

Interfaith Relations in the Time of the Prophet Muhammad: The Construction of Global Ethics in the Medina Charter

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Abstract:

This study examines interfaith relations during the era of the Prophet Muhammad by analyzing the Medina Charter as an early foundation for global ethics in pluralistic societies. Using a qualitative literature-based approach, it analyzes the charter, classical Islamic historiography, the Qur'an, and contemporary scholarship on religious tolerance and global ethics. The findings show that the Medina Charter introduced a socio-political model in which the *ummah* functioned not only as a religious community but also as a political entity founded on mutual obligations and collective protection. It recognized religious diversity, granted legal autonomy to non-Muslim communities, guaranteed freedom of religion, and established an impartial mechanism for resolving conflicts. These principles correspond closely with Hans Küng's Global Ethics, particularly its emphasis on nonviolence, justice, tolerance, solidarity, and human dignity. The study argues that the Medina Charter offers a historical prototype for managing religious plurality through dialogue, legal pluralism, and shared moral commitments, providing continuing relevance for addressing religious conflict, identity politics, and social fragmentation.

Keywords: Global Ethics; Interfaith relations; Islamic Civilization; Medina Charter; religious tolerance.

INTRODUCTION

Religious tolerance is one of the most frequently discussed issues (Rustandi et al., 2022). Tolerance can generally be understood as an attitude of respecting the opinions of others who have different views, accompanied by leniency and gentleness (Yenuri et al., 2021). The word "tolerance" is a translation of the English word tolerance, which is almost identical in other Western languages, derived from the Latin verb *tolerare* which is interpreted as "to bear or endure" (Zagorin, 2003). Religious tolerance is an attitude of mutual respect and acceptance of differences in religious beliefs between individuals or groups (Luthfi, 2023). The emergence of philosophical theories related to religious tolerance occurred during the Age of Enlightenment, motivated by several factors, among the most important of which was the bloody religious war between Catholics and Protestants (Kandil, 2024).

The 16th century witnessed the Protestant Reformation, arguably the most intolerant period in European history. This century was marked not only by violent conflict between rival Christian denominations but also by a surge in anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism in Western Europe. As a result of these conflicts, thousands of people were killed or forced to flee as victims of religious violence (Zagorin, 2003). This religious conflict culminated in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) between Catholics and eight Protestant sects. The war ended with the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which regulated European laws to allow for the existence of Christian minorities (Kandil, 2024).

The 17th century marked a crucial turning point in the development of modern thought on religious tolerance. Among the early proponents of tolerance theory during this era were Baruch de Spinoza, Pierre Bayle, and John Locke. In his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Theological-Political Treatise), Spinoza (1670) emphasized the state's role in ensuring peace, and therefore its authority to control external religious practices. However, he argued that the state had limited authority regarding the right to freedom of belief and thought (Bagley, 1991). In his *Commentaire Philosophique* (Philosophical Commentary on Tolerance), Bayle (1686) became the first intellectual to elaborate a universal argument for tolerance, encompassing people of various religions as well as those considered infidels and atheists (Bayle, 2005). Locke then proposed a more revolutionary theory in his *Epistola de Tolerantia* (A Letter on Tolerance), laying the foundation for the modern liberal perspective on human rights. He stated that the state has nothing to do with the "care of the soul", so religion should be considered a private matter between humans and God (Locke, 2010).

The idea of a secular state gained further prominence in the 18th century. Tolerance theorists of this era began to focus on the country's political stability and religious harmony. Montesquieu (1748), for example, in *The Spirit of the Laws*, discussed the importance of religious tolerance to ensure political stability and peace. However, he argued that there were limits to the acceptance of new religions or the modification of existing ones (Samuel, 2009). Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), in *The Social Contract*, further clarified the separation between politics and religion, seeking to eliminate religious conflict and intolerance by creating a "civic religion" that should be embraced by all. Meanwhile, in his treatise on human nature and education, *Émile, ou De l'éducation*, Rousseau emphasized the importance of one's conscience and the need for a non-dogmatic "natural religion" (Parker, 2006).

In the 19th century, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) marked a shift to a contemporary understanding of tolerance that did not limit tolerance to religious differences (Ten, 1980). This work is one of the most powerful and influential written statements on tolerance throughout the nineteenth century. Mill urged that individual, political, religious, and intellectual freedoms be granted in the widest possible scope (Zagorin, 2003). In this regard, he argued that tolerance is also necessary for modern society to face irresolvable cultural, social, and political differences (Kandil, 2024). The formulation of religious tolerance as a legal principle systematically designed and institutionalized by the international community began to take clear shape in the 20th century. During this period, various international legal instruments such as treaties, declarations, and conventions were formulated to establish common norms regarding religious freedom. One of the main milestones was Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, ratified by the United Nations General Assembly. The article affirms that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the right to change religion or belief and to express it through teaching, practice, worship, and observance, both individually and collectively, in public and private spaces. A similar principle is also contained in Article 18 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief strengthened the global normative framework in efforts to advance tolerance and religious freedom (Kandil, 2024).

