

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE CONCEPTS OF INTERACTION AMONG MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Khadijah Mohd Khambali @ Hambali[#], Nur Hidayah Mohd Paudzi*, Abdul Nasser Sultan Mohsen Sallam**

*Department of Aqidah and Islamic Thought. Academy of Islamic Studies. Universiti Malaya. 50603. Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia.

**Philosophy and Religion Study Department. Islamic Sciences Faculty. Yalova University. Central Campus, on Cinarcik Road. 77200. Merkez/Yalova. Turkey.

Email: #ijamh@um.edu.my

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol23no2.7>

Abstract

Interaction is an important and necessary action that everyone needs in life. Every human being depends on one another to fulfill their necessary needs. Islam has emphasized interaction through the many revealed verses in the Qur'ān as well as the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In order to build a positive relationship, many concepts of interaction have been introduced by Islamic scholars specifically as guidance for Muslims that are also universally applicable to the whole nation regardless of different religions and ethnicities. The success in the implementation of these concepts can be proven from the rulings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Medina. The Constitution of Medina is a great guideline in building a solid united multicultural society. This article aims to explain more on the concepts of interaction according to the Islamic perspective. It also expounds on how this concept significantly impacts creating a peaceful co-existence among multicultural society especially in Malaysia as a multi-adherent society based on *tasāmuh*,

maḥabbah, and *ta'āmul* that underlying the concept of *fiqh al-ta'āyush*.

Keywords: Interaction; multicultural society; Islamic perspective; *fiqh al-ta'āyush*; Constitution of Medina.

Khulasah

Interaksi atau hubungan kemanusiaan merupakan perkara utama yang diperlukan dan dipraktikkan insan dalam kehidupan. Setiap insan saling bergantung antara satu sama lain bagi memenuhi keperluan hidup. Islam telah menekankan interaksi dan hubungan kemanusiaan ini melalui beberapa ayat al-Quran dan Hadith Nabi Muhammad SAW. Dalam usaha membina hubungan positif, beberapa konsep interaksi telah diperkenalkan oleh para sarjana Muslim secara khusus sebagai panduan bagi masyarakat Islam dan sekaligus bersesuaian diaplikasikan oleh seluruh masyarakat dunia tanpa mempedulikan aspek multi-agama dan etnik. Kejayaan pelaksanaan konsep ini telah terbukti melalui kepimpinan Nabi Muhammad SAW di Madinah. Perlembagaan Madinah merupakan garis panduan terbaik dalam membangunkan kesepaduan keanekaan masyarakat. Penulisan ini bertujuan untuk merencami konsep interaksi menurut perspektif Islam dan bagaimana konsep ini memberi signifikasi utama dalam mewujudkan kedamaian antara masyarakat pelbagai budaya terutamanya di Malaysia sebagai masyarakat yang berpegang teguh dan bersatu padu berteraskan elemen *tasāmuḥ*, *maḥabbah*, dan *ta'āmul* yang mendasari konsep *fiqh al-ta'āyush*.

Kata kunci: Interaksi; masyarakat multi budaya; perspektif Islam; *fiqh al-ta'āyush*; Perjanjian Madinah.

Introduction

Living in a multicultural environment has urged the sense of need to perceive values such as tolerance, respect, understanding, cooperative, and love among society. Malaysia as part of the multi-racial as well as multi-

adherent society has proven the importance of the values mentioned above in maintaining peaceful and harmonious living for the country.¹ In discussing the implementation of good and positive values as well as ways in developing a good relationship, Islam has explained intricately many times the importance of *ādāb* and *akhlāq* in life through the main Islamic references which are the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Moreover, religion and morality in Islam are interrelated to the extent that one's character or moral behaviour presupposes faith, and one's faith is affected by their action.²

The formation of relationships that happen every day within human beings regardless of bad or good relationships is affected by interaction among them. Therefore, interaction plays a big role in constructing a united and well-balanced society, as it is the essence in building a relationship. Many scholars including Western and Islamic scholars have introduced lots of interaction concepts in understanding more about social interaction. These concepts are created in order to understand more about people, or as means to improve social relationships within a community, society, and even nation.

Furthermore, the Noble Qur'ān has laid down a system of clear rules to preserve societies and keep sectarian strife away from them, as Islam declared that all people were created from one soul, which means that they share in the unity of human origin, where God Almighty said:

¹ Enizahura Abdul Aziz, "Peaceful Co-Existence The Right Way", website *The Star Online*, achieved on 16th September 2020, <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/columnists/ikim-views/2014/09/16/peaceful-coexistence-the-right-way/>.

² H. Tata Fathurrohman, "Peranan Akhlak Dalam Kehidupan Seorang Muslim", website UNISBA: Universitas Islam Bandung, achieved on 28th January 2021, <https://www.unisba.ac.id/index.php/id/illustrations/item/88-peranan-akhlak-dalam-kehidupan-seorang-muslim>.

O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.

Al-Nisa' 4:1

All human beings on this earth face are involved in humanity, and thus Islam guaranteed them the right of life and to live with dignity; without discrimination between them, and that is based on the principle that a person is honoured, regardless of their religion, race, colour, or origin. All members of society are one family, and they have certain rights and duties. The Almighty said:

Good things and We have preferred them over many of those whom We have created with a preference; And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.

Al-Isra' 17:70

Islam called on its followers to deal morally with all people, and did not limit it to Muslims only, such as the Almighty's saying:

Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing.

