# Intellectual Discourse

Special Issue on

**The Intersection of Theory, Identity, and Security in PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism)**

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2025

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## Transliteration Table: Consonants

| Arabic | Roman | | Arabic | Roman |
|--------|-------|---|--------|-------|
| ب | b | | ط | ṭ |
| ت | t | | ظ | ? |
| ث | th | | ع | ' |
| ج | j | | غ | gh |
| ح | Ụ | | ف | f |
| خ | kh | | ق | q |
| د | d | | ك | k |
| ذ | dh | | ل | l |
| ر | r | | م | m |
| ز | z | | ن | n |
| س | s | | ه | h |
| ش | sh | | و | w |
| ص | ? | | ء | ' |
| ض | ḍ' | | ي | y |

## Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

| Arabic | Roman | | Arabic | Roman |
|--------|-------|---|--------|-------|
| ◌َ | a | | ◌ًا، ◌ًى | an |
| ◌ُ | u | | ◌ُو | un |
| ◌ِ | i | | ◌ِي | in |
| ◌َ◌ْ، ◌َى، ◌َا | ā | | ◌َوْ | aw |
| ◌ُو | ū | | ◌َيْ | ay |
| ◌ِي | ī | | ◌ُوّ | uww, ū (in final position) |
| | | | ◌ِيّ | iyy, ī (in final position) |

*Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: http://rotas.iium.edu.my*

# A Reflection of the Peaceful Life between Muslims and Christians in *Desa Kertajaya*: An Analytical Study from Qur'anic and Biblical Perspectives

## Ungaran@Rashid[*]

**Abstract:** Living in peace is, perhaps, a term or a situation that every community in the world has longed for. Living in peace may mean living a harmonious life, being secure and prosperous, and loving one another in a community. In many cultures, people can find the concept of peace in language, worldview, art, and other ways. However, the owners of these cultures forget that they have that notion in their lives. Thus, in many conflict issues, people within a particular culture often seek a third party to be a mediator. In this article, the researcher describes a case study of a peaceful life in a village in West Java, Indonesia, named *Desa Kertajaya*. The researcher observed that some aspects supporting the harmonious life in *Desa Kertajaya* bear similarity with the facets of peace found in the Qur'ān, the Bible, or Sundanese culture. The researcher collected the data for this study through participant observation and two types of interviews - semi-structured and unstructured. The researcher used the data to develop some themes and analysed the relationship between the themes that involved thirteen Sundanese from *Desa Kertajaya*. The semi-structured interview included five questions that serve as a guide. In the community of *Desa Kertajaya*, where Muslims and Christians coexist, the concepts of peace from both Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives can be applied together. However, the peaceful life in this village seems to be more influenced by Sundanese culture, although there are some interrelated aspects of harmony from the Qur'ān and the Bible.

**Keywords:** peace, Qur'an, Bible, Muslims, Christians

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**Abstrak**: Hidup dalam keadaan yang aman mungkin menjadi istilah atau keadaan yang diidam-idamkan setiap masyarakat di dunia ini. Hidup dalam keadaan yang aman mungkin bermakna hidup dalam kehidupan yang sejahtera, aman dan makmur, serta mencintai sesama sendiri dalam sesuatu masyarakat. Konsep keamanan boleh ditemui dalampelbagai budaya, sama ada dalam bahasa, pandangan hidup, atau seni. Walau bagaimanapun, pengamal budaya-budaya ini sering lupa bahawa mereka mempunyai konsep keamanan itu. Hal ini menyebabkan mereka sering mencari pihak ketiga untuk menjadi orang tengah setiap kali berlakunya konflik. Dalam artikel ini, pengkaji membincangkan sebuah kajian kes mengenai kehidupan aman sebuah di sebuah kampung di Jawa Barat yang bernama *Desa Kertajaya*. Pengkaji mendapati bahawa terdapat beberapa aspek yang membuktikan persamaan antara kehidupan aman *Desa Kertajaya* dengan aspek keamanan yang terdapat dalam al-Quran, Bible dan juga budaya Sunda. Pengkaji mengumpul data untuk kajian ini melalui pemerhatian peserta dan dua jenis temu bual––temu bual separa berstruktur dan temu bual tidak berstruktur. Pengkaji menggunakan data tersebut untuk membangunkan beberapa tema dan menganalisis hubungan antara tema yang melibatkan tiga belas orang Sunda dari *Desa Kertajaya*. Temu bual separa berstruktur yang digunakan mengandungi merangkumi lima soalan yang menjadi panduan kajian. Dalam komuniti *Desa Kertajaya*, di mana umat Islam dan Kristian wujud bersama, konsep keamanan dari perspektif Al-Quran dan Injil boleh diterapkan bersama. Namun, kehidupan damai di kampung ini nampaknya lebih dipengaruhi oleh budaya Sunda, walaupun terdapat beberapa aspek keharmonian yang saling berkaitan daripada al-Qur'an dan Bible.

**Kata kunci:** keamanan, Al-Quran, Bible, Muslim, Kristian

## Introduction

Living in peace is, perhaps, a term or a situation that every community in the world has longed for. Living in peace may mean living in harmony, being secure and prosperous, and/or loving one another in a community. On the contrary, living in peace generally does not mean living in fear, insecurity, or distrustfulness in the community. To gain a fuller understanding of peace, it is not possible to only review its meaning and definition, but it is essential to understand who takes the initiative for brokering the peace and for whom the peace is made. In addition, it is significant to know and understand that creating and maintaining peace is not a simple task. This knowledge will help those concerned to appreciate peace better.

