *qisās* (retributive justice) to protect life and uphold human dignity.
3. Preservation of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*) – This forms the basis for the prohibition of intoxicants such as alcohol and narcotics.
4. Preservation of wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) – This supports the implementation of punitive measures against theft, and the prohibition of usury (*ribā*), bribery, and the unlawful appropriation of others' property.

5. Preservation of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) – This justifies the prohibition of adultery and the imposition of penalties for false accusations of sexual misconduct (Al-Ghazālī, 1412; Paryadi, 2021, pp. 201–216).

These objectives constitute a universal ethical framework that transcends cultural and ethnic boundaries, aiming to uphold human welfare in all its dimensions.

### **Moral Universalism in Islam**

Islam enjoins believers not only to adhere to a monotheistic creed and ritual obligations but also to embody elevated moral and ethical conduct. This ethical framework manifests in values such as purity, justice, compassion, and solidarity with others. Importantly, Islam emphasizes a strong relationship between faith and morality. The term *īmān* (faith) in Islam encompasses three dimensions: verbal affirmation, heartfelt conviction, and the enactment of righteous deeds.

This connection is illustrated in the prophetic saying:

*“Purity is half of faith.” (al-Ṭahārah shaṭr al-īmān)*

Purity here refers both to physical cleanliness and spiritual integrity. Thus, bodily and spiritual purity are seen as inseparable components of true faith—a universal moral concept also shared across religions, cultures, and civilizations.

In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated:

*“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should maintain kinship ties; whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent.”*

This narration underscores the deep connection between belief in God and eschatological accountability with social ethics, demonstrating that faith cannot be divorced from moral and communal responsibility. Such ethical foundations are integral to maintaining a cohesive, multicultural society.

Universal Islamic ethics are also evident in the teachings of Islamic mysticism (*taṣawwuf*). The Indian Sufi master Shaykh Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 1236 CE), a central figure in South Asian Sufism, articulated a doctrine of *joyful love* (*maḥabbah sa‘īdah*) as central to spiritual life. According to him, there is no separation between the lover, the beloved, and love itself. He considered service to the poor and feeding the hungry as the highest forms of worship. Mu‘īn al-Dīn described the friend of God as one who embodies three virtues: generosity like the ocean, kindness like the sun, and humility like the earth. His message of universal love and compassion transcended religious boundaries, as reflected in the continued reverence of his tomb by both Muslims and Hindus (Akbar, 2021).

Such teachings of love and compassion represent Islam’s universal moral vision and contribute meaningfully to the strengthening of multiculturalism and coexistence within diverse societies.

### **Building Common Ground (*Kalimat al-Sawā’*) Amidst Diversity**

In multicultural discourse, the emphasis lies not only on appreciating diverse cultures, religious convictions, and languages, but also on recognizing shared values that form points of convergence across these differences. Universal moral principles—such as love, truth, loyalty, integrity, equality, responsibility, justice, and respect for life—are intrinsic to all cultural and religious traditions, and are not exclusive to anyone. The Qur’anic concept of *kalimatun sawā’* (a common word or principle) signifies this convergence. Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān (3:64) states:

*“Say, ‘O People of the Scripture! Come to a word that is equitable between us and you—that we worship none but Allah, and associate no partner with Him, and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.’ If they turn away, then say, ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].’”*



This concept serves as a vital foundation for interfaith tolerance. Wahbah az-Zuhaylī interprets *kalimatun sawā'* to mean a fair and balanced declaration—one that is not aligned with a single faith tradition but is acceptable to all. Accordingly, this invitation represents an equitable starting point for interreligious dialogue and cooperation, fostering harmony within pluralistic societies.

Modern Muslim intellectuals have echoed these interpretations. Sayyid Hossein Nasr describes *kalimatun sawā'* as “common words,” while Nurcholish Madjid terms it a “common platform.” This idea resonates in Indonesia’s national philosophy, *Pancasila*, particularly in its first principle (belief in one God), which undergirds subsequent principles and reflects acknowledgment of a single universal truth (Imronudin, 2020).

### **The Concept of Brotherhood (*Ukhuwah*) in Islam**

Another central value in Islamic outreach concerning multiculturalism emphasizes *ukhuwah*, spiritual and social fraternity. Islamic brotherhood rejects division or enmity based on nationality, language, region, or family. It is understood in two primary dimensions:

#### **1. Universal Human Brotherhood**

All humans are viewed as descendants of a common ancestor, Prophet Adam. This sentiment was eloquently affirmed during the Prophet Muhammad’s Farewell Sermon, in which he declared:

*Abu Nadrah reported: “The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said during the days after the pilgrimage, “O people, your Lord is one and your father Adam is one. There is no favor of an Arab over a foreigner, nor a foreigner over an Arab, and neither white skin over black skin, nor black skin over white skin, except by righteousness. Have I not delivered the message?” They said, “The Messenger of Allah has delivered the message.” (Musnad Ahmad 23489).*

This pronouncement highlights the inherent equality of all humans, irrespective of ethnicity, status, or race.