Before proceeding further, it is important to distinguish among several terms that are often treated as synonymous, yet each carries a distinct conceptual meaning. These terms include religious tolerance, religious freedom, religious harmony, and religious pluralism. Some thinkers distinguish religious tolerance from religious freedom. Religious tolerance is understood as an attitude of restraint and the granting of permission by a dominant group or authority to other religious groups to continue to exist, even if their existence is deemed erroneous, inferior, or even dangerous. Conversely, religious freedom requires equal recognition of the rights of all religions and denominations without distinction or discrimination. Within the framework of tolerance, those in power still have the authority to revoke or reject such tolerance, while within the concept of religious freedom there is no legitimate authority to abolish such freedom (Zagorin, 2003). Understanding religious tolerance cannot be separated from the initial assumption that the religious beliefs or practices of others are considered erroneous. It is precisely at this point that tolerance acquires its significance, because it presupposes acceptance of the existence of practices deemed erroneous without necessarily eliminating such normative judgments. Thus, religious tolerance is a moral concept that contains two elements simultaneously: the assessment of wrongdoing and an attitude of acceptance born of moral virtue (Araújo et al., 2008). In social practice, religious tolerance can be seen as the most fundamental level in interfaith relations, which opens up space for the creation of harmony and, to some extent, plurality of religious life. Religious harmony itself refers to a harmonious social condition, where different religious groups are able to coexist peacefully through active interaction, cooperation, and mutual understanding in shared life (Atique, 2025).

Based on this understanding, religious tolerance cannot be equated with religious pluralism. Religious pluralism, as proposed by John Hick, is based on the view that the

world's major religions represent diverse responses to the same transcendent reality. In this perspective, no single religion can claim absolute superiority over another (Hick, 1991). This philosophical view is clearly different from religious tolerance, which does not initially require recognition of the truth of other religions. True tolerance, however, demands the ability to respect beliefs believed to be false, not by eliminating or relativizing differences, but by accepting the disagreement itself. Araújo and his colleagues summarize the historical development of the concept of religious tolerance into four main stages. First, the concept of permissiveness, namely the most minimal form of tolerance characterized by unilateral permission from the authorities to minorities, often in hierarchical and discriminatory situations. Second, the concept of coexistence, in which tolerance is practiced as a pragmatic strategy to prevent conflict between relatively equal groups. Third, the concept of respect, which places tolerance on the recognition of individuals as autonomous subjects with equal rights before the state. Fourth, the concept of appreciation, which is the stage at which diversity is seen as an intrinsic value worthy of celebration in an egalitarian society.

Chronologically, these developments indicate that the concept of religious tolerance has undergone significant transformation in Western history, particularly since the Age of Enlightenment, which gave birth to the foundations of modern liberal thought on human rights and religious freedom. However, religious plurality is a global social reality faced not only by modern Western societies. Advances in information technology are increasingly erasing geographical boundaries, transforming the world into a "global village," making the challenges of interfaith coexistence increasingly apparent (Thoha, 2021). Tracing the history of Islamic civilization, the practice of religious tolerance emerged long before the development of Western liberal-secular concepts. As early as the seventh century AD, the Prophet Muhammad, through the Medina Charter, laid the constitutional foundation for a multicultural society that guaranteed religious freedom and protected the rights of non-Muslim communities. This principle then continued throughout various phases of the Islamic Caliphate, from the Caliphate to the Ottoman Empire, demonstrating the consistency of the practice of religious tolerance throughout Islamic history (Kalatini et al., 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Presenting relevant previous research is an important step in mapping the research position and identifying gaps that have not been widely explored by previous researchers. This literature review aims to demonstrate the academic relevance and scientific urgency of the topic. In general, there are three main research clusters closely related to the focus of this study: research on the experience of religious tolerance, religious tolerance from an Islamic perspective, and the history of the development of religious tolerance. This division aligns with the scope of research on the experience of religious tolerance in Islam from the time of the Prophet to the Ottoman Empire, which encompasses conceptual, theological, historical, and practical dimensions.

One of the relevant studies is the work of Muhammad Baleeh Hamad Alajmi (2021) entitled *Ṭabī'at al-Taṣāmaḥwa Majālātih fī al-Islām* published in *Majallat al-Sharī'ah wa al-Qānūn*. This study examines the concept of tolerance in Islam by highlighting its meaning, indicators, and the normative foundations that govern it. Alajmi emphasizes that tolerance

in Islam is not unlimited, but rather has clear ethical and theological corridors. The important contribution of this study lies in its effort to correct the various negative stigmas often attached to Islam, such as accusations of extremism and exclusivism, by showing that Islamic teachings actually encourage peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. However, Alajmi's study tends to be normative-conceptual and has not been supplemented with an empirical approach or concrete examples of the practice of tolerance in the historical or social reality of Muslims.

