

INTERPRETING TOLERANCE FROM A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE: AGH. DAUD ISMAIL'S THOUGHTS ON INTERFAITH RELATIONS IN *TAFSIR AL-MUNIR*

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Abstract: The phenomena of religious intolerance and conflict continues to pose a serious challenge in multicultural societies both at the national and global levels. This situation underscores the importance of formulating a concept of religious tolerance that is not merely normative, but also contextual and rooted in local scholarly traditions. In this context, Nusantara exegesis plays a strategic role in articulating a moderate Islamic perspective that is relevant to social realities. This article aims to analyze the concept of interfaith tolerance in *Tafsir Al-Munir* by AGH. Daud Ismail as a representation of local Qur'anic interpretation in responding to contemporary global issues of tolerance. This study employs a qualitative approach using library research methods. The primary source of data is *Tafsir Al-Munir* written in Lontara script, while secondary sources include books, journal articles, and other relevant studies. Data were analyzed through content analysis of Qur'anic verses and exegetical discussions related to interreligious tolerance. The results of the study show that Daud formulates tolerance in two forms, namely passive tolerance and active tolerance. Passive tolerance is applied to matters of faith and worship that manifested in the prohibition of coercion in belief and rejection of ritual syncretism. Active tolerance, on the other hand, is applied within the socio-communal sphere and is reflected in principles of communication, cooperation, social justice, and rejection of hate speech. The study concludes that Daud Ismail's thought makes an important contribution to the development of Nusantara Qur'anic interpretation and the broader discourse on religious moderation. Implicitly, the framework of active-passive tolerance offers a relevant reference for religious education and the promotion of social harmony grounded in local wisdom without obscuring the fundamental religious principles.

Keywords: Daud Ismail; Religious Moderation; Tolerance; Tafsir Al-Munir

Introduction

The phenomena of intolerance, radicalism, and extremism continue to manifest at both national and global levels. In Indonesia, intolerance triggered by factors such as religion, sectarian differences, ethnicity, race, culture, politics, and social class, has led to physical and verbal violence which has significantly affected individual's personal and social lives (Hamzah, 2019). A number of tragic events, including the conflict in Poso (1998), Ambon (1999), and Tolikara (2015), further illustrate acts of violence targeting particular religious and social groups (Indrawan & Putri, 2022; Khalikin, 2016; Rosyid, 2017). Within the educational sphere, intolerance also occur in various forms, such as the prohibition of headscarves in several schools in Bali in 2014 and the policy of SDN 3 Karang Tengah in 2019 which requires the wearing of headscarves despite the presence of non-Muslim students (Ihsan, 2021). Research conducted by UNSFIR covering the

period from 1990 to 2003 recorded 10,758 deaths due to intergroup intolerance that escalated into physical violence (Setiawan et al., 2024). Beyond Indonesia, similar patterns of intolerance have been observed in European democratic societies, including discrimination against Muslim women who wear the hijab (Weichselbaumer, 2020) and debates surrounding bans on the hijab in public spaces (Piatti-Crocker & Tasch, 2015), which reflect broader threats to freedom of expression and religious practice.

Against the backdrop, it becomes crucial to explore the concept of tolerance through the perspective of the Qur'an, particularly through local exegetical works. One such contribution is *Tafsir al-Munir* by AGH. Daud Ismail, which offers an interpretive framework that is relatively free from narrow group interests and Western-centric paradigms. A localistic approach is important to find contextual solutions by drawing upon local wisdom as a form of social resilience (Azwar, 2018; Darmawan et al., 2021). At the same time, a scientific approach is also necessary to identify the psychological and sociological roots of intolerance, such as the role of the need for cognitive certainty in responding to perceived cultural threats as a trigger for extremism, in order to avoid ideological bias (Ayman & Rakan, 2022; Obaidi et al., 2023).

This study aims to systematically examine the concept of interfaith tolerance in *Tafsir Al-Munir* by AGH. Daud Ismail as a representation of the Nusantara interpretation rooted in Bugis local wisdom and relevant to the context of a multicultural society. The analysis focuses on identifying the normative foundations and conceptual construction of tolerance formulated by Daud through his interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to interreligious relations. In addition, this study examines the boundaries of tolerance as articulated in matters of creed (*'aqidah*), worship (*'ibadah*), and social interaction (*mu'amalah*). Through this approach, the study seeks to show that Daud's thought offers a model of religious tolerance that is theologically firm while remaining socially inclusive, characterized by a distinction between passive tolerance in the areas of faith and worship, and active tolerance in the social sphere.

Several previous studies have addressed themes related to this article, including works on Bugis *tafsir*, Daud Ismail's intellectual contributions, and broader discussions of tolerance, albeit from different perspectives. These include studies such as *The Nusantara Interpretation by Bugis Scholars: Social And Local Dimensions of Al-Munir Tafsir* by AGH. Daud Ismail (Haris & Nurfaika, 2025) (Haris & Nurfaika, 2025), *Tafsir Al-Munir by Anregurutta Daud Ismail: A Visionary Scholar from South Sulawesi* (Khaerussalam et al., 2025), *Sexual Ethics and Ritual In Buginese Manuscript Culture: Qur'anic Performative Practices in the Assikalaibineng Heritage of Sulawesi* (Basri et al., 2025), *Pernikahan Beda Agama dalam Tafsir Bugis: Studi Penafsiran AGH. Daud Ismail atas Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]:221 dan Q.S. al-Ma'idah [5]:5* (Syam, 2021), *Penafsiran Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Perbuatan Manusia Dalam Tafsir Al-Munir karya AGH. Daud Ismail* (Mutailah, 2021), *Vernakularisasi Al-Qur'an di Tanah Bugis: Tinjauan Metodologis Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Karya Anregurutta Mub. Yunus Maratan* (Salim & Abbas, 2020), *Studi Tafsir Nusantara: Kajian Kitab Tafsir AG.H. Abd. Muin Yusuf (Tafsere Akorang Ma'basa Ugi) (Tpeeser Akor Mbs Agui)* (Awwaliyah & Hamid, 2019), *Konstruksi Tafsir Bugis (Studi Komparatif Tentang Surah Al-Fatihah Antara Kitab Tarejumanna Nenniya Tafeséré'na Dan Tafeséré' Akorang Mabbasa Ogi)* (Amiruddin, 2019). In addition, several dissertations have specifically examined *Tafsir Al-Munir*, including studies on the quality

of hadith (Caco, 2012), moral thought (Muhyiddin, 2013), and human action in Daud Ismail's interpretation (Mutailah, 2021).

