

Hadith and Religious Harmony: Reinterpretation of Hadith Tolerance with Gadamer's Hermeneutic Approach

Hadis dan Kerukunan Beragama: Reinterpretasi Hadis Toleransi dengan Pendekatan Hermeneutika Gadamer

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ABSTRACT

Understanding hadith only textually and partially can cause someone to be exclusive, not opening up space to interact with other religions as a form of religious harmony. This article aims to show that hadiths actually contain values of religious harmony and tolerance, even though this is not explicitly stated. The research method used is qualitative, using a thematic approach to hadith to examine relevant hadith collections, including Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Saḥīḥ Muslim, and Sunan Abū Dāwud. Meanwhile, the theoretical framework in this hadith study uses Hans-Gadamer's hermeneutics. The results of the study show that the Prophet consistently emphasized respect, tolerance, and wisdom in dealing with differences, promoting an inclusive approach to religious and social diversity. In addition, the study found that the Prophet's approach to differences emphasized shared values, patience, and non-coercion in matters of belief. In conclusion, this hadith provides valuable insights for fostering harmony between communities. By adopting these values, modern societies can strive to reduce religious tensions and build more harmonious interfaith relations. Therefore, this study reinforces previous research on interfaith harmony by referring to fundamental Islamic teachings.

Keywords: *Gadamer's Hermeneutic, Hadiths Reinterpretation, Religious Harmony, Tolerance*

ABSTRAK

Memahami hadis hanya secara tekstual dan parsial dapat menyebabkan seseorang bersikap eksklusif, tidak membuka ruang untuk berinteraksi dengan agama lain sebagai bentuk kerukunan dalam beragama. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bahwa hadis sebenarnya mengandung nilai-nilai harmoni dan toleransi beragama, meskipun hal ini tidak disebutkan secara eksplisit. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif, dengan menggunakan pendekatan tematik hadis untuk mengkaji koleksi hadis yang relevan, termasuk Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Saḥīḥ Muslim, dan Sunan Abū Dāwud. Sedangkan kerangka teoretis di dalam studi hadis ini menggunakan Hermeneutika Hans-Gadamer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Nabi secara konsisten menekankan rasa hormat, toleransi, dan kebijaksanaan dalam menghadapi perbedaan, mempromosikan pendekatan inklusif terhadap keragaman agama dan sosial. Selain itu, penelitian menemukan bahwa pendekatan Nabi Saw terhadap perbedaan menekankan nilai-nilai bersama, kesabaran, dan non-paksaan dalam urusan keyakinan. Kesimpulannya, hadis ini memberikan wawasan berharga untuk memupuk harmoni antar komunitas. Dengan mengadopsi nilai-nilai ini,

masyarakat modern dapat berusaha mengurangi ketegangan agama dan membangun hubungan yang lebih harmonis antar agama. Oleh karena itu, studi ini memperkuat penelitian terdahulu untuk ikut berkontribusi terkait harmoni antaragama dengan mengacu pada ajaran Islam yang mendasar.

Kata Kunci: Hadis, Hermeneutika Gadamer, Kerukunan Beragama, Toleransi

INTRODUCTION

As a religion, Islam comes with a set of teachings that contain human liberation from various oppressions. Islam wants to restore humanity and elevate their humanity as it should be. However, Islam is still often accused of being a discriminatory religion, especially in relation to its status and treatment of non-Muslims. It is considered discriminatory, because Islam differentiates attitudes and treatment towards fellow human beings due to differences in their religion ([Arifin & Yusuf, 2020](#)).

This accusation is based on hadith texts that are considered to contain discriminatory elements. There are several traditions that give the impression that Islam teaches a social ethic that tends to be intolerant of followers of other religions ([Fadl, 2005](#)). In fact, some Muslim communities are still reluctant to cooperate just because they have different beliefs. In turn, these traditions affect the attitude and behavior of Muslims towards people of other religions in their daily lives ([Zakiyyah, 2022](#)).

Among the traditions that are considered to contain discriminatory elements against non-Muslims are the traditions about the command to fight and kill Jews and Christians, the prohibition to marry them, the prohibition to imitate and resemble them and the prohibition to start greeting them. Discriminatory attitudes as reflected in some of these traditions if understood textually will give birth to an exclusive and rigid religious attitude. In the context of religious pluralism, this has a negative impact on social relations between religious communities. Although the hadith is considered sahih, it hardly finds relevance in the present context and cannot be applied, especially in a pluralistic country, except with a new approach and paradigm ([Tsaniyah, 2022](#)).

Some Muslims understand these traditions as norms and ethics of socializing that should be applied by Muslims towards people of other religions, namely the command to be harsh and rude and the prohibition to be kind to non-Muslims ([Siregar, 2020](#)). The norms

contained in the above texts are considered to be no longer in accordance with the spirit of the times, social and cultural realities and contexts and even contradict the universal values of Islam that give freedom to every individual to have a religion or no religion. In this context, valid hadiths cannot be practiced because they are not relevant and contextual to the existing social reality ([Tsaniyah, 2022](#)).