Living together peacefully in diverse communities, especially those with different religious backgrounds, can present some challenges. Prioritising one's religious beliefs can cause conflicts. However, this article discusses how it is possible to lead a peaceful life among people who embrace different religions but share a cultural background, a reflection of the understanding of culture and religion that can lead to a harmonious life, which is longed for by every community. The researcher conducted his research in *Desa Kertajaya*, West Java, Indonesia. The research in *Desa Kertajaya* is significant to enable people to compare the truth from their culture with the truth from the Qur'an for Muslims and from the Bible for the Christians, and to show as a model that is not only a dream for many communities but can be achieved if they have the ardent desire to develop a harmonious life.

## The Concept of Peace in the Qur'ān

In the Qur'ān, the term peace is reflected in two words, s-l-m (س ل م) and ṣ-l-ḥ (ص ل ح). The trilateral s-l-m (س ل م) occurs 140 times in 16 derived forms in the Qur'ān; meanwhile, the trilateral ṣ-l-ḥ (ص ل ح) occurs 180 times in 8 derived forms. Furthermore, the ternary s-l-m (س ل م) is translated as submit, greeting or saluting, free, to pay, peace, save, safely, secure, sound, stairway, and ladder. While ṣ-l- ḥ (ص ل ح) is translated as righteous, reconciliation, make peace, reform, improve, good, cure, corrected, set it right, set it in order, proper, repair, virtuous, honest, and amend (Lane, 1968, pp. 1412-1417, 1714).

The term *salām* appears in the Qur'ān with several meanings. Firstly, *salām* is commonly used as a greeting among individuals, particularly among Muslims, and it is also extended from angels to humanity (Qur'ān 11:69; 14:23; 15:52; 25:63). Secondly, *salām* is utilised as a prayer or expression of hope (Qur'ān 6:54; 10:10; 19:15; 19:33). Thirdly, it represents a sign of peace with God, which is initiated through repentance (Qur'ān 6:54). Fourthly, salām is described as a reward from God for those who have faith and strive to follow His path (Qur'ān 6:127; 10:25; 13:24). Fifthly, *salām* signifies salvation from God for those whom He has chosen (Qur'ān 21:69; 50:34). Lastly, *salām* is a blessing bestowed by God upon His messengers (Qur'ān 37:79; 37:109; 37:120).

The other term of peace used in the Qur'ān is ṣ -l- ḥ ( ص ل ح ). Muhammad Asad translates some terms that have root ṣ -l- ḥ ( ص ل ح )

that is *tuṣlīḥū* as "promotion of peace" in 2: 224 (Asad, 1980, p. 49), *Yuṣliḥā* as "to set things peacefully" in 4: 128, *ṣulḥān* as "peace", also in 4: 128, *'aṣlaḥa* as "makes peace" in 42: 40, and *'aṣliḥū* as well as "makes peace" in 49: 9 and 49:10 (Asad, 1980, pp. 49, 129, 746, 793). Furthermore, Asad uses "promotion of peace" in 2: 224 to refer to an oath relating to divorce, which is uttered by a husband to his wife. Then, he translates the trilateral as "to set things peacefully" in 4: 128 in the context of a woman who has reason to fear ill treatment from her husband, it is good if they set things peacefully, rather than to be selfish. Asad writes "makes peace" in 42: 40 to point out a struggle against tyranny that tends to use a similar tyrannical attitude towards the previous oppressors. In addition, he interprets "makes peace" in 49: 9 and 10 in the context of fighting between two groups of believers involving any form of discord or contention, either verbal or action; they have to make peace for they are brethren.

Thus, Muhammad Asad translates trilateral ṣ -l- ḥ (ص ل ح) and its variants to mean peace as expressions referring to solving problems if there is a conflict between two or more parties, but not as prevention of a conflict or for maintaining peace.

**Various Issues Related to the Trilateral S-L-M (س ل م) And Ṣ-L-Ḥ ( ص ل ح) on the Teaching of Peace**

The teaching of peace in the Qur'ān, based on the trilateral roots, s-l-m (س ل م) and ṣ-l-ḥ (ص ل ح) is also seen in the interrelated issues of submission to God, forgiveness, love, and others. In this section, the researcher discusses eight interrelated issues that link; either directly or indirectly, to the teaching of peace. The researcher expects that this will provide a framework for peacebuilding for those who are interested in becoming peacemakers according to the Islamic perspective.

The first issue that the researcher discusses is submission to God. According to the discussion above, submission to God is the state of peace where someone realises that God is always with him and this understanding motivates him to do good deeds according to God's law, as can be seen in the Qur'ān surah al-Nisā verse 125. The one who has this understanding is called a Muslim, one who has a relationship with God, which is based on faith. On the one hand, submission to God is one of the means to attain peace; on the other hand, demonstrating peace is

a reflection that one has faith in God. So, peace and submission to God are like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated from one another.

