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## Tasyabbuh in Plural Society in Malaysia: An Islamic Perspective

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### Abstract

The existence of a plural society in Malaysia has led to cross-cultural and religious interactions. This can be seen through the open house culture where all races celebrate it together. Although this culture has played an important role in fostering unity in society, the element of tasyabbuh often provokes polemics in the Muslim community because they understand it as something that is forbidden by religion. Thus, this study will discuss the concept and implications of tasyabbuh elements that may occur among Muslims in their association with other non-Muslims in Malaysia, and further suggest appropriate guidelines to be taken by the Muslim community based on current realities in Malaysia. The study was conducted qualitatively using content analysis method through examination of primary and secondary sources related to concept of tasyabbuh as well as data and statistics related to the implementation of tasyabbuh on the social interaction in Malaysia. This study found that there are some elements of tasyabbuh in some cultural practices between Muslims and non-Muslims. This study will suggest several solutions so that the practice that contains the element of tasyabbuh in cultural practice in the plural society can be continued with preserving the purity of the faith of Muslims.

**Keywords:** Tasyabbuh, Interaction, Plurality, Harmony, Faith

### Introduction

There are two main approaches that drive the social relations of a plural society, namely 'melting pot' and multicultural. Melting pot emphasizes the existence of a dominant community or nation that influences the existence and character of marginal groups.

Therefore, these marginalized groups need to adapt to the culture and way of life of the dominant nation to ensure their survival in a country. France is an example of a country that has adopted such an approach, through the slogan '*unité de l'hexagon*' (one person with one language and one common identity, within national borders). In addition, the USA also emphasizes a similar concept by introducing the principle of '*e pluribus unum*' (from many to one) (Nguyen, 2013). Meanwhile, the multicultural approach has its differences as it focuses on the formation of a comprehensive social framework by celebrating the interests and needs of diverse ethno-cultural groups. This method is seen to be more tolerant with the formation on the basis of preservation of the historical and cultural background of each minority group without having to be sacrificed simply for the sake of giving way to the identity of the dominant indigenous group.

In the end, both of these approaches support the same national aspirations but are free to carry out their own traditional cultures. Therefore, cultural mixing should not be one-way, but it should be implemented in a complementary manner. These two approaches have two different emphases where the melting-down approach looks at the value of cultural pluralism as a problem that threatens the unity and stability of civil society, and therefore should be avoided. However, the multiculturalism approach accepts pluralism as a unique and inclusive culture and considers it as a national identity that needs to be defended. There are three main thrusts that support this approach, namely the rejection of cultural discrimination and jealousy, the preservation, development and sharing of cultures, and the use of one language to increase cross-cultural participation in society (Berry, J. W., 2013).

In the case of Malaysia, this second type of approach (multicultural), has long been practiced. The background of pluralism that has existed for so long, requires an inclusive and harmonious approach to ensure the stability and well-being of society. Based on statistics, there are more than 178 ethnic groups that have made up Malaysia's population of 32.7 million. Of the total population, Muslims constitute 60.6% of a total of 15,762,012 people in 2010. The Malays are the largest contributor to the total number of Muslims in Malaysia, a total of 14:19 million people or 90.1%, followed by the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak as many as 1,347,208 people or 8.5% of the total Muslim population. Other ethnicities accounted for 0.6% or 102,334 people. Ethnic Indians and Chinese are the third and fourth largest contributors to the Muslim population with 78,702 or 0.5% and 42,048 or 0.3%, respectively.

Buddhism is the second largest religion in Malaysia with a total of 5,459,065 people or 21% of the Malaysian population where the Chinese are the largest contributor with 5,341,687 people or 97.8% of the total Buddhism. The third largest religion is Christianity with 2,392,823 people or 9.2% of the total Malaysia's population. Other Bumiputera ethnicities being the largest contributor for Christianity, amounting to 1,549,193 people or 64.7% of the total number of Christians. Next, followed by Hinduism with 1,666,365 people or 6.4% of the total population of Malaysia. Ethnic Indians are the largest contributor to this religion with a total of 1,644,072 people or 98.7% of the total number of Hindus. Those who do not profess any religion also have a relatively significant number of 183,808 people or 0.7% of the total population of Malaysia.