In the contemporary era, the demand for respect for human dignity inevitably comes into contact with the idea of upholding human rights. Discriminatory attitudes towards humans on the basis of Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Intergroup Relations are opposed as a form of recognition of the basic rights of humanity that are important to appreciate ([Jufri, 2014](#)). Therefore, the protection of human rights from violations committed by both individuals and institutions is an undeniable reality.

Departing from the demand for a humanist system of social relations, it is necessary to study hadith with a new perspective that is functional and pragmatic. The study of hadith does not stop at researching the authenticity and quality of the hadith, but must continue on the understanding of the hadith and the possibility of its practice ([Faelasup, 2021](#)). It is possible that a hadith is declared valid in the context in which it appears but it turns out to be irrelevant to be applied in the context of a different time and space. This means that constructing an understanding of hadith, especially those related to social relations on the basis of relevance and contextuality is urgent.

This article focuses on the traditions on religious harmony (*religious tolerance*). The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that the Prophet's hadith, when approached through a hermeneutic and socio-historical lens, functions fundamentally as a source of ethical guidance oriented toward the preservation of human dignity, social order, and peaceful coexistence in pluralistic societies. By critically examining selected hadiths particularly those encapsulated in the concepts of *al-hanīfiyyah* and *as-samḥah*.

THEORETICAL STUDIES

1. The Concept Religious Harmony and Tolerance

Religious harmony and tolerance can be conceptualized as an integrated ethical, social, and legal framework for managing religious diversity, wherein distinct faith communities coexist peacefully under conditions of mutual respect, equality, and protected freedom of religion or belief. In this framework, harmony is both a condition and a process: as a condition, it denotes balanced relations among religious groups such that each can fulfill core religious obligations without infringing on others' rights; as a process, it involves sustained engagement especially interreligious dialogue to cultivate trust, reduce prejudice, and enable cooperative life in plural societies ([Sari & Wasi, 2022](#)).

Authoritative formulations emphasize that tolerance is the ethical foundation of harmony it is the willingness to accept and live alongside beliefs and practices one does not share, without discrimination or aggression, while affirming the equal dignity and legal protection of all communities. UNESCO's Declaration of Principles on Tolerance articulates tolerance as "respect, acceptance and appreciation" of diversity and ties it to education, open communication, and legal safeguards that prevent coercion and discrimination, thereby grounding tolerance in both civic virtue and institutional design ([Simamora et al., 2025](#)).

Operationally, the general concept spans four interlinked dimensions ([Rukimin et al., 2024](#)). *First*, ethical principles include respect, reciprocity, non-imposition, and recognition of equal rights. *Second*, institutional-legal arrangements require impartial laws, protection of freedom of religion or belief, and anti-discrimination measures that prevent dominance by any single group. *Third*, dialogical mechanisms include structured interreligious dialogue often articulated as the dialogue of life (everyday cooperation), dialogue of work (shared service for the common good), theological exchange, and dialogue of religious experience to identify common values and address doctrinal differences constructively. *Fourth*, educational-cultural strategies involve interfaith literacy, stereotype reduction, and cultural engagement that normalize everyday cooperation and empathetic understanding, with curricular and curricular programs in schools, universities, and communities reinforcing these dispositions ([Rukimin et al., 2024](#)).

2. Definitions and History of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, in its broadest sense, refers to the theory and practice of interpretation, particularly of texts, language, and symbolic expressions. While in its early

usage hermeneutics was concerned primarily with the interpretation of sacred writings, especially the Bible, it has developed into a wider philosophical inquiry about the nature of understanding itself. Richard E. Palmer notes that hermeneutics is essentially “the study of understanding, especially the task of understanding texts” (Palmer, 1969). The term derives from the Greek *hermēneuein* (to interpret, to explain), which is linked to Hermes, the messenger of the gods, suggesting the idea of mediating meaning between divine messages and human comprehension.

The emergence of modern hermeneutics took place in the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment era, when interpretation became systematized as a general methodology. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) is often considered the “father of modern hermeneutics” because he extended interpretation beyond biblical texts to all forms of human communication. His approach combined grammatical analysis with a psychological effort to reconstruct the author’s original intention. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) expanded on this foundation by applying hermeneutics to the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), distinguishing them from the natural sciences by insisting that their proper method is understanding (*Verstehen*) rather than explanation (*Erklaren*) (Dilthey, 1883).

