

Kiai Ihsan Jampes's concept of mahabbah: echoing sufi principles for unity, peace, and respect among diverse communities

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Abstract. The modern Muslim community faces significant challenges in fostering unity, peace, and mutual respect amidst cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. To address these challenges, the development of ethical concepts rooted in Islamic tradition has become increasingly important. One such concept is Mahabbah, which Kiai Ihsan Jampes, a renowned Indonesian Sufi scholar, discusses in his work *Siraj al-Talibin*. Kiai Ihsan emphasises that Mahabbah is not merely personal or spiritual love but also an ethical foundation capable of strengthening social bonds in diverse contexts. This study explores Mahabbah in the thought of Kiai Ihsan Jampes, examining its potential as a value to address conflicts and foster social harmony. Using a qualitative approach to analyse Kiai Ihsan's Sufi texts, supported by interviews with individuals knowledgeable about his teachings, this research focuses on understanding Mahabbah as a universal principle applicable to social interactions and its contribution to social cohesion. The findings suggest that Kiai Ihsan's concept of Mahabbah is highly relevant for fostering brotherhood and interfaith tolerance. Seen not only as a personal spiritual path, Mahabbah also promotes cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue, helping to ease tensions in pluralistic societies. These insights indicate that Sufi teachings on Mahabbah can provide a foundation for social reconciliation, strengthen bonds among diverse communities, and enhance appreciation for shared human values.

Keywords: Mahabbah, Kiai Ihsan Jampes unity, peace, respect among diverse communities

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts within diverse communities are almost inevitable. Every community, whether in the context of religion, ethnicity, culture, or belief, frequently encounters differences that trigger tensions and even violence (Diani & Rozi, 2018). In the national context of Indonesia, for example, various conflicts such as those in Poso, Maluku, and Papua have been largely driven by religious and ethnic differences (Kusuma, 2022). On the global stage, serious conflicts such as the one in Rohingya, Myanmar, where the persecution of Muslims has led to significant ethnic and religious tensions (Kumar & Rahman, 2019). The Uyghur conflict in China and the ethnic tensions in southern Thailand, influenced by religious radicalisation, provide additional examples of how differences can exacerbate intergroup relations (Abdullah & Hussain, 2022). These cases demonstrate that differences, if not well-managed, can lead to prolonged conflicts.

The efforts to handle conflicts like this require a more holistic and in-depth approach to achieve the main goals of unity, peace, and mutual respect within society. One of the main efforts in easing these tensions is by referring to religious teachings, which serve as a life guide for humanity. Religion has a very significant role in uniting divided societies, creating peace amid differences, and building mutual respect among individuals (Zubaidi, 2021). In this case, religion can function as a unifying tool that leads humanity to live in harmony despite having different backgrounds.

Islam, as the second-largest religion in the world, offers teachings that are highly relevant to the context of unity, peace, and mutual respect. The Qur'an, as a guide for Muslims, contains various verses that emphasise the importance of unity, peace, and mutual respect (Murtado & Zain, 2020). For example, in Surah Āli 'Imrān verse 103, Muslims are taught to maintain unity and not divide. In Surah al-Hujurat verses 10 and 13, Muslims are reminded to strive for peace among themselves and are prohibited from mocking one another. Surah al-Isra' verse 23 also teaches the importance of mutual respect. All these teachings confirm that the Qur'an directs its followers to fulfil the mission of unity, peace, and mutual respect in social life.

One of the main teachings that can guide humanity to consistently cultivate love in social life is Mahabbah (Ariyanto, 2021). In the context of Sufism, Mahabbah is defined as a sincere and profound love for God, oneself, others, and all of His creation. The teaching of Mahabbah, as conveyed by many prominent figures in the history of Sufism, such as Al-Ghazali, emphasises that pure and compassionate love is the foundation of peace within

society (Ebrahimi et al., 2021). Mahabbah is not merely an emotion but also an action that must be manifested in concrete deeds. In Sufism, Mahabbah is seen as a bridge between the relationship with God and the relationships between human beings, and when practiced correctly, it leads to unity and peace. Therefore, Mahabbah is regarded as the key to achieving unity, peace, and mutual respect in social life (Aziz, 2021).