Mazrui (1971) model can be applied in analyzing the level of interaction in the context of the reality of a plural society in Malaysia. There are four levels of integration in achieving a true level of unity. The first level: "living side by side" This is the minimum level of interaction between different groups. These groups do not need to know each other about each other's existence. Their existence with a number of other groups in forming a national entity does

not necessarily require co-existence at all times. In the Malaysian context, such a level of integration occurred between the mid-nineteenth century to the early nineteenth century 19M-20M which was before the Second World War. At this stage, the meaning of a plural society is as suggested by Furnivall. The second level is related to "relationship relationships". This stage sees open conflict between communities of different backgrounds in a social system. A group has at least some contact or minimal communication with each other. The group has not yet reached the level of friendship. This stage can be seen in the era of Japanese occupation in Malaya until a few years after independence. The third stage: the "compromise relationship". This stage is a relationship based on compromise between races. At present, relations between groups have become sufficiently complex, diverse and interdependent to require reconciliation between conflicting interests. These groups still have their clear identities and different interests (Anuar & Aizat, 2012).

In the Malaysian context, leaders of each ethnicity collaborate to increase the level of understanding with the application of government policies aimed at building a united Malaysian nation by putting aside parochialism and racism. The fourth level is the "unification level". This is the final stage of national integration. This is a combination of identities, rather than a merging of different and diverse interests. The unification of multi-ethnic communities at this stage has formed the basis of the solution of a new society (unification stage). The immigrant community will lose much of its original identity as unification has reached perfection. Malaysian society has gone through the first two stages and is now in the third stage. Thus, the journey is still long in creating absolute unity as desired at the fourth level (Hashim, 1983).

In a plural society such as Malaysia, the inter-racial interactions that exist are quite challenging especially when involving different religious backgrounds, such as Muslims and non-Muslims. Therefore, the socio-cultural interaction between these two different religious groups has the potential to give birth to practices that are called *tasyabbuh*. The practice of *tasyabbuh* in the plural society in Malaysia can be seen during major religious festivals such as Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Chinese New Year and Deepavali. This open house not only involves the followers of their own religion but also to all members of the community, thus becoming a national tourism program. It is feared that the actions of Muslims who not only participate in non-Muslim religious programs, but also celebrate certain festivals will affect their *aqidah* as a Muslim. Therefore, this issue needs to be given guidance to provide a dividing line whether the festival is a community-based festival or has a religious connection.

### **Methodology**

This study applies a qualitative approach in the process of data collection and data analysis. Qualitative research focuses on efforts to obtain non-numerical information (Cresswell, 2013) that can provide in-depth information about the background matter. Qualitative research uses a natural approach to understand the real state of a phenomenon in a specific context without manipulating any real situation (Patton, 2002). In this study, the concept of *tasyabbuh* by Muslim scholar is analyzed to identify the implementation of *tasyabbuh* in social interaction in Malaysia. In addition, reports and statistical data related to this implementation were also analyzed to formulate appropriate solutions so that the practice that contains the element of *tasyabbuh* in cultural practice in the plural society can be continued with preserving the purity of the faith of Muslims. Content analysis in qualitative studies sees more text as an internal and subjective interpretation of meaning. Berg (1988) distinguishes content analysis (qualitative) as an advantage in examining a content based on context and process.

The context aspect is seen through the main content implicitly (latent content) while the process aspect involves the process of text interpretation that is carried out carefully and repeatedly. This content is then analyzed inductively starting with detailed observations in general situations and then moving towards formulating more specific views and theories (Bennard, 2011). This approach is used to describe the problem or phenomenon that is being studied and then the findings of the study will be used towards the formation of specific conclusions that are appropriate to the problem under study.