From Gadamer argued that understanding is not about recovering an author’s original intent but about the historical and dialogical process whereby the horizons of the text and the interpreter merge in a “fusion of horizons.” (Alarn, 2002). Contemporary hermeneutics extends its influence across many disciplines. In law and jurisprudence, it provides frameworks for interpreting legal texts; in history and anthropology, it guides the reconstruction of cultural meanings; in psychology, it informs narrative therapy and psychoanalytic interpretation. Critical theorists such as Jürgen Habermas engaged hermeneutics with ideology critique, while post-structuralists like Jacques Derrida challenged its assumptions by proposing deconstruction, a method of exposing internal tensions within texts (Habermas, 1971). Thus, from its beginnings in Greek philosophy and religious exegesis, hermeneutics has evolved into a central mode of inquiry in the humanities and social sciences, continually reshaping how human beings approach meaning, understanding, and communication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a type of library study research, which is research based on authoritative books or journal, both from primary and secondary sources (Sugiyono, 2016). This research is conducted because the object studied focuses on the meaning of the hadith which is considered a hadith about religious tolerance. The hadith retrieval model in this study is thematic, by looking for traditions that still have relevance to the subject of research (Mubin, 2020). The traditions that will be analyzed in this study are those that are claimed to be exclusive, as well as those that are about tolerance and the prophet's behavior towards people of different faiths.

In analyzing the hadith, this study will use Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic theoretical framework which includes Historically Effected Consciousness, Pre-Understanding, Fusion of Horizons, and Application (Georgia Warnke, 2019). This theory is used because it has flexibility in interpretation based on the horizon of the reader so that it can be the basis for creating religious harmony (Zimmermans, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Setting the Record Straight on Violence in The Context of Religion

Basically, there is not a single hadith that tries to undermine inter-religious harmony. If we look at the character of the Prophet Muhammad, there is no discriminatory and disrespectful behavior towards the disbelievers of Quraysh. Indeed, if understood textually there are some traditions that seem to promote violence, such as those found in the following Arbain al-Nawawiyah traditions.

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ : أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ، فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّ الْإِسْلَامِ وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

"Ibn 'Umar ra. Rasulullah Saw said: "I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and that they should pray and pay alms. When they have done that, their blood and wealth will be protected from me, except by the right of Islam, and their account will be left to Allah." (Al-Bukhari, 1980).

If the above hadith is read literally, it will look terrible, because Muslims must fight non-Muslims until they convert to Islam. Of course, this is contrary to the first source of teachings in Islam, namely the Qur'an, where in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 256 states that "There is

no compulsion in religion” ([Kemenag RI, 2002](#)). This evidence also if understood textually will be refuted by the attitude of the Prophet when invited to join worship with the disbelievers of Quraysh (QS. Al-Kafirun [109]: 6). Hence, this Hadīth if understood only on the basis of its wording would appear to contradict the Qur'ān. In fact, this hadith must be understood contextually (comprehensively).

The Hadith issued by Imam Bukhari above is motivated by the incident when there was a debate between Umar bin Khatab and Abu Bakr, at that time Abu Bakr fought people who did not want to pay zakat, thus Umar bin Khatab did not agree with the policy taken by Abu Bakr because according to Umar by adhering to the hadith of the prophet that whoever has taken the oath of allegiance, Then Abu Bakr narrated a hadith stating that prayer, zakat is also a right of Islam so the one who leaves it means it is lawful to fight, hearing this news Umar bin Khatab finally agreed with Abu Bakr's opinion ([Al-Bugha, 1998](#)). From this *Asbabul Wurud* ([Tamimi et al., 2014](#)), it can be concluded that this Hadith does not actually give an order to fight non-Muslims, but this Hadith is only temporally applicable only in the past.

Some factors of violent acts of religious disharmony are also often based on the pretext of Islam in the name of **Jihad and Hijrah**. Hijrah is the most important doctrine in the spread of radical-terrorist understanding ([Abdul Muthe, 2021](#)). Through this doctrine, it can attract the attention of many people to get involved in this agenda. One of the traditions used as propaganda for jihad is the tradition narrated by Abu Hurairah, found in Sunan Abu Dawud on “The prohibition of abandoning jihad”.

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَغْزُ وَلَمْ يُحَدِّثْ نَفْسَهُ بِالْغَزْوِ مَاتَ عَلَى شُعْبَةٍ مِنْ نِفَاقٍ

“Whoever dies and has not fought and does not intend to fight, dies on the branch of hypocrisy.”. (Al-Sijistani, 1997).

In terms of sanad, this hadith is considered saheeh by the majority of scholars with flawless narrators and is well known in terms of credibility. However, in terms of meaning, if the matan is examined and interpreted textually, it is prone to misunderstanding with the claim that people who have never fought during their lifetime will die in a hypocrite state. This interpretation with the metaphor of hypocrites always avoiding jihad ([Nidhomatul, 2023](#)).

If interpreted with the principle of *Maqasid al-Syariah*, it needs to be traced in context at what time the hadith was revealed and what the position of the Prophet Muhammad as the legal determinant at that time ([Rico Khashogi, 2022](#)). According to Ibn Mubarak, the practice of the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah cannot be practiced in peaceful conditions and can only be applied in war situations. This is because the *asbabul wurud* of this hadith is to encourage Muslims at that time to fight jihad in the way of Allah. So, it is appropriate that this hadith exists because in the conditions of the struggle to spread Islam during the jahilliyah period so that all dare to fight ([Psikologi et al., 1993](#)).