One of the scholars who strongly advocated Mahabbah as a teaching and practice in realising the mission of unity, peace, and mutual respect in social life was Kiai Ihsan Jampes. Kiai Ihsan, a prominent scholar from Jampes-Kediri, is widely recognised for his profound teachings on love in Islam. He taught Mahabbah as the foundation of all human interactions, both with God and with fellow creatures (Rofiq, 2017). Kiai Ihsan not only taught the theory but also gave concrete examples of how Mahabbah can be embodied in daily life. Through his teachings and leadership, Kiai Ihsan succeeded in inspiring many people to respect differences and build a more peaceful and harmonious society. The influence of his teachings on Mahabbah in society cannot be underestimated, as many people were inspired by the concept of love he taught (Barizi, 2004).

Kiai Ihsan Jampes' teaching on Mahabbah offers a path to unity, peace, and mutual respect in diverse communities. In this context, Mahabbah is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical guide that can be applied in daily life. Through this teaching, Kiai Ihsan invites people to treat others with compassion, prioritise constructive dialogue, and create a harmonious atmosphere despite differences. In this fast-paced and challenging life, Kiai Ihsan's Mahabbah teaching offers an effective way to resolve conflict and create a more peaceful, respectful, and loving world.

This literature review discusses the concept of Mahabbah according to Kiai Ihsan Jampes as a manifestation of Sufi principles that contribute to building unity, peace, and mutual respect in diverse communities. This concept of Mahabbah serves as a crucial foundation for achieving social harmony, both individually and collectively, by promoting love, mutual understanding, and openness to differences. This study also compares Kiai Ihsan's views with those of other Sufi figures, such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi, who similarly emphasise the importance of universal love in addressing societal diversity (Schimmel, 2011). In the related literature, Mahabbah is seen as a transformative force that facilitates interreligious and interethnic dialogue while strengthening social solidarity (Abu-Nimer, 2003). Moreover, this study highlights the relevance of Kiai Ihsan's teachings in the context of contemporary, increasingly plural societies, where peace and respect are urgent needs to prevent conflict (Küng, 2015). Therefore, this study shows how Kiai Ihsan Jampes' principles of Mahabbah can contribute to achieving the goals of inclusive social development, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in creating peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16).

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design to explore Kiai Ihsan Jampes' views on the concept of Mahabbah and its implications for unity, peace, and respect in diverse communities (Ricci et al., 2019). The data were collected through an in-depth literature review of Kiai Ihsan's works, as well as other relevant sources, especially those related to Sufi thought in Sufism. The analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify the main themes in his works, focusing on the development of Mahabbah as a Sufi principle (Saleha et al., 2020). This research prioritises research ethics by ensuring an authentic interpretation of Kiai Ihsan's teachings while respecting the context and original message of his thoughts to reveal his contributions to realising unity and peace in diverse societies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kiai Ihsan Jampes's Life and Teachings

Kyai Muhammad Ihsan bin Muhammad Dahlan bin Saleh al-Jampes, born in 1901 in Jampes, Kediri, East Java, was a prominent scholar and Sufi from Indonesia (Akmal, 2020). He was the second son of KH. Dahlan bin Sholeh, the founder of Pondok Pesantren Jampes, now known as Pondok Pesantren Al-Ihsan. Kiai Ihsan's lineage is also connected to key figures in the history of Islam in the archipelago, such as Sunan Gunung Jati and Panembahan Senapati, which shaped his intellectual and spiritual background ('Izzah, 2021). He was raised in a *pesantren* environment rich in Islamic scholarly traditions, which laid the foundation for his thoughts and teachings.

Kiai Ihsan is known as a profound Islamic thinker and a prolific writer. One of his best-known works is *Sirojuth Tholibin*, a classical text on Sufism that has made a significant contribution to Islamic studies in Indonesia (Saleha et al., 2020). As a scholar living during the Dutch Colonial era, he played an important role in maintaining the rich Islamic tradition while responding to the challenges of social change brought about by external influences. In his spiritual journey, he became a disciple of prominent figures from the *Qadiriyyah* and *Naqshbandiyyah tariqahs*, who taught the principles of tawhid, *Mahabbah*, and sincerity (Siswoyo & Fahrurrozi, 2023).