Another relevant study was conducted by Patrick Pasture and Lidiya Georgieva (2022) in a research report entitled "Religion, Peace, and Toleration: Can We Learn with History?" This study examines various historical and contemporary initiatives in building interfaith peace and tolerance, using history as a space for shared reflection. This research emphasizes the importance of inclusive dialogue involving religious and non-religious actors in efforts to create sustainable peace. The report's main strength lies in its analysis of primary sources, including historical peace agreements, as well as an extensive review of secondary literature on tolerance, religious freedom, and the emancipation of minority groups. However, the approach used is more reflective and normative, so the results tend to be policy recommendations rather than measurable empirical findings (Pasture & Georgieva, 2022).

An article written by Rifki Rosyad (2022), titled "Islamic Doctrines on How to Live Tolerantly in a Pluralistic Society," focuses on Islamic teachings as a source of values for building tolerance in a pluralistic society. Rosyad emphasizes that Islam teaches the principles of mutual respect, dialogue, and the prohibition of religious coercion, as reflected in the Quran and the exemplary life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This research demonstrates that the practice of tolerance in Islam is not merely theoretical but has also been realized in historical experience. However, this study has not yet examined in depth how policies of religious tolerance were formulated and implemented within Islamic government structures during the classical era (Rosyad, 2022).

Another relevant article was written by Taufik Hidayatulloh and Theguh Saumantri (2023) entitled "Religious Harmony through the Lens of Religious Experience According to Joachim Wach." This study uses Joachim Wach's theory of religious experience to analyze religious harmony in Indonesia. Wach proposed three forms of expression of religious experience: thought, action, and fellowship, as well as the concept of the sacred canopy, which explains the role of religion as a framework of meaning in human life. This article makes an important contribution to understanding religious harmony from a phenomenological perspective, but its scope is limited to the Indonesian context and does not yet discuss religious tolerance from an Islamic perspective or its historical development more broadly (Hidayatulloh & Saumantri, 2023).

The next research is a master's thesis compiled by Khoerul Musafak (2023) entitled "Religious Tolerance in the Qur'an: A Comparative Study of the Tafsir of Ibn Kathir and the Tafsir of Al-Mishbah." Using Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism theory, this study compares the interpretations of verses on religious tolerance by classical and contemporary commentators. The research findings indicate differences in interpretative tendencies influenced by the socio-historical context of each figure. The strength of this thesis lies in enriching the perspective of Qur'anic interpretation regarding religious tolerance. However, this study does not comprehensively link the results of these

interpretations to the practice of tolerance in the social and political life of Muslims (Musafak, 2023).

Muh Fatkhan's (2024) doctoral dissertation, "Religious Tolerance in the Development of Interactions Between Muslims and Christians in Magelang, 1900–1942 AD," is also relevant to examine. This study examines the dynamics of interactions between Muslims and Christians during the colonial period and identifies various forms of tolerance arising from the balance of political power and moral considerations. The study's main strength lies in its detailed historical analysis within the Indonesian context. However, its focus is limited to the colonial period and does not yet highlight religious tolerance within the context of classical Islamic civilization (Fatkhan, 2024). Finally, a journal article by Zaid Tsabit Al Kalatini et al. (2025), "The Concept of Religious Tolerance in the History of Islamic Civilization," discusses religious tolerance within the historical trajectory of Islamic civilization. This study demonstrates that the practice of religious tolerance in Islam is rooted in the Qur'an, the Prophet's Sunnah, and Islamic political policies such as the Medina Charter, the concept of *ahl al-dhimma*, and the caliphate system. The strength of this article lies in its integration of normative concepts and historical evidence. However, due to the limited space of the journal article, the discussion presented is still brief and requires further development (Kalatini et al., 2025).

Based on this mapping, it can be concluded that previous studies have generally been partial, focusing on specific conceptual and historical aspects, or limited geographic contexts. Few studies have comprehensively examined the experience of religious tolerance in Islam from the time of the Prophet to the Ottoman Empire, integrating the dimensions of religious experience, Islamic theological perspectives, and historical practices. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by presenting a comprehensive study of the experience of religious tolerance in Islam throughout the history of Islamic civilization.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method. The choice of a qualitative approach is based on the research objective of seeking a deeper understanding of the experience of religious tolerance in Islam from the time of the Prophet to the Ottoman Empire. This approach allows researchers to examine the meaning, context, and dynamics of religious tolerance as it developed throughout Islamic history. Literature review was chosen because the research focuses on the analysis of relevant written sources, such as classical works, scientific books, journal articles, and other academic publications related to the research topic (Sugiyono, 2013).

In humanities studies, this method plays a strategic role in reconstructing historical facts and understanding the practice of religious tolerance documented in various textual sources. The data sources in this study are divided into two categories: primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources include classical texts, scholarly books, journal articles, and other academic works that directly discuss the concept of religious tolerance in Islam and its practice in the history of Islamic civilization. Furthermore, this study draws on the works of thinkers such as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Joachim Wach, and Thomas B. Smith, whose theories serve as a formal analytical framework. These primary

sources are utilized to uncover historical and conceptual facts, which are then analyzed using relevant theoretical perspectives (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