In the context of a peaceful state, this hadith can be expanded to include the definition of jihad by believing that jihad is not always synonymous with war. As Al-Khatib al-Syirbini argues in the book "Mughni al-Muntaj" that war is only an instrument of jihad not the goal ([Khatib Al-Syirbini, 2002](#)). On the basis of this construction, sociologically and anthropologically according to the present, jihad without fighting is more appropriate to practice, even on the contrary, when conditions are peaceful and Muslim and non-Muslim relations have mutual respect, jihad is when people take care of each other's hearts and maintain attitudes so that harmonious relationships with each other are maintained ([Farida, 2020](#)). Understanding jihad only as fighting will actually damage peace and injure the teachings of Islam which uphold peace and non violence.

Overall, in the contemporary context, a literal reading of this hadith is often understood as if Islam demands a permanent orientation of conflict with "the other," resulting in suspicion, delegitimization, and polarization in interfaith relations ([Abdul Muthe, 2021](#)). As a result, hadith texts that were born in specific contexts are reduced to ideological slogans that are detached from their socio-historical realities.

However, classical and contemporary scholars emphasize that this hadith cannot be understood literally. Al-Nawawī explains that "the intention to wage war" in the hadith refers to moral preparedness when Muslims are under threat and armed jihad becomes a collective obligation (*farḍ kifāyah*), not a command to wage aggression without context ([Al-Nawawi, 1989](#)). Al-'Asqalānī also emphasizes that the meaning of *nifāq* here is not *nifāq i'tiqādī* (disbelief), but rather *nifāq 'amalī*, which is a weak commitment to social and religious obligations in certain situations ([Al-Asqalani, 1980](#)). Thus, when this hadith is used to justify

intolerance towards non-Muslims in a peaceful and pluralistic society, there is a shift in meaning from the ethics of community defense to the legitimization of social exclusivism.

Based on this, modern hermeneutics plays a very important role in Islamic studies. The hermeneutic approach, as developed in Gadamer's thinking and adapted by contemporary Muslim scholars, emphasizes that religious texts must be read through historically effected consciousness and fusion of horizons.

B. The Concept of Religious Harmony from the Hadith Perspective

Hadith in the sense is all actions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, whether in the form of speech, behavior and habits. Therefore, it needs to be explained that "The Prophet's morals in understanding differences" will be filled by various redactions of the hadith in question because the hadith describes all the behavior and words of the Prophet.

Religious harmony is an important means of ensuring national integration, as well as a necessity in order to create the stability necessary for the process of achieving a united and peaceful Indonesian society ([Hutabarat, 2023](#)). Harmonious cooperation can occur if among religious adherents feel mutual need, mutual respect for differences, mutual help, mutual assistance and being able to unite opinions or other terms have an attitude of tolerance ([Anggita & Suryadilaga, 2021](#)).

Talking about religious harmony means talking about tolerance. Religious harmony in the context of a plural society must be maintained. Moreover, Indonesia has religions, tribes and races. Allah SWT has given a very clear explanation that there is no coercion in religion, and Allah gives freedom of religion to humans, there is nothing to argue about because it is clear in QS. al-Kafirun about the essence of a person's suggestion to be able to respect differences in beliefs, and be able to live in peace ([Kemenag RI, 2002](#)).

With tolerance, it will be able to preserve the unity and integrity of the nation, support and succeed in development, and eliminate gaps. Inter-religious relations are based on the principle of good brotherhood, cooperating to face enemies and defending the suffering group. The concept of religious harmony is not only limited to respecting space, but religious harmony can be created if people are not reluctant to collaborate, even though they have different beliefs. All religions must be able to exist. Islam, despite being the majority in Indonesia, should not be a priori in religious life.

Nurcholish Madjid say this concept of human plurality is fundamental in Islam. It can, consistently, be transformed into forms of pluralism, which constitutes tolerance. Tolerance has a two-sided meaning, on the one hand, every Muslim must have the strongest conviction and fanaticism towards his creed, that there is no partner for Allah and no worship other than Allah. On the other hand, Muslims are required to understand and respect adherents of other religions. There are several principles used in maintaining inter-religious harmony ([Akbar et al., 2024](#)).

Concrete efforts to promote religious harmony have been made by stakeholders, such as establishing the FKUB (Forum for Religious Harmony). In addition, the tangible manifestation of religious harmony can also be seen in several areas, such as in the pluralistic community of Lebak, where people of different ethnicities and religions all live side by side. In fact, they have even established villages of moderation in the subdistricts of Leuwidamar, Rangkasbitung, and Maja ([Nasrul, 2023](#)).

