RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND ISLAM: AN APPRAISAL OF PLURALISM IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT:

Religious Diversity is as old as mankind's history. From old cavern occupants to the social orders of the great empire of China, India, Iran, Egypt, and Babylon, religion as the human journey for the divine showed itself in an assortment of dialects, reverential practices, myths, and customs. Certain scholars put forward some religious theologies regarding such kind of diversity. Islam is divine religion and complete code of life, which also gives some principles about religious diversity. It is a general misconception that Islam is a biased and prejudiced religion. This article highlights the Islamic injunctions based on Quran regarding religious diversity, correcting the misconception about the biasedness of Islam. In the context of Islamic injunctions, this research paper discusses theological and Islamic approaches towards exclusivist-inclusivist-pluralistic trichotomy. It also discusses the Malaysian approach towards religious diversity and multi-ethnicity, where the Muslim majority is living with the people of other religions with love and respect as the biggest example of religious harmony in today's world. The objective of this paper is to portray religious theologies and circumstances in today's Malaysia where multi-ethnic and multi-faith people exist with harmony, mutual regard, and understanding, however remain institutionally separate.

KEYWORDS Religious diversity, Theology, Harmony, Malaysia, Legal Status

Introduction

Religious Harmony and peaceful conjunction are a portion of the fundamental components for the full acknowledgment of the innovative capability of people, sustainable growth of the economy, traditions of nations, and genuine security for the long-lasting inflation of humankind. The interfaith harmony means bringing tranquility and peace supporting among individuals by inspiration. There is an interconnection among people of various religious beliefs at the individual and institutional level which portraits a positive image in the progress of countries. The interfaith harmony promotes the proclamation to live and let other lives calmly.[1]

According to the assessments of 2009 Malaysia's population was around 27 million, comprised of people from different ethnic groups, the three greatest being Malay, Indian, and Chinese. Smaller ethnic groups comprised of Iban, Bidayuh, Dusun, Melanau, Murut, Kedayan, Kadazan, Kelabit, and Bajau, among others these were the native gatherings of Sarawak and Sabah. Every one of the ethnic groups holds its character in terms of religion, custom, and language, making the country multiethnic, yet multicultural just as multireligious. All significant religions of the world are addressed in the country: Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. There are different theologies about such kinds of religious diversities. [2]

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[1] Muqarrab Akbar and Hafsa Yaseen, "Interfaith Harmony in Pakistan: An Analysis," *Global Political Review* V, no. I (2020): 9–18, https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2020(v-i).02.

[2] Mohamed Fauzi Yaacob, "The Challenge of Religious Pluralism in Malaysia," *Journal of Oriental Studies* 21, no. 3 (2011): 166–77.

Religion manages something exceptionally profound and essential in the human psyche. Regardless of hundreds of years of liberal excusal, despite Bertrand Russell's explanation that individuals are just a 'random aggregation of atoms' and Arthur Koestler's hypothesis that humanity is 'modified for implosion', religion is still with us, alongside its feeling that there is a higher reason for our reality. [3]

Religious Diversity is an undeniable truth of the world. Religious Diversity is an issue that may not be effortlessly grasped. In recent years, the issue of religious diversity has been the subject of expanding academic consideration and discussion. [4] There are different theologies regarding religious diversity, Theologies try to be the knowledge of belief, setting the light of reason on these human encounters of significance. In an exemplary meaning of Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), theology is faith that looks for insight and information—Fides quaerens intellectum. A long time before, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) had effectively attested Intellige ut credas, crede ut intelligas—comprehend to accept, accept to comprehend. In this sense, theologies need to comprehend and decipher the encounters of belief, which are assorted, in the diversity of religious structures and customs. In case there is a diversity of faith, there will likewise be a diversity of theologies. It is unimaginable to expect to consider general, universal, or world theology. [5]

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[3] Sonia Sikka et al., *Living with Religious Diversity*, *Living with Religious Diversity*, 2015, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315671727.

[4] Mustafa Çakmak, "Foundations of Religious Inclusiveness in Muslim Thought," *Islamic Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (2016): 467–508.

[5] Paulo A.N. Baptista, "Theology Facing Religious Diversity: The Perspective of Latin American Pluralist Theology," *Religions* 8, no. 10 (2017), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8100233.

Religious Diversity: An Islamic appraisal

Diversity is one of the primary attributes of nature and shows marvels of life through its biodiversity. As a feature of nature, which has created as awareness in human being, all that alludes to the human also holds this condition. In this manner, one cannot talk in the singular with regards to custom, culture, youth, or philosophy. [6] A basic change underlies religious life in the contemporary world. Today the truth of different religions no longer exists in a specific area. It has shifted into neighborhoods all through the world especially in the USA and Europe. [7] The religions of the world have scarcely started to grapple with the ramifications of the reality of religious diversity. In numerous nations today the customs coordinate in different ways; they are all somewhat attempting to adapt to the modern world, and the endeavor to adapt in this as in other contexts can make for unusual partners. Nevertheless, among the main religions, there are precious few certified endeavors to treat different customs seriously. [8]

The present world is highly diverse. There is not a single country on the planet that is without diversity and homogenous. Diversity is one of the laws of nature; it is not something individuals can guarantee is man-made, rather the Holy Quran says that diversity is made by Allah Almighty for us for our test as well as to seek benefit from that:

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[6] Baptista.

[7] Christian Danz, "Religious Diversity and the Concept of Religion: Theology and Religious Pluralism," *Neue Zeitschrift Fur Systematische Theologie Und Religionsphilosophie* 62, no. 1 (2020): 101–13, https://doi.org/10.1515/nzsth-2020-0004.