### **Religious Tolerance: The Reality in Malaysia**

Humans are created with their abilities and capabilities in building relationships with other human beings, even in different environments. Political, geographical, economic, cultural and religious differences require high values of tolerance. Any compulsion to unite human beings in the religious aspect is beyond the will of human beings who hold fast to their religion. Islam does not accept the concept of conversion to another religion because Islam has its own doctrine that must be adhered to by every believer (Ramli, 2003). On the other hand, Islam recognizes the concept of religious freedom where the practice of each religion is allowed as long as they respect each other and celebrate the differences that exist. All parties must comply with the basic conditions in religious practice that there is no element of interference with other religions that can create a tense atmosphere and extreme provocation (Khadijah & Herzali, 2008). This is also in line with the provisions of Article 11 (1) of the Federal Constitution where, although Islam is recognized as the official religion of the federation, other religions can continue to be practiced without interference. A clear understanding of this concept will engender a high spirit of tolerance among the adherents of various religions, in turn leading to a good unification process.

Al-Qaraḍawi (2001) has proposed four principles that can be used as the main policy by Muslims in creating tolerance that is practical in nature, namely:

- a) Every Muslim should acknowledge and recognize the basis of human dignity regardless of religion, race and skin color.
- b) Every Muslim must accept that the religious differences that occur are part of the rules that have been set by Allah to allow people to make a choice to accept or abandon a belief based on their understanding and belief.
- c) Every Muslim is not required to be hostile to non-Muslims due to their disbelief and adherence to the principle of religious freedom.
- d) Every Muslim must believe that being fair and fulfilling the rights of fellow human beings despite different races and religions is part of God's command that must be implemented

These principles should be able to be a motivator for the society to accept and celebrate the cultural diversity that exists among them and promote the harmony and well-being that exists among them. During the Islamic rule in Medina, the Prophet SAW did not bother the Jews who had their own religious and academic institutions known as Bayt al-Midras (Ibn Hisham, 1990). They are free to manage and carry out their activities without restrictions as long as they do not pose a nuisance and threat to Muslims. This has shown us the superiority of Islam as a religion that respects human rights. The same thing happened after the battle of Khaybar where the companions had confiscated the pages of the Torah because there were many deviations and lies against Allah and His Messenger found in the book. The Jews had complained of the matter to the Prophet SAW and he eventually ordered the companions to

return the book to them as a form of respect for religious rights and freedoms (al-Waqidi, 1989).

Islam has shown the highest level of tolerance towards people of different religions. The proper deprivation of human rights to non-Muslims proves how high the level of religious freedom is practiced in an Islamic country. This is also in line with the provisions of Article 11 (1) of the Federal Constitution where, although Islam is recognized as the Federal religion, other religions can continue to be practiced without interference, provided they do not cause provocation and affect public order. Article 11 (3) gives autonomy to every believer to manage all religious affairs, including the construction of houses of worship. Nevertheless, they remain bound by Article 12 (3) which prohibits all forms of coercion in attracting and influencing parties from various religions to maintain stability in society. A clear understanding of this concept will promote a proper spirit of tolerance among adherents of various religions and in turn lead to a process of good unity.

This tolerance can be seen through the practice of open houses in conjunction with the celebration of certain religions in Malaysia. National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs of Malaysia which met on 12 April 2005 has provide a flexible approach based on Islam in building relationships among plural society. However, this participation still requires adherence to the conditions set to maintain the sensitivity and sanctity of Islam itself (Khairul, 2016). In addition, statements from religious authorities regarding different religious festivals were also well received by the community in pursuing a tolerant attitude. The statement is related to the freedom to practice their respective religious festivals and at the same time need to avoid an atmosphere of provocation, public disturbance and need to respect each other. This can be seen through the procession of Hindus during the Thaipusam festival and the process of slaughtering cows done during Eid Adha which can be carried out every year without any element of dissatisfaction of some communities. This attitude of tolerance must be maintained in realizing a harmonious society.