The concept of *Mahabbah* according to Kiai Ihsan serves as a foundational principle in the Sufi teachings he imparted. He perceives *Mahabbah* not merely as mutual affection between individuals but as divine love originating from Allah that flows to all His creatures. In his view, *Mahabbah* represents a sincere devotion to

Allah, manifested through a compassionate attitude toward the universe (Al-Ghazali, 2021; Badwi, 2016). This teaching emphasises the importance of creating a sense of brotherhood between diverse communities, regardless of differing backgrounds or beliefs, and encouraging unity, peace, and mutual respect in a diverse society.

The Concept of Mahabbah in Kiai Ihsan Jampes's Teachings

Kiai Ihsan Jampes taught that *Mahabbah* embodies the essence of creation, as he believed that God created the universe out of love, showcasing His mercy and compassion (Al-Jampasi, 1940c). For Kiai Ihsan, every being has a noble purpose, revealing signs of God's greatness. He saw love as a divine attribute foundational to all creation, making *Mahabbah* not only central to human relationships but a reflection of God's boundless love.

Kiai Ihsan emphasised that *Mahabbah* connects the Creator with His creatures, establishing a relationship rooted in compassion. As creations of Allah, humans are called to embody love in their lives as an act of worship and a reflection of divine compassion (Al-Jampasi, 1940d). Through *Mahabbah*, individuals can perceive the universe as a manifestation of Divine love, understanding that every part of creation points to Allah's presence and love, thus drawing humans closer to their Creator and guiding them to a deeper sense of life's purpose (Al-Jampasi, 1940a).

Manifestations of Mahabbah

Love for God

Kiai Ihsan Jampes teaches that love for God is the essence of true *Mahabbah*, marking it as the highest form of love a Muslim should (Al-Jampasi, 1940d). This love goes beyond emotion, encompassing obedience, submission, and devotion, demonstrated through worship, patience, and sincerity in living according to God's will. By loving Allah, individuals attain spiritual fulfillment and genuine happiness, as they develop a deep awareness of His greatness and mercy. This form of love becomes a commitment, pushing one to do good, heighten spiritual consciousness, and uphold strong morals (Al-Ghazali, 2021).

According to Kiai Ihsan, love for Allah forms the foundation of all other loves, extending naturally to all of His creations out of respect for the Creator (Wasid, 2016). *Mahabbah* becomes the basis of human relationships with others and the world, encouraging a positive outlook and motivating individuals to perform good deeds in pursuit of divine pleasure. Kiai Ihsan emphasises that this love elevates one's spirituality, creating a transcendent bond that guides a person's interactions with others and inspires them to live a morally sound and compassionate life.

Love for fellow human beings

Love for fellow human beings is an important manifestation of *Mahabbah* in Kiai Ihsan's teachings. He taught that humans are created as social beings who must establish good relationships with others as an expression of love to Allah (Al-Jampasi, 1940c). Kiai Ihsan believes that *Mahabbah* toward others includes empathy, compassion, and helping. This attitude should be applied in various aspects of life, from family and community relationships to broader contexts, including interfaith and intercultural relations.

According to Kiai Ihsan, love for fellow human beings is a real expression of faith and obedience to Allah. He emphasises that people should love others as they love themselves, following the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, who advocated for brotherhood and equality. In Kiai Ihsan's teachings, love for others is an essential foundation for creating peace and harmony in society (Smith, 2022). *Mahabbah* becomes the basis for overcoming differences and conflicts and encourages mutual respect and forgiveness. By loving others, Kiai Ihsan believes that one will have a more meaningful and blessed life (Ebrahimi et al., 2021).

Love for all creation

Kiai Ihsan taught that *Mahabbah* includes love for all creation, including animals, plants, and the universe (Al-Jampasi, 1940d). He believes that nature is clear evidence of God's power and compassion that needs to be respected and preserved by humans as a mandate from Him. The human responsibility to love nature is an expression of obedience to Allah and part of worship. By caring for the environment, humans show gratitude for Allah's blessings and draw closer to Him (Putra, 2014).