[8] Robert McKim, *Religious Ambiguity And Religious Diversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِيْ مَآ اٰتٰكُمْ

فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرٰتِ ۚ اِلَى اللهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيْعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيْهِ

تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ

"And had Allah listed, He would have made you all a single community, but He willed not in order that he may prove you by that which He hath vouchsafed unto you. Hasten wherefore to the virtues; unto Allah is the return of you all; then He shall declare unto you concerning that wherein ye have been disputing." (Al-Maida 5:48)

Diversity is Allah's Will and it is a test for us to live in harmony and peace with one another despite our disparities. Allah Almighty also needs us not to attest prevalence over a specific group, race, or beauty but to rather strive with another in great deeds or acts.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّقَبَآئِلَ

لِتَعَارَفُوْا ۚ اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللهِ اَتْقٰكُمْ ۚ اِنَّ اللهَ عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ

"O Humankind indeed We have created you of a male and female, and We have made you nations and tribes that ye might know one another. Verily the noblest of you with Allah is the most God-fearing of you; verily Allah is Knowing, Aware." (Al-Hujrat 49:13)

Diversity is a characteristic marvel made by Allah and we are limited by the laws of nature to this enhanced world, where religions and societies exist close to one another in similar lands and nations. Since diversity is Divinely made, we as a whole need to comprehend and acknowledge the

magnificence of creation. Allah guarantees us that we can live respectively in harmony and concordance with individuals of different beliefs. The diversities of cultural values resemble a nursery where various sorts of blossoms develop on the same soil. [9]

Religious diversity had been one of the main characteristics of Malaysia since right off the bat in its set of experiences. Hinduism and Buddhism appear near about the third century BC. By the start of the first century AD the two religions were grounded in the Malay Peninsula, just to disappear with the wind down of Srivijaya in the fourteenth century, which coincided with the ascent of Malacca and also of Islam. Islam turned into an exceptionally solid power in Malay life since then and proceeded into the present. Christianity met up with the victory of Malacca by the Portuguese in 1511, and other Europeans later. Sikhism came hundreds of years later. [10]

Religious Diversity exists at whatever point true or sincere, proficient people hold incongruent beliefs on a similar religious issue. Diversity of this sort is inescapable, existing across fundamental mystical or theistic systems as well as inside of these theistic systems themselves. Religious Diversity investigates the expansiveness and meaning of such a struggle. Analyzing the beliefs of different theistic systems, especially inside Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, Basinger examines contrary cases about numerous religious problems, including the nature of God and the salvation of mankind. He considers particularly the work of Hick, Gellman, Pianting a, Schellenberg, Alston, Wainwright, and Quinn,

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[9] (Wani et al., 2015)
[10] Yaacob, "The Challenge of Religious Pluralism in Malaysia."

applying their points of view on 'exclusivism' and 'pluralism' as they become relevant to the issues being referred to. [11]

This kind of classification was first presented by Alan Race in his book "Christians and

Religious Pluralism" to arrange Christian reactions to different religions. Race does not give exact definitions of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism right away. He rather expresses that it is embraced as a wide typological framework that can oblige the greater part of the current Christian philosophies of religions. [12]

Religious Exclusivism

Rendering to religious exclusivism, one world religion is right and all others are wrong; salvation (or nirvana, moksha, and so forth) is discovered distinctly through this one religion, fundamental truth is found in just a single religion, and salvation is also exclusive to that one valid religion. [13] Exclusivists believe that just a single genuine religion leads to God. Achieving the spiritual objective requires a devotee to discover and follow the one valid faith, for other religious ways will not prompt the spiritual objective. [14] According to Hindson and Caner and Jones, exclusivism sees just a single religion as soteriological strong, and the

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[11] David Basinger, *Religious Diversity A Philosophical Assessment* (Burlington: Asghate Publishing Limited, 2002).

[12] Rifat Atay, "Religious and Islam : Pluralism Examination of a Critical John Hick ' S Pluralistic Hypothesis," 1999.

[13] R Naaman Kipsigei, "Investigations on Philosophy of Religion: Religious Diversity and Pluralism," no. January 2014 (2015): 1–51.

[14] Imran Aijaz, "Traditional Islamic Exclusivism - A Critique," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 6, no. 2 (2014): 185–209, https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.v6i2.186.

followers of any other religion are lost. Jones expressed that Christians who are exclusivists consider Christianity as the main religion that is valid, and even though there might be some truths in different religions, these certainties are not sufficient to achieve salvation. In this way, the issue for exclusivism is that, to many people, it appears to be unmerciful, un-enthusiastic, and vile of God to condemn millions to everlasting punishment that they have not picked or based on mere intellectual error. [15]Exclusivists have faith that the Christian custom is in sole possession of effective religious truth and offers the way to salvation. [16]

a) *Theological Foundations Religious Exclusivism*

To know Christian exclusivism better we need to check out the history and promotion of the Christian exclusivist worldview. The topic can be taken as far back as the Old Testament. Exclusivism started a deep-rooted monotheistic belief in God, which uncovered himself in and through Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Now salvation was workable for all, yet just through Jesus. This view brought about the position that any remaining religions were idolatry. The early church was especially severe or rigid concerning the subject. The background of the early church was one of the plurality of religions and feelings. The early Christians were also exceptionally reproachful of the qualities and practices of different religions. Another contributing variable was the persecution which the early church

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[15] Moe Nilar, "Salvation and World Religions: Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism," *St. Theresa Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2017): 99–108.
[16] Wong Wai Yip, "Reconstructing John Hick's Theory of Religious Pluralism: A Chinese Folk Religion's Perspective," 2011, 1–426.

confronted, from different religions as well as from Judaism. Christians were seen by Judaism as apostates within the Jewish belief. [17]

The overall increase in Christianity through the activity of American and European churches in the 18th to 20th century conveyed it into contact with all present religions. During the 20th century, most Christians accepted one of three fundamental points of view. According to exclusivism, salvation is just for Christians. This religious philosophy was imparted both in the Roman Catholic precept "**extra ecclesiam nulla salus**" (there is no salvation outside the congregation) and in the suspicion of the 18th and 19th-century Protestant missionary improvements. [18]

Based on the Aristotelian idea of truth exclusivists remaining religions as bogus and consumptive since the Christian revelation is acknowledged as valid or true. Notable or most famous exclusivists of this century are Samuel Zwemer, Handrik Kraemer, and Lesslie Newbigin. [19]

b) Theological Aspects of Religious Exclusivism

Copan and Meister expressed that exclusivism is fundamentally a dismissal of non-Christian believers as for the possibility of salvation. Therefore, exclusivism is generally portrayed in the literature in an uncomplimentary term as accepting highly adverse perspectives on other religions. For example, Race remarked that the prevalent attitude of the

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[17] Jaco Beyers, *Prespective on Theology of Religions*, vol. 148, n.d.