Despite the breadth of existing scholarship, no study has specifically examined global issues of religious tolerance through the interpretive framework of local Qur'anic interpretation as presented in this article, particularly with regard to Daud Ismail's conceptualization of tolerance. Accordingly, this study offers a novel contribution by presenting a local perspective on a global issue. The originality of this article lies in its articulation of tolerance as a dual framework: active tolerance in the domain of social relations (*mu'amalah*) and passive tolerance in matters of faith and worship.

Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative-analytical approach using library research. The data collection begins with an examination of relevant literature addressing similar themes, both in relation to Daud Ismail and his interpretation as well as broader discussion of tolerance. Data selection and validation are conducted through processes of reduction and conclusion drawing. The primary data source is *Tafsir Al-Munir*, written in the Lontara script, while secondary sources consist of books, journal articles, and other relevant documents. The data analysis technique used in this study is content analysis, involving an in-depth examination of the text from careful reading to interpretation. Particular attention is given to the reading process, as variations in pronunciation within the Lontara script can result in different meanings and interpretive implications.

***Tafsir Al-Munir* in Lontara Script and the Intellectual Formation of AGH. Daud Ismail**

Tafsir Al-Munir by AGH. Daud Ismail is a complete Qur'anic exegesis written in the Lontara script, a traditional writing system that developed in South Sulawesi and West Sulawesi. Lontara has historically been used to write the Bugis, Mandar, and Makassar languages, as well as languages in regions influenced by Bugis-Makassar culture, such as Bima and Ende (Tol, 1996). Structurally, Lontara belongs to the abugida writing system and consists of 23 basic characters, with each consonant represents a syllable with an inherent vowel /a/, modifiable through diacritics. The script is written from left to right, employs *scriptio continua* (without spaces between words), and uses minimal punctuation. Moreover, closed syllables are generally not represented, rendering many Lontara texts ambiguous and intelligible primarily through contextual interpretation (Macknight, 2016).

Similar to *Tafsir Al-Munir*, Lontara script appears in numerous classical and modern Bugis manuscripts. Among others, this study refers to Pelras's discussion in *The Bugis* (Pelras, 2021) to situate the use of Lontara within the broader Bugis literary tradition. For detailed information on Lontara script, see the following table:

𐌀(ka)	𐌁(ga)	𐌂(nga)	𐌃(nka')
𐌄(pa)	𐌅(ba)	𐌆(ma)	𐌇(mpa')
𐌈(ta)	𐌉(da)	𐌊(na)	𐌋(nra')
𐌌(ca)	𐌍(ja)	𐌎(nya)	𐌏(nca')
𐌐(ya)	𐌑(ra)	𐌒(la)	𐌓(wa)
𐌔(sa)	𐌕(a)	𐌖(ha)	

Figure 1. List of Lontara Letters According to Pelras

The Makassar Lontara script does not include letters such as, 𐌃 = ngka', 𐌇 = mpa', 𐌋 = nra', 𐌏 = nca'. The punctuation marks used in the Lontara script are presented in the second table below:

Code	Explanation	How to read	Example 1		Example 2		Example 3	
			𐌐	a	𐌔	sa	𐌃	ka
̣	Top Dot	I / i	𐌐̣	i	𐌔̣	si	𐌃̣	ki
̤	Bottom Dot	U / u	𐌐̤	u	𐌔̤	su	𐌃̤	ku
◀	Front check mark	É / é	𐌐◀	é	𐌔◀	sé	𐌃◀	ké
↖	Back check mark	O / o	𐌐↖	o	𐌔↖	so	𐌃↖	ko
̣̤	Top check mark	E' / e'	𐌐̣̤	e'	𐌔̣̤	se'	𐌃̣̤	ke'
̥	Long sound signal		Â/â	Ê/ê	Î/i	Ô/ô	Û/û	

Figure 2. Punctuation Marks in Lontara Writing

The pronunciation can be found on several *YouTube* channels, including Baim Ron's channel in the video titled “*Aksara Bugis*” at this link: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNXUvHPHn5Y&t=233sf>).

AGH. Daud Ismail is widely known as H. Daud, *gurutta'* or *anregurutta'*, abbreviated as AG. This title is an honorific designation within Bugis society granted to scholars recognized for their extensive religious knowledge and exemplary moral character. It is comparable to titles such as *Kiyai* in Javanese culture, *Buya* in Minangkabau society, and Tuan Guru in Lombok (Putrawan, 2014). Daud's early education began

under the guidance of his father, H. Ismail, who taught the Qur'an, as well as a woman named Maryam, renowned for her pedagogical skills in imparting both knowledge and ethical conduct (Caco, 2012). After acquiring foundational religious knowledge, Daud continued his studies with several prominent scholars, including H. Muhammad Saleh (Imam Lompo Cangadi), H. Ismail (the *qadi* of Soppeng), Guru Tengnga Ganra, H. Syamsuddin (Imam of Sengkang), H. Daeng Sumange (Ceppie, Soppeng Riaja), H. Kitta (*qadi* of Soppeng Riaja), and AGH. Muh. As'ad in Sengkang (Muhyiddin, 2013). All of these teachers contributed to the formation of Daud's intellectual and spiritual character. Among them, AGH. Muh. As'ad exerted the most profound influence due to their prolonged association and close collaboration in developing Islamic education through *pesantren* institutions.