Additionally, Kiai Ihsan emphasises that human attitudes toward nature directly impact their own lives. Those who protect and love nature live in harmony and gain greater benefits, while those who harm the environment experience negative consequences from their actions (Yusuf et al., 2017). Through the love of nature, individuals not only fulfil their role as *Khalifah* on earth but also achieve a closer connection to the Creator.

Mahabbah as a transformative force for personal and societal change

Kiai Ihsan views *Mahabbah* as a powerful force for inner transformation, enhancing character and strengthening faith, patience, and sincerity (Aziz, 2021). *Mahabbah* motivates individuals to abandon negative traits and prioritise behaviours that align with Islamic teachings, creating personal transformation as the first step toward a better society. For him, *Mahabbah* is a primary means to improve self-quality and form a noble character.

Furthermore, Kiai Ihsan emphasises that *Mahabbah* plays a significant role in social change. Love for others encourages individuals to do good and spread kindness within their communities, acting as positive agents who inspire others. He believes that *Mahabbah* can resolve conflicts and bridge differences by fostering tolerance

and cooperation. With *Mahabbah* as the foundation of relationships between individuals, a harmonious, rightful, and peaceful society can be created (Siswoyo & Fahrurrozi, 2023).

Echoing Sufi Principles: Mahabbah and Unity

The principle of Tawhid (Unity of God) and its implications

The principle of *Tawhid*, according to Kiai Ihsan Jampes, is the central foundation of Islam that influences theological beliefs and spiritual and social life. *Tawhid* teaches that everything comes from and will return to Allah, making every action rooted in obedience to Him (Al-Jampasi, 1940b). For Kiai Ihsan, awareness of *Tawhid* carries the duty to maintain harmony with others and the environment as a form of respect for Allah's creation.

Tawhid also highlights the importance of unity within society, where differences in skin colour, ethnicity, language, and beliefs should not be barriers. Kiai Ihsan asserts that belief in the oneness of God helps humans see diversity as part of Allah's creation and that it is worthy of respect (Idrus, 2020). With this understanding, *Tawhid* becomes the foundation for fostering brotherhood and embracing diversity, creating a peaceful and harmonious life amid differences.

Furthermore, *Tawhid* encourages self-control from worldly ambitions and materialistic attitudes. The awareness of Allah's oneness cultivates humility and generosity, eliminating egotism and fostering loving social relations. Kiai Ihsan emphasises that every good deed toward others reflects love to Allah, thus making love for others part of a commitment to *Tawhid* (Ni'am, 2020). Based on *Tawhid*, humans can live in unity, mutual respect, and love towards a just and peaceful society.

Mahabbah as a unifying force transcending differences

Kiai Ihsan sees *Mahabbah* as a force capable of uniting diverse elements within society. For him, love removes the barriers that limit human interaction, allowing everyone to see others as a part of themselves, regardless of background, beliefs, or nationality. Through this love, doors open for a deep understanding of others and foster mutual respect (Ariyanto, 2021). In Kiai Ihsan's perspective, *Mahabbah* is also an expression of obedience to Allah, because loving others is a form of love for the Creator. True love does not discriminate by religion, race, or culture but embraces all within a universal bond of compassion. By loving others as an expression of love to Allah, humans are united in a compassion that transcends differences.

Moreover, *Mahabbah* strengthens social solidarity by encouraging each person to prioritise common interests over personal interests. Love teaches patience and appreciation for diversity and helps ease conflicts. According to Kiai Ihsan, love is a commitment to understanding and valuing others, creating a society that can live in harmony (Zubaidi, 2021). Love is the answer to social tensions, dissolving boundaries and uniting people in a shared noble purpose.

Examples from Kiai Ihsan Jampes's teachings on unity through love

Kiai Ihsan Jampes emphasises that love must be expressed through concrete actions, which he sees as the foundation for unity. For him, love is more than just words; it's an active expression of compassion toward others, such as helping those in need, forgiving wrongdoers, and sharing happiness—all of which foster a just and peaceful society (Al-Jampasi, 1940d). He teaches that by treating others as we wish to be treated, love promotes empathy and concern, encouraging people to prioritise the happiness of others over selfishness, which ultimately strengthens social bonds and unity (Nasution, 2017).