[18] "Christianity - Christianity and World Religions | Britannica," accessed October 6, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christianity/Christianity-and-world-religions.

[19] Domenic Marbaniang, "Theology of Religion: Pluralism, Inclusivism, Exclusivism," no. February (2007).

church through Christian history has been see by untouchables as blunders or haziness. [20]

A researcher that intensely protected exclusivism in his works is Harold A. Netland. He emphasizes that salvation is settled only through Jesus Christ and that a particularly saving measurement does not exist in different religions. Netland states that "exclusivism maintains that the focal claims of Christianity are true and that where the cases of Christianity conflict with those of different religions the latter are to be dismissed as bogus" [21]

Exclusivism indicates the view that the truth, and therefore the best approach to salvation, is just one. It is moreover confined to just a single true religion and is the opportunity of one and only one faith community. Exclusivism has moral, religious, and theological ramifications. Thoughtfully, it limits reality to one faith and value system; while morally and philosophically, it ultimately condemns all other faith communities to show mistakes in this world and to destruction on the world to come. [22]

There are three points to observe regarding Christian exclusivism

(1) Christian exclusivism does not say that all assertions made by different religions are bogus, rather it recognizes that there may be a trace of validity in what they express.

(2) Christian exclusivism recognizes that different religions also have values and that Christianity can learn something from them and

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[20] Nilar, "Salvation and World Religions: Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism."

[21] Mariana Rosca, "From Exclusivism To Pluralism: A Reflection on European Religious Minorities," *The Age of Human Rights Journal* 10, no. 10 (2018): 139–58, https://doi.org/10.17561/tahrj.n10.7.

[22] Mahmoud Ayoub, "Religious Pluralism and The Qur'an," *Contemporary Approaches to the Quran and Sunnah*, 2019, 39–56, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvk8w26p.8.

(3)

(4) Christian exclusivism is not the main type of exclusivism that exists, and different religions also possess an exclusivist point of view. [23]

c) *Islamic Perspective of Religious Exclusivism*

Religious exclusivism in Islam is defined by Zain Ali, he says: "Islamic belief is overall higher or superior to other religions and other beliefs are not true." [24]

Islam has also an exclusivist viewpoint that is not just spiritually yet additionally alludes to the Muslims' daily living. "Islam recommends conduct in all aspects of human life and activity. Islam, in actuality, is stated to be a complete lifestyle intended to present the cognizance of the divine in every moment of day-to-day existence and every Muslim is responsible for all their activities within it". Along these lines, the wide and outright presence in all aspects of life advocates Islam as the genuine religion and only way of life. [25]

وَمَنْ يَّبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْاِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا فَلَنْ يُّقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ۚ وَهُوَ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنَ

الْخٰسِرِيْنَ

"Other than Islam, it shall not be accepted of Him, and he shall be of the losers in the Hereafter."

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[23] Johannes Janse Van Rensburg, "An Assessment of the Theology of Religions," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 73, no. 6 (2017): 91–147, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i6.4841.
[24] Aijaz, "Traditional Islamic Exclusivism - A Critique."
[25] Rosca, "From Exclusivism To Pluralism: A Reflection on European Religious Minorities."

According to Christianity's exclusivism salvation is only obtained by Christianity whereas according to Islam salvation can only be obtained by following Islam. (Al-Imra 3:85)

وَقَالُوْا كُوْنُوْا هُوْدًا اَوْ نَصْرٰى تَهْتَدُوْا ۗ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهٖمَ حَنِيْفًا ۗ وَمَا

كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْن

"They said become Jews or Christians, and you will find the right path. Say: Instead, (we follow) the faith of Ibrahim, the upright, - and he was not one of those who associate partners with Allah." (Al-Baqara 2:135)

Islam promotes religious harmony. It respects other religions but at the same time does not accept them as a source of salvation as it is mentioned in Holy Quran

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ اَنْ يُّشْرَكَ بِهٖ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَمَنْ

يُّشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرٰى اِثْمًا عَظِيْمًا

"Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin." (Al-Nisa 4:48)

People who have exclusive attitudes always concede the truth of their religion and beliefs that only their religion is true. This assessment cannot be supposed to be wrong. The truth of the religion that is accepted by its followers is an absolute necessity since it will awaken the soul to assemble a commitment to his religion. If the opinion is followed by religious tendencies which tend to be extreme, by making the others as an adversary

or enemy that should be evaded, this exclusivity has entered the domain of "extreme exclusivism" which obviously will leave a very bad impact on society. Since religion is just utilized as a cover to make wickedness and harm on the planet. It would be considerably riskier if that extreme attitude is applied to parts of Islamic teachings concerning social relations between people, for example about <u>amar maruf nahi munkar.</u> [26]

Such kind of implementation can lately lead to the image of Islam as a rude and violent religion whereas this picture will not as per the nature of Islam which is gentle and caring but at the same time accepting other religions as a source of salvation is not the idea of Islam.

Religious Inclusivism

Religious inclusivism is that the only one world religion is completely right, yet other world religions take part in or somewhat uncover a portion of the reality of the one right religion; it is conceivable to get salvation (or nirvana, or moksha, and so on) through different religions. [27]

Inclusivism recognizes that even though Christianity addresses the normative revelation of God, salvation stays available to the people who have a place with other religious customs too. God wants every person to be saved although the best way to God is through Christ, and the main

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[26] Dhikrul Hakim, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism As Well As Their Effect on Islamic Education Based Multicultural," *International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and Multiculturalism (IJIERM)* 1, no. 1 (2019): 18–29, https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v1i1.3.

