



# Quraish Shihab's Reinterpretation of Ibn Kathir's Interpretation of Religious Moderation Verses in the Qur'an

M. Rama Haqiqi<sup>1\*</sup>, Syamsu Syauqani<sup>1</sup>, Agam Royana<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Study of Qur'an and Tafsir, Fakultas of Ushuluddin and Relegius Studies, Islam University of Mataram, Lombok, Indonesia.

Received: December 21, 2023

Revised: February 10, 2024

Accepted: February 25, 2024

Published: February 28, 2024

Corresponding Author:

M. Rama Haqiqi

[mramahaqiqi29@mail.com](mailto:mramahaqiqi29@mail.com)

© 2024 The Authors. This open access article is distributed under a (CC-BY License)



**Abstract:** The emergence of insight into religious moderation from an Islamic perspective can provide space for studying and understanding how religious moderation should be in the Koran. Not only that, its important role in the emergence of various problems, especially in the religious field, makes it an attraction or study material that should be resolved. The Qur'an provides answers to all the problems faced, both religious and cultural insights. As social beings we need to understand and study, especially the issues that are always problematic, namely moderation and tolerance from the perspective of Islam and the Koran. In various aspects, the discussion of religious moderation continues to repeat itself and has no end in sight. Many figures define religious moderation so that the understanding of religious moderation varies according to their point of view. The presence of this research is to narrow down the discussion of religious moderation in the Koran so that a common understanding is created so that it is not divided. Not only that, with advances in technology, increasingly complex problems mean that this discussion must be in accordance with the current context, so that religious moderation can be understood well and does not cause commotion in society.

**Keywords:** Al-Qur'an; Moderation; Relegius.

## Introduction

Reinterpretation is an effort to