Secondary sources include books, scientific articles, documents, and other writings that support the research discussion. These sources serve as complements and strengthen the analysis, given that no single work has been found that comprehensively examines the concept and implementation of religious tolerance in Islamic history from the Prophetic period to the Ottoman Empire using a contemporary theoretical approach. Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature review, exploring primary and supporting literature. This process included searching for and collecting relevant texts from print and digital libraries, as well as scientific journal databases. All sources obtained were then selected based on their level of relevance, author credibility, and publisher reputation. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, categorization, synthesis, and interpretation (Miles et al., 2020). Relevant data were filtered and grouped according to the research theme, then categorized to identify patterns of religious tolerance from an Islamic perspective and its historical practice. The final stage, synthesis and interpretation, was conducted by linking the data findings to the theoretical framework to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experience of religious tolerance in Islamic civilization. To maintain the validity and reliability of the findings, this study employed source triangulation by comparing data from primary and secondary sources. This step aims to ensure consistency of information and increase the accuracy and credibility of research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Principles of Interfaith Relations in the Medina Charter

The study of Islamic history within the framework of religious studies cannot be limited solely to theological narratives related to revelation and religious practices, but rather needs to be understood as a socio-political phenomenon born of the dynamics of society at the time. From this perspective, the emergence of Islam and the formation of Medina society were historical responses to a social reality characterized by prolonged conflict, fragmented identities, and the absence of a unifying authority capable of guaranteeing justice and peace. Therefore, the Medina Charter not only reflects the prophetic mission of the Prophet Muhammad as a transmitter of divine messages but also demonstrates his capacity as a political leader capable of formulating a new social order for a pluralistic society.

The Prophet Muhammad's leadership in Medina presented a governance paradigm that differed from the pre-Islamic Arab social patterns of tribal loyalty and blood ties. Medina's society at that time consisted of various groups with very diverse backgrounds, ranging from the Aus and Khazraj tribes who had long been involved in armed conflict, the Muhajirin as immigrants from Mecca, the Ansar as the native inhabitants, to the Jewish community who possessed significant economic power and political influence. In addition to ethnic and tribal differences, Medina's society was also characterized by a diversity of beliefs, which included Muslims, Jews, and adherents of local non-Muslim faiths. This social complexity is what made Medina an early laboratory for managing diversity in Islamic history.

In this context, the Medina Charter served as a social contract designed to create stability, security, and justice for all city residents, regardless of religious or ethnic background. This document affirmed the principle of living together through a dialogue-formulated agreement agreed upon by the various groups involved. Therefore, the Medina Charter cannot be understood simply as an instrument of da'wah (Islamic preaching) or an internal regulation of the Muslim community, but rather as a political agreement that bound the entire Medina community within a single framework of citizenship. This principle enabled groups with differing identities to coexist without sacrificing their respective beliefs. The Medina Charter demonstrates that, since its early stages of development, Islam has offered a model of interfaith relations that is inclusive and cooperative. Religious differences are not used as a basis for mutual exclusion, but rather are managed through the recognition of shared rights and obligations in social and political life. The principle of tolerance embodied in the Medina Charter does not imply theological relativism, but rather an ethical stance that respects the existence of "others" as part of the same political community. With this approach, identity conflicts that could potentially undermine social cohesion can be mitigated through mechanisms of agreement and the rule of law.

Positioning the Medina Charter as merely a historical artifact without contemporary relevance would diminish its strategic value in addressing the challenges of the modern world. Amidst increasing religious-based conflict, identity politics, and intergroup trust crises, the Medina Charter offers a normative reference demonstrating that harmony in a pluralistic society is not a utopia, but has been realized in historical practice. Therefore, making the Medina Charter a significant milestone in academic analysis is an effort to rediscover the roots of tolerance, harmony, and interfaith relations in the Islamic tradition. This effort also contributes to enriching contemporary discourse on peace, pluralism, and governance of multicultural societies in the global era.

The Formation of the Ummah: A New Paradigm in the Sociopolitical Community

Ummah (أمة) or "ummah" literally means "group; nation; party." (Qadhi, 2012). According to Zainal Abidin, the word ummah is a new term in politics that indicates the existence of citizens of a newly established state. Because there is no appropriate translation for the term, he uses the term "nation-state" which he considers adequate enough to explain the nationality of citizens who do not depend on the unity of descent, residence, or others, but are bound by the unity of the state. (Ahmad, 2014) However, Asep Sobari does not agree with this interpretation, because the concept of "nation-state" is the result of Western colonialism which gave birth to national identity based on geographical barriers. (Sobari, 2017) Yasir Qadhi's explanation of the concept of ummah supports Asep Sobari's opinion: according to him, the concept of ummah is built on a theological foundation (Qadhi, 2012). This is as stated by Allah in the Al-Qur'an surah Al-Mu'minun verse 52:

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

"And truly, your community, O Prophets, is one community."

The text of the Medina Charter explicitly states that the believers from Quraysh and Yathrib, later known as the Muhajirin and Ansar, are considered a single community,

separate from the rest of humanity. This opening clause of the treaty between Muslims establishes the ummah not only as a religious community but also as a political entity with a shared collective consciousness (Anjum, 2021). This formulation represents a major breakthrough in the context of pre-Islamic Arab society, which was previously based entirely on kinship and tribal ties. The phrase "separate from the rest of humanity" emphasizes that the Islamic ummah is a unique community, with internal bonds rooted in faith and incomparable to social relations outside of Islam.