[27] Kipsigei, "Investigations on Philosophy of Religion: Religious Diversity and Pluralism."

reason for absolution and acknowledgment is atonement at the cross. [28].
According to religious inclusivism, only one religion is valid, others are
also by virtue of being diverse of the one genuine religion. [29]

a) Theological Foundations of Religious Inclusivism

The initial three centuries were the point at which the early Christian
scholars attempted to find the significance, assuming any, of God's
presence in different religions. Historical progress in the 4th century
impacted the shift from stress on God's universal worship and presence to
focus on the specific significance of the Church. Under Emperor
Constantine and Emperor Theodosius (379-95), the frequently oppressed
minority community of Christians unexpectedly turned into the authority
state religion. In a parallel manner to exclusivism, the perspective of the
early Fathers on different religions having seeds of the divine Logos had
also been pretty much noticeable in Catholic theology until the Second
Vatican Council. [30]

In the Catholic world, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) is
significant for Christian's inclusiveness. At the end of the Council, a
document about the religious other (Nostra Aetate) expressed the chance
of salvation for certain individuals in different religions. It can accordingly
be acknowledged as a sign that the classical exclusivist paradigm had

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[28] Nilar, "Salvation and World Religions: Exclusivism, Inclusivism and
Pluralism."
[29] James Kellenberger, "Introduction to Philosophy of Religion," *Introduction to
Philosophy of Religion*, 2017, 1–246, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351219785.
[30] Krzysztof Grzelak, "A Historical Perspective on Inclusivism as the Prevailing
Paradigm in the Christian Theology of Religions," *Sympozjum* 1, no. 1 (34)
(2018): 161–92, https://doi.org/10.4467/25443283sym.18.008.9689.

begun to change in the Catholic world. Aside from that, as a Catholic, scholar Karl Rahner's idea of "Mysterious Christian" and, as a zealous, Christian thinker, Clark H. Pinnock's idea of "Messianic Believer" is the biggest ideas for Christian inclusiveness. It is feasible to say that the fundamental cause of inclusiveness in Christianity is that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are consistently present and active in different religions. However, the chance of certain individuals' salvation in different religions is about the activity of Jesus or the Holy Spirit, not with regards to the value of different religions. [31]

It was during the 1950s and the start of the 1960s that a genuine change in the Catholic philosophy of religions were started. This change identifies with a religious idea called a "fulfillment theory". Fulfillment theory recognizes that different religions look for a Christ who can satisfy their spiritual longings. Nonetheless, just Christianity owns Christ and is the only saving religion that has its origin, not in human desires but God's heavenly and supernatural self-correspondence. Similarly, as the "fulfillment theory" was a step away from exclusivism in the Catholic Church, an extreme turn in the Catholic way to deal with the world religions occurred through the philosophy of Karl Rahner who was one of the pioneers in exploring new areas in a Christian philosophy of religions in the 20th century. His examination of Christian precepts caused him to accept that God's reality was a lot greater than the Christian world. Surely, it was a lot greater than the Roman Catholic Church. [32]

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[31] Çakmak, "Foundations of Religious Inclusiveness in Muslim Thought."
[32] Grzelak, "A Historical Perspective on Inclusivism as the Prevailing Paradigm in the Christian Theology of Religions."

During the 1960s, Rahner started to focus better on "non-Christian" religions in an essay entitled "Christianity and the non-Christian religions" published later in 1966 in his "Theological examinations." Utilizing standard Catholic doctrine, Rahner assembled a reformist philosophy of religions. The focal topic of Rahner's religious theology was that God wants to save the whole human family. God wills to find all the essential means. This is possible for God since God continually conveys (uncovers) God's self to each individual. [33]

b) Theological Aspects of Religious Inclusivism

The inclusivist can acknowledge the reality of religious diversity and deal with that reality thoughtfully without keeping the prevalence from getting his angle. This kind of inclusivism should not be perceived, as David Basinger claims, as a derivative "soft exclusivism", but as a model by its right that stays different from exclusivism and pluralism. Right terminology is significant here. Any position that recognizes philosophically, the salvific power, or, theologically, the inclusivity of at least one of its essential truth claims inside the principles of a different religion, ought to be considered as an inclusivism and not as an inclusive or "soft exclusivism". [34] In religious discourse, Inclusivism assigns a specific philosophical position in regards to the connection between religions. This position is described by the faith that while one faith or

[33] Grzelak.
[34] Bernd Irlenborn, "Religious Diversity: A Philosophical Defense of Religious Inclusivism," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 2, no. 2 (2010): 127–40, https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.v2i2.371.

belief is true and other sets of faiths are true but to some extent. Comprehensively speaking, there are two schools of Inclusivist thought:

- Traditional Inclusivism, which attests that the devotee's perspectives are true, and devotees or believers of different religions are right to the extent that they concur with that believer.

- Relativistic Inclusivism, which states that an obscure set of declarations is true, that no person at present living has yet verify absolute truth, however, that all people have to some extent find out absolute truth.

Strands of these two sorts of Inclusivists run through most of the religions.[35]

Netland concisely communicates the center standards of Christian inclusivism

- There is a sense where Jesus Christ is exclusive, normative, or better than other religious personalities, and in some sense, it is through Christ that salvation is made accessible.

- God's grace and salvation, which are somehow dependent on Jesus Christ, are likewise accessible and viable through different religions.