1. The Principle of Mutual Respect

Religious differences are a necessity that must be saved through the mechanism of mutual understanding ([Zakiyyah, 2022](#)). An attitude of understanding and willingness to respect others must be treated by a pluralistic society. Moreover, diversity is actually a divine creation for mankind. This kind of ethics is very likely to be developed in interfaith societies, because religions encourage mutual respect. The desire to be respected has become a right for humans protected by religious and state regulations. In the hadith, this attitude has been carried out by the Prophet Muhammad which is immortalized through a fragment of the hadith matan.

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلًا سَمَحًا إِذَا بَاعَ وَإِذَا اشْتَرَى وَإِذَا افْتَضَى

In world life Teh Rasulullah (Saw) Said: *"Allah has mercy on teh one who makes it easy when selling and when buying, and when deciding cases."* ([Al-Bukhari, 1980](#)).

In world life, the principle of mutual respect must be owned by everyone, especially the people of Indonesia, which in fact this country has many religions. From the above hadith, it can be learned that the Prophet Muhammad never looked at differences. In other words, he made it easy for others regardless of religious background. Harassment of others is an insult to the human spirit. Every human being must have shortcomings and those shortcomings are covered by the strengths of

others. Therefore, humans are a unity where each other need each other. The attitude of disrespect towards adherents of other religions, or differences in internal religious thoughts, will result in a backlash in the form of disrespect as well. Thus mutual respect can give birth to an attitude of respect that leads to the creation of peace between religious communities. So it is important to reduce negative views of others and increase positive views of them so that interfaith togetherness is getting better.

2. Principles of Togetherness and Openness

Religious diversity must be interpreted sociologically or Muamalah, namely seeing the benefits of the difference. The positive side of the difference must be prioritized for the common good. If religious pluralism is interpreted ideologically by looking at its mistakes and shortcomings, it is difficult to find togetherness among people of different religions, so suspicion will stand out. The negative side of the behavior of other religions always appears to shift the positive side. All activities of others are considered negative while the positive is buried by suspicion. In fact, in social relations, Islam has taught us to prioritize the good of others and the attitude of togetherness and openness as long as it does not damage the joints of religious belief. Since Islam was revealed based on the principle of convenience, as the Prophet said.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا
وَأَبْشِرُوا وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالرَّوْحَةِ وَشَيْءٍ مِنَ الدُّجَىِّ

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said: "Verily, religion is easy, and no one makes religion difficult except that he will be defeated (made harder and more difficult). So be upright, draw near and give glad tidings and seek help from Al-ghadhwah (departing early in the morning) and Al-ruhah (departing after Dzuhur) and something from Al-duljah (departing at night)." (Al-Bukhari, 1980).

The above Hadīth is only found in the Sahīh of Bukhari in the Book of Imān. According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalāni, the meaning of this Hadīth is the prohibition of being strict in religion, i.e. when a person forces himself to perform an act of worship when he is unable to do so, which is the meaning of the words: "And no one is strict in religion except that he will be defeated", meaning that religion is not practiced in the form of force, so whoever forces or is strict in religion, religion will defeat him and stop his actions.

The concept of tolerance according to Salim al-Hilāli is willingness due to nobility and generosity, open-mindedness due to cleanliness of heart and piety to Allah, gentleness and ease, a happy and cheerful face, inferiority to Muslims but not humiliation, easy interaction in social relations, ease in preaching without ado, submission to Allah without coercion.

3. Principle of Brotherhood

Islam recognizes that in principle all human beings are brothers, even if they have different religious beliefs, they must still be seen as brothers. Just like brothers, it is also appropriate to respect, appreciate, and love non-Muslims. As there are three points in the rope of brotherhood, namely *Ukhuwah Insāniah* (Brotherhood that applies universally among all human beings regardless of religion, bound by the soul of humanity), *Ukhuwah Basyāriah* (Brotherhood to create harmony between religious communities) and *Ukhuwah Batāniyah* (Brotherhood of society bound by the soul of nationalism). The theological basis of brotherhood is mentioned in the hadith contained in the book *Arbaīn al-Nawawiyyah* with the following editorial.

عَنْ أَبِي حَمَزَةَ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ – خَادِمِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ – عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

Abu Hamzah Anas bin Malik Ra, a servant of the Prophet, reported that the Prophet said, "None of you has complete faith until he loves his brother as he loves himself." [\(Al-Bukhari, 1980\)](#).

This hadith explicitly emphasizes the principle of Ukhwah Islamiyyah. The purpose of this Hadith (*Maqashid al-Sunnah*) is the value of "unity and compassion" [\(Fauzan, 2023\)](#). Islam aims to create a harmonious and compassionate society. Each individual tries to prioritize the general benefit and peace of the community, so that justice and peace will be created. All this will not be realized, unless every individual in a society wants the good and happiness of others as he loves himself. That is why the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) attached great importance to creating an indivisible unity of the people [\(Mistu, 2020\)](#). This hadith is also supported by the Qur'anic verse in QS. Al-Hujurat/49:13.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"Indeed We created you from a man and a woman and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you. Indeed, Allah knows best". (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13) (Kemenag RI, 2002).