The education Daud received from an early age played a significant role in shaping his worldview and exegetical outlook. Immersed in an environment rich in intellectual exchange, he developed his ideas not only through textual study, but also through lived experiences that shaped his understandings of religion and society (Muhyiddin, 2013). His educational trajectory thus represents a synthesis of formal and informal modes of learning which enriched his mastery of Islamic sciences and his sensitivity to Bugis cultural values.

The socio-religious context of Bugis society at the time also greatly influenced Daud's exegetical production. During this period, Bugis society was undergoing a complex transition marked by encounters between established local traditions and the expanding influence of Islam (Mattulada, 1985). Bugis culture is characterized by strong kinship ties and ethical values emphasizing honor, balance, and moral integrity (Pelras, 2000). In this context, *Tafsir Al-Munir* functions not merely as a textual explanation of the Qur'an, but also as a medium for reinforcing the religious and social identity of the Bugis community. In his interpretations, Daud frequently connects Qur'anic teachings with local customs, enabling readers to perceive the relevance of Islamic values within their daily cultural practices. For instance, in interpreting verses related to social justice, he explicitly links Qur'anic principles to Bugis norms that emphasize harmony and equilibrium in social relations (Muhyiddin, 2013; Mutaillah, 2021). Through this approach, Daud not only provides the meaning of sacred texts, but also encourages their practical application within the local cultural framework. It shows his awareness of existing social dynamics and his commitment to make Islamic teachings contextually meaningful.

Closely related to the formation of Daud's interpretive paradigm is his extensive life experience, including his education under scholars with diverse intellectual orientations. Figures such as H. Muhammad Saleh, H. Ismail (*qadi* of Soppeng), and AGH. Muh. As'ad each represented distinct approaches to Islamic teaching and interpretation (Rifah et al., 2023). Exposure to these various perspectives enriched Daud's exegetical insight and contributed to the nuanced character of his *tafsir*. His close relationship with AGH. Muh. As'ad was especially influential in shaping his views on education and the social role of religious scholars. Known as progressive figure in the development of Islamic education, AGH. Muh. As'ad emphasized education as a means of societal advancement (Hudri, 2021), a perspective that is clearly reflected in Daud's

works. Consequently, *Tafsir Al-Munir* functions not only as a scholarly interpretations of the Qur'an, but also as a practical guide for society in addressing contemporary challenges. He encourages readers to translate religious understanding into concrete social practice.

Daud Ismail was a prolific scholar of his time, as evidenced by the range of works attributed to him and cited by Rahmawati in her dissertation, such as the following (Caco, 2012). These works include: 1) *Al-Ta'rif bi al-Alim al-Allamah al-Syaikh al-Haj Muhammad As'ad al-Bugisi*, a biographical work dedicated to his teacher as an expression of reverence; 2) *Basic Knowledge of Islam* (three volumes, Soppeng); 3) *Translation and Interpretation of Juz 'Ammah*, which can be regarded as the preliminary foundation of his later exegetical project; 4) *Bicaranna Puasa'é (The Law of Fasting)*; 5) *Bicaranna Sumpajangné (The Law of Prayer)*; 6) *Bicaranna Kabingné (The Law of Marriage)*; 7) A collection of Friday sermons written in the Bugis language; 8) A collection of prayers for daily life; and 9) *Tafsir al-Munir*, his monumental ten-volume Qur'anic exegesis.

According to Caco, there are two principal reasons behind Daud's decision to compose *Tafsir Al-Munir* using the Lontara script. *First*, as a Bugis scholar living among the Bugis people, Daud sought to preserve and transmit the Lontara script to future generations by employing it as a medium for Qur'anic interpretation. At the same time, the choice of script and language responded to the strong enthusiasm among Bugis Muslims for learning the Qur'an and its interpretation. Presenting *tafsir* in the local script and language made it more accessible, comprehensible, and emotionally resonant for readers and listeners, while also allowing Daud to offer rational explanations and avoid polemical debates, so that readers can focus on the substance of interpretation (Caco, 2012; Mutaillah, 2021); *Second*, at the time of its composition, no Bugis-language *tafsir* existed that provided a complete interpretation of the Qur'an across all thirty *juz* (Ismail, 2001). *Tafsir Al-Munir* thus filled an important gap in the Islamic scholarly tradition of the Bugis region.

The systematic structure of *Tafsir Al-Munir* can be identified through at least seven key features. *First*, the opening volume contains an extensive introduction that includes several discussions: the first chapter explains the background and motivation for writing the *tafsir*; the second chapter discusses the history of the Qur'an, which includes its definitions, names, and revelation (*nuzūl al-Qur'an*); and the third outlines the preservation of the Qur'an from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the period of Caliph 'Uthman bin 'Affan. *Second*, each section begins with an introduction to the surah and juz under discussion. *Third*, the Qur'anic text is placed on the left side of the page, while its translation appears on the right, as noted by Daud at the beginning of juz 10 (Juz 10/30, p. 10). *Fourth*, the exegetical discussion presents the verse and its translation before elaborating on its meaning. *Fifth*, references to Qur'anic verses and hadith vary in form: sometimes verses are cited in full, while in other instances only the text is presented without explicit surah and verse numbers. Similarly, hadith citations may include the complete chain of transmission (*sanad*), text (*matan*), and source (*mukharrij*), or only selected elements thereof; in some cases, the *matan* is rendered directly into the Bugis language. *Sixth*, each exegetical unit concludes with *pappakainge'* (moral advice). *Seventh*, the explanation of each juz ends with an expression of gratitude to God.