- Thus, different religions ought to be viewed decidedly as a component of God's plan for mankind. [36]

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[35] "Inclusivism - New World Encyclopedia," accessed October 8, 2021, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Inclusivism.
[36] SHAFFARULLAH ABDUL RAHMAN, "A Bibliographic Survey of Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist Inclusivisms," *MANU: Jurnal Pusat Penataran Ilmu Dan Bahasa (PPIB)* 2018 (2018): 1–32, https://doi.org/10.51200/manu.v0i0.1580.

c) *Islamic Perspective of Religious Inclusivism*

This attitude turns into the standard during the prime of Islam and also underlies the political strategy of religious freedom. Islamic inclusivism additionally gives a plan that Islam is an open religion. Islam rejects extreme exclusivism, absolutism, and gives a high appreciation to religious harmony. [37]

Since the Quran remarks on Judaism and Christianity, however infrequently on other religions, several Muslim researchers of the Quran will, in general, be inclusivists to the extent Judaism and Christianity are concerned, and exclusivists as to different religions of mankind – naively naming the religions of Asia, Africa, Oceania and that of the Eskimos and Siberians as being false and polytheistic structures to be dismissed, just as Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) himself dismissed Arab agnosticism during his time.[38]

Inclusivism holds that there is one surest way to salvation, which is Islam for Muslims' situation, others may have some good values however not on par with what one's own, i.e., Islam. An inclusivist approach might have been a typical method of managing different religions according to an Islamic viewpoint. Sociologically, Muslims set good instances or examples of joining with different religions throughout history; a decent illustration of which was the Andalus Moorish Empire in Spain where Muslims, Christians, and Jews created an exceptionally sophisticated,

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[37] Dhikrul Hakim, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism As Well As Their Effect on Islamic Education Based Multicultural."
[38] Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Islamic Theology Of Religious Pluralism: Qur'an's Attitude Towards Other Religions," n.d., 1–20.

civilized and progressed society. Islam always promotes religious harmony and love. [39]

قُلْ يَاۤأَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ تَعَالَوْا اِلٰى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَآءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ اَلَّا نَعْبُدَ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ

وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهٖ شَيْئًا وَّلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا اَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِنْ

تَوَلَّوْا فَقُوْلُوا اشْهَدُوْا بِاَنَّا مُسْلِمُوْنَ

"Say (O Muhammad) O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims." (Al-Imran 3:64)

The Qur'anic idea of peaceful co-existence and harmony is the view that people are joined under one God which orders Muslims to assemble scaffolds of understanding and participation with fellow human beings to establish an atmosphere of social order. Tranquil concurrence requires that people abstain from abusing and slandering the people who do not share their beliefs. Disparaging and deriding others can incite savagery and scorn. [40]

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[39] Atay, "Religious and Islam : Pluralism Examination of a Critical John Hick ' S Pluralistic Hypothesis."

[40] Mohd Rosmizi Bin Abd Rahman, Mohamed Mihlar Abdul Muthaliff, and Muhammad Khairi Bin Mahyuddin, "Religious Harmony and Peaceful Co-Existence : A Quranic Perspective," *Journal of Islamic SCIENCES AND Humanities*, no. 7 (2016): 47–62, https://doi.org/10.12816/0029924.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللّٰهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ

عِلْمٍ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ مَّرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ

بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"And insult not those whom they (disbelievers) worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge. Thus, We have made fair-seeming to each people its doings; then to their Lord is their return and He shall then inform them of all that they used to do." (Al-Inam 6:108)

Although religious inclusiveness is not the mainstream in Islamic ideology there are some traces of inclusivism in some Islamic perspectives. It is absurd, however, to discover those traces directly communicated in such terms as inclusiveness, exclusiveness, and pluralism as utilized in the current western idea. [41]

Muslims also believe that salvation is just in Islam but at the same time every Muslim must respect other religions and spread Dawah (preach others) y following certain rules as it is mentioned in Holy Quran

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ

اَحْسَنُ ۗ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ

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[41] Çakmak, "Foundations of Religious Inclusiveness in Muslim Thought."

"Invite (mankind, O Muhammad) to the Way of your Lord (i.e., Islam) with wisdom (i.e., with the Divine Inspiration and the Quran) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a better way. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided." (Al-Nahal 16:125)

Islam promotes love, respect, and religious harmony. There are many verses and examples found in Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companion's lives that support religious harmony.

Religious Pluralism

In its lexical utilization, pluralism implies plurality, rather than a peculiarity. Plurality, besides, suggests contrast, and henceforth diversity. Theologically, the articulation of religious pluralism is different from other religious theologies. [42]

Pluralism is an understanding of social diversity. It can be delivered as a social, philosophical political position. In any of these renditions, pluralism offers a record of social association comprehended as an interaction of conflicting and contending places that cannot be consistently diminished to each other, positioned in one single request for all time, or decreased to a solitary institutional course of action. [43]

Religious pluralism is a term for religious diversity that attributes positive significance to religion and energizes enthusiasm for religion's different structures. As a term used to depict religious diversity in the United States,

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[42] Ayoub, "Religious Pluralism and The Qur'an."
[43] Carla Yumatle, "Pluralism," 2015, 47–65, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118474396.wbept0771.

religious pluralism passes on regard for the commitments that religious practices have made and keep on making to any society.[44]

According to Religious pluralism is that eventually, all world religions are right, each offering an alternate way and fractional point of view vis-à-vis the one Ultimate Reality.[45]

Religious pluralism implies tolerating religious equity and validity between religions, it holds that religious truth is not the property of one religion however is accessible through the teachings of various religions. [46]

a) Theological Foundations of Religious Pluralism

The period from the 8th to the 3rd century BCE can be viewed as the hub age in religious and philosophical innovativeness in extraordinarily isolated regions around the then known world. It saw the ascent of Chinese school of thought in its Taoist, Confucianist and different structures. In India, during this time of spiritual development, the incredible sages of the Upanishads originated mystical monistic philosophy which superseded the fairly crude Vedic religion. In India, the Buddha "set the wheel of dharma turning" with his ethical way of thinking or moral philosophies of anguish and salvation and challenged the huge Hindu pantheon with its tyrant brotherhood too. [47]

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[44] Amanda Porterfield, "Religious Pluralism in Religious Studies," 2019.

[45] Kipsigei, "Investigations on Philosophy of Religion: Religious Diversity and Pluralism."

[46] Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Islamic Theology Of Religious Pluralism: Qur'an's Attitude Towards Other Religions."

[47] Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Heaven And London Yale University Press, 1965).