According to Quraish Shihab in the book Tafsir Al-Misbāh, it is explained that this verse is the basis that all humans have a bond of brotherhood with each other, and should not discriminate against people who have different beliefs (Shihab, 2006). Meanwhile, in Tafsir Al-Maraghi, it is explained that this verse contains an invitation to love oneself and others (Wahbah az-Zuhaili, 2004). From these two interpretations, it can be concluded that in principle Islam wants to create harmony between religious communities, both based on the hadith or the Qur'an.

C. Analysis of Hadith Texts Using Gadamer's Hermeneutics

Before analyzing the related hadith, it is necessary to know that the hermeneutical method applied by Gadamer's has several concepts that must be and steps that must be taken by a researcher. In general, Hans Gadamer's hermeneutic concept is as follows (Susanto, 2016):

First	The first interpretation is "Historical Effected Consciousness". According to this theory, an interpreter's understanding is influenced by the background that surrounds him, starting from tradition, culture, and life experience.
Second	Theory "Pre Understanding". This theory is an interpreter's initial step in understanding the text. In this case, the interpreter must be open and have high critical thinking.
Third	Theory "Fusion of Horizon". In Gadamer's theory there are two horizons, namely: text horizon and reader's horizon.
Fourth	Application theory, where an interpreter must be able to implement what is understood in accordance with the development of the era.

Figure 1. General Model of the Hermeneutics Hans Gadamer's Concept

The hadith that will be explained in this article is a hadith that contains the words "Al-Hanafiyyah al-Samḥah" (Religion that is straight and tolerant).

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قِيلَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيُّ الْأَدْيَانِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَنِيفِيَّةُ السَّمْحَةُ

Ibn Abbas said, asked to Rasulullah Saw: "Which religion is most loved by Allah?" So he said: "Al-Hanifiyyah Al-Samḥah" (the upright and tolerant). (Ibn Hambal, 1999).

As explained at the beginning, in using Gadamer's hermeneutic approach, it must be done in four ways Historically Effected Consciousness, Pre-Understanding, Fusion of Horizons, and Application. The steps are a form of reinterpreting the hadith as follows.

1) *Historically Effected Consciousness and Pre-Understanding*

Historically Effected Consciousness means that our understanding is always shaped by history. Gadamer argues that no reader or interpreter approaches a text, event, or tradition with a "neutral" or empty mind (Warnke, 1987). Although sometimes, we are often unconsciously influenced by our cultural background, language, traditions, and previous assumptions. Rather than seeing this historical influence as an obstacle, Gadamer views it as a *condition of possibility* for understanding: history does not distort meaning, but actively participates in how meaning appears to us.

Al-Hanifiyyah as-Samḥah in the initial assumption of the reader's pre-understanding is only interpreted as something that is easy and straight. *Al-Hanifiyyah* comes from the word حنفا-حنيفا , while the plural form is حنفاء with the meaning of "straight and correct". The word hanif is only associated with the Prophet Abraham or the religion of the Prophet Abraham as discussed in the Qur'an. On the other hand, every Arab who performs the hajj or circumcision is called hanif, so this shows that it has practiced the religion of Abraham (Fattahun, 2024).

Hanif can also be interpreted as someone who submits his affairs to Allah without bequeathing them to others, meaning anyone who obeys Allah's commands without turning away is called hanif. Hanif also means a sincere and pure search for truth. In line with the attitude of humans who uphold justice and goodness.

Meanwhile the word "*Samāḥah*" (سماحة) comes from سمح with symbol "dzammah and mim" which means tolerant or generous (Fattahun,2024). The word As-

Samḥah besides having the meaning of tolerance also means a state of open-mindedness and generosity.

At the level of the reader's initial pre-understanding, *al-Ḥanīfiyyah as-Samḥah* is often reduced to a purely linguistic meaning, namely "straight" (*ḥanīf*) and "easy or tolerant" (*samḥah*) (Al-Nawawi, 1989). However, a historically conscious interpretation reveals that these meanings are inseparable from the socio-religious context in which the terms were used.

Historically, *al-ḥanīfiyyah* emerged in an environment dominated by tribal polytheism and rigid religious identities, where adherence to the Abrahamic tradition functioned as a moral critique of idolatry, social injustice, and exclusivist claims to truth. The designation of *ḥanīf* for Arabs who performed pilgrimage or circumcision indicates that the term did not merely denote doctrinal correctness, but embodied a lived ethical orientation rooted in inherited religious practices and communal memory (Siregar, 2020).

Likewise, *samḥah* must be understood against the background of pre-Islamic and early Islamic social relations, where religious life was often intertwined with legal rigidity, economic inequality, and intertribal hostility. In this historical setting, *samḥah* signified not only tolerance in belief, but generosity in social conduct, openness toward difference, and the easing of religious burdens (Akbar et al., 2024).