The Medina Charter explicitly stated that the Quraysh and Yathrib, both natives and immigrants, constituted one equal community. There was no distinction between natives and immigrants; all members of the community enjoyed the same rights and obligations. Membership in the community was no longer determined by lineage, but by religious commitment. Anyone who embraced Islam automatically became part of this community. Thus, the old tribal-based social system was gradually abandoned. Even the social hierarchy between nobles and slaves began to lose its relevance, as the measure of nobility was no longer determined by social status but by the level of piety. Individual identity was now entirely constructed through faith. While this concept may seem commonplace from the perspective of contemporary Muslims, at the time it was a truly revolutionary idea, unprecedented in Arab history (Qadhi, 2012).

In addition to regulating internal relations between Muslims, the Charter of Medina also governed relations between Muslims and the Jewish community. One crucial clause states that the Jews constitute one Ummah (community) alongside the believers. This formulation, "ummah ma'a al-mu'minin," has become one of the most controversial and debated sections in studies of the Charter of Medina. This debate arises not only from differences in wording in various narrations of the charter's text, but also from the potential for misunderstanding. The clause is often misinterpreted as if Islam and Judaism were positioned as one community, meaning they share the same theological truth. This interpretation is inconsistent with the overall structure and content of the Charter of Medina (Silvita, 2012).

The clear separation between the internal agreement of the Muslim community and the agreement with the Jews demonstrates that the Jewish community remains recognized as an independent entity, both theologically and politically. They are not integrated into the Islamic ummah, but rather positioned as a community living side by side, bound by a common agreement. The model of social integration advocated by the Medina Charter is not identity assimilation, but rather functional cooperation within the framework of the state, particularly in matters of collective defense and security (Khashogi, 2012). The key word in this clause lies in the use of the preposition *ma'a* (together). Yasir Qadhi provides a powerful metaphorical illustration to explain this concept: the Jews are one ummah, the Muslims are one ummah; together, they form two ummahs living side by side (Qadhi, 2012). This relationship can be likened to two brothers who come from different mothers but live in the same house. Despite their different origins and identities, both have the same moral responsibility to maintain and protect this shared home. This concept of brotherhood across the "womb" allows for social stability without requiring the elimination of each party's religious identity. This principle proved effective in mitigating conflict and building peace in Medina, uniting diverse groups under a common national interest. This provision applies not only to the Jews of Banu Awf but also extends to other Jewish tribes

such as Banu Najjar, Banu al-Harith, and Banu Sa'idah, as outlined in subsequent articles (Anjum, 2021).

One of the most progressive aspects of the Medina Charter was its recognition of legal autonomy and religious freedom. This principle of tolerance was explicitly stated in a clause affirming that Jews were free to practice their religion, just as Muslims were free to practice theirs. The declaration "li al-Yahūd dīnuhum wa li al-Muslimīn dīnuhum" constituted the first constitutional guarantee in Arab history that granted a minority community complete freedom to practice their faith without the threat of persecution. This guarantee was particularly significant when compared to the experience of Muslims in Mecca, who had previously experienced oppression by polytheists.

This policy gave birth to a system of religious autonomy that granted broad authority to Jewish tribes to regulate their own internal affairs. This freedom also extended to their allies. Each Jewish community was given the right to apply its own religious law in various areas, from criminal and civil law, marriage, inheritance, and even internal dispute resolution, without intervention from Islamic state authorities (Qadhi, 2012).

This pattern demonstrates that the Medina Charter implemented the principle of legal pluralism, where not just one legal system applies, but rather several legal systems coexist within a single state. This legal autonomy played a crucial role in maintaining the continuity of distinct group identities. By maintaining their respective religious laws as long as they did not conflict with the principles of general justice, each community felt its sovereignty was recognized and respected. In this system, the state functioned as a coordinator of cross-community public affairs, such as defense, foreign relations, and law enforcement in cases involving parties of different religions. This approach proved effective in creating a harmonious social life within a pluralistic society, and became a key distinction between Medina and other major empires of its time, such as Byzantium and Persia, which tended to impose official state religions through political and military force (Silvita, 2012).

In addition to religious freedom, the Medina Charter also established a clear conflict resolution mechanism by designating the Prophet Muhammad as the supreme authority in dispute resolution. The charter emphasized that any dispute that could potentially cause harm must be referred to God and His Messenger. This provision places the Prophet Muhammad as the supreme arbiter recognized by all citizens, both Muslim and non-Muslim. This mechanism emphasizes that conflicts should not be resolved through majority rule or the interests of a particular group, but rather through an authority with moral integrity and a commitment to justice. The Prophet Muhammad's practice of justice is well-documented in Islamic history, one example being the events that led to the revelation of Surah An-Nisa, verse 105. The existence of a strong yet just central authority is crucial to preventing the escalation of conflict that could lead to civil war and undermine the state order. The unbiased justice practiced by the Prophet Muhammad is very well documented in history and immortalized in the Qur'an, one of which is through the asbabun nuzul (events that formed the background to the revelation of the verse) of Surah An-Nisa: 105.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَائِنِينَ خَصِيمًا ۝

Meaning: "Indeed, We have sent down the Book (the Quran) to you (Muhammad) with the truth, that you may judge between people by what Allah has taught you, and do not be an opponent (of the innocent) for (defending) the treacherous."