Al-Nisa' 4:58

Rather, Islam enjoins the Muslims to be righteous and just with the non-Muslims as long as they are not fighting the Muslims. God Almighty said:

Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity.

Al-Mumtahanah 60:8

Righteousness and equity in the verse are a divine law in Islam in dealing with non-Muslims, that equity is justice, and righteousness is the most precise as well as most apparent for the meaning of interaction, since righteousness in the Arabic language is a word that encompasses all the attributes of goodness, and it is a word that is used only in the greatest and the finest forms of dealing, it is used to describe the interaction between sons and their parents.

Furthermore, the concepts of interaction have been discussed by Islamic scholars through many approaches. Ḥasān al-Bannā for example had introduced three basic pillars of interaction especially in building a relationship in an *usrah*³ or *halaqah*.⁴ He stated that there are three steps in interaction that build a strong bond relationship, which includes *ta'aruf*⁵, *tafāhum*⁶, and *takāful*.⁷ Moreover,

³ *Usrah* according to Ḥasān al-Bannā is synonym with the meaning of brotherhood that portrays unity. He emphasize on *usrah* to show unity or a strong and close relationship among Muslims. Meanwhile, *usrah* in Arabic means family. Hassan al-Banna, *Usrah dan Dakwah* (n.p.p.: n.p, 1979), 3.

⁴ Husayn ibn Muhsin ibn Ali Jabir, *Membentuk Jama'atul Muslimin* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1991), 283.

⁵ *Ta'aruf* means get acquainted originated from the word *'arafa* means know about something. Muhammad Idris al-Marbawī, "*Ta'aruf*," in *Qāmus Idris al-Marbāwi*, ed. Abdullah al-Qari' (Kuala Lumpur: Dar al-Nukman, 1998), 3:16.

⁶ *Tafāhum* is defined as understanding each other which forms from the root word *fahima* means to understand. Muhammad Idris al-Marbawī, "*Tafāhum*," in *Qāmus Idris al-Marbāwi*, 104.

⁷ *Takāful* is a synonym with the word *damān* which means protection. It is originated from the word *takāfala* means to agree with each

there are other scholars who added *ta'āwun*⁸ as an additional steps from these three pillars.⁹ These steps or processes of interaction help form a strong relationship among society and develop successful nation especially in a multicultural environment.

Hence, throughout the discussion on this paper, author aims to elucidate the different concepts of interaction and its importance as well as the implementation of these concepts in the reality world nowadays.

Definition and Concepts of Interaction

Interaction literally means a functional relationship between two or more persons or an act in such a way that will influence each other through communication and direct involvement.¹⁰ Based on this definition, interaction does not only include communication, but also social engagement. A successful interaction depending on a good communication and the process then influence the formation of society. This cycle process can be referred from the following diagram:

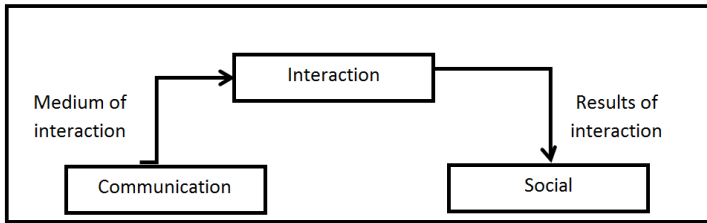
other or coincide. Referred to Al-Ma'any, entry: "*takāfala*," achieved on 27th March 2021, <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar>.

⁸ *Ta'āwun* means cooperating or helping each other. Mohd Puzhi Usop et al., *Kamus al-Farid* (Kuala Lumpur: Telaga Biru Sdn. Bhd., 2009), 67.

⁹ Hamidah, "Al-Ukhuwwah wa al-Ijtimā'iyah wa al-Insāniyyah: Kajian Terhadap Pluralisme Agama dan Kerjasama Kemanusiaan," *Jurnal Kajian Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 2 (2015), 331. Also referred to 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *Fiqh al-Ukhuwwah fī al-Islām* (t.tp: Dar al-Tawzi' wa al-Naṣr al-Islāmiyyah, 1993), 26.

¹⁰ John Andrew Simpson and Edmund S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 2: 361, entry: "interact".

Figure 1. Cycle Process of Interaction



In managing this cycle process, many researchers especially in sociology have studied this matter particularly. Based on the research done by Blumer¹¹, he explained that interaction happens when there is an involvement between each other or more than try to move themselves mentally into the state or situation of the particular person they are dealing with. Hence, the action of trying to understand the behaviour or act of other persons till the process of communication and interaction happens is called social interaction.¹² He then added that social interaction also requires the understanding of symbols that includes the meaning, language and thought¹³.

Joel M. Charon who studied Blumer's theory on Symbolic Interactionism explained that these symbols are important in defining a person's attitudes and characters

¹¹ Herbert Blumer (1900-1987) was a prominent Sociologist who is well known for his theory of Symbolic Interactionism. Referred International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, "Blumer, Herbert," website *Encyclopedia.com*, achieved on 2008, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-biographies/herbert-blumer#1G23045300217>.

¹² Dadi Ahmadi, "Interaksi Simbolik: Suatu Pengantar", *Jurnal Komunikasi* 9, no. 2 (2017), 301-316.

¹³ *Ibid.*

whenever they are interacting with others or even in defining themselves as a person¹⁴. The symbols like ideas, perspectives, thought, languages, and actions assist every person in socializing with others.