The occurrence of several objections raised by certain parties regarding the implementation of religious practices is an isolated case. This situation is only based on the ignorance of certain groups on the historical factors of inter-religious relations in Malaysia and stubbornness to accept statements on the recognition of the rights and privileges of bumiputera and Muslims (Roslan, 2011). This factor is also contributed by the lack of awareness and research efforts in historiography, especially in educating the younger generation about the history of nation building and the socio-culture of its society, so that this forgetfulness and confusion is eventually exploited by some vested interests.

### ***Tasyabbuh* From Islamic Perspective**

Muslim scholars have a wise discussion on the aspects of *tasyabbuh* toward different religions. Literally, the word *tasyabbuh* comes from the root word *sya-ba-ha*, referring to the resemblance to something, the similarity of color and nature (Ahmad, F., 1990). The word *tasyabbaha* means to resemble or imitate one thing with another (Mu'jam al-Mujiz, 2002). According to al-Ghazi (2011), *tasyabbuh* is an expression that indicates the human effort to liken himself to something desired, in terms of behavior, clothing, or attributes. This view is in line with al-Luwayhiq (1996) who formulates *tasyabbuh* as the action of an individual who burdens himself to look similar to others either in whole or in part only. The term 'burdensome' refers to actions performed intentionally and voluntarily. As for the action that occurs naturally like a man who has a voice like a woman without his own effort is not included in the context of such analogy.

Prohibition of resembling non-Muslims in external aspects actually aims to prevent the influence from permeating into the human heart and affect their practices and morals and potentially produce feelings of love and inclination towards the group (Ibn Taymiyah, 1971; Ibn Qayyim, 1997).

Has not the time yet come for those who believe (who wish to reach Allah while they are alive) that their hearts to have reverence with Dhikr (the remembrance) of Allah and what comes down from the Truth (with the glorious lights of Allah)? Let them not be like those who were given the Book before, but after a long time whose hearts became hardened (due to forgetting Dhikr-remembrance of Allah). Most of them are transgressors. (Surah al-Ḥadid 57:16)

Ibn Kathir (1997) states that Allah forbids believers from resembling *ahl al-kitab* in all aspects, especially religious matters whether in the form of *usul* (principles) or *furu'* (branches) because they are a group who have deviated from the guidance of truth. Rasulullah SAW say:

He who copies any people is one of them. (Riwayat Abu Daud, no. 4031).

'Abd Allah bin Amru stated that whoever participates in a festival specifically for non-Muslims such as Nayruz and Mahrajan and then dies without repenting of the act, then he will later be resurrected with that group (al-Siddiqi, 2005). Thus, on this basis, Allah and His Messenger forbid all kinds of practices of al-tasyabbuh on matters that are characteristic of non-Muslims, especially those who manifest hostility to Islam clearly and clearly (Ibn Taimiyah, 2008).

In the discipline of sociological studies, the concept of al-tasyabbuh is discussed in the framework of imitation (Bruhn, 2011). The elements of imitation in the social culture are usually influenced by trends, customs, sympathy, obedience and education, either intentionally or through habitual instincts. Language, tradition and religion become among the main objects that are often exposed to this element of similarity. Tarde through his work Law of Imitation, states 'social beings, by virtue of their very socialness, are by nature imitators (Farida & Faiz, 2014). The process of assimilation operates from within the human being before being exhibited to the outside. Paradoxically, the internal model (i.e. personal purpose or idea) needs to be imitated before the external model (i.e. means or expression). In addition, simulation also operates on a top-down principle, i.e. innovations from superior entities are more likely to be imitated by inferior entities. The choice between two logics (yes or no) is essentially an individual framework. Yet when an individual has made a choice, the analogy has shifted to a social framework. In other words, 'it is only in so far as he imitates that he is part of society'.