The layout of the Lontara script can be seen in the image below:

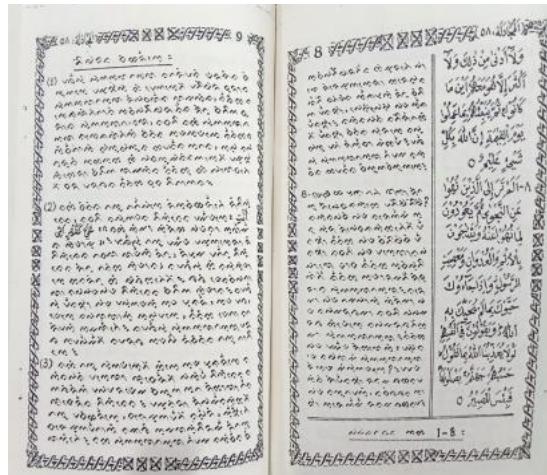


Figure 3. Example of Lontara Script Layout

In terms of interpretive forms, *Tafsir Al-Munir* employs both *ma'thur* and *ra'y* approaches, although one may appear more dominant in certain passages (Said et al., 2023). It is categorized as *ma'thur* because Daud follows classical exegetical procedures, interpreting the Qur'an through the Qur'an itself, through hadith, and through the explanations and opinions of the Companions (Mujahidin & Salman, 2024). At the same time, it reflects a *ra'y*-based approach in its use of *ijtihad* grounded in observation and rational inquiry, particularly when addressing verses related to social and natural phenomena (Nadia et al., 2025; Nasrun & Alwizar, 2025).

Methodologically, Daud employs the four well-known exegetical methods: *ijmalī*, *taḥlīlī*, *muqāran*, and *mauḍū'ī*, depending on the context of the verses and the interpretive needs at hand. Several methodological studies have identified the *taḥlīlī* method as the most dominant in *Tafsir Al-Munir* (Syakhlani, 2018), as evidenced by the detailed verse-by-verse analysis and the extensive discussion spread across ten volumes. Nevertheless, a closer examination reveals that the *taḥlīlī* method is often applied selectively, focusing primarily on key terms rather than providing exhaustive linguistic analysis of every word. For example, in the interpretation of Surah Al-Fatihah, linguistic attention is given to specific terms such as *rabb*, *al-'ālamīn*, *al-ḥamd*, *al-raḥmān*, *al-raḥīm*, *malik*, and *al-mustaqīm* (Ismail, 2001).

While this assessment of the dominance of the *taḥlīlī* method is valid, thematic (*mauḍū'ī*) elements also play a significant role in Daud's exegetical practice. Each cluster of verses is often assigned a specific theme, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the text. For instance, see the images below:

religious rituals without interference or coercion, while refraining from theological justification of beliefs considered erroneous (Casram, 2016). In this sense, respect toward adherents of other religions does not imply recognition of the truth of their beliefs, but rather simply constitutes an ethical form of respect aimed at fostering social harmony (Yuniarto et al., 2023).

The Prophet Muhammad's conduct provides practical illustrations of tolerance in social life. Historical accounts indicate that during periods of territorial expansion, neither the Prophet nor his companions compelled non-Muslims to convert to Islam. Instead, they offered protection to followers of other religions under Islamic governance as long as social order was maintained (Amin, 2021). Reports also mention his respectful conduct toward non-Muslims, such as standing in respect when a Christian corpse passed by, underscoring the recognition of shared human dignity (Amin, 2021). The other example, almost every morning he would go to the market to feed a Jewish man in the corner who always insulted him (Rafi, 2025). These practices demonstrate that prophetic tolerance was grounded in ethical respect for humanity rather than theological validation of other belief systems.

The normative Qur'anic foundation for tolerance in social and religious life is rooted in the recognition of human diversity as a divinely ordained reality. This principle is explicitly articulated in QS. al-Hujurāt (49): 13 which affirms that humanity was created from a single origin and diversified into nations and tribes for the purpose of mutual recognition (*ta'aruf*), with moral excellence measured not by identity but by piety.

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

“O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware”.

From a hermeneutical perspective, this verse shows how sacred texts invite interpretive engagement shaped by socio-cultural context (Saumantri & Saefuddin, 2025). The term *al-nās* is particularly significant in this regard. Lexically, it refers to humanity in its entirety (Mandzur, 1405). Classical exegetes offer nuanced interpretations: *Tafsir Al-Jalālain* understands *al-nās* as referring to Adam and Eve as the progenitors of humankind (Mahalli (al) & Suyuthi (al), 2000), whereas al-Marāghī understands it more broadly as encompassing all human beings without distinction (Maraghi (al), 1946). Despite these variations, the core message remains the same: all humans share a common origin and possess equal dignity before God. In *Tafsir Al-Munir*, AGH. Daud Ismail emphasizes the importance of situating this verse within its social and historical context (Ismail, 2001). For him, understanding *al-nās* requires attention to the lived realities of society (Ismail, 2001), as Qur'anic guidance is not intended to be abstracted from social conditions. Interpretation, therefore, is not merely a textual exercise but an engagement with the social world in which the text operates.

The keyword *al-nās* signifies not only the biological unity of humankind but also the ethic imperative of mutual respect. Al-Tha'labī interprets the universal address in this

verse as a reminder of the shared origin and process of human creation (Tsa'labi (al), 2015), a view that implies equal moral worth across social and religious boundaries (Hanafi, 2010). This is in line with the perspective of M. Quraish Shihab, who states that the sameness of human origin constitutes the ethical foundation for tolerance and equality (Al-Fairuzabadi, 1992; M. Quraish Shihab, 2017). Thus, we can see that this equality is the basis of tolerance in society.