On the other hand, looking into the perspective of Ibn Khaldun¹⁵ in terms of interaction, he characterized interaction as an important entity for each individual.¹⁶ Ibn Khaldun stated that the need to cooperate and unite with each other is natural inclination for human being in order to achieve basic life needs. Every person is dependent on others even for a small grain of rice. It happens through the cycle from the production of machines to planting and reaping paddy fields, and the process continues until the rice is completely ready to cook and eat. Thus, these natural needs of human being that always dependent on each other defined by Ibn Khaldun as 'a political and social being'. The continuous cooperation and unity that happen between human being will form social organizations that later develop towards a civilization which is called as *'umrān*.¹⁷

In Islam, the concepts of interaction are introduced in many terms for example, there are few Qur'ānic words

¹⁴ Joel M. Charon, *Symbolic Interactionism* (USA: Prentice Hall Inc, 1979), 61.

¹⁵ Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) was a historian and also was formerly known as a sociologist with his introduction of new science known as *'Ilm al-Ijtimā' al-Insānī* (The Science of Human Society) and *'Ilm al-'Umrān al-Baṣarī* (The Science of Human Civilization). These two concepts have had a big impact on the development of Muslims thought that being referred for such a long decade. Meanwhile, his two books titled *Muqaddimah* and *al-'Ibār* have contributed a lot to the discipline of social sciences.

¹⁶ Syed Omar bin Syed Agil, *The Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun: Religion, Human Nature and Economics* (Selangor: Selangor International Islamic University College (KUIS), 2008), 110.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 111. Refer also, Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, translated by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Selangor: Percetakan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993), 1-4.

that indirectly refer to the meaning of interaction as Allah S.W.T stated in the Qur'ān:

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

Al-Hujurat, 49:13

And the other verse says:

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.

Al-Nahl, 16:125

Based on these two verses, it is clearly shown that Islam really encourages people to interact with each other by using the words '*lita'arafū*' and '*jādilhum*' which means 'to know' and 'to argue' between them in good manner. Further explained in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*¹⁸, the verse stated above in al-Hujurat indicates that regardless of different tribes, religions, and nations, all humans are created equal as they are born from the same offspring of Adam and Hawwa. The wisdom behind these differences in creation is because Allah would like them to know and understand each other as well as a means for a human to accept, respect, and embrace the differences that they have.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm li al-Imām al-Khālīl al-Hāfiẓ 'Imād al-Dīn Abi al-Fidā' Ismā'il al-Dimshiqī* (Beirut: Dār al-Šādīr, 2001), 50:33.

¹⁹ Khadijah Mohd Khambali and Khairul Nizam Mat Karim, "Interaksi dan Dialog Agama (Dialog Peradaban): Satu Paparan", in *Islam dan Dialog Peradaban: Satu Perspektif*, ed. Azizan Baharuddin (Kuala Lumpur: Pusat Dialog Peradaban, Universiti Malaya, 2005), 91-121.

Meanwhile, the word '*jādilhūm*' is synonym with what been commonly discussed nowadays which is dialogue. *Jādilhūm* or *al-jidāl* literally means arguments or debates in determining something truth. This term that had been mentioned 29 times in the Qur'ān shows the importance of debates or dialogue as to discuss and clarify any religious or social issues.²⁰ The two terms that have been discussed above, not only elucidate the inclusiveness of Islam, but also to express that Islam really emphasizes the importance of interaction among people to spread love, kindness, and peaceful living among humankind.²¹

Referring to Arabic language, there are two Arabic words are defined as interaction which are *tafā'ul* and *ta'āmul*. According to Ibn Manẓūr, *ta'āmul* comes from the root word '*amal* means work.²² It is constructed referring to the word *tafā'ul* which is defined as interact, cooperate and associate that influences and effect each other throughout these actions.²³

In forming a relation or *ukhuwwah*, *ta'āruf* is important as the very first step in every interaction. It is the basic level for people to get to know each other. This step can lead people to the next level of interaction by allowing them to open their hearts from only knowing to another level of curiosity which is understanding or *tafāhum*. This is because knowing one another influences people to feel a sense of openness and acceptance in

²⁰ Suraya Sintang, "Dialog Kehidupan dalam Pengalaman Saudara Baru di Sabah" (Doctoral thesis, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 2012), 107.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

²² Muḥammad Ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Mesir: al-Maṭba'ah al-Kubrā al-Miṣriyyah, 1886), 13:504.

²³ *Kamus Besar Arab-Melayu Dewan* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2006), 1617, entry: "تَعَامَل"; al-Ma'any, entry: "tafa'ul" achieved on 27th March 2021, <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar->

embracing uniqueness of every individual.²⁴ *Tafāhum* as defined by Nur Ervannudin and Jiyanto means mutual understanding and it is an advance step to be close and comfortable with somebody²⁵. Reaching to this state, it will not only make individuals to achieve good relationship with others, but also avoiding any misunderstanding and conflicts.