The second issue for discussion is reconciliation (*iṣlāh*). Conflict stemming from contradictory opinions is an unavoidable part of human life and needs a solution (Miller, 2005, p. 22; Galtung, 2004, pp. 1-2). It should be resolved; otherwise the conflict will deplete one's energy, physically and spiritually. An unresolved conflict can damage one's mind and intellect, which can also cause bodily weakness (Amin, 2006, p. 15). The researcher believes that reconciliation is one of the solutions to re-establish friendship and peaceful relationships between two or more parties involved in a conflict (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004, p. 72).

In the context of conflict between Muslims, reconciliation should be adopted by fellow Muslims as a solution to re-establish the harmonious and fraternal relationship among believers. The purpose of reconciliation is to bring believers back to the law of God and eventually receive forgiveness and mercy from God, as can be seen in al-Baqarah (2): 128 and al-Hujuaraat (49): 10.

The third issue that the researcher observes is repentance, as mentioned above in al-An'an (6): 54. The word repentance in Arabic comes from the trilateral root, t-w-b (ت و ب) which means a man returns to God from his sin, and it signifies he desists from his sin (Lane, 1968, p. 321). This term is important in the Qur'ān, so much so that God even revealed one chapter called al-Tawbah. As seen in its definition and occurrence in the Qur'ān, repentance is an interaction only between human beings and God, it does not occur between human beings. Effectively, repentance restores peace between human beings and God.

The fourth interrelated point is forgiveness, which is derived from the Arabic root '-f-w (ع ف و) as asserted above in al-Shūrā (42): 40. If there is a man who has power to revenge but he does not use the power to do that, conversely, he forgives the one who wrongs him, he shows that he is a worshiper of God. This indicates that this man is learning from God, as one of His characteristics and names of Him is the Forgiver. There is no reason for Muslims not to apply forgiveness and thereby bring peace. Abu Nimer, a peace practitioner and professor, says, "Forgiveness is the way people (Muslim and non-Muslim) ought to deal with each other" (2006, p. 153).

In the Qur'ān, the term forgiveness is also taken from the Arabic root word gh-f-r (غ ف ر). This term occurs 234 times in the Qur'ān, in nine derived forms, which are usually translated as to forgive, forgiving, forgiver, and forgiveness. Most of these appearances can be classified into two categories, namely the character of God as a forgiver and exhortation for human beings to forgive, either to be righteous or to get a reward from God.

The fifth interrelated aspect is the practice of greeting someone by wishing peace upon him or her, as seen in al-Furqān (25): 63. Greetings are an expression of friendship and one of the human universals (Lundmark, 2009, p. 1) that should be performed by anyone who wants to interact with others. It is most unusual, especially for a first meeting, to begin an interaction with someone by asking the name, occupation, or address without first offering a greeting. Likewise, for people who already know each other, a greeting is usually used as the beginning of communication when they meet up.

The sixth issue that implicitly deals with peace is tolerance. Tolerance refers to the willingness to accept feelings, habits, and beliefs that differ from one's own (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Although the word 'tolerance' is not used explicitly in the Qur'ān, the concept is present through various other terms and phrases such as "no compulsion" (Qur'ān 2:256, Yusuf Ali), "do not insult" (Qur'ān 6:108, Sahih International), and "to you be your way and to me mine" (Qur'ān 109:6, Yusuf Ali). Furthermore, tolerance has played a significant role in the spread of Islam. It facilitated the acceptance of Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the present day. The Prophet (PBUH) exemplified tolerance in an Islamic context through the Constitution of Medina, which acknowledged and embraced other religious groups, uniting them as one community.

The seventh topic that interrelates with the concept of peace is love. The Qur'ān does not record peace and love together in one passage, but this does not mean that they do not have any relation to each other. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, an interfaith activist, says, "Peace is a stage of love, and human love for God requires peace" (2010, p. 246).

The eighth or last related point is non-violence. The picture of Islam as a violent religion came to the fore after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 when the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York

and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. were hit by aeroplanes that had been hijacked by terrorists who claimed to be Muslims. Since then, condemnation of Islam as a violent religion has continued via various negative propaganda campaigns conducted by many parties, especially in the West (Pal, 2011, p. 1). This has been further supported by many research projects concerning the Islamic teaching of peace and how it relates Islam with violence rather than nonviolence. Interestingly, this research was not only conducted by Orientalists but also carried out by Muslim scholars. Abu Nimer says, "Many Muslims lack a comprehensive Islamic knowledge and hermeneutics relevant to non-violent conflict transformation through its peaceful teachings" (p. 133).

The discussion of the nonviolence aspect in Islamic peacebuilding is not an easy topic; in fact, the Qur'ān mentions or allows Muslims to fight, which means there is space to use violence in solving a conflict. However, using a non-violent approach to resolve conflicts is certainly achievable. The researcher thinks that non-violence can be a significant vehicle in Islamic peace building, which can show the peaceful face of Islam.

### The Understanding of Peace (*Eirēnē*) in the New Testament

The term peace in the New Testament is derived from a Greek verb εἰρηνεύω (*eirēneúō*), which means to reconcile, live in peace, be at peace outwardly and inwardly, and keep the peace (p. 227). As a noun, this term comes from εἴρήνε (*eirēnē*), which denotes peace, harmony and order, and corresponds to the Hebrew *shālôm*, which means welfare and health. In addition, *eirēnē* is used as an essential characteristic of the messianic kingdom (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 227).