The first man of the power to perceive and support religious pluralism was Cyrus the great, originator of the Persian empire in the 5th century BCE, Cyrus established a realm that extended from Iran to Central Asia to Egypt, Iraq, Syria-Palestine, and even into Europe. This incredible supreme space was unmatched until the rise of the Muslim empire particularly after the extraordinary development of CE 711. Alexander The Great also promoted pluralism. Jesus and Paul dismissed the particularistic Jewish confidence to which the two of them belonged. They tracked down the new universalistic faith but with the progression of time, it transformed into extremism which caused many issues. [48]

The historical backdrop of the world's religions is brimming with terrible stories of abuse and narrow-mindedness. Often the religious resistance to the faiths of a group has been utilized to serve colonialist purposes, as in the treatment of Native American people groups by Christian Europeans. It is not astounding to find that with an expanded awareness of this history, and of the convictions and traditions of others, among sincere Christians there additionally comes sympathy, lament for what has been done in the past, and a purpose to forestall its recurrence. Indeed, the advancement of political liberalism in 18th century Europe was generally energized by a dismissal of the religious intolerance displayed in the sectarian conflicts of the Reformation period. [49]

Vatican II helped a lot in understanding religion and human instinct. It additionally paved a path for deciding a specific theology of religions that is still evident in Roman Catholic circles. It becomes clear that the Roman

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[48] Ayoub, "Religious Pluralism and The Qur'an."
[49] (Legenhausen, 2008)

Catholic theology of religions is grounded in a comprehension of the unity of mankind. This unity is based upon solidarity as an observational reality, unity as the consequence of God's provision, and unity because of mankind's search for reality. [50]

Rahner contended for the legitimacy of his theology of universal salvation through the offering penance demise of Christ on the ground that it is in virtual concurrence with the theology of Vatican II. But, while Vatican II presupposes belief in God, despite how mistaken such belief might be, Rahner made never-ending salvation accessible to every nobleman and woman of a good conscience, regardless of whether they are atheists. It should be seen that his religious theology of salvation eventually conflicts with the Christian teaching of original sin and the requirement for recovery and amends through faith in the cross of Christ. [51]

Knitter distinguishes three bridges to be crossed by Christians to conform to the necessities of the commonality model: a philosophical-historical bridge, a religious-mystical bridge, and an amoral commonsense scaffold. The philosophical-historical bridge is addressed by the position of John Hick, who proposes that there may exist just one Divine Reality with numerous social articulations. [52]

It is to be seen that the concept of salvation in Protestant Christianity is enunciated in terms of faith, while in Catholicism the accentuation is on the sacramental, although exemptions are permitted. As per Catholic

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[50] Jaco Beyers, *Prespective on Theology of Religions*.

[51] Ayoub, "Religious Pluralism and The Qur'an."

[52] Giuseppe Giordan and Enzo Pace, *Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*, *Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*, 2014, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-06623-3.

teaching, salvation is the proper end of a man, the captivating vision of God in paradise. Hick does not give much attention to the Catholic precept. He was writing as a Presbyterian minister who was at once a scholar, theologian, rationalist, and liberal social activist. His social activism carried him into close contact with the Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Sikhs of Birmingham in 1967 when he acknowledged a seat in the Philosophy of Religion at Birmingham University. Because of his commitment to local area relations and his exercises to battle bigotry, he turned into a piece of a religiously pluralistic society,

and he was unable to acknowledge the judgment of traditional Christianity that his non-Christian companions would not have the option to accomplish salvation. [53]

Pluralism is fundamentally the belief that all religions of the world are valid and equally true in their correspondence of reality with regards to God, the world, and salvation. The main expounder of this view is John Hick of Claremont Graduate School in California, who first propounded it in his book "God and the Universe of Faiths" in 1973. [54]

His views same as the well-known Hindu view capsulated in Krishna's saying in the Bhagavad Gita "By at all way men love Me, all things being equal do I acknowledge them; for, in all ways, O Partha, men. stroll in my way." [55]

This is the well-known view that all religions lead to a similar God and all ways lead to paradise. It is clear from the above discussion that the roots

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[53] (Legenhausen, 2008)

[54] Marbaniang, "Theology of Religion: Pluralism, Inclusivism, Exclusivism."

[55] *The Bhagawad Gita (Pancama Veda)* (USA: YogaVidya.com LLC, 2007).

of pluralism were there from the beginning but it turned into religious theology in the 18th century.

b) Theological Aspects of Religious Pluralism

Hick and Knitter suggest that we move away from a Christocentric to a theocentric way to deal with religion. All religions rotate around God, and even Christianity moves around God. Christianity should presently do not be viewed as the focal point of the universe of religions, which Hick calls the 'Copernican revolution'. [56]

The term 'religious pluralism' can allude to four distinct things:

(a) factual types of diversity according to religion

(b) regularizing or philosophical perspectives about the positive value of religious diversity

(c) the structures of public approach, law, and social practices which oblige manage, and work with religious diversity.

(d) social settings of regular collaborations among people and groups identified as religious. [57]

Religious pluralism is the result of an endeavor to give a premise in Christian theology for the resilience of non-Christian religions; in that capacity, it is a component in a sort of religious modernism or liberalism. Regardless of how excellent the intentions of those people who have promoted religious pluralism, and regardless of the amount we might

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[56] Jaco Beyers, *Prespective on Theology of Religions*.
[57] Giordan and Pace, *Religious Pluralism: Framing Religious Diversity in the Contemporary World*.

identify with their struggle against dug-in intolerance, this religious theology is seriously defective. [58]

Despite their disparities, there is a common assumption shared by the different Christian groups to the question of pluralism. For Hick and Rahner and dogmatists, right faith is vital for salvation. To open the doors of paradise, Rahner broadens the thought of right faith to the individuals who live as if they were Christians and who might acknowledge Christianity if appropriately presented to it, while Hick goes further to reject that the apparent contrasts among the world's beliefs are incongruous. Hick's definitive compromise is the thing that makes various beliefs right. What Hick does is to relax the state of right belief so it diminished to the common factor in all of the world's religions, despite how dynamic this might be; nevertheless, it stays as much as Hick's precept as Luther's that there can be no salvation without right faith, regardless of whether the right faith as indicated by Hick is something of a least common factor. [59]