The second keyword in the phrase *wa ja'alnakum syu'ubā wa qabā'il li ta'arafū* highlights diversity as an inherent feature of human existence (*sunnatullāh*). It is stated in Q.S. Yunus (10): 99 and Q.S. Hud (11): 118, which confirms that differences in beliefs are part of God's destiny. From this diversity, humans are required to get to know one another (*ta'arafū*) (M. Quraish Shihab, 2017). From this perspective, religious diversity should not serve as a basis for conflict but as a context for ethical engagement. The command *ta'arafū* implies an active process of knowing one another through interaction, communication, and mutual understanding. Thus, *ta'arafū* indicates not merely physical interaction, but also psychological and moral engagement (Wardiyah et al., 2023). In plural societies, this process requires individuals and communities to move beyond superficial acquaintance toward deeper understanding of the values, traditions, and beliefs of others (Yu et al., 2023). Such engagement can be facilitated through dialogue, cultural exchange, and cooperative social activities, thereby strengthening social cohesion and reinforcing the ideal of unity in diversity (Reimer et al., 2021).

From this analysis, tolerance in social and religious life emerges as an ethical orientation grounded in the recognition and understanding of difference (Emlita et al., 2024; Malleleang et al., 2022). QS. al-Hujurāt (49): 13 invites reflection on diversity as a divinely intended reality that demands respect rather than negation. Through a hermeneutical reading, interpretations such as those offered by Daud provide a contextual framework for translating Qur'anic principles into lived social ethics, where each individual feels valued and recognized as part of the same human race.

To clarify the conceptual construction of tolerance in *Tafsir Al-Munir*, Table 1 presents a mapping of the meanings and foundations of tolerance based on the Qur'anic verses referenced by Daud:

Table 1. Meaning and Foundations of Tolerance in *Tafsir Al-Munir* by AGH. Daud Ismail

No	Aspect	Conceptual Description	Qur'anic Basis	Daud Ismail's Interpretation
1	The Meaning of Tolerance (<i>Tasamuh</i>)	Respect for differences in belief without justifying or mixing creeds	QS. al-Hujurāt (49): 13	Tolerance arises from human diversity and requires mutual recognition
2	The Principle of Religious Freedom	Prohibition of coercion in belief	QS. al-Baqarah (2): 256	Faith is invalid if produced by coercion; <i>da'wah</i> must be persuasive, not intimidating.
3	The Divine Law in Diversity	Religious plurality as divine decree	QS. Yūnus (10): 99 & QS. Hūd (11):	Diversity of belief is part of God's will and must not be used to justify conflict

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4	Ethics of Interfaith Interaction	Prohibition of insulting other beliefs	QS. al-An'ām (6): 108	Emphasis of ethical speech and gentle conduct to prevent provocation and retaliation
5	Moral Orientation of Tolerance	Preservation of social harmony and peace	QS. al-Qaṣas (28): 56	Human responsibility lies in conveying goodness, not forcing faith outcomes

Table 1 demonstrates that tolerance in *Tafsir Al-Munir* is constructed upon a clear theological foundation and oriented towards the cultivation of ethical and civilized social relations. By framing tolerance as a consequence of *sunnatullah* in diversity and the principle of religious freedom, Daud does not reduce tolerance to theological relativism, but as a moral commitment to maintaining harmony within communal life.

Interfaith Tolerance: The Thought of AGH. Daud Ismail in *Tafsir al-Munir*

Basically, Daud does not specifically examine tolerance as a standalone in his interpretation. Nevertheless, his views on the foundations, meaning, and manifestations of tolerance can be traced through his interpretations of Qur'anic verses that are widely understood to address this issue. The discourse of tolerance covers various aspects of human life ranging from family, community, nation, global society to religious relations, each requiring different emphases depending on context, time, and circumstances. Tolerance is not limited to interreligious relations, but also extends to intra-religious contexts, such as within families, groups, and sects in Islam, all of which require continuous cultivation.

Interfaith tolerance in Daud's perspective can be divided into three main aspects: faith (belief), worship, and social-community relations.

Tolerance in Faith

Faith is a fundamental element of every religious tradition and serves as the core of a Muslim's salvation. Consequently, faith must be safeguarded, nurtured, and strengthened. Belief in the Oneness of Allah and in Prophet Muhammad as His final messenger constitutes the essential creed of Islam. However, such belief cannot be imposed upon others, nor may Muslims be compelled to adopt beliefs outside their own faith. This principle is clearly articulated in Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 256:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Artinya:

Tidak ada paksaan dalam agama. Telah jelas petunjuk dari kesesatan. Siapa yang kafir terhadap sesat-sesat itu dan beriman kepada Allah, maka dia telah memegang tali keteguhan yang tidak putus. Allah Maha Mendengar, Maha Mengetahui.

Be'ttuanna:

Dégága ápassang mattamäivi religion ase'lle'nge'ngé majeppu mane'wanni lälé'ng apatirowangné pólé rilälé'ng apusangné. Nanigi nigi makapérékini be're'halaé nanateppe'rivi Puang Allataäla majeppu makkate'nni masse'nitu ricallcinna tülu' masse'é iya déé nakkullé pe'ttu. Naiyya Puang Allataäla mase'rro maringkalinga namase'rro misse'ng.

Translation:

There is no compulsion in (adhering to) religion (Islam), for indeed, the right path is distinct from the wrong path. Whoever rejects idols and believes in Allah has grasped a strong rope that will never break. Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.

Daud provides an interpretation of this verse in Lontara script, emphasizing that religious commitment must arise from personal conviction and clear understanding, not from coercion or intimidation. According to him, forcing someone to embrace Islam or forcing a Muslim to abandon their faith is categorically impermissible. Nonetheless, introducing Islam to all people, including non-Muslims, remains permissible and even encouraged. Coercion or intimidation in preaching or spreading religion is futile, even if the person being preached to embraces Islam, but because of fear rather than desire and guidance from Allah (Ismail, 2001).