From the perspective of historically effected consciousness, contemporary readers shaped by modern experiences of pluralism and interreligious tension inevitably encounter these terms through their own historical horizon. Rather than distorting the meaning of *al-Ḥanīfiyyah as-Samḥah*, this historical situatedness enables a fusion of horizons in which the prophetic message is understood as a dynamic ethical principle that affirms justice, sincerity in faith, and peaceful coexistence across religious boundaries.

2) *Fusion of Horizon*

Fusion of Horizon describes how understanding occurs through a dialogue between the horizon of the past (the text, tradition, or historical context) and the horizon of the present (the interpreter's current perspective and concerns) (Palmer, 1969). A "horizon" refers to the range of meanings shaped by one's historical situation (Palmer,

[1969](#)). Understanding occurs when these two horizons interact and partly merge. This does not mean eliminating differences, but rather allowing new meanings to emerge. In this way, interpretation is a dynamic process in which both the text and the reader are transformed.

Hans Gadamer in his fusion of horizons approach, divides this into three elements: text horizon, reader horizon, and meaningful sense. These three elements will be discussed as follows.

a) *Text Horizon*

The study of the text horizon has actually been carried out by previous scholars such as Ibn Hajar who interpreted *al-hanīfiyyah* as straight, namely a religion that has not been mixed up and *as-samḥah* as *as-sahlah* (easy). Likewise, Ahmad Ibn Faris interpreted it *as-suhūlah* (making it easy). Abu Zayd said that *al-hanīfiyyah as-samḥah* is a religion brought by Prophet Ibrahim AS ([Tsaniyah, 2023](#)).

When viewed from the historical setting the Prophet Muhammad lived in an environment with many tribes and religions. Hadiths do not just appear without a process of communication with the environment because hadiths are not born in empty spaces without a socio-historical process that later gives birth to hadiths ([Sattar, 2017](#)). Thus the dialectical process with the society at that time certainly influenced the birth of the hadith.

The emergence of the Hadith (hadith of tolerance and pluralism) above is certainly the Prophet Muhammad's response to his surroundings. We can see many hadith products that are in dialectic with several religions, both divine and non-divine. Islam in its history will not be able to stand alone without the components of other religions. As with the process of buying and selling or muamalah in the time of the Prophet, it often intersects with Jewish or Christian traders and even other religions ([Siregar, 2020](#)).

Differences are inevitable given by God, humans must be able to respond to them wisely. The Prophet Muhammad in history was born into a family that had different beliefs. We can see like his uncle Abu Jahal who adhered to paganism or idol worship then his grandfather who was a hanif or followed the teachings of

Ibrahim. Even the Prophet Muhammad once prayed for his uncle Abu Thalib who in history died in a state of not yet embracing Islam to be forgiven by Allah.

The Prophet Muhammad in his history has also united the people of Medina into a common institution, which of course the understanding of tolerance and pluralism must be instilled in society at that time as a glue in an institution. Group fanaticism must certainly be eroded in such a way as to avoid conflict.

b) *Reader's Horizon*

Given the diversity of religions today, it is not surprising that there are many horizontal conflicts between religious adherents. This conflict continues without stopping until now. The main cause of this problem is the existence of exclusive beliefs that continue to be maintained. In the body of Islam itself, exclusive doctrines of religious interpretation are still very popular and in demand. This has resulted in the birth of extremist movements that feel they are the most correct ([Akbar et al., 2024](#)).

Some Islamic scholars have tried to include the concept of pluralism in the body of Islam, but in reality there are many contradictions within the body of Islam itself. Some groups do not agree with the concept of pluralism because it is considered not born from the treasury of Islam and is a western product and far from Islamic values. This is certainly wrong, even though the Prophet Muhammad has long planted the seeds of tolerance and pluralism in several of his hadith products.

Through the theory of the fusion of horizons, *al-Hanīfiyyah as-Samḥah* is read by bringing the historical horizon of the prophetic context marked by moral reform, rejection of exclusivism, and social generosity into dialogue with the contemporary horizon shaped by religious pluralism and interfaith coexistence, resulting in an interpretation that understands it not merely as a description of doctrinal correctness or ritual ease, but as a dynamic ethical principle that calls believers to embody sincerity of faith, justice, tolerance, and peaceful living with others in diverse communal settings.

c) *Meaningful Sense*

The concepts of *al-Hanifiyah* and *as-Samhah* offered by the Prophet must of course be interpreted more dynamically and even have their meaning expanded according to the dynamics of the times. If we observe the hadith which says "Which religion is most loved by Allah? So he said: "*al-ḥanīfiyyah as-samḥah*." There are questions that then arise. If Islam really teaches an exclusive ideology, why didn't the Prophet just answer Islam? not *al-Hanifiyah* and *as-Samhah*, so what did the Prophet mean by these words?