In addition, it is easier in fostering people to become supportive and helpful which known as *ta'āwun*.²⁶ Reliance on one another and being supportive can make a community stronger and have a vivid relationship filled with positive and great environment instead of hatred and oppression. Achievement of this level can finally result in achieving the highest level of interaction, which is *takāful*. At this stage, people will no longer focus on themselves; instead, the priority will be on others. The action of *takāful* was described in the *hadith* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): "Nu'man bin Bāshir (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: Messenger of Allah SWT said: 'The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever'."²⁷

²⁴ Khadijah Mohd Khambali @ Hambali, "Panduan Dialog Antara Agama Dalam Disiplin Ilmu Perbandingan Agama di Malaysia Menurut Konteks Fiqh al-Ta'āyusy," in *Rahmah lil-Alamin: Dakwah dalam Masyarakat Majmuk Malaysia*, ed. Zulkefli Aini, Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani and Zainab Ismail (Bangi: Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2018), 62.

²⁵ Nur Ervannudin and Jiyanto, "Education: *Ta'aruf, Tafahum* and *Takaful* to Child" (International Conference on Child-Friendly Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 5th November 2016), 460.

²⁶ Khadijah, "Panduan Dialog Antara Agama", 16.

²⁷ Hadith narrated by Muslim, *Kitāb al-Bir wa al-Ṣilāh wa al-Ādāb*, Chapter *Tarāḥum al-Mu'minīn wa Ta'āṭufuhum wa Ta'āduduhum*, hadith no. 6586. Referred to Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj bin Muslim, "Saḥīḥ Muslim," in *Mawsū'ah al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf: al-*

Hamidah explained that relationships that reach to this stage of *takāful* are filled with the highest level of love and concern to one another. The burden of others will be shared and affect one another, as they will no longer have any self-interest.²⁸

The attitude of *takāful* is likened to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through his words:

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ، وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ، وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ، مَثَلُ
الْجَسَدِ، إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهْرِ
وَالْحَمَى

Meaning: The parable of the Believers in the attitude of loving each other, loving and caring, like the body, if one limb is sick, then the other limb will have difficulty sleeping or feeling fever.²⁹

Besides these four levels of interaction, there are also other opinions regarding the concepts of interaction. According to 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm³⁰, he stated that there are six levels of interaction in order to gain strong relationships, which are, *ta'āruf*, *ta'āluḥ*,³¹ *tafāḥum*, *ri'āyah*,³² *ta'āwun*, and *tanāṣur*.³³ Meanwhile, from the

Kutub al-Sittah, ed. Ṣāliḥ bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl al-Shaykh (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2000), 1130.

²⁸ Hamidah, "Al-Ukhuwwah wa al-Ijtimā'iyah," 331.

²⁹ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Bir wa al-Ṣilāh wa al-Ādāb," Ṣāḥiḥ Muslim, no. Hadith 6586.

³⁰ 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, *Fiqh al-Ukhuwwah*, 30-40.

³¹ *Ta'āluḥ* means unity between one another. It comes from the root word *taālaḥ* which means gathered. 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, *Fiqh al-Ukhuwwah*, 32. Also, referred to Al-Ma'any, entry: "*taāḥala*" achieved on 27th March 2021, <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar>.

³² *Ri'āyah* is defined as taking care and look after. Originated from the term *ra'ā* means shepherd and preserve. Al-Marbawi, "*ri'āyah*," in *Qāmus Idris al-Marbāwi*, 240.

viewpoint of contemporary Islamic scholars, the concepts of interaction are discussed in detail with more comprehensive views to conform with the current situation nowadays. For example, the concept of *fiqh al-ta'āmul* and *fiqh al-ta'āyush* has been introduced towards achieving good and peaceful relations among multicultural societies that comprise of different faiths and races.

The meaning of *ta'āmul* as discussed before is defined as mutual cooperation, and interaction that takes place between two persons or more. The concept of *fiqh al-ta'āmul* is commonly used among scholars to explain the effort of unifying relationships between spouses in marriage, society of different faiths and cultures, as well as in Islamic economy (*mu'āmalah*). `Abd al-Azīz stated that *fiqh al-ta'āmul* is a concept that emphasize on perfecting *adāb* and *akhlāq* or morality.³⁴ He mentioned that in Islam, successful interaction not only focusing on the interaction with Allah, but also with humans. Many people do successfully perform well in their *'ibādah*, for example, prayers, fasting and reading the Qur'ān, yet still portray bad attitudes or *akhlāq* towards others. They still have the sense of hatred, being injustice, untrustworthy, and other negative attitudes.³⁵ Hence, by complying with the objective of *fiqh al-ta'āmul*, this concept is one of the means that encourage people to spread justice, peacefulness, love and mercy as a basic foundation in building good relation among multicultural society.

There is another concept that also focus on promoting unity, which is *fiqh al-ta'āyush*. This concept has been discussed widely among Western and Islamic scholars as it holds a comprehensive meaning. *Ta'āyush* literally

³³ *Tanāṣur* means help each other or mutual support, which comes from the term *naṣara* means help. Synonym with the *kalimah ta'āwun*. *Ibid.*, entry "*tafāhum*," 321.