Classical Muslim scholars such as Ibn Taimiyyah (2008) strongly opposed the act of *tasyabbuh* with non-Muslims at that time. This is clearly summarized through his view in *al-Iqtida'* :

The rules that have been set by previous fiqh scholars regarding the Islamic law in relation to infidels living under the leadership of Muslims, is to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims in matters involving outward appearance such as hair fashion, clothing, language and so on. This means that the Muslim scholars have a consensus (*ijma'*) that there must be an outward difference between Muslims and others, and there can be no imitation between them.

Nevertheless, the debate on this prohibition cannot be based on the hadith text alone without reviewing the background and realities that characterize each practice. This is because the phenomenon of *tasyabbuh* is dynamic which often changes in line with the socio-cultural changes of a society (Anuar, Paizah & Badri, 2014). This change can be seen from Malaysia's own practice where pre-independence inter-cultural interactions occurred on a small scale as

each race sought to maintain its own identity without exhibiting interest in foreign cultures (Anuar & Aizat, 2011). However, the interaction became more widespread after independence to create pluralism in the cultural aspects of Malaysian society in an effort to build unity among the people.

The process of transformation of religious society into a secular society that is taking place today also influences the law related to the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The background of social relations of the early Muslim community revolved only around the *dhimmi* and *harbi*. However, the emergence of a secular society has changed that paradigm, when the social structure of a society is no longer determined by the religion practiced. On the other hand, the determination of an issue is based on the consideration of citizenship, especially after the existence of the nation state (Minhaji, 2002). Thus, the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* in external appearance such as the language used, vehicles, clothing and so on that are synonymous with the context of society in the past needs to be re-evaluated. The current changing reality shows the mixing of a plural society across national, racial and religious boundaries. This mixing causes the element of *tasyabbuh* to occur more widely involving various aspects of life. Therefore, an appropriate assessment needs to be done to ensure that the value of Islamic resilience in the face of changing times can be translated.

### **Analysis on Tasyabbuh in Plural Society in Malaysia**

The cross-cultural and religious interactions that often occur in a plural society in Malaysia have exposed Muslims to the element of *tasyabbuh*. Therefore, specific research needs to be done to ensure that the interaction that takes place does not affect the religious principles of every Muslim, while ensuring the purity of Islam itself. On that basis, Muslim scholars have viewed the phenomenon of *tasyabbuh* from two perspectives, *tasyabbuh* which is allowed and *tasyabbuh* which is forbidden based on the essence of the practice and its relationship with the practices and religious values of non-Muslims.

#### **a) Religious Practices and Specific Traditions**

There are two forms of prohibition of assimilation that have been set by the scholars, namely assimilation in religious practices and traditions that are specific to the group involved. In the religious aspect, Allah has ordered Rasulullah SAW and his companions to shift the focus of Qibla towards Masjid al-Haram in order to offend the group of ahl al-kitab who are centered on Masjid al-Aqsa. This is in response to the concern of the Prophet who wanted to look different from that group (al-Qurtubi, 2006).

Verily, We have seen the turning of your face towards the heaven (waiting for the Divine Decree). Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you; so turn your face in the direction of the Inviolable Sanctuary (Al-Masjid Al-Harâm in Makka), and wherever you may be, turn your faces towards it. Those to whom the Book was given know this to be the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not Unaware of what they do. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:144)

Similarly, in the matter of fasting Ashura where the Prophet wanted to increase the fast on the 9th and 11th day to be different from the Jews who only specialize in it on the 10th day only as stated in the following hadith:

Fast on the Day of 'Āshūrā' (10 Muharram) and distinguish it from the Jews. Fast the day before and the day after (Riwayat Ahmad, no. 2154).



The main purpose of this action is to ensure that non-Muslims do not raise any allegation that Islam imitate and scoop up their religious practices. On this basis, the Jews seem to be lost direction to make any false accusation till they say:

This man (Rasulullah SAW) is not leaves even one of our affairs unless he will disagree with us on the matter (Riwayat Muslim, no. 302).