The theft case involving a Muslim named Tu'mah, who attempted to blame a Jew, serves as a vivid example of how justice is upheld regardless of religious identity. Despite pressure from his own community, the Prophet Muhammad defended the wronged party based on revelation, while simultaneously condemning narrow defenses based on group solidarity (Ridho, 2021). This precedent provided a strong assurance to minority groups that their rights would be protected by the state with objective standards of justice. Furthermore, this procedural and centralized conflict resolution system prevented vigilantism and enabled Medina to develop as a safe and stable city. The Prophet Muhammad's success in uniting a fragmented society and managing interfaith conflict fairly represents a monumental achievement in the history of global leadership and conflict management.

The Construction of Global Ethics in the Socio-Political Structure of the Medina Charter

The effort to reconcile the text of the Medina Charter with the Global Ethics framework developed by Hans Küng aims to produce a comprehensive, trans-erased synthesis of thought. Although the Medina Charter was drafted in the socio-political context of the 7th century, the fundamental values contained therein are not merely temporary or contextual, but have an ethical reach that transcends the boundaries of space and time. These values remain relevant in addressing modern humanitarian issues, particularly those related to identity conflicts, religious plurality, and the need for a just social order. Hans Küng's thoughts on interfaith dialogue and the five directives of Global Ethics demonstrate a substantive alignment with the state practices of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina. By using the Global Ethics perspective, the principles of the Medina Charter can be understood not merely as a short-term political strategy, but as a moral foundation that is objective, universal, and oriented towards global humanity. Within this framework, the Medina Charter can be positioned as a historical prototype of Global Ethics, in which the Prophet Muhammad succeeded in building a social consensus that transcended theological differences in order to create a just and civilized social order.

Philosophically, Hans Küng's Global Ethics project rests on three logically and normatively interrelated propositions: that peace between nations is only possible if there is peace between religions, that peace between religions can only be achieved through interreligious dialogue, and that interreligious dialogue requires a fundamental study of religions. This series of ideas emphasizes that religion plays a central role in shaping the direction of human civilization. When universal ethical values fail to be formulated and agreed upon, religion has the potential to become a source of conflict that threatens the survival of humanity. Therefore, Hans Küng rejects a superficial understanding of dialogue or merely a diplomatic formality. True dialogue, he believes, must touch the deepest layers of values that form the basis of the beliefs and social practices of religious adherents (Küng, 2015).

In the context of Islamic history, the Medina Charter can be understood as a concrete manifestation of the dialogue paradigm developed in Global Ethics. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated to Medina, the city was in a fragile social condition due to ongoing inter-tribal conflict and theological tensions between the Jewish community and pagan Arab society. This social fragmentation created an urgent need for a normative agreement capable of regulating relations between groups fairly. The Medina Charter existed as a constitutional instrument aimed at building collective awareness about the formation of a

"common ummah," a political community that transcended ethnic and religious boundaries while still respecting the identity, traditions, and religious autonomy of each group. Thus, the Medina Charter implicitly demanded that all parties involved possess a fundamental understanding of other religions as a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence.

The principle of religious freedom guaranteed in the Medina Charter is the result of a close relationship between fundamental religious studies and the practice of interfaith dialogue. Within the paradigm of dialogue, recognition of the existence of others, regardless of theological or cultural differences, is a primary requirement for healthy interaction. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not use his political authority to force conversion on the Jewish community or adherents of local faiths. The historical record of Medina, on the other hand, demonstrates that the process of conversion to Islam proceeded through personal awareness born of theological dialogue, rational observation, and the Prophet's moral example. Intellectual debates between Muslims and Jews regarding prophecy, scripture, the direction of the Qibla, and other theological issues provide a vivid illustration of interfaith dialogue based on knowledge and mutual understanding. The Jewish community drew on the Torah tradition and their scholarly heritage, while Muslims relied on the Quran, which also contains narratives about the Children of Israel and the People of the Book.

One of the most representative illustrations of Islamic-Jewish dialogue in Medina is the story of a Jewish boy who served the Prophet Muhammad. When the boy fell ill, the Prophet visited him as an act of humanitarian concern that transcended religious boundaries. In an atmosphere of empathy, the Prophet invited the boy to embrace Islam without pressure. The boy then asked his father's permission, and the father gave his consent conscientiously. This incident contains several important ethical lessons: first, Islam does not prohibit professional collaboration with non-Muslims; second, *da'wah* is carried out in an atmosphere of compassion and respect for human dignity; and third, respect for parents is upheld, even in matters of faith. This story demonstrates that religious dialogue in Islam is inseparable from the dimensions of relational and humanitarian ethics.