³⁴ `Abd al-Azīz bin Fawzān al-Fawzān, *Fiqh al-Ta'āmul ma'a al-Nās* (Riyadh: t.p., 2004), 78.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

means going through a harmonious life despite having different faiths and races.³⁶ Zulkifli and Anis further described that *ta'āyush* means living together as a community that is based on the spirit of love, high tolerance, acceptance of diversity, mutual understanding, trust, and complementing each other.³⁷ Besides that, the term *fiqh al-ta'āyush* also synonym with the word co-existence. As explained by Kamar Oniah in her study on pluralistic co-existence, she stated that co-existence means each community has its own identity and uniqueness that comprise of different ethnic, races, religions, and languages. They live together as a society or in the same country.³⁸ She argued that the basis of producing a successful nation is through harmonious and happiness co-existence.³⁹

However, by looking back to the role of Muslims as vicegerents of Allah, Muslim must prioritize *'aqidah* above all as the basis of unity among humankind.⁴⁰ '*Khayra ummah*' as stated in the following verse shows that *'aqidah* is the root for spreading *da'wah*. A strong level of *'aqidah* influence people towards spreading virtues and avoiding vices:

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is

³⁶ Al-Ma'any, entry: "*ta'āyush*" achieved on 27th March 2021, <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar>.

³⁷ Zulkifli Aini dan Wan Nurul Anis Wan Ismail, "Pengenalan Kepada Amalan Konsep Fiqh al-Ta'āyush" in *Rahmah Lil Alamin: Dakwah dalam Masyarakat Majmuk Malaysia* ed. Zulkifli Aini, Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani dan Zainab Ismail (Bangi: Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2018), 22.

³⁸ Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, *Religion and Pluralistic Co-Existence: The Muhibah Perspective* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2010), 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁰ Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki, "Ukhuwah Asas Penyatuan Umat," website *Sinar Online*, achieved on 5th February 2021, <http://www.sinarharian.com.my/kolumnis/ukhuwah-asas-penyatuan-ummah-1.569272>.

right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among they are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.

Ali 'Imran, 3:110

According to Sayyid Qutb⁴¹ literally, the sequence of *'aqīdah* in this verse is later than the action of *amr ma'rūf nahī munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). However, he further interpreted that in spiritual meaning, the action of *amr ma'rūf nahī munkar* is actually influenced by *'aqīdah*. This is because by truly abiding the principles of *tawḥīd*, the deed of enjoining good and forbidding evil is elicited. An example of this description can be proven from the greatest time of Islamic history during the ruling of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The unity of 'Aws and Khazraj, as well as Muhājirīn and Anṣār proved that by having strong faith and loyalty towards Allah SWT, a prolonged tension between the two tribes had been resolved and further transformed into a strong bond of immense unity and respect.

It is important to note that interaction is not only about building a relationship, but also involves moral improvement, ethical values, and thoughts. Having *'aqīdah* as the foundation in every principle of interaction; *ta'aruf*, *tafāhum*, *takāful*, *ta'awun*, *fiqh al-ta'āmul* and *fiqh al-ta'āyush*, clearly shows that good values and *akhlāq Islāmiyyah* are very important to be instilled in the society. This is also the essential factor for sustaining the well-being of the society, especially among multi-ethnic and multi-religions societies.

⁴¹ Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1972), 1:447. Also, referred to Mohd. Shafiee Hamzah et al., "Penerapan Akidah dalam Dasar Pendidikan Malaysia: Analisis Terhadap Falsafah Islam Negara dan Islam Hadhari," *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 9 (2021), 3.

Hence, these are the elements that are regarded as the fundamental factors that contribute to the socio-religious harmony among multi-religious societies. It is therefore not misleading to assume that a Muslim society that adorns itself with such principles might be regarded as '*ummatan wasatan*' - the nation which is just and balanced. Allah said in the Qur'ān:

And so We have made you believers an upright community (*ummatan wasatan*) so that you may be witnesses over humanity and that the Messenger may be a witness over you.

Al-Baqarah, 2: 143

This is because the qualities of this nation as described in the previous verses are first, being the best (*khayra ummah*) due to constant improvement and upgrading of the community, and second, being just or fair.⁴² To be fair, Islam gives generous space to the people of different religions and cultures to discuss in solving mundane issues, or those that relate to intellectual, beliefs, and others.⁴³

Rasulullah (PBUH)'s Implementation on the Concepts of Interaction

The Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) had concerned with the purpose of establishing peace among nations through signing different pacts, and treaties to ensure peaceful coexistence and security for all people. This is proven

⁴² Abdullah Yusuf Ali interpreted the criteria of a witness as 1. Possesses the first-hand knowledge 2. Has the courage to intervene in the cause of justice 3. Fair or just in dealings.

⁴³ Khadijah Mohd Khambali @ Hambali, Suraya Sintang, Azarudin Awang, Khairul Nizam Mat Karim, Nur Farhana Abdul Rahman, Wan Adli Wan Ramli, Nurhanisah Senin, Azmil Zainal Abidin, Ahmad Zuhdi Ismail, Wan Zailan Kamaruddin Wan Ali, Ruzman Md. Noor, "al-Wasatiyyah in the Practice of Religious Tolerance among the Families of New Muslims in Sustaining a Well-being Society", *Humanomics* 33, no. 2 (2017), 1-15.

through pacts like the Peace of Hudaibiyyah and the Treaty of Ṭāif. Another famous example is the treaty of Najran which was delivered to Christians of Najran and its surrounding area. The document reads:

To the Christians of Najran and its surrounding territories, the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet is extended for their lives, religion and their property- to the present as well as the absent, and others besides, there shall be no interference within the practice of their faith or their observance nor any change in their rights and privileges, no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any priest from his priesthood, nor any monk from his monastery, and they shall continue to enjoy everything great and small as heretofore no image or cross shall be destroyed, they shall not oppress or be oppressed; they shall not practice the rights of blood-vengeance as in the Days of Ignorance, nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops: ⁴⁴

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

Beware, if anyone wrongs a contracting man, or diminishes his right, or forces him to work beyond his capacity, or takes from him anything without his consent, I shall plead for him on the Day of Judgment. ⁴⁵

Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

Whoever does them harm does me harm and I shall be his foe on the Day of

⁴⁴ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* 4 (Beirut: Maktabah al-Ma'ārif, 1999), 101-106.