This certainly has an implied meaning that the Prophet wanted to express. The words (*al-ḥanīfiyyah* and *as-Samḥah*) seem to want to show that all tolerant and upright religions are loved by Allah. This means that Islam accepts and acknowledges the existence of other religions. Even if the meaning is expanded, *al-ḥanīfiyyah* can mean all religions that are believed by their adherents to be straight truths without having to belittle other religions. *as-Samḥah* can mean a tolerant religion that does not discriminate against others, of course this meaning applies to all religions and even beliefs. The similarity of religions is basically at the transcendent, esoteric, and essential levels, not immanent (*Syari'at*) [\(Tamimi et al., 2014\)](#).

The portion of tolerance in Islam tends to be greater in the monotheistic religions, namely Christianity and Judaism or religions commonly called Hanif religions which have similar genealogy and teachings. This circle monotheistic religion has advantages in several sharia products compared to non-monotheistic religions. Such as in the example of the law of animal slaughter in Islam [\(Jufri, 2014\)](#).

World religions or non-samawi then experienced animism and were considered primitive. Negative labeling continued to be intertwined with the dominance of heavenly religions. This outdated concept certainly needs a new, more universal interpretation, considering that discrimination between religions has become a terrible specter today. For that, the expansion of the meaning of *al-hanifiyah* in the hadith must be expanded not only to mean Judaism, Christianity, and Islam but also other religions or beliefs.

3) *Application*

According to Gadamer, *application* (*Anwendung*) is not a final stage that is separate from understanding, but an integral part of the process of understanding itself. This means that understanding a hadith does not end with textual and historical analysis, but must continue into the application of its meaning within contemporary social reality.

Within this framework, understanding the hadith of *al-Ḥanīfiyyah as-Samḥah* as a teaching of religious sincerity and tolerance requires the actualization of these values in today's pluralistic societies. This hadith reflects Islam's acceptance of differences in religion, ethnicity, race, and social background as realities that should not be negated, but ethically managed through inclusive, just, and respectful attitudes. Applying the meaning of this hadith therefore necessitates the rejection of arrogant truth claims and discriminatory practices toward others, as such attitudes clearly contradict the spirit of *as-samḥah* taught by the Prophet Muhammad.

The applicative dimension of this understanding becomes more evident when it is connected to practical hadiths that directly demonstrate the Prophet's attitude of tolerance in interreligious relations. One significant example is the narration concerning the Christian delegation from Najran, whom the Prophet Muhammad allowed to perform their worship in the Mosque of the Prophet (Al-Bukhari, 1980). This event indicates that tolerance in Islam is not merely theoretical or normative, but is concretely realized in social and religious spaces.

From a Gadamerian perspective, applying the hadith of *al-Ḥanīfiyyah as-Samḥah* in the contemporary context means transforming mosques, religious institutions, and public spaces into arenas that encourage dialogue, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence, without requiring any party to relinquish their theological convictions.

Furthermore, the application of this hadith calls for the cultivation of an attitude of *internal relativism*, not in the sense of negating the truth of one's own religion, but as an awareness that the pursuit of religious truth must be accompanied by humility, openness, and a rejection of narrow fanaticism. A religious attitude grounded in *al-Ḥanīfiyyah as-Samḥah* is one that liberates the soul, avoids coercion, and is oriented toward justice and social well-being (Faelasup, 2021). Through the process of *application* as articulated by Gadamer, this hadith can thus function as a living and relevant source

of social ethics, guiding Muslims to build harmonious, ethical, and sustainable interfaith relations within pluralistic societies.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the Prophet's hadith cannot be understood solely as a normative text that stands alone, but rather as an ethical message that arose in a specific socio-historical context and was intended to preserve human dignity and social order. When the hadiths are understood through a hermeneutic approach, it becomes clear that their orientation is the formation of moral responsibility, justice, and peace in communal life. Thus, interfaith harmony is not an external value imposed on Islam, but is deeply rooted in the prophetic tradition itself. This finding has important implications for interfaith relations in contemporary pluralistic societies: it demands a shift from literal-ideological readings to dialogical and historically conscious understandings, so that hadith can function as a source of social ethics that builds trust, fosters empathy, and strengthens interfaith harmony as the foundation for sustainable communal life.

The words (*al-ḥanīfiyyah* and *as-Samḥah*) seem to indicate that all tolerant and upright religions are loved by Allah. This means that Islam accepts and recognizes the existence of other religions. Even if the meaning is widened, *al-ḥanīfiyyah* can mean all religions that their adherents believe are straight truths without having to denigrate other religions. *as-Samḥah* can mean a religion that is tolerant and does not discriminate against others, of course this meaning applies to all religions and even beliefs. Thus, the Hadith concepts of *Al-Hanīfiyyah* and *As-Samḥah* become the basic foundation that Islam teaches and commands its people to live side by side, in harmony and peace.

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