Through his teachings on *Mahabbah*, Kiai Ihsan demonstrates that love plays a crucial role in building harmonious societies. He believes love can overcome conflicts, build solidarity, and deepen relationships, allowing people to coexist peacefully in diversity. For Kiai Ihsan, love is not only a path to personal fulfillment but also a powerful means to achieve broader social ideals of peace, justice, and compassion within diverse communities (Smith, 2022).

Echoing Sufi Principles: Mahabbah and Peace

The concept of inner peace (Salam) in Sufism

Kiai Ihsan views inner peace (*Salam*) as a profound spiritual state achieved through closeness to God (Al-Jampasi, 1940b). This peace is not merely a physical condition but is a peace of heart obtained when one subdues the ego and surrenders oneself entirely to Allah. Through deep awareness of God's unity and will, a Sufi reaches a peace that transcends worldly concerns and focuses life on spiritual goals (Amrullah & Wahyudi, 2022).

In Sufism, inner peace is also manifested through the qualities of *Zuhud* (asceticism) and *Taqwa* (piety), namely humility and fear of God (Cholis, 2018). Sufis who achieve *Salam* can free themselves from anxiety and fear, finding calmness even in difficult situations. For them, this peace reflects complete self-control, where both mind and heart submit to Divine will, resulting in serenity in the face of the world's turmoil.

Salam also inspires peace in social relations. A Sufi who has achieved inner peace tends to be patient and forgiving and prefers harmony over conflict, bringing calmness into their interactions with others. This peace is not solely personal but is shared with the community as a form of love for all of God's creatures, creating a harmonious life in the world. (Nursita & Sahide, 2019).

Mahabbah as a path to inner peace and harmony

Mahabbah is a spiritual path leading to inner peace. Sincere *Mahabbah* releases the individual from worldly desires and leads to the tranquillity of the soul (Bambang Suharto, 2022). *Mahabbah* leads people to transcend life's anxieties and find enduring inner calm, with divine love serving as the primary source of serenity. It is also as teaching acceptance of destiny, where a Sufi understands all events as part of God's will. A sincere attitude of love towards all divine decrees allows one to face the difficulties of life without disappointment but with complete peace. This understanding strengthens the soul in facing life's realities (both joy and sorrow), as all are seen as containing wisdom from God.

In addition, *Mahabbah* nurtures harmonious relations with others as an extension of love to Allah (Smith, 2022). Love for humanity, regardless of background, encourages respect and eliminates hostility, creating a sense of brotherhood amid diversity. Sincere love has the power to transform conflicts into opportunities for mutual understanding, making *Mahabbah* not only a path to inner peace but also creates social harmony and peace in society.

Kiai Ihsan Jampes's teachings on cultivating peace through Mahabbah

Kiai Ihsan Jampes taught that *Mahabbah* is the key to achieving true peace. He believed that peace stems from wholehearted submission to Allah, accepting fate with sincerity, and living a life of obedience. Through such devotion, an individual's thoughts and actions reflect this inner peace, creating a sense of tranquillity rooted in *Mahabbah* (Al-Ghazali, 2021).

Beyond personal devotion, Kiai Ihsan emphasised *Mahabbah* as essential for fostering harmonious relationships within society. He taught that peace can only flourish when love and compassion guide social interactions, extending beyond family to all people, regardless of their background (Khalid, 2018). This peace also includes a respectful relationship with nature, as respecting all of God's creations fosters inner harmony. Kiai Ihsan encouraged purifying the heart of hatred and selfishness, embodying peace through kindness, sharing, and forgiveness, thus nurturing a unified and compassionate society (Brown, 2020).

Echoing Sufi Principles: Mahabbah and Respect***The Sufi emphasis on compassion (Rahma) and its connection to respect***

In Sufism, compassion (*Rahma*) is a central value that mirrors God's merciful nature, and Sufis believe that cultivating this quality is essential for attaining closeness to God (Misbah, 2018). This compassion encompasses not only empathy for others but also an unconditional acceptance of all of God's creations. Rooted in sincere love (*Mahabbah*) for God, this compassion is manifested through concrete actions toward others, reflecting a deep-seated respect for every being as part of the divine creation.