Any genuine study of world religions explicitly uncovers that despite the pluralistic contention all religions appear to be identical but very unique or different. Every one of them varies from the rest in its perspective of God, sin, salvation, demise, and eternity. The pantheistic idea of the world as God and the monotheistic thought of the world as a creation of God is not the equivalent. [60]

Religious pluralism means tolerating religious equality and validity between religions, it holds that religious truth is not the selective property

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[58] Marbaniang, "Theology of Religion: Pluralism, Inclusivism, Exclusivism."
[59] (Legenhausen, 2008)
[60] Marbaniang, "Theology of Religion: Pluralism, Inclusivism, Exclusivism."

of one religion however is accessible through the guidance of various religions. Religious pluralism promotes the building of unity, dialogue, corporation, and understanding, both between various religions and inside a single religion. [61]

c) *Islamic Perspective of Religious Pluralism*

Islam promotes religious harmony and serene concurrence not just among the Muslims, but also among people of different beliefs. According to Islam, it is significant for each Muslim to endure or tolerate different religions, and to follow the policy of living calmly and peacefully with different nations, religions, and so forth. [62]

Pluralists refer to many verses of the Quran to support their perspective. Religious pluralism for Islam is not just an issue of obliging confront cases to religious truth in the private area of an individual. It was and remains characteristically an issue of the general approach in which a Muslim state ought to perceive and guarantee the heavenly appointed right of each person to determine their spiritual destiny without any kind of coercion. [63]

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلَا يَزَالُوْنَ مُخْتَلِفِيْنَ

"Had your Lord willed, He would have made all the people a single community but, they will continue in their differences." (Al-Hood 11:118)

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[61] Imtiyaz Yusuf, "Islamic Theology Of Religious Pluralism: Qur'an's Attitude Towards Other Religions."

[62] Bin Abd Rahman, Abdul Muthaliff, and Bin Mahyuddin, "Religious Harmony and Peaceful Co-Existence : A Quranic Perspective."

[63] Zulfikar Hirji, "Debating Islam from Within: Muslim Constructions of the Internal Other," *Diversity and Pluralism in Islam: Historical and Contemporary Discourses amongst Muslims*, 2010, 1–30.

Among all of the sacred writings of the theistic religions, the Quran is different and unique in that as it sets its perspective in the context of divine Oneness and human diversity, including the plurality of religions. Moreover, it views religious diversity as one of the signs of Allah Almighty.[64]

Religious Harmony and freedom to practice religious duties for Non-Muslims are allowed in Islam. Islam does not permit to compel someone to accept Islam as it is mentioned in Quran.

<div dir="rtl">

اَفَاَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ

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"Would you then compel people so that they become believers?" (Yunus 10:99)

Similarly,

<div dir="rtl">

لَآ اِكْرَاهَ فِى الدِّيْنِ

</div>

"No constraint is there in the religion" (Al-Baqara 2:256)

Humanity is one of the most important values of Islam passed on through Muslims' beliefs in the equality of origins, and their calls for equivalent rights, treatment, and fortitude among all people. People are an indispensable piece of an expanse of creation, and they are the most honorable and magnified of all creatures. People can learn and realize the capacity to choose which action to take and to bear the outcomes of his/her activities. People are God's vicegerent on earth. [65]

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[64] Ayoub, "Religious Pluralism and The Qur'an."

[65] Bin Abd Rahman, Abdul Muthaliff, and Bin Mahyuddin, "Religious Harmony and Peaceful Co-Existence : A Quranic Perspective."

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِيٓ اٰدَمَ وَحَمَلْنٰهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ

وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى كَثِيْرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيْلًا

"And assuredly We have honored the Children of Adam: and We have borne them on the land and the sea, and We have provided them with clean things, and We have preferred them over many of them whom We have created with a preferment." (Al-Isra 17:70)

It is the duty of a Muslim not to disrespect and threat any non-Muslim without any genuine reason as Quran states:

مِنْ اَجْلِ ذٰلِكَ ۚ كَتَبْنَا عَلٰى بَنِيٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اَنَّهٗ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًاۢ بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ

اَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ فَكَاَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيْعًا ۗ وَمَنْ اَحْيَاهَا فَكَاَنَّمَآ

اَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيْعًا

"Because of that We Prescribed unto the Children of Israel: whosoever slayed a person, except for a person, or corruption in the land, it shall be as though he had slain all mankind, and whosoever bringeth life to one it shall be as though he had brought life to all mankind." (Al-Maida 5:32)

In the case of religious diversity and respecting other people, Islam is far better than any other religion. Islam gives the best model of religious harmony and respect but if we talk about the actual definition of religious pluralism that all religions are true and no religion is greater than other religions. Islam does not accept such kind of theology as it is mentioned in Holy Quran

<div dir="rtl">

اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِىٌّ عَنْكُمْ ۖ وَلَا يَرْضٰى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ ۚ وَاِنْ تَشْكُرُوْا

يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ

</div>

"If ye disbelieve, then verily Allah is Independent of you. And He approveth not of infidelity in His bondmen. And if ye return thanks He approveth of that in you." (Al-Zumar 39:7)

Islam accepts the diversity of race, nationality, language, etc. but not religious pluralism.