Furthermore, in Greek constructs, *eirēnē* is primarily utilised to explain a state, not a relationship or attitude. A positive expression of *eirēnē* could refer to a peaceful state, whereas a negative one could refer to the absence of hostility (Kittel & Friedrich, 1985, p. 184). In addition, this term is used to convey a number of different expressions such as greetings, the feeling of rest, reconciliation with God, peace with one another, peace of soul and eschatological salvation (Kittel & Friedrich, 1985, pp. 186-187). Collin Brown, an American Bible scholar, says that in profane Greek, "*eirēnē*" denotes the antithesis of war or the condition resulting from a cessation of war. Peace is the state of law and order which gives rise to the blessings of prosperity" (1976, p. 776).

In the synoptic Gospels, the term *eirēnē* occurs 19 times, 4 times in Matthew, once in Mark, and 14 times in Luke. Matthew 10: 11-13 is used when Jesus (PBUH) says, "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you."

An interesting passage about peace (*eirēnē*) can be found in Mark 5: 34. Following the healing of the woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, Jesus (PBUH) said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." A priest would usually speak this phrase after a cleansing ceremony in which appropriate offerings and sacrifices would be offered (Kernaghan, 2007, p. 111). In this context, Jesus (PBUH) demonstrates himself to be God's agent who mediates the peace of God to those who are troubled.

The Gospel of Luke in chapter 2: 8-14 talks about an angel who appeared to some shepherds to announce the coming of the Messiah. In verse 14, the angel emphasises the good news by saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests." Albert Barnes, an American Theologian, says that this passage is the fulfilment of Isaiah 9: 6 which mentions the prince of peace that is coming to reconcile the world to God. Moreover, the prince of peace (the Messiah) will make peace between human beings and God because humankind is at enmity with itself and, also at war against God (Barnes, 1949, p. 704). Thus, the term *eirēnē* in Luke 2: 14 is used to depict reconciliation between humans and between God and humans.

Another picture of *eirēnē* in the New Testament is illustrated in Romans 2: 9-10, "There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." The meaning of peace (*eirēnē*) in this passage is a condition of perfect well-being created by God as a blessing for the righteous, namely everyone who does good (Moo, 1996, p. 139).

Reconciliation with God is another depiction of *eirēnē* given in the epistle to the Romans. This peace is a result of justification by faith as stated in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Another portrayal of peace in the New Testament can be seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter 13: 20, where the phrase God of peace, is used. This term is used as part of the closing of this letter to explain the wholeness of blessing (Gordon, 2008, p. 101). This also indicates that God is the source of peace, which gives happiness, a peaceful mind, health and prosperity, and even has the initiative to reconcile humans with Himself, so that human beings have the hope of heaven (Barnes, 1949, p. 4448).

In the Epistle of James, the term *eirēnē* (peace) takes on a nuanced meaning, particularly in its connection to wisdom and righteousness. It says, "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:17-18, New International Version). This verse suggests that heavenly wisdom should be understood in the context of moral virtues and practical goodness (Laws, 1980, p. 163).

## Peaceful Life Between Muslims and Christians in *Desa Kertajaya* and Its Analysis from the Biblical and Qur'anic Perspectives

*Desa Kertajaya* is a village in Cianjur Regency of West Java, approximately 60 kilometres from the city of Bandung, the capital of West Java. The researcher used this village as a case study for a number of reasons. Firstly, Muslims and Christians live together peacefully together in this village without any conflict caused by religious issues, thereby providing a good picture of the understanding of peace in a Sundanese community. Secondly, whilst the Regency of Cianjur is one of many regencies in Indonesia that applies Islamic law (*sharia Islam*), the Christians in *Desa Kertajaya* are not bound by this law's implementation, unlike those in other places. Thirdly, *Christians built Desa Kertajaya*, but Muslims have been allowed to live there without any conditions. Fourthly, Muslims and Christians do not proselytise each other, though they live in the same area.

The data for this research were gathered through participant observation and two types of interviews: semi-structured and unstructured. The researcher utilised the information to develop some themes and analysed the relationship between the themes involving thirteen Sundanese from *Desa Kertajaya*. A semi-structured interview

comprising five questions as a guide was conducted. The questions were:

1. What does peace mean to you as a Sundanese or as a Muslim/Christian?
2. What factors support the harmonious life in this community?
3. Do you think that the life in this village is peaceful? Please explain the reason for your answer.
4. How is the understanding of peace taught and where is this teaching mostly conducted, at home or the mosque/church?
5. If there is a conflict between residents, which solution do you use, a kinship or religious approach?

Eleven of the selected interviewees were village natives. While eleven of them still reside in the village, two have relocated to Bandung. The remaining two interviewees originally came from other cities but have lived in this village for more than five years; one moved to this village more than twenty years ago. The purpose of the researcher obtaining information from the "outsiders" was to compare the social and anthropological environment of this village with that of the area where they originated. Similarly, the researcher interviewed two people from this village who already moved to other areas to compare the situation in the place with their new environment. In addition, the respondents were of different ages, gender, occupations, and religions. The goal of the researcher in interviewing people of different ages, genders, occupations, and religions was to understand how peace is perceived by people in the village from various viewpoints.