Compassion in Sufism is more than an emotional response; it is a way of life that encompasses all living beings and the environment. This trait fosters a sense of connectedness with the world and promotes respect as a natural outcome of compassion. Sufi teachings highlight that respect arises from recognising the inherent dignity of every individual, regardless of their background or beliefs. Compassion thus forms the foundation for harmonious relationships, where respect for others transcends personal differences and becomes a means of acknowledging the equal honour of all God's creations (Rahmah et al., 2024).

Moreover, Sufi compassion calls for respecting the rights of others in all contexts (personal, social, and spiritual). This respect is not limited to avoiding harm but includes treating others with kindness, understanding, and patience. Sufis view compassion as the essence of respectful human relations, urging people to treat others as they would wish to be treated. In this way, Sufi compassion encourages open-heartedness, acceptance of differences, and a deep appreciation for the dignity of all beings (Barizi, 2004).

Mahabbah as a foundation for respecting diversity

Mahabbah in Sufism is considered an important foundation for respecting diversity. *Mahabbah* invites one to view differences as God's will that must be respected. In the Sufi perspective, differences are not a source of conflict but rather the richness of God's wise creation, so love for God teaches respect for diversity. Sufi teachings emphasise that diversity encompasses differences in religion, culture, and worldview; those are blessings that enrich life. Through *Mahabbah*, one is expected to accept and even celebrate these differences, resulting in harmonious relationships without having to sacrifice personal values (Jamaludin; Zulkifli, 2018). This attitude of love and respect serves as a binder that reduces tension and negative prejudice among individuals, aligning with the Sufi principle of honouring all of God's creations.

Mahabbah also teaches an inclusive and just attitude, where love for Allah brings compassion to all His creatures without discrimination. This attitude is not only a social obligation but also a reflection of spiritual closeness to God. With *Mahabbah*, diversity is seen as an opportunity to build a peaceful and loving society. Respect for difference in Sufism is considered the highest form of love that creates universal harmony.

Kiai Ihsan Jampes's teachings on respecting others through Mahabbah

Kiai Ihsan Jampes emphasises the importance of *Mahabbah* as a foundation for respecting others. He teaches that a genuine love for Allah manifests in respect for people regardless of social status, religion, or worldview, with love and respect being inseparable aspects of daily life (Rofiq, 2017). For Kiai Ihsan, true respect

must be shown through actions, not merely words, by treating others fairly, compassionately, and kindly. Concrete expressions of respect, such as forgiving, honouring differences, and listening attentively, reflect one's love for fellow human beings and foster understanding.

In Kiai Ihsan's view, respect also entails upholding the rights and dignity of others within families, communities, and society at large. Every individual, he teaches, has inherent dignity that must be honoured, and safeguarding others' honour is a genuine act of love. He urged people to avoid insults and to respect each other, as this aligns with the principles of *Mahabbah*. Kiai Ihsan believed that when people develop a close relationship with God, they recognise every person as part of God's creation, deserving of respect, thus broadening the impact of love from personal to collective relationships (Al-Jampasi, 1940b).

Through *Mahabbah*, Kiai Ihsan envisioned a harmonious society founded on love and respect. He believed that sincere love for God fosters inner peace, which naturally extends to respect for diversity and unity among people. This respect, grounded in spiritual awareness, leads to a community where support, love, and understanding thrive, allowing society to coexist peacefully amidst differences.

Practical Applications and Contemporary Relevance

Implementing Kiai Ihsan Jampes's teachings on Mahabbah

Kiai Ihsan Jampes's teachings on *Mahabbah* have highly relevant applications in the context of contemporary life, especially in social and spiritual relationships (Rahmah et al., 2024). One way to implement his teachings is by cultivating sincere love for God, which will be reflected in our relationships with others. According to Kiai Ihsan, *Mahabbah* is not merely an emotional feeling but also concrete actions that reflect affection, empathy, and care for others. Therefore, in daily life, we can apply his teachings by showing more kindness through concrete actions, such as helping those in need, being fair, and respecting differences.