The Jewish parents' permission for their children to embrace Islam indicates a recognition of the overlapping truths between Islamic teachings and Jewish tradition. In Jewish tradition, children, especially the eldest, play a crucial role as the inheritors of the religious heritage and the Torah. Therefore, this decision reflects a profound theological awareness, not merely an emotional one. The dialogues with the Prophet Muhammad, grounded in an understanding of Jewish teachings, and the Jewish father's recognition of Muhammad's prophethood, demonstrate that interfaith dialogue during the Medina period was based on knowledge and intellectual honesty. In addition to conversion stories, there are also examples of dialogues between the Prophet Muhammad and Jewish rabbis that did not result in conversion. In these dialogues, the rabbis posed theological and cosmological questions, which the Prophet answered with coherent argumentation. Although the rabbis acknowledged the validity of the Prophet's answers and his prophethood, they chose to remain steadfast in their original beliefs. This fact confirms that acceptance of religious truth in Medina was never based on coercion or violence, but rather on freedom of conscience. The Prophet Muhammad demonstrated that strong religious conviction can coexist with respect for the religious freedom of others. This is the essence of Global Ethics formulated by Hans Küng: in-depth study of religions gives birth to honest dialogue, dialogue produces inter-religious peace, and inter-religious peace becomes the foundation for world peace.

In subsequent developments, the Global Ethics was formulated more systematically through the Declaration of the Global Ethics by Hans Küng in collaboration with the Parliament of the World's Religions. This Declaration formulated four main directives: a commitment to a culture of nonviolence and respect for life, solidarity and economic justice, tolerance and honesty, and equal rights and partnership between men and women. In 2018, a fifth directive was added, a commitment to sustainability and care for the earth. These five directives are understood as irrevocable ethical principles and serve as the foundation for a more just world order. Interestingly, the articles in the Medina Charter contain substance that aligns with these five directives of the Global Ethics.

A commitment to a culture of nonviolence is reflected in the blood-restitution and rule of law regulations aimed at ending the cycle of revenge. Solidarity and economic justice are evident in the obligation to defend and finance the state, shared by all citizens, without religious discrimination. A culture of tolerance and honesty is manifested in the prohibition on protecting perpetrators of crimes, even if they are blood relatives. Equality of rights, particularly in the protection of women, demonstrates Islam's early efforts to safeguard women's dignity and security in a patriarchal society. Meanwhile, concern for environmental sustainability is reflected in the designation of Medina as a forbidden area protected from excessive exploitation. Thus, the Medina Charter can be understood as a normative document that not only regulates the socio-political relations of the Medina community but also lays the foundation for global ethics that remain relevant today. It demonstrates that a multicultural and multi-religious society can build a harmonious life together if it is based on dialogue, justice, solidarity, and moral responsibility towards fellow human beings and the environment.

Medina's Legacy for World Peace: The Group-Rights Model as an Effective Solution for Religious Tolerance

The urgency of this research stems from the reality of the contemporary world facing various serious challenges, ranging from prolonged ethnoreligious conflicts, the strengthening of identity politics, to the national crisis that threatens social cohesion in many countries. These phenomena demonstrate that diversity, if not managed within a just ethical and institutional framework, has the potential to become a source of destructive conflict. Therefore, a solid historical reference is needed to understand how plural societies in the past were able to build lives together without eliminating the religious, ethnic, or cultural identities of each group. In this context, the Medina Charter becomes relevant for serious and critical reexamination. Hans Küng, a great theologian and thinker of the 20th century, through his idea of Global Ethics, asserted a fundamental principle that world peace is impossible without peace among nations, and peace among nations is impossible without peace between religions. Furthermore, he emphasized that interreligious peace can only be built through honest, open dialogue rooted in the recognition of universal human dignity. This idea provides a strong conceptual framework for rereading the Charter of Medina, a historical document born from a process of dialogue, deliberation, and consensus in a very diverse society (Küng, 2015).

Using a descriptive-analytical approach, this study attempts to systematically describe the contents of the Medina Charter, particularly the articles governing interfaith and inter-social relations. Furthermore, the contents of the charter are analyzed through ethical indicators proposed by Hans Küng in the concept of Global Ethics, such as a

commitment to a culture of nonviolence, social solidarity, religious tolerance, and equal rights. This approach allows the Medina Charter to be understood not only as a pragmatic political document, but also as a moral foundation with relevance across time. Historically, the Medina period presented a very complex social context. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not only played the role of a prophet and bearer of religious messages, but also as a political authority tasked with uniting various groups that had previously lived in conflict. The city of Yathrib, later known as Medina, was inhabited by the Muhajirin who migrated from Mecca, the Ansar as the original inhabitants, and the Jewish community consisting of various tribes with significant economic and political power. Furthermore, relations between tribes such as Aus and Khazraj had long been marked by bloody conflict. In such a situation, the Medina Charter emerged as a unifying instrument capable of ending social fragmentation and building a relatively stable order of communal life.