Daud firmly argues that coercion in religious matters is not only ineffective, but also contradicts the ethical foundations of Islam and creates conflict. Daud emphasizes that the introduction of Islam should be carried out in a friendly and compassionate manner, rather than through force (Ismail, 2001). In the modern context where pluralism has become an important issue, Daud's perspective is relevant for understanding how religious communities should interact with one another. This view aligns with the concept of pluralism, which requires individuals to respect differences in belief (Casram, 2016). In the context of religious conflict in Sulawesi, for example, such an understanding can help ease tensions by encouraging intergroup and interfaith dialogue, so that people can understand each other. In his book, Daud states:

[illegible]

Dé nawe'dding ripássa tauwvé, tau taniyaé se'lle'ng muttâma riagama ase'lle'nge'ngé, rimukka tonge'ngngé ne'nniya saláé manne'ssa duwami ritu ritungke' tungke' tauwvé, jaji denakkiguna apassae

Meaning:

It is not permissible to force non-Muslims to convert to Islam. It is clear to everyone that there are only two choices, truth and falsehood, and imposing one's will upon others is futile.

This position align with the views of prominent Muslim scholars such as Ibn Katsīr and M. Quraish Shihab, both of whom affirm that no individual should be forced to adopt any religion, including Islam (Ismail, 2001; Katsir, 1999; M. Quraish Shihab, 2017). What is required instead is to introduce Islam as religion of mercy (*raḥmah*), conveyed through ethical conduct and persuasive dialogue. However, Daud also

emphasizes an important distinction: while there is no coercion in entering Islam, once a person willingly embraces the faith, they become subject to *taklifi* obligations. These religious duties may be fulfilled gradually, but they are binding as part of one's commitment to Islam.

In comparison with Indonesian Muslim exegetes such as Buya Hamka and M. Quraish Shihab, Daud's interpretation reflects a shared emphasis on freedom of belief and respectful coexistence. Buya Hamka consistently maintained that religious truth cannot be enforced and that each individual has the right to choose their path (Amrullah, 2015). Similarly, M. Quraish Shihab underscores that understanding differences is an integral part of faith and that interfaith dialogue is essential for building a social harmony (M. Quraish Shihab, 2017).

Daud's conception of tolerance is thus principled and balanced. Tolerance does not compromising or relativizing one's faith, but rather recognizing the right of others to believe what they consider true (Ismail, 2001). This perspective is relevant within the Indonesian context, characterized by deep religious and cultural diversity. By integrating theological, social, and cultural dimensions, Daud's thought demonstrates a nuanced and contextual approach to interfaith tolerance, reinforcing Islam's ethical commitment to justice, compassion, and peaceful coexistence.

Another Qur'anic basis cited by Daud to reinforce the prohibition of coercion in religion is QS. Yūnus (10): 99:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَآمَنَ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

“And if your Lord had willed, all the people on earth would have believed altogether. Would you then compel people to become believers?”.

According to Daud, this verse serves as a strong admonition against any attempt to impose religious belief upon others. If Allah had so willed, He could have made all humanity believers, the existence of religious diversity therefore reflects divine wisdom rather than human failure. Consequently, forcing others to accept Islam not only contradicts divine will, but also exceeds human authority. The duty of Muslims is limited to conveying the message of truth (*tabligh*), while guidance (*hidayah*) remains solely within Allah's prerogative (Bukhari (al), 2002). Daud further emphasizes that human beings are individually accountable before God. Whether one believes or rejects faith, each person will bear responsibility for their own deeds (Q.S. Al-Syura (42): 15) and for what they strive for in this world (Q.S Al-Baqarah (2): 134). Thus, coercion in matters of belief is meaningless, as faith cannot be transferred or imposed by force. This understanding ultimately will lead to the conclusion stated at the end of Surah al-Kafirun, *lakum dinukum wa li dān* (to you your religion, and to me my religion).

In practical terms, Daud argues that every religious community should focus on their respective teachings and convictions. Within the Indonesian context where Muslims constitute the majority, this commitment entails a moral responsibility to protect and ensure the freedom of religious minorities to practice their beliefs without acquiring agreement or theological validation (Al-Bukhari, 2002). While Islam is upheld by Muslims as the ultimate truth, this conviction does not justify denigrating or condemning

followers of other religions. As Daud maintains, each individual will adhere to the faith they believe in, and ultimate judgment belongs to Allah alone.

Tolerance in Worship

Thus, worship among different religious communities differs in all aspects, even though there are similarities (but not sameness). Therefore, it is not permissible for Muslims to follow the rituals of other religious communities, as stated in Q.S. Al-Kāfirūn (109):

Worship constitutes a concrete manifestation of a person's faith in the deity they believe in (Saleh & Khan, 2023). For Muslims, ritual practices such as prayer and other acts of worship function not merely as physical routines, but as forms of spiritual communication with Allah (Syafirin, 2020). Each element of worship such as recitation, movement, and intention reflects a deep relationship between the servant and the Creator. This shows that worship practices differ fundamentally among religious communities, even though certain outward similarities may exist. Similarity, however, does not imply sameness (Alsuhaymi & Atallah, 2025).

Because worship is inseparable from faith, Islam does not permit Muslims to participate in or adopt the ritual practices of other religions. This principle is explicitly articulated in QS. al-Kāfirūn (109):

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ (١) لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ (٢) وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ (٣) وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ
مَا عَبَدْتُمْ (٤) وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ (٥) لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ (٦)

人 人 人 人 人

[illegible]

Be'ttuanna:

Pūwadānggi (me'nnangro kapéréé) é sininna wāwang kapéréé. Pūra dé usompai (be're'hala) iya pāda musompāé me'nnang. Ne'nniya pāda déttoko me'nnang sompai Puwang iya usompāé. Ne'nniya déttoka iya musompāé me'nnang. Ne'nniya déttoko me'nnang pāda sompai Pūwang usompāé. Pāda mupunnaiwi mane'ng your religion ne'nniya iya upunnaiwi my religion.

Translation:

Say (Muhammad), O disbelievers. I do not worship what you worship. And you will not become worshippers of what I worship. And I will not worship what you worship. And you will not worship what I worship. For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.