Background of *Desa Kertajaya (Office of Desa Kertajaya, 2015).*

*Desa Kertajaya*, which is located in the district of Ciranjang and the Regency of Cianjur, has a population of 8,795 inhabitants who occupy 27 *kampung* (sub-villages). While 30% of the inhabitants of *Desa Kertajaya* are Christians, 70% are Muslims. Although the number of Christians in the entire village is only 30%, in *kampung* Palalangon which has a population of about 1,480 inhabitants, the number of Christians is almost 100%. In other words, 56% of Christians in *Desa Kertajaya* live in one *kampung*, Palalangon.

In general, the livelihood of the residents of *Desa Kertajaya* comes from either rice farming or fish farming. There are, however, some residents who work as teachers, industrial workers, and construction workers. The classification of the total population by age is as follows: those under five years number 640, those of school age (5 to 19) number 2,250 and those of productive age (20 to 55) number 5,340. Women make up 48% of this last figure. As they do not work outside of their home, the productive population of this village is only about 2,775. The rest of the population, who are 55 years or above, numbers 565.

History of Christianity in Desa *Kertajaya*

In this section, the researcher discusses the history of Christianity in *Desa Kertajaya*. As mentioned above, Islam is the religion embraced by most of the residents. Furthermore, the Regency of Cianjur is one of the regencies that apply Islamic law, which signifies that Islam is better known and more widespread in this regency. Therefore, the presence of Christianity is a unique aspect of this village.

Nowadays, most of the Christians in this village, except for some elders of churches or those villagers who are 60 years old and above, do not know about the history of Christianity in their area. Due to this phenomenon, the researcher obtained the information through an interview with Chandra, the chief elder of *Gereja Kristen Pasundan Palalangon* (Pasundan Christian Church of Palalangon). Chandra said that Christianity in Palalangon and *Desa Kertajaya* began in 1901 when B. M. Alkema, a missionary who worked under *Nederlandsche Zendings Vereeniging*/ NZV (Netherland Missions Society), built a village for Christians who were under persecution.

As per the official records of *Gereja Kristen Pasundan*, Alkema was sent by NZV to relocate the Sundanese Christians who were scattered across Batavia and Tanah Pasundan due to persecution, intimidation, and even murder. Accompanied by seven Sundanese Christians, Alkema requested the Regent of Cianjur to provide them with land for the oppressed Sundanese Christians. Although the Regent permitted them to construct a new village in the Regency of Cianjur, it was a challenging and tiresome task to locate a suitable place for their mission. Eventually, they discovered a flat ground in a forest after crossing the rivers of Citarum and Cisokan, which they believed was ideal for farming and

settlement. Alkema then inserted his stick into the ground and declared, "I assign this place to be the settlement for the Sundanese Christians."

With financial assistance from NZV amounting to as much as 1,200 Gulden, they cleared a forest and created grassland. Seven Christians, including B.M. Alkema, brought their families to the new village. After being established there for over a year, they decided to build a simple place of worship. On August 17, 1902, B.M. Alkema conducted the first Sunday service, and the new village and congregation was named Palalangon, which means "high shelter". Eventually, NZV supervised this Christian community for more than thirty years.  In 1934, the congregations under the supervision of NZV in West Java established a new independent church called *Gereja Kristen Pasundan* (Pasundan Christian Church). After five generations, Christianity in Palalangon has spread to other *Kampungs* (sub-villages) and even to other *Desas* (villages). *Gereja Kristen Pasundan* is not the only assembly in *Kampung* Palalangon and *Desa Kertajaya*. There are other churches, such as the New Apostolic Church and Renewal Bethel Church.

Several important factors of peaceful life in *Desa Kertajaya* are significant to discuss, namely, religious tolerance, trust, and love for each other, togetherness, *kekeluargaan* (kinship), respect and applying Sundanese custom, and the government's role in building peace.

*Religious Tolerance*

During interviews with several respondents, the researcher noted an interesting topic mentioned by almost all interviewees, both Muslims and Christians, that was tolerance. The interviewees said that tolerance is one of the main aspects that have led to a harmonious life in *Desa Kertajaya*.

Muhammad Khaeruddin, the chief of *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesia Ulema Council) of *Desa Kertajaya*, said that the tolerant attitude towards Christians in this area has existed since long ago (personal interview, April 2015). Furthermore, he mentioned that his grandfather said that Christians and Muslims have been living and socialising in *Desa* Kertajaya since the Dutch era. A conversion from Islam to Christianity, on the one hand, and from Christianity to Islam, on the other hand, is not a strange situation, though there are some procedures for the conversion. Ferry Chandra, the chief elder of *Gereja*

*Kristen Pasundan,* supported Khaeruddin's opinion. Chandra said that tolerance is a unique feature of *Desa Kertajaya*. He noted that it is rare to find such an exemplary display of tolerance in other villages (personal interview, April 2015).

Khaeruddin and Chandra were not simply boasting about their village's qualities. Hadyanto, who was an outsider or a re-settler, agreed with them. According to him, the people of *Desa Kertajaya* have a high level of religious tolerance, unlike other places. He compared this situation with his hometown, the big city of Bandung, which is the capital of the West Java province. He suggested that since Bandung is inhabited by people from different religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, its people should have exhibited more tolerance. Hadyanto explained that he felt marginalised in Bandung because he was a Christian. In contrast, he observed that he was well accepted by both Christians and Muslims in Desa *Kertajaya*. Therefore, Hadyanto argued that religious tolerance in *Desa Kertajaya* should be promoted as an excellent example for other places.