⁴⁵ Abū Dāwūd, "Kitāb al-Kharaj, wa al-Fay wa al-Imārah", *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, no. 3052.

Judgment, his recompense will be the fire of hell and he will be free of my protection.⁴⁶

Among the most important evidence for the existence of interaction with non-Muslims is the Medina Document that the Messenger (PBUH), concluded with the Jews in Medina, which revealed the necessity of regulating the relationship with Muslims and Jews in a way that guarantees them their rights and reveals to them their duties in the state of Islam. This document emphasizes Islam's call for coexistence between Muslims and others in an interactive manner that preserves the rights of all as it imposes duties on them.

As we mentioned above; the prime example of Rasulullah (PBUH)'s implementation on the concepts of interaction can be proven from the Constitution of Medina. The diversity that exists among the society of Medina, which was populace by Jews, Muslims, pagans, animisms and other ethnicities, indicate that the Constitution of Medina was created with full of justice, fairness, respect, love and tolerance.⁴⁷ According to Azyati Azhani et al., the so-called 'one Ummah' in this charter is dedicated specifically for Muslims, and non-Muslims to bring awareness to the society of Medina are one and need to unite in building a strong society.⁴⁸ The kind acts of the Anṣār towards the Muḥājirīn can be described as the act of *takāful* and absolute sincerity whereby the former had prioritized the latter over their own needs.

⁴⁶ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Imara'," *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 20.

⁴⁷ Yusri Mohamad Ramli and Tengku Ghani Tengku Jusoh, "Najib Razak's Malaysia and Charter of Medina's One Ummah: Comparative Perspective", *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2012), 5.

⁴⁸ Azyati Azhani Mohd Mazuki et al., "Application of the Wasatiyyah Concept to the Formation of the Medina Charter", *International Journal of West Asian Studies* 5, no. 2 (2013), 5.

Furthermore, the Constitution of Medina also resulted in the union of Muhājirīn and Anṣār and finally ended the long battle of ‘Aws and Khazraj.⁴⁹ Rasulullah’s approach in forming a brotherhood among ‘Aws and Khazraj which are known as Anṣār as well as Anṣār with Muhājirīn had given big contribution in creating a solid form of Muslim brotherhood in Medina. This approach, later on, being followed by other non-Muslims communities.⁵⁰ The implementation of *ta’āruf*, *tafāhum*, *takāful*, and *ta’āwun* can be seen indirectly through the formation of brotherhood.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent as a mercy to the world to establish the true meaning of brotherhood among humans as they should all stand united regardless of their skin colour or theological belief. He gave the dynamic conception of undivided humanity, the family of man, the children of Adam. He managed to raise the ambitions of people from the limited confinements of national identity to the wide-open meaning of humanity.

The world is passing through a dark phase of moral bankruptcy, social disintegration, and parochial loyalties which helped in inciting wars and increasing the weight of the roaring voices calling for enmity and hatred. Prophet Muhammad’s message sanctified the life of all human beings irrespective of their racial origin or religious affiliation. He taught us the true meaning of the interaction and implementation of *ta’āruf*, and *tafāhum*.

Despite not knowing deeply about one another, the people of Anṣār were so accepting and willing to offer wealth, accommodation, and other belongings to the Muhājirīn. Therefore, Rasulullah’s way of uniting Muhājirīn and Anṣār leads them to the level of *ta’āruf* and

⁴⁹ Yusri Mohamad and Tengku Ghani, "Najib Razak’s 1Malaysia and Charter of Medina’s One Ummah," 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

tafāhum of each other and the highest level of interaction which is *takāful*.⁵¹

The values of love and sincerity between Muhājirīn and Anṣār were shown from one example of the story narrated by al-Waqīdī in his book *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*. From Abū Hurayrah R.A, Rasulullah (PBUH) had offered a man from *ahl al-ṣuffah*⁵² to an Anṣār man in order to help the Muhājir. Hence, the Anṣār man brought the Muhājir to his home to offer him food and accommodation. Although not having much except for the Anṣār's family, he insisted on helping and asked his wife to put their children to sleep to prevent hunger. His wife being very obedient followed his command and served the food for the Muhājir. On the next day, Rasulullah (PBUH) met the husband and wife and said to both of them "Indeed Allah was so impressed with your actions". Then revealed the following verse as a symbol of compliment to the Anṣār.⁵³

And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madīnah and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation.

⁵¹ Mohd Rashad Shamsuddin, *Sirah Muhammad Rasulullah SAW* (Kuala Lumpur: Al-Hidayah Publishers, 2002), 261; Abdul Aziz al-Fauzan, *Fikih Sosial: Tuntutan dan Etika Hidup Bermasyarakat* (Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2007), 329.

⁵² *Ahl al-ṣuffah* is a group of men among the *ṣaḥābah* of Prophet (PBUH) that lived around the corner of Medina mosque. They are poor and got no families as well as a home to live. They were part of Muhājirīn that migrated to Medina for protection. Jalaluddin Rakhmat, *Jalan Rahmat Mengetuk Pintu Tuhan* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2013), 30.