#### **2. Spiritual Brotherhood Rooted in Faith**

By the 6th century CE, Islam introduced a newfound bond of brotherhood based on belief in divine unity, compassion for humanity, and principles of justice and equality. This bond transcended traditional social divides—caste, race, gender, language, lineage, or wealth—proclaiming human equality for the first time. The Farewell Sermon is often regarded as one of the earliest and most enduring declarations of human rights, emphasizing universal equality and justice, not for political ends, but as a divine moral mandate (Ganai & Nabi, 2024).

#### **3. Civic Brotherhood Within Nationhood**

According to M. Quraish Shihab, strengthening brotherhood does not require religious homogeneity. The Qur’an affirms that diversity is part of divine design and essential for social vitality. In *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5:48), Allah states:

*“And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return all together, and He will [then] inform you*

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*concerning that over which you used to differ”.*

This civic brotherhood is a valuable framework for addressing societal and global challenges, fostering unity amidst diversity.

These approaches, common principles (*kalimat al-sawāʾ*) and Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), offer robust ethical foundations for promoting multicultural harmony through justice, equality, and committed interfaith and civic cooperation.

### **Islamic Education and Multicultural Da'wah**

In the context of education, there are Islamic values that can be instilled as a form of multicultural da'wah. According to KH. Tholhah Hasan (2016: 41), as cited by Makmun et al., multicultural da'wah through education can be carried out by instilling inclusive character values such as *ta'aruf* (mutual acquaintance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawassut* (moderation), *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), and *tawazun* (balance). He also emphasized the importance of implementing multicultural education, particularly within Islamic religious education, due to the growing phenomenon of radical and terrorist movements that claim to act in the name of Islam (Makmun, F., Mansur, R., & Safiâ, I., 2021: 68–85).

The concept of multicultural education in Indonesia is also reflected in the thoughts of the national figure KH Abdurrahman Wahid. His vision comprises four key points: First, upholding local cultural values as part of the nation's heritage while remaining open to modern cultural developments. Second, safeguarding human rights and upholding democracy, which allows society to experience freedom within the boundaries of constitutional law. Third, promoting a humane and just multicultural education system to foster stronger social interactions. Fourth, respecting pluralism, through which society can mature in responding to multicultural realities (Huda, S., & Muhammad, D. H., 2022).

### **Da'wah Approach Through Interreligious Dialogue**

Multiculturalism encourages communication and interaction between diverse groups to foster mutual understanding and respect. Dialogue serves as a means to bridge cultural differences and reduce prejudice against others. Engaging in dialogue is also essential for addressing shared concerns and for seeking truth.

The Qur'an outlines the principle of interreligious da'wah in the following verse: *“And do not argue with the People of the Book except in a way that is best, except with those who act unjustly among them, and say, ‘We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.’”* (Qur'an, Al-Ankabut: 46).

This verse emphasizes the importance of engaging in dialogue and *mujadalah* (debate) in the best possible manner, grounded in ethical and moral values, while maintaining a firm commitment to the principle of *Tawhid* (the Oneness of God) and submitting to Allah SWT.

Another guiding verse on the ethics of da'wah and dialogue states: *“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is rightly guided.”* (Qur'an, An-Nahl: 125).

In conducting interfaith dialogue, Leonard Swidler offers his "Ten Commandments" known as *The Dialogue Decalogue* for genuine interfaith dialogue:

1. The main goal of dialogue is to learn and grow, by gaining new insights into reality, changing our understanding, and adjusting our actions accordingly.
  2. True interfaith or ideological dialogue must happen both within each group and between different groups, it's a mutual exchange.
  3. Everyone involved must be completely honest and sincere in what they share and how they
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engage.

4. We should avoid comparing the best parts of our own beliefs with the shortcomings of others' practices.
5. Every participant has the right and responsibility to define their own beliefs and identity.
6. People should enter dialogue with open minds, not assuming in advance what the disagreements will be.
7. Dialogue can only happen between people who treat each other as equals.
8. Mutual trust is essential, dialogue won't work without it.
9. Everyone must be willing to examine and acknowledge the flaws within their own beliefs or traditions.
10. At some point, each person should try to understand the other's religion or worldview from the inside, as if they were part of it themselves. (Swidler, Leonard, 1984; Putwaningtyas, W. F. A., 2023: 6).

## CONCLUSION

Multiculturalism is an ideology that emphasizes the importance of respecting diversity within a pluralistic society, encompassing differences in ethnicity, nationality, language, and religion. From the Islamic perspective, multiculturalism is regarded as a *sunnatullah*, a divine will, intended to enable humans to learn from and recognize one another. As a universal religion, Islam offers a set of principles and values that are compatible with all of humanity.

From the standpoint of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *Shariah* law, the concept of *Maqasid al-Shariah* (objectives of Islamic law) exists to protect and preserve human well-being. From a *Tasawwuf* (Islamic spirituality) perspective, Islamic teachings emphasize love and compassion toward others, such as supporting and feeding the needy. From the viewpoint of Islamic education, values such as *ta'aruf* (mutual acquaintance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawassut* (moderation), *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), and *tawazun* (balance) are essential.

In addition, the approaches of *ukhuwah* (fraternity) and interreligious dialogue can also be applied in multicultural da'wah. These are among the values that Islam offers in addressing and embracing multiculturalism.

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