Dwi Ivani and Trisna Dewi are two women who were born and raised in *Desa Kertajaya*, but they have been living in the Bandung area for over twenty years. They both share similar observations to those of Hadyanto. They have noticed that the environments in Bandung and *Desa Kertajaya* are vastly different, especially regarding religious tolerance. According to them, people in Bandung tend to be more exclusive, forming separate religious and sporting communities, among others. That is why they find it more pleasant to return to their village every weekend to experience the blessing environment they cannot always enjoy in Bandung (personal interview, April 2015).

The researcher investigated where the respondents learned about religious tolerance. The assumption was that they got that teaching from their families or religious institutions. Surprisingly, the respondents indicated that they mostly pick it up from their families, although it was also sometimes mentioned in sermons at both mosques and churches. The teaching was simple: everyone in his or her village is a brother or sister. This principle has been passed down from generation to generation for over a hundred years.

The village displays an admirable level of religious tolerance, which is evident in several ways. Firstly, during the Islamic festival

(Eid al-Fitr), Christians visit and bring food to their Muslim neighbours, saving them the trouble of cooking that day. In return, Muslims guard churches and Christian homes while Christians celebrate Christmas in their churches. Moreover, there are no restrictions on greeting each other during religious festivals, unlike in different parts of Indonesia. Both communities are encouraged to exchange greetings during their respective religious holidays. However, it is observed that some Muslims tend to avoid non-Muslim festival greetings, such as "Merry Christmas" to Christians.

The researcher considers that interaction between children and parents plays an important role. Parents provide informal education at home, and implementing the instruction has become an established part of life or a part of the culture in the village to maintain peaceful coexistence. So, one means of preserving the culture is to apply the culture and this is certainly kept and promoted by people in Desa *Kertajaya* and the wider Sundanese community. Even though the term religious tolerance is not explicitly stated in the Bible or the Qur'ān, the Scriptures teach this concept anyway. Additionally, freedom in all aspects, including the notion of political and religious freedom in the modern era, also influences a person's perspective in accepting the existence of other people to live together in a peaceful community (Perez Zagorin, 2013, p. 3).

## Trust and Love Each Other

Two significant values emerged during the researcher's investigations in Desa *Kertajaya*: Trust and Love. In this context, love refers to more than just the romantic relationship between spouses. It also encompasses personal connections between friends and siblings.

Yuliarsih explains that there was a group of Muslims from other areas, and they were members of an Islamic organisation who came to bring people in *Desa Kertajaya* into religious conflict by spreading a rumour that Muslims in that village would destroy a church. The community responded by expelling them and reporting them to the police. People trusted their fellow villagers more so than outsiders, especially those who came to bring hostility. In other words, the love among fellow residents defeated the hatred planted by outsiders. This love is like an inheritance from their ancestors, handed down from generation to generation (personal interview, April 2015).

Another case comes from Karlina. She is a Christian and a teacher in an elementary school. To be a Christian and a teacher in *Desa Kertajaya* is not a big problem, but the interesting issue is that her husband is a Muslim. According to the Indonesian Marriage Law, Chapter 2 Article 1, a marriage is legal if it is carried out according to the law of the religion of the bride and the bridegroom. In the case of Karlina, she converted to Islam only to be married. Her marriage was conducted under Islamic law, in agreement with her family and her husband's family. So, while her marriage is legal in terms of state law, it could be seen as illegal by other Muslims living in different places because she continues to be a practising Christian. Karlina's family is not the only inter-religious family in *Desa Kertajaya*. Other families have the same situation (personal interview, April 2015).

During an interview, a researcher asked Karlina, who is a Christian, about why she decided to marry a Muslim, especially considering that it could lead to trouble outside of their village, *Desa Kertajaya*. Karlina explained that she had known her husband since childhood, and their families had a good relationship for a long time. She stated that marrying someone you know well is preferable to marrying a stranger. Additionally, marrying someone from a different religion is part of their village's culture. Hence, she does not feel she and her husband spoil their tradition. On the contrary, she thinks they preserved the love culture cherished for generations.

The community holds the practice of love and trust higher than religious and state laws. In other words, culture is more respected rather than the law. The researcher argues that the law in that community is secondary to the culture because people do not mind inter-religious marriage; in fact, they honour the commitment of these people to their respective religions.

In the researcher's opinion, this issue is influenced strongly by Sundanese culture because Muslim and Christian communities generally cannot accept inter-religious marriages. Another argument supporting this inclusive approach is found in the Manuscript of *Sanghyang Siksakandang Karesian*, whose teachings were adhered to by the Sundanese in the past. Even though the existence of inclusivism is recognised in Islam and Christianity, in today's society, it is not generally held by Muslims and Christians. However, beyond the

context of marriage, the Bible encourages people to love one another. The second greatest commandment after loving your God, as stated in Mark 12: 29, is "Love your neighbour as yourself." Unlike the Bible, which commands people explicitly to love others, the Qur'ān does not mention loving others directly. Instead, the Qur'ān encourages believers to make peace with other believers since they are brothers, as mentioned in Surah al- Hujurāt (49) 10.

In conclusion, the community practices love and trust, often taking precedence over religious and state laws. In other words, culture is more respected rather than the law. The researcher argues that the law in that community is secondary to the culture because people do not mind inter-religious marriage. They honour the commitment of these people to their respective religions. The influence of Christianity seems quite strong in the community of *Desa Kertajaya*. They instil a sense that love has more power than law. They apply what is written in Romans 13: 8, "Let no doubt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt of love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled he law."