Furthermore, Kiai Ihsan emphasised the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships with others, both within the family, society, and broader social life. This includes attitudes of mutual forgiveness, avoiding conflict, and prioritising peace in every action. The implementation of *Mahabbah*, according to him, is not limited to beautiful words but is also manifested through actions that bring benefits to many people. By integrating love with God in every aspect of life, we not only build harmonious relationships but also create a more inclusive and loving society.

The importance of applying *Mahabbah* is also seen in the context of education and character development (Haq, 2021). Kiai Ihsan taught that spiritual education based on *Mahabbah* will produce individuals who have a high awareness of values such as love and respect for others. In practice, it can be applied in an educational system that emphasises the importance of character education, where teachers and leaders serve as role models in demonstrating love and care for students. This also encourages us to educate children to develop empathy, concern, and respect for others as part of the teachings of *Mahabbah*.

Fostering interfaith dialogue and understanding

One important application of Kiai Ihsan's teachings on *Mahabbah* is in promoting interfaith dialogue (Khalid, 2018). In this increasingly global and multicultural world, interfaith understanding is crucial for maintaining peace and reducing social tensions. Kiai Ihsan taught that sincere love for God must be reflected in our attitude toward religious differences. By practicing *Mahabbah*, we can more easily respect and understand the beliefs of others, establishing constructive and empathetic communication.

Interfaith dialogue is based on the principle of *Mahabbah* is not about seeking a winner or proving the superiority of one religion over another, but about learning from each other and appreciating differences. He encouraged people to see the differences in religion as part of God's will, and each religion contains truths and values that deserve respect. Through dialogue founded on love and understanding will reduce prejudice, increase interfaith tolerance, and bring peace to society (Dewi, 2021).

Kiai Ihsan also taught the importance of building loving and peaceful relationships between followers of different religions. He emphasised that respect and understanding of religious differences should be based on sincere love for God. By recognising that every individual has the right to follow their own beliefs, we can create a more tolerant and peaceful world. Therefore, his teachings can serve as a guide in reducing interfaith tensions and creating a more harmonious social environment.

Promoting social harmony and cohesion in diverse communities

Kiai Ihsan Jampes's teachings on *Mahabbah* offer valuable insights for fostering social harmony in diverse societies. In multicultural communities, where differences in ethnicity, religion, and culture often lead to tension, *Mahabbah* encourages individuals to view these differences as enriching rather than divisive. Kiai Ihsan emphasises that love for God serves as a foundation for unity and social harmony by teaching respect for others regardless of their backgrounds (Smith, 2022).

Mahabbah can be implemented in various social contexts, promoting mutual respect and positive social interactions. At the community level, this love can be expressed through joint cultural activities, shared education, or community projects aimed at collective well-being. Through compassion and prioritising unity, communities can build a sense of togetherness, fostering bonds across diverse backgrounds despite individual differences.

Kiai Ihsan also highlights responding to differences with wisdom and love, seeing them as opportunities for mutual understanding rather than sources of conflict (Rofiq, 2017). In practicing Mahabbah, individuals learn to approach differences calmly, using love to strengthen relationships and promote harmony. This approach transforms Mahabbah into a powerful social force, inspiring more just, tolerant, and compassionate societies capable of addressing complex social challenges with peace and understanding (Barizi, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Kiai Ihsan Jampes' teachings on *Mahabbah* provide a deep insight into the relationship between humans and God and each other. For him, Mahabbah is a manifestation of faith that must be reflected in concrete actions, not just emotional love. This concept teaches that Mahabbah will encourage us to love others and all of His creation with love and peace. In addition, Kiai Ihsan links *Mahabbah* with the principles of Sufism, especially in terms of unity and peace, where love becomes a force that unites humanity despite differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture.

The application of *Mahabbah's* teachings in daily life shows how the value of love and compassion can connect individuals and religious communities. Kiai Ihsan encourages us to treat others with respect and appreciation for differences, which will create a more harmonious and tolerant society. In today's global context, his teachings are relevant as guidelines for creating a more inclusive and peaceful world, where Mahabbah is the foundation for true peace and unity.

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