Zainal Abidin Ahmad, in his landmark work, asserts that the Medina Charter can be seen as the world's first written constitution that explicitly guarantees human rights and religious freedom. This statement is crucial because it confirms that Islam, from its earliest days, has internalized the principles of inclusive constitutionalism. The guarantee of religious freedom, the protection of minority groups, and the recognition of the rights and obligations of citizens demonstrate that the Medina Charter transcends mere political concessions and reflects a long-term moral vision (Ahmad, 2014). Through an analysis of primary sources such as the text of the Medina Charter and Hans Küng's writings on Global Ethics, this study demonstrates that the principles of interfaith relations in the Medina Charter strongly resonate with the demands of 21st-century global ethics. The modern world, which aspires to a more just, peaceful, and civilized international order, can truly learn from the historical experience of Medina, where differences in identity are not used as a reason for exclusion, but rather managed within a framework of collective responsibility.

The integration of the historical wisdom of Islam during the Medina period with the thinking of Hans Küng's Global Ethics has given rise to a new paradigm for understanding interfaith relations. In this paradigm, tolerance is not understood merely as a passive attitude of allowing differences, but as an active commitment to building an ethical consensus that upholds the dignity of every human being. The concept of the ummah in the Medina Charter forms the basis for a group-rights model, in which religious communities are recognized and their rights protected without having to merge their respective theological identities. Authentic peace can only be achieved if every religious group is willing to move beyond exclusivity and open itself to dialogue and cooperation based on shared ethical values. In the Indonesian context, this spirit is inherently embedded in Pancasila, the state's ideological foundation. The values of divinity, humanity, unity, deliberation, and social justice reflect a moral consensus that aligns with the principles of the Medina Charter and Hans Küng's Global Ethics. Therefore, efforts to maintain tolerance and harmony between religious communities are not a new agenda, but rather a continuation of the basic values that have become the foundation of the nation.

The transformation of conflict-torn Yathrib into Medina as a "City of Civilization" provides an important lesson that social change toward peace is not impossible. The contemporary world also has the same opportunity to transform into a more humane living

space, provided the principles of justice, tolerance, and interfaith solidarity are a common foundation. The Medina Charter demonstrates that these values are not merely normative ideals but have been proven to be realized in historical practice. For academics and thinkers in Indonesia, studying the Medina Charter holds strategic significance in strengthening the foundations of the nation. Several researchers believe that there are substantial similarities between the principles contained in the Medina Charter and the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. All three emphasize the importance of civic unity, respect for religious freedom, upholding legal justice, and protecting all citizens without discrimination.

In this context, the Medina Charter can serve as a powerful historical-religious reference for Indonesian Muslims to remain committed to a pluralistic and democratic nation-state. The experience of Medina demonstrates that religious identity need not conflict with civic identity. Rather, the two can reinforce each other when managed within an inclusive ethical framework. Implementing a culture of tolerance and honesty is crucial for maintaining Indonesia's diversity. Social disparities, economic injustice, and weak trust between groups often trigger identity conflicts. Therefore, the government and society need to return to the spirit of the Medina Charter, which emphasizes social justice as the foundation of communal life. Honesty in interfaith relations, based on mutual understanding and sincerity (*nasihah*), is key to building substantive harmony, not merely fragile formal harmony. Furthermore, the conflict resolution model offered by the Medina Charter, which prioritizes deliberation and arbitration by trusted parties, can serve as inspiration for dispute resolution, both at the local and national levels. Amidst the growing challenges of intolerance and social polarization, the Medina Charter offers an inclusive and harmonious model for managing diversity. This model emphasizes that diversity is not a threat to unity, but rather a potential enrichment for national life when managed with principles of justice and shared ethics.

CONCLUSION

The Medina Charter and Hans Küng's Global Ethics share significant alignment in affirming human dignity as a moral subject whose rights must be respected. Through a descriptive-analytical approach, it is clear that each article of the Medina Charter is designed to create social harmony through the recognition of diversity and the upholding of justice. The principles of interfaith relations established by the Prophet Muhammad, ranging from the unity of the people as a political entity, the guarantee of religious freedom, defense solidarity, to the protection of vulnerable groups, demonstrate the application of global ethical indicators later formulated by Hans Küng. The Medina Charter is not merely a historical document, but a living document relevant for interpretation in facing the challenges of the modern era. The universal ethical values contained therein provide important moral guidance, both for Muslims and the international community. For Muslims, this charter emphasizes that the purpose of the Islamic message is to be a blessing for all, realized through fair and humane treatment of all people, regardless of religion or belief. For the international community, the Medina Charter is proof that religion can be the foundation for a peaceful, just, and civilized world order. A comprehensive analysis shows that the Medina Charter is not merely a temporary agreement, but rather a constitutional masterpiece that lays the foundation

for modern global ethics. Universal values such as respect for life, economic justice, honesty, protection of women's dignity, and environmental sustainability, which align with Küng's five global ethical directives, have been implemented for over a thousand years. Thus, the Medina Charter demonstrates that religion can be a driver of world peace if realized within an inclusive and operational ethical framework. Reviving the spirit of this charter means strengthening honest interfaith dialogue and building a just global order, in line with Küng's call that the survival of humanity depends on a fundamental, binding and universal ethic.

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