*Togetherness*

Religious differences in a society can lead to disunity and often impede advancement in many aspects of life. For example, if there is a Muslim who wants to build a mosque or Islamic school in a majority Christian area, most likely, he will face some difficulties or may not even be allowed to construct the mosque. This situation, however, is not to be found in *Desa Kertajaya*. Ismail Sholeh, a schoolteacher, and the foundation he works with were permitted to establish an Islamic school and even a mosque, which is located about 50 meters from a church in the majority-Christian *Kampung* of Palalangon. The Christians think that Palalangon is not land for Christians only but also for Muslims. So, the peaceful life in *Desa Kertajaya* is marked by the presence of togetherness.

Mintareja Yunus, the senior pastor of *Gereja* Bethel Pembaharuan Indonesia (Indonesian Renewal Bethel Church), shared that he was deeply impressed by the sense of togetherness in his village. He explained that during the district football competition in Ciranjang, *Desa Kertajaya* sent a unique team because its members came from two different religions. This extraordinary collaboration was further exemplified by the diverse supporters from both religions who rallied behind the team,

offering encouragement in various forms, including prayer. Although the intercessions were different, the togetherness shown by the people of *Desa Kertajaya* was remarkable as they demonstrated the ability to pray together in various ways for the same purpose (personal interview, April 2015).

The people in this village are very close-knit and use this closeness to deal with potential conflicts due to outsiders. Yuliarsih had previously mentioned how the residents came together to tackle a situation where an outsider tried to create a religious conflict between Muslims and Christians by spreading a rumour in the village. Hadyanto also shared his experience, where the residents, regardless of religion, joined hands to expel people who tried to bring conflict to their community. The rumour did not affect them, and they remained united in their efforts to maintain peace in their community.

The concept of togetherness exists in the Qur'ān, al-ʿImrān (3): 103, and in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 1: 10, amongst other verses. In reality, this concept is encouraged to be applied only to those of the same religious identity. On the contrary, this idea is found in the history of King Purnavarman, who involved people in extensive excavation work to cause the River Candrabhaga to drain into the sea (Ekadjati, 2005, p. 51). The people who worked together under Purnavarman's rule were from different social statuses and professions. Thus, the concept of togetherness applied in *Desa Kertajaya* is more influenced by tradition rather than religious teachings.

*Kekeluargaan (Kinship)*

The situation of *Desa Kertajaya* is secure in the sense there is no significant conflict relating to religious issues. If there is a problem among the residents, it is usually only a minor issue that can be easily solved. Their way of solving problems is via the attitude of kinship, which means that the people trying to help, plus those involved in the conflict, consider each other as family. Ade Hasan, one of the community leaders in *Desa Kertajaya*, said that he considers the community members under his supervision as a big family, which means he can easily help his neighbours who conflict with each other in the same way he reconciles his children who are in disagreement (personal interview, April 2015).

Dewi felt that she could not find a sense of kinship in the place where she lives now, like in her village. It is fascinating for her that people in her community, even though they are different in one aspect, namely religion, are united as one family to develop the community in many ways. Sunaryo Rahma, a retired teacher and senior citizen in the community, had the same feeling. Rahma said that his house is often used by the Muslim and Christian youth of the village as a gathering place. Furthermore, he explained that they gather together as a family and consider him their foster parent. They cook and eat together in the house without fearing that the food and kitchenware in his house are *haram* (forbidden).

The perception that the community is a big family is not directly related to the concept of peace in the Bible, but it is one of the valuable teachings of Jesus (PBUH). He says in Mark 3: 33-35 that his mother, brothers, and sisters are those who do God's will. In other words, he explains that the "real family" is the family of God. Equally, the Qur'ān teaches in al- Hujurāt (49): 10 that the believers are brothers. Nevertheless, the understanding of community as a family in the Sundanese community of *Desa Kertajaya* is insignificantly different from the Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives. The Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives describe a community of believers, or in other words, a family of those who come from the same beliefs, but in the Sundanese community of *Desa Kertajaya*, even inhabitants who hold different beliefs are regarded as family.

*Respecting and Applying Sundanese Custom*

In Indonesia, the Sundanese are known generally as meek people. The modesty of the Sundanese can be seen in various forms of etiquette, such as the way of speaking, eating, treating older people, and so on. In many places in Indonesia in general, and amongst the Sundanese specifically, there are some differences between Muslim and Christian etiquette, especially in speaking and dressing. For example, the Muslims call God as Allah, and the Christians use the term *Tuhan* (the Lord). Even though the Christians also use the word Allah in some cases, their pronunciation is different from that of the Muslims.

In *Desa Kertajaya*, Muslims and Christians implement many aspects of Sundanese customs accordingly. They use the same term for God, which is *Gusti* (the Lord in Sundanese), and some Christians

even use Arabic expressions that are considered Islamic terms, such as *insha* Allah (God willing). Besides this, they wear the same kind of Sundanese-style clothing. The researcher noticed very few Muslim women wearing head coverings in that village.