Legal Status of Religious Diversity in Malaysia

According to the constitution of Malaysia Article 3 section1 Islam is the religion of their federation/country but other religions may be practiced with peace, love and harmony. [66]

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia cherishes various legitimate securities regarding the freedom of religion or belief in the country. It secures the right to religion of religion under Article 11, including the option to "profess, practice and propagate" one's religious beliefs, with the likelihood that government law might force specific cutoff points on the option to proliferate the Islamic faith among Muslims. [67] Article 11 also attaches religious freedom to religious communities by ensuring the rights of religious communities to deal with their own affairs. Under Article 12, segregation against any resident on the grounds of religion is precluded in connection to the administration of public education, and each religious group has the right to set up and keep up with institutions for educating kid

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[66] "Malaysia's Constitution of 1957 with Amendments through 2007," 2021.
[67] "Malaysia's Constitution of 1957 with Amendments through 2007."

in its own religion. It is, however, legitimate under Article 12 for the Federal and State Legislatures to keep up with Islamic institutions. But no individual will be required to get education in or to partake in any ceremony or demonstration of worship of a religion other than their own. [68]

Article 153 in the Constitution specifies the significance of Malaysia as being pluralistic culture whereby it clarifies privileges and obligations of religious communities to live together peacefully. [69]

As a nation of different ethnicities, societies, and religions, Malaysia is indeed exceptional in demonstrating how its diversity can be used and saddled for nation-building. Despite the distinctive political belief systems and differentiating perspectives and suppositions, they have consistently had the option to regard and appreciate each other. [70]

Islam accepts socio-cultural pluralism and Malaysia is the biggest example of such kind of pluralism in the contemporary world.

Practice of Religious Diversity in Malaysia

As a country Malaysia was created in 1963, including nine Malay States and four previous British provinces, religious pluralism has existed since the days of yore. Over a long time, Hinduism, Animism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Taoism, Sikhism, and other religious beliefs and practices

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[68] Andrew Harding, "Malaysia: Religious Pluralism and the Constitution in a Contested Polity," *Middle East Law and Governance* 4, no. 2–3 (2012): 356–85, https://doi.org/10.1163/18763375-00403007.
[69] Marina Munira Abdul Mutalib and Mashitah Sulaiman, "Understanding Religious Pluralism in Malaysia: A Christian and Muslim Debate," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, no. 13 (2017): 175–88, https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i13/3193.
[70] (Wani et al., 2015)

have coexisted in relative harmony. [71] Islam was believed to have shown up in Malaysia around the fourteenth century through Arab businessmen from the Middle East. However, it was not until the formation of the Sultanate of Malacca in the fifteenth century that Islam turned into the prevailing religion in the Southeast Asian region. [72]

Religious Diversity in Malaysia has prompted the improvement of what social researchers allude to as "religious pluralism". Comprising of many religions of the world like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Chinese Religion, Taoism, Sikhism, and others, it is the test for Malaysia to manage religious diversity and keep up with social harmony. Various understandings of "religious pluralism" in the earlier decades among researchers have been recognizable, especially among members from Muslim and Christian communities in the country. [73]

Malaysia, being a multiracial country with different identities, societies, and dialects, has consistently prided itself as moderate, reformist, and a model of a tranquil. Malaysia is a Muslim majority country. There is no question that Malaysia today stands out in the world to act as an illustration of how different ethnic or religious communities can live in harmony and peace and turn out together for the advancement and prosperity of the country. [74]

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[71] Harding, "Malaysia: Religious Pluralism and the Constitution in a Contested Polity."
[72] Christopher Rodney Yeoh, "Malaysia, Truly Asia? Religious Pluralism in Malaysia," 2006.
[73] Mutalib and Sulaiman, "Understanding Religious Pluralism in Malaysia: A Christian and Muslim Debate."
[74] (Wani et al., 2015)

In its amplest and most common usage, it has been characterized as religious diversity or heterogeneity, which implies a basic acknowledgment of the way that there are many religious groups active in any given geopolitical space viable and that there is a state of harmonious co-existence between followers of various religions. The term has also been utilized to mean a type of ecumenism where people of various religions discourse and gain from one another without endeavoring to persuade each other of the accuracy of their beliefs. The third sense in the utilization of the term is that pluralism means accepting the beliefs taught by religions other than one's own as valid, but not necessarily obvious. Its usage in the third perspective can lead to another controversy but Malaysia follows pluralism by accepting the first two meanings. [75]

Religious pluralism arose in Malaysia in the late twentieth century. Henceforth, it is still new and not yet known to a large number of the Malaysian people. Regardless, this does not imply that its adherents or likewise called the pluralists did not exist in Malaysia. In fact, they have been consistently pushing and promoting the thoughts of religious pluralism in the brain of people in the name of religious tolerance. [76]

The constitution states Islam is the "religion of the Federation; however different religions might be drilled in harmony and peace." Islamic religious instruction is compulsory for Muslim kids in government schools; Non-Muslim students are needed to take nonreligious ethics and morals courses. Private schools might offer a non-Islamic religious

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[75] Yaacob, "The Challenge of Religious Pluralism in Malaysia."
[76] Najiah Athirah Jamaludin and Haslina Ibrahim, "The Muslims' Response to the Challenges of Religious Pluralism in Malaysia," *Al-Itqan: Journal of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies* 3, no. 1 (2019): 45–72.

educational plan or curriculum as an option for non-Muslims. Sharia courts have jurisdiction over Muslims in issues of family law and religious observances. Non-Muslims have no standing in sharia procedures. [77]

Conclusion

Religious diversity is universal, inevitable, and natural. In the contemporary world, religious diversity is a controversial but fundamental question raised by theologists. Since the last three decades, exclusivist-inclusivist-pluralistic trichotomy has become the standard of measuring religious diversity. Islam is wrongly judged as a fundamentalist religion that has no regard or acceptance towards other religions. This article, through arguments, concludes that though Islam is not a religion of all but Islam is the religion for all. It gives due regard, tolerance, and necessary acceptance to other religions of the world. Malaysia is a multiethnic, multifaith, multiracial, and multicultural Islamic country that has opted for Islam as an official religion as well as providing a unique code of religious pluralism for homogeneous relations. Malaysia is a great model of harmony and amicability as they are the most essential viewpoints to the endurance of a country. Muslim interaction with multi-faith people in almost all Muslim countries is a reality. So, Muslim countries should tend to adopt an absolute acceptance strategy based on Islamic principles so that religious acceptance may prevail in global harmony.

[77] International religious Freedom Report, "MALAYSIA 2020 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT," 2020.