⁵³ Mahmud Mohamad Babeli, *Persaudaraan Islam dan Pembangunan Sosial: al-Shabāb al-Muslim fī Muwājahah al-Tahdiyyāt*, transl. 'Abd al-Karīm Muṣṭafā (Makkah: Rābiṭah al-Ālam al-Islāmī, 2002), 52; 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, *Fiqh al-Ukhuwwah fī al-Islām*, 392.

Al-Hashr, 59:9

The emergence of Islam influences fostering great characters as Muslims among them and making their faith stronger and freedom from their own desire. The success of the Constitution of Medina in bringing unity and justice for the Medina nation despite their diversity had proved the great ruling of Rasulullah (PBUH) in cultivating peaceful co-existence. Such a comprehensive constitution that comprises the rights and responsibilities of each individual brought them together by becoming a world-class civilization and respectable nation.

Malaysians as Multicultural Society

Looking at the situation in Malaysia that is also characterized by a multicultural nation, there are yet many unsolved issues regarding racisms, oppression, and discrimination that surround Malaysian societies. Khadijah argues that differences of ethnicities, skin colours, faiths, cultures, and thoughts have impacted creating harmonious living among nations. In order to improve the situation, the cultivation of religious values and improvement of morality is much needed in society.⁵⁴ Hence, the implementation of the concepts of interaction according to the Islamic perspective as discussed above are practical in fostering good characters.

The mechanics of interaction (*ta'āruf*, *tafāhum* and *takāful*) are able to influence society to be more knowledgeable and understanding of other cultures and religious tradition. Instead of being prejudice and ignorant of learning other faith, the process of *ta'āruf* is a good start in creating awareness in the society. It automatically inculcates the sense of respect and openness towards others. Besides, this situation also created a supportive nation or can be described as the stage of *takāful*. Similar with the formation of brotherhood in Medina, the

⁵⁴ Khadijah, "Panduan Dialog Antara Agama", 62.

supportive nation was impacted by the act of *takāful* and absolute sincerity.

Apart from that, living in a multicultural country like Malaysia, dialogue can also be part of the important means of constructing a peaceful co-existence life. It cannot be denied that dialogue always happens in Malaysian interactions every day. Regardless of what topics are being discussed, dialogue can play an important role in generating social unity. Suraya Sintang mentioned that due to its importance, there are many activities and discussions nowadays that encourage people to practice dialogue, more specifically in interfaith dialogue.⁵⁵ Interfaith dialogue benefits people through discussion of current issues, misunderstanding inputs, and finding solutions to the problems that arise in society.

Nonetheless, looking through the discussion on the comprehensive concept of *fiqh al-ta'āyush*, this concept is most probably the best concept to apply in a Malaysian multicultural nation. In accordance with its meaning of co-existence, living in a multicultural environment really urges individuals to practice living with tolerance and respect. Furthermore, the importance of *fiqh al-ta'āyush* is proven from the inclusiveness of other concepts such as *tasāmuh*, *maḥabbah*, and *ta'āmul* that underlying the concept of *fiqh al-ta'āyush*.

Conclusion

To summarize, *aqīdah* plays an important role that affects the development of a successful *ummah*. Prioritizing *aqīdah* as the foundation in every interaction concept, these concepts were clearly developed with emphasizing the Islamic values and morality to be applied among society. All these concepts share similarities in encouraging individuals to be tolerant, compassionate, understanding, and respectful as well as to be freed from

⁵⁵ Suraya, "Dialog Kehidupan Dalam Pengalaman Saudara Baru", 147.

desires to conform to its purpose in building a successful *ummah*.

Acknowledgement

We wish to offer our gratitude for the opportunity extended by UMRG RP035A-17HNE to sponsor our research.

References

- Abdul Aziz al-Fauzan. *Fikih Sosial: Tuntutan dan Etika Hidup Bermasyarakat*. Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2007.
- ‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin Fawzān al-Fawzān, *Fiqh al-Ta‘āmul ma‘a al-Nās*. Riyadh: t.p., 2004.
- Muslim, Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim bin al-Ḥajjāj. "Saḥīḥ Muslim." In *Mawsū‘ah al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf: al-Kutub al-Sittah*, ed. Ṣāliḥ bin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Āl al-Shaykh. Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2000.
- Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki, "Ukhuwah Asas Penyatuan Umat," website *Sinar Online*, achieved on 5th February 2021, <http://www.sinarharian.com.my/kolumnis/ukhuwah-asas-penyatuan-ummah-1.569272>.
- Maḥmūd, ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm. *Fiqh al-Ukhuwwah fī al-Islām*. n.p: Dar al-Tawzi‘ wa al-Naṣr al-Islāmiyyah, 1993.
- Al-Ma‘any, achieved on 27th March 2021, <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar->.
- Azyati Azhani Mohd Mazuki et al., "Application of the Wasatiyyah Concept to The Formation of the Medina Charter", *International Journal of West Asian Studies* 5, no. 2 (2013): 1-15.
- Dadi Ahmadi, "Interaksi Simbolik: Suatu Pengantar", *Jurnal Komunikasi* 9, no. 2 (2017): 301-316.
- H. Tata Fathurrohman, "Peranan Akhlak Dalam Kehidupan Seorang Muslim", website UNISBA: Universitas Islam Bandung, achieved on 28th January 2021, <https://www.unisba.ac.id/index.php/id/illustrations/item>

/88-peranan-akhlak- dalam-kehidupan-seorang-muslim.