#### b) Appearance of Identity

In terms of traditions and cultural customs, Rasulullah SAW tried to form and create a special identity for Muslims to prevent them from resembling the appearance of non-Muslims. This is important to strengthen the position and uniqueness of Islam. For example, the orders of the Prophet SAW to thin the mustache and lengthen the beard as stated in the following hadith:

Be different from the polytheists. Cut your mustache and leave the beard (Riwayat Muslim, no. 259).

Meanwhile, in the aspect of clothing, Rasulullah SAW once forbade 'Abd Allah bin 'Amrū from wearing clothes dyed with yellow dye as stated in the following hadith:

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) once saw me wearing two clothes that had been soaked with yellow dye, so he said: Indeed, these are the clothes of the infidels, so do not wear them. (Riwayat Muslim, no. 2077).

Al-Nawawī (1994) stated that the ban was imposed only at a certain time as yellow clothing was the main message of non-Muslims at that time. On the other hand, *jumhur fuqaha* requires its use after the *illah* (cause) of the prohibition has disappeared. Similarly, the view put forward by Ibn Hajar (2001) with reference to the prohibition of wearing *ṭayalishah* which was the special clothing of the Jews in Medina at that time but the changes of the times have eliminated the specialization. Thus, based on the evidence stated, it is clear that the aspect that is the focus of the ban on assimilation only involves religious ceremonies of religions other than Islam as well as imitation of certain traditions and customs that have been synonymous with the practice of non-Muslims. This is because, it can affect the position of faith of a Muslim even if done without any intention and intent. For example, any Muslim individual who joins the Thaipusam festival procession towards the Batu Caves temple is punished as sinful even if the purpose is only to enliven the celebration without any intention of performing their religious rites. Similarly, the use of clothing and symbols that are specifically in religious

#### c) Universal Culture

To balance the position of Islam as a religion that celebrates current realities and local customs, then there is also the element of *tasyabbuh* that is allowed by Islam. However, the requirement depends on the extent of compliance with the guidelines set by the Islamic law. First, the thing done is not accompanied by the intention of intentionally resembling non-Muslims nor is it a specific ritual of their religion (Ibn 'Abidin, 2003). This is according to the famous method of *fiqh*:

Every practice depends on intention (al-Suyuti, 1983).

In the Malaysian context, the practice of the lamp (*pelita*) assembly whenever the 'Eid done by the Malays are permissible as long as the intent (*niat*) of the lamp mimics ceremony is not to imitate the Hindu festival. This 'intent' will make the practice derail the faith of a Muslim (al-San'ani, 1998). This is as the method stated by al-Qurtubi (2006) in his *tafsir*:

Pleasure towards disbelief is disbelief.

The practice of a special ceremony performed by non-Muslims has indirectly displayed the satisfaction (redha) of the Muslim towards the element of disbelief inherent in the ceremony.

In addition, a practice must be ensured that it is not related to religious elements but rather just a tradition and culture that underlies certain races and groups. For example in the aspect of dress, Rasulullah SAW has continued to wear robes and turbans like the polytheists of Makkah because it is the culture of the Arab community and not the identity of their disbelief (Wail, t.t). In addition, al-Tirmidhi also states that the Prophet also once wore a Yemeni-made aHibarah dress as well as a Roman robe because it was comfortable with its woven structure even though both countries were inhabited by a non-Muslim (al-Badr, 2014). However, the practice of a tradition must be ensured not to violate the requirements of Islamic law. For example in the ethics of food, the use of spoons and forks is a practice allowed by Islam but the Western ethic that prioritizes the left hand to feed food should be abandoned because it violates the advice of the Prophet SAW through the following hadith:

If one of you eats, then eat with his right hand and if he wants to drink then drink with his right hand. Surely the devil eats and drinks with his left hand (Riwayat Muslim, no. 2020).

#### d) Public Interest

There is a need and public interest in the implementation of the matter. Ibn Taimiyah (2008) allows Muslims living in kuffar countries to resemble them in outward appearance if there is a need either to avoid any harm and threat or as a method of da'wah to them. In addition, some Hanafi jurists also allow the lengthening of the mustache in war to confuse or intimidate the enemy despite the recommendation from the Prophet SAW for Muslims to thin the mustache (Ibn Hajar, 2001). This is as stated in one method of fiqh:

Any cause that leads to damage is prohibited if there is no major requirement (al-Sa'dan, 1999).