This surah affirms the existence of clear boundaries in matters of worship. While different religions may share similar aspirations, such as the pursuit of peace or salvation, the essence, theological foundations, and ritual expressions of worship remain distinct

(Awad, 2021). For this reason, Islamic teachings prohibit syncretism or ritual participation that could blur doctrinal boundaries.

Surah Al-Kafirun emphasizes the fundamental differences between the faith and worship practices of Muslims and those who do not share their faith. In this surah, Allah commands the Prophet Muhammad to declare emphatically that he does not worship what the disbelievers worship, and conversely, they will not worship what the Prophet Muhammad worships. The important point of this verse is the affirmation that in matters of worship, there is no room for compromise (Al Amin et al., 2020; Fadilah et al., 2025; Zahara et al., 2024). In a hermeneutical context, this surah does not promote hostility, but rather establishes a framework in which religious differences are acknowledged and respected without being merged.

In *Tafsir Al-Munir*, Daud explains that tolerance in worship means giving every religious community the freedom to practice their religion without getting involved in it (Ismail, 2001). This reflects what M. Quraish Shihab refers to as *passive peace* or *passive kindness* (M. Quraish Shihab, 2017). Tolerance in this context means respecting other people's choices to worship, without disturbing or interfering with their worship activities. For example, in a diverse society, various places of worship can be found side by side, where Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and other religions respect each other and allow each other to worship without interference. In plural societies such as Indonesia, this principle is manifested in the coexistence of different places of worship and religious celebrations conducted without mutual obstruction (Hutabarat, 2023; Mujiburrahman, 2008). However, such freedom is not absolute. It remains subject to religious norms, state regulations, and social harmony (Habermas, 2004).

From Daud's perspective, worship cannot be negotiated because it directly concerns faith (*imān*) and monotheistic commitment (*tawḥīd*) (Ismail, 2001). Daud's view is grounded in the historical context of the revelation of this verse, which emerged from a dialogue between the Prophet Muhammad and the Jews concerning matters of worship (Suyuthi (al), 1998). Surah al-Kafirun serves as a response and an affirmation that compromise in acts of worship is impermissible (Ismail, 2001; Katsir, 1999). This means that the form of tolerance that can be practiced is the granting of freedom to others to worship without interference. While such freedom is essential, it must be accompanied by an awareness of social responsibility. For example, when Muslims perform congregational prayers, they are expected to do so in a way that does not disturb the activities or comfort of the surrounding community.

In a hermeneutic perspective, this verse also underscores the importance of respecting diversity. The concepts of tolerance and pluralism are relevant in Indonesia's multicultural society (Fernando et al., 2023; Hoon, 2017). Tolerance encourages acceptance of differences and respect others' choices in worship, while pluralism acknowledges the coexistence of multiple religions and belief systems within a shared social space. These principles foster harmony amid diversity (Sahri & Ali, 2025).

Accordingly, worship represents a manifestation of profound faith that varies across religious traditions. In this context, QS. al-Kāfirūn emphasizes the importance of maintaining the identity and beliefs of each religious community. Tolerance in worship does not entail compromising one's beliefs, but rather respecting the rights of others to

practice their religious obligations freely (Tumanggor & Mularsih, 2021). Through this approach, a harmonious society can be cultivated, one in which individuals are able to practice their beliefs without infringing upon the rights of others. This remains both a challenge and a shared responsibility in a diverse society, to prioritize mutual respect and tolerance in worship and everyday life.

Tolerance in Social-Community Life

Tolerance in social and communal life with people of different religions is fundamentally no different from interactions among fellow believers. In QS. al-Ḥujurāt (49): 13, God addresses humanity using the term *al-nās* which encompasses both Muslims and non-Muslims. The use of *al-nās* in this verse refers to the equal status of all human beings in terms of their creation (*bashariyyah*) (Iqbal, 2020). In other words, humans are equal in their physical and existential origin, whether viewed from the perspective of shared ancestry (Adam and Eve), common nationality, regional identity, ethnic affiliation, or neighborhood relations.

One of the key emphases in QS. al-Ḥujurāt[49]: 13 according to Daud is the concept of *ta'arāfū*, which he interprets as communication (Ismail, 2001). Mutual recognition and understanding among human beings can only occur through communication. Through sustained interaction, communication gives rise to familiarity, empathy, and a shared sense of care that is manifested in mutual assistance and cooperation within society (Ismail, 2001). In this sense, social tolerance is not merely passive acceptance, but an active process rooted in dialogue and engagement.

In addition to QS. al-Ḥujurāt (49): 13, QS. al-Anʿām (6): 108 provides an important ethical foundation for tolerance, especially in relation to attitudes towards the beliefs and worship practices of followers of other religions. While Muslims firmly believe that Allah is the only true God and that Muhammad is His final Messenger, this conviction does not justify condemning, mocking, or insulting the beliefs and objects of worship of others. QS. al-Anʿām (6): 108 clearly warns against such behavior:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ
ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

ᐱᕈᑦ:

[illegible]

Be'tuaanna:

Ne'nνια ája' páda mutarasúini tau iya páda sompaéngngi rilainnáé Puang Allataála, tarasúitóitu mátu' Puang Allataála karana atallive'ng e'ng nádé naturuve'ngwi paddise'nge'ng. Mákkuniró

kibélo-béloiyangngéngngi tungke' tungkre' ummaé pàda nasengngi maksessing gau gau'na mennangro. Nainnâpani pàda kâmmu i ri Puanna Mennangro uréwekkenna mennangro aga nabirittaini mennangro sininna gau pura engkaé mennangro ripugawu.

Translation:

And do not revile those whom they invoke besides Allah, lest they revile Allah out of ignorance. Thus, We have made every community consider their deeds as good. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them of what they used to do.