Interestingly, the Sundanese culture in the *Desa Kertajaya* community is not limited to their clothing and language but also extended to their farming practices. Rudikin, one of the community leaders, mentioned that the Sundanese cultivation method considers factors such as the position of the stars, wind direction, and the timing for planting rice, all based on ancestral instructions (personal interview, April 2015). However, it is worth noting that Christian communities in other parts of Indonesia, including other Sunda principalities, do not usually incorporate local customs. They believe Christianity represents a distinct culture and that local practices may conflict with Biblical teachings (Ward, 2005, p. 21).

Cornelius, a retired soldier, mentioned that the practice of *Gotong royong,* where the community gathers to accomplish a task, is still applied by the people in *Desa Kertajaya*. This mutual communal aid is rarely practised nowadays in other places. In *Desa Kertajaya*, *Gotong royong* is conducted by both Christians and Muslims to complete a wide range of tasks such as building houses for the poor people, constructing roads for mutual benefit, cleaning up the environment together, and so on. This practice is one aspect that unites the people in this village and is one of the reasons they live together peacefully (personal interview, April 2015).

Respecting and applying Sundanese customs is another weighty part of building a harmonious life in this village. This practice aligns with Sundanese culture as well as perspectives from the Qur'ān and the Bible. However, respecting and applying Sundanese culture particularly is not necessarily accepted by Qur'ānic and Biblical views because not all traditions of an ethnic group are at peace with either the Qur'ān or the Bible.

### Government's Role in Building Peace

The system of government in *Desa Kertajaya* is the same as in other places in Indonesia. The lowest level of government is called *Rukun Tetangga*, usually shortened to *RT*. One *Rukun Tetangga* usually

consists of thirty to fifty houses and is led by a *Ketua RT* (Chief of the *RT*). The next level above *RT* is *Rukun Warga* (*RW*), led by a *Ketua RW* (chief of the *RW*). One RW is usually made up of ten to fifty RTs. A higher level above RW is *Desa* or *Kelurahan,* ruled by a *Kepala Desa or Lurah* (Head of *the Desa*). There are three other successive levels of government: *Kecamatan* (Sub-district), *Kabupaten* or *Kota* (District or Regency), and Province. According to the Minister of Home Affairs, *Rukun Tetangga* and *Rukun Warga* are not officially part of government administration. However, they are guided by the administration to assist the government in dealing with the everyday matters of its citizens.

In the interviews conducted by the researcher, 2 *Ketua RT*, 2 *Ketua RW*, and a *Kepala Desa* were among the selected respondents. Excluding these five leaders, all of the other interviewees said that all components of government, from *Ketua RT* up to *Kepala Desa,* significantly contribute to the peaceful life in this village. For example, they revealed that those *Ketua RTs* and *RWs* who are Christians do not treat Christians more favourably than Muslims. Similarly, Muslim leaders do not see Christians as inferior citizens. They consider both Christians and Muslims to be on the same level, as fellow citizens of the Republic of Indonesia, who have the same rights and obligations.

*Kepala Desa* (Chief of Desa) Sunandar, a Muslim, attracts a lot of praise from the community, especially from the Christians, because of his commitment to the community. He is viewed as a unifying figure who promotes harmonious living within the village. Some Christians are impressed because he goes to churches every Christmas Day to encourage them to be good Christians and to worship God. Despite religious objections from some, Sunandar is bravely making a stand, doing something commonly considered by other leaders in majority Muslim villages as something they would never do or something too difficult to do. Anyway, the Muslim residents of *Desa Kertajaya* support Sunandar's efforts to attend church services, seeing it as a means to strengthen village unity and peace (personal interview, April 2015). The government plays a crucial role in fostering a peaceful life in *Desa Kertajaya*, from the local level (RT) to the head of the *Desa*. Without their involvement, the life of the people in *Desa Kertajaya* would possibly be similar to that of other villages in Sundanese lands or elsewhere in Indonesia. In Sundanese history, the success of a kingdom and the role

of a king who actively established his kingdom as a peaceful kingdom had a significant role in building a harmonious life.

## Conclusion

In the community of *Desa Kertajaya*, where Muslims and Christians coexist, the concepts of peace from both Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives can be applied together. The idea of peace in Sundanese culture is intricately linked to values found in both the Qur'an and the Bible, such as love, togetherness, non-violence, submission to God, respect for elders, and tolerance. However, the peaceful life in this village seems to be more influenced by Sundanese culture, although there are some interrelated aspects of harmony from the Qur'ān and the Bible. The tranquil lifestyle in *Desa Kertajaya* can serve as a model for other villages in Sundanese regions. Furthermore, this village can also be an example in terms of how to apply and preserve harmony based on a cultural approach. The sense of commonality, relatedness and relevance with another religious tradition is a necessary pre-condition for a deeper understanding for living together in peace. This sense of solidarity held by religion and culture among the people of *Desa Kertajaya* can be referenced, and be used as an example to encourage and facilitate harmonious relations between Muslim and Christian communities in other places, especially where there is conflict.

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Chapra, M. U. (2002). Islam and the international debt problem. *Journal of Islamic Studies, 10*, 214-232.

**The Qur'ān**
In-text:
(i) direct quotation, write as 30:36
(ii) indirect quotation, write as Qur'ān, 30:36

Reference:
*The glorious Qur'ān*. Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali (1977). US: American Trust Publications.

**Ḥadīth**
In-text:
(i) Al-Bukhārī, 88:204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)
(ii) Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

Reference:
(i) Al-Bukhārī, M. (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.
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**The Bible**
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Matthew 12:31-32

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