- Hamidah, "Al-Ukhuwwah wa al-Ijtimā'iyah wa al-Insāniyyah: Kajian Terhadap Pluralisme Agama dan Kerjasama Kemanusiaan," *Jurnal Kajian Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 2 (2015).
- Hassan al-Banna. *Usrah dan Dakwah*. n.p.p.: n.p., 1979.
- Husayn ibn Muhsin ibn Ali Jabir. *Membentuk Jama'atul Muslimin*. Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1991.
- Ibn Kathīr, Abī al-Fidā' Ismā'il. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīmi li al-Imām al-Khālīl al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Imād al-Dīn Abī al-Fidā' Ismā'il al-Dimshiqī* 5. Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 2001.
- Ibn Khaldun. *Muqaddimah*, translated by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Selangor: Percetakan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993.
- Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad Ibn Mukarram. *Lisān al-'Arab* 13. Egypt: Al-Maṭba'ah al-Kubrā al-Miṣriyyah, 1886.
- Abū Dāwūd. "Sunan Abī Dāwūd." In *Mawsū'ah al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf: al-Kutub al-Sittah*, ed. Ṣaliḥ bin 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl al-Shaykh. Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2000.
- International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, "Blumer, Herbert," website *Encyclopedia.com*, achieved on January 2021, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-biographies/herbert-blumer#1G23045300217>.
- Jalaluddin Rakhmat. *Jalan Rahmat Mengetuk Pintu Tuhan*. Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2013.
- Charon, Joel M. *Symbolic Interactionism*. USA: Prentice Hall Inc, 1979.
- Simpson, John Andrew and Weiner, Edmund S. C. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman. *Religion and Pluralistic Co-Existence: The Muhibah Perspective*. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2010.

- Kamus Besar Arab-Melayu Dewan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2006.
- Khadijah Mohd Khambali and Khairul Nizam Mat Karim. "Interaksi dan Dialog Agama (Dialog Peradaban): Satu Paparan". In *Islam dan Dialog Peradaban: Satu Perspektif*, ed. Azizan Baharuddin. Kuala Lumpur: Pusat Dialog Peradaban, Universiti Malaya, 2005: 91-121.
- Khadijah Mohd Khambali @ Hambali. "Panduan Dialog Antara Agama dalam Disiplin Ilmu Perbandingan Agama di Malaysia Menurut Konteks Fiqh Al-Ta'āyusy". In *Rahmah lil-Alamin: Dakwah dalam Masyarakat Majmuk Malaysia*, eds. Zulkefli Aini, Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani and Zainab Ismail. Bangi: Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2018: 62-72.
- Khadijah Mohd Khambali @ Hambali et al., "*al-Wasatiyyah* in the Practice of Religious Tolerance Among the Families of New Muslims in Sustaining a Well-Being Society", *Humanomics* 33, no. 2 (2017): 1-15.
- Mahmud Mohamad Babeli. *Persaudaraan Islam dan Pembangunan Sosial: al-Shabāb al-Muslim fī Muwājahah al-Tahdiyyāt*, trans. 'Abd al-Karīm Muṣṭafā. Makkah: Rābitah al-'Ālam al-Islāmī, 2002.
- Mohd Rashad Shamsuddin. *Sirah Muhammad Rasulullah SAW*. Kuala Lumpur: Al-Hidayah Publishers, 2002.
- Mohd. Shafiee bin Hamzah et al., "Penerapan Akidah dalam Dasar Pendidikan Malaysia: Analisis Terhadap Falsafah Negara Islam dan Islam Hadhari," *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 9 (2015): 1-11.
- Mohd Puzhi Usop et al. *Kamus al-Farid*. Kuala Lumpur: Telaga Biru Sdn. Bhd., 2009.
- Muhammad Idris al-Marbawī. *Qāmus Idris al-Marbāwī*, ed. Abdullah al-Qari'. Kuala Lumpur: Dar al-Nukman, 1998.

- Nur Ervannudin and Jiyanto, "Education: *Ta`aruf, Tafahum* and *Takaful* to Child" (International Conference on Child-Friendly Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 5th November 2016).
- Enizahura Abdul Aziz, "Peaceful Co-Existence the Right Way", website *The Star Online*, achieved on 16th September 2020, <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/columnists/ikim-views/2014/09/16/peaceful-coexistence-the-right-way/>.
- Sayyid Qutb. *Tafsir fi Zilal al-Qur'an* 1. Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1972.
- Suraya Sintang. "Dialog Kehidupan Dalam Pengalaman Saudara Baru di Sabah". Doctoral thesis, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 2012.
- Syed Omar Syed Agil, *The Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun: Religion, Human Nature and Economics*. Selangor: Selangor International Islamic University College (KUIS), 2008.
- Yusri Mohamad Ramli and Tengku Ghani Tengku Jusoh, "Najib Razak's 1Malaysia and Charter of Medina's One Ummah: Comparative Perspective", *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2012): 95-101.
- Zulkefli Aini and Wan Nurul Anis Wan Ismail. "Pengenalan Kepada Amalan Konsep *Fiqh al-Ta`āyusy*", In *Rahmah Lil Alamin: Dakwah dalam Masyarakat Majmuk Malaysia*, eds. Zulkefli Aini, Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani and Zainab Ismail. Bangi: Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2018: 21-35.