In *Tafsir Al-Munir*, Daud emphasizes that criticizing or insulting the objects of worship of others is ultimately counterproductive, as it invites reciprocal insults toward Allah. Such actions not only damage social harmony but also undermine the ethical mission of Islam. Daud further asserts that harsh speech, ridicule, and verbal abuse are impermissible, even toward those considered misguided or hostile. He refers to the Qur'anic command to speak gently, even when addressing figures such as Pharaoh who openly opposed and insulted God (Ismail, 2001).

For Daud, recognizing something as false does not necessitate harshness in attitude or language. On the contrary, he argues that gentle speech and humble disposition are often more effective than loud or aggressive expressions. A soft voice accompanied by sincerity may reach hearts more deeply than forceful rhetoric. In this context, the responsibility of Muslims toward non-Muslims is to convey the goodness and truth of Islamic teachings through exemplary conduct, while guidance (*hidāyah*) remains entirely within God's authority, as stated in QS. al-Qaṣaṣ (28): 56 (Ismail, 2001). Ultimately, Daud's perspective affirms that all human beings share equal rights and obligations as creatures of God. Social life must be grounded in compassion, justice, and respect, both toward those who share the same faith and those who do not. Every human beings, as a creation and servant of God, deserves to be treated with dignity, fairness, and humanity, just as one would wish to be treated oneself.

After describing narratively the forms of tolerance in the domains of faith, worship, and social life, Daud's thoughts can be systematized through the distinction between *passive tolerance* and *active tolerance*. This categorization clarifies both the limits and the practical expressions of tolerance among religious communities in *Tafsir Al-Munir*, as summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Forms and Boundaries of Tolerance among Religious Communities in *Tafsir Al-Munir*

No	Domain of Tolerance	Form of Tolerance	Characteristics	Qur'anic Basis	AGH. Daud Ismail's Interpretation
1	Faith (Belief)	Non-coercion; no mixing of creeds	Passive Tolerance	QS. al-Baqarah (2): 256 & QS. al-Kāfirūn (109): 6	Faith is absolute; tolerance entails respecting others' religious choices without theological relativism
2	Worship	Freedom of	Passive	QS. al-	No compromise

		worship without participation	tolerance	Kāfirūn (109): 1–6	in ritual practice; tolerance is expressed through non- interference
3	Social- Community Life	Cooperation, communication, social justice	Active Tolerance	QS. al- Ḥujurāt (49): 13	Human equality transcends religious differences; social interaction is encouraged
4	Social Ethics	Prohibition of hate speech and verbal abuse	Active Tolerance	QS. al- An'ām (6): 108	Ethical communication and gentle speech are essential to social harmony
5	Public Life	Peaceful coexistence	Active Tolerance	QS. al- Qaṣaṣ (28): 56	Islam promotes social peace without compromising faith principles

The mapping in Table 2 confirms that tolerance in *Tafsir Al-Munir* is differentiated: passive in the domains of faith and worship, and active in the social and communal sphere. This pattern shows Daud's consistency in maintaining the firmness of theological principles while simultaneously encouraging openness, ethical interaction, and social cooperation across religious boundaries. Such a framework remains highly relevant in the context of contemporary multicultural societies.

Conclusion

Based on an in-depth analysis of *Tafsir Al-Munir* by AGH. Daud Ismail, this study concludes that Daud's concept of interfaith tolerance is distinctive, contextual, and balanced, characterized by a clear differentiation between the domains of faith and worship and the socio-community sphere. Tolerance in Daud's perspective is not understood as theological relativism or the blending of religious beliefs, but rather as respect for religious freedom without compromising the principle of monotheism (*taḥḥid*). In matters of faith and worship, tolerance takes a passive form, manifested in the prohibition of coercion, interference, and participation in the rituals of other religions. Meanwhile, in the socio-community sphere, tolerance is active, expressed through communication, cooperation, social justice, mutual respect, and a firm rejection of hate speech, verbal abuse, and provocative actions rooted in religious differences.

The implications of these findings show that Daud's thought offers theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on Nusantara

tafsir by presenting a local exegetical model that responds constructively and non-confrontationally to the global challenge of religious intolerance. The concept of active-passive tolerance formulated by Daud provides an alternative analytical framework for the study of religious moderation, which has often been dominated by normative-theological or policy-oriented approaches. Practically, Daud's ideas are relevant for application in multicultural societies such as Indonesia, particularly as an ethical foundation for building peaceful, dignified, and mutually respectful relations among religious communities without sacrificing their respective religious identities.

However, this study is not without limitations. *First*, as a library-based study focused on textual analysis of *Tafsir Al-Munir*, it does not address the empirical dimension of how Daud's ideas on tolerance are practiced or received in the social life of the Bugis community or in the broader Indonesian context. *Second*, this research does not yet provide a systematic comparative analysis between Daud Ismail's thought and that of other Nusantara exegetes on the issue of tolerance, leaving significant room for further comparative inquiry. *Third*, the reliance on primary sources written in Lontara script requires careful philological consideration, while the limited accessibility of these text for non-Bugis readers poses challenges for the wider dissemination of Daud's intellectual legacy.

In light of these findings and limitations, several recommendations can be proposed. *First*, future studies should employ empirical and socio-anthropological approaches to explore the reception and actualization of Daud's ideas on tolerance within the local religious practices. *Second*, comparative research involving *Tafsir Al-Munir* and other Nusantara *tafsir* works is necessary to map the patterns, divergences, and unique contributions of local exegetical traditions in responding to global issues. *Third*, the development of interdisciplinary studies linking *tafsir*, education, and public policy is important to enable systematic incorporation of the active-passive tolerance framework into religious moderation programs and efforts to strengthening social cohesion in Indonesia.

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

Abdul Mutakabbir: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial interests or personal relationships that could interfere with the performance of the people in this article.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank all those involved in helping to complete this paper, starting with colleagues who always took the time to discuss and provide information about various references and accessible journals. Likewise, we thank the faculty and institute leaders who always provided guidance and support to improve our skills and careers as lecturers.

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