The element of *tasyabbuh* belongs to the category of *maslahah* (essential) recognized by the Islamic law. This is because *tasyabbuh* on matters that benefit Islam and its adherents is permissible and even strongly encouraged in Islam (Asyraf, 2009). Rasulullah SAW used to apply the management system of non-Muslim countries around Madinah which used to use the seal for any official correspondence matters as stated in the following hadith:

When Rasulullah SAW wanted to send a letter to the leaders of Ajam (other than Arabs), it was said to him: "Orang Ajam will not receive a letter unless a stamp (seal) is placed on it." So the Prophet also ordered a ring (for that purpose) (Riwayat al-Tirmidhi, no. 90).

The same thing was also done by Umar al-Khattab where he received a proposal from one of his people to create an Islamic calendar system by imitating the administrative system of non-Muslims to produce a migratory calendar that is used to this day. Thus, this action clearly shows that utilizing the technology and systems used by non-Muslims is permissible, especially if it brings benefits to Muslims. In the Malaysian context, key national leaders are allowed to fulfill invitations to non-Muslim celebrations held in their houses of worship, as long as they do not participate in their religious ceremonies. This initiative to strengthen unity and harmony among people of various races and religions. However, the ban applies to parties other than those mentioned, especially if it is done for political mileage because it is worried that it will become a habit among the people so that it can open the door to slander.

The social interactions that take place involving the plural society in Malaysia reflect a unique tradition that has been widely accepted as a cultural element in society. Thus, it plays an important role as one of the elements that need to be given attention in discussing the

position of a practice based on Islamic law. The element of tasyabbuh that exists in this interaction certainly needs to be refined. This is to ensure that the elasticity of Islam in the same time will still firmly defend the glory and superiority of Islamic principles themselves. This is according to the following method of fiqh:

Indicators of customs as well as current conditions are placed the same (position) as clear words in specifying general matters and binding absolute matters as well as others (Izz al-Din, 1980).

The efforts undertaken by the government have shown us how the management and improvement of relations among the multi-racial and multi-religious communities in Malaysia has been made one of the important agendas by the government. Therefore, this effort should be achieved jointly by all members of society in realizing the country's aspiration to create stability, harmony and unity among Malaysians.

### **Conclusion**

Malaysia is known for the multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious society but still given a fair space of freedom and in turn, has created an atmosphere of harmony and mutual understanding between them. Each party must strive to maintain the peace enjoyed by avoiding the exploitation of racial and religious issues that could potentially affect the unity of society. However, at the same time, we need to be more careful about some groups in society who are willing to do anything to make a profit and fulfill the agenda of certain political parties. The direct involvement of every member of the community in such a program is very important in creating warmth and harmony between them. Each party needs to get out of their respective comfort zones by not only prioritizing the relationship within their respective races but needs to go beyond communities of different cultures and religions to take advantage of the unique diversity that exists in Malaysia. In addition, the existing cultural program should be used as a dakwah platform, where each party has the opportunity to be an ambassador for their respective religions in explaining every confusion that is often associated with them. However, Muslims in particular, must abide by all rules and guidelines issued by the religious authorities to ensure the sanctity of Islam is preserved and to avoid any difficulties that may occur in the future.

Therefore, this study contributes to the present body of knowledge on tasyabbuh in plural society in Malaysia. The main contribution of this article also provides directions for the harmonious interaction in a plural society in Malaysia. Islam guarantees freedom of religion but must be implemented according to established guidelines. Adherence to religious and humanitarian values can create a plural society that is mutually tolerant and united. Suggestion for future study to explore the understanding of the concept of tasyabbuh among the Muslim community in Malaysia. This is valuable finding that contribute towards towards the harmony of a plural society in Malaysia, as well as achieving the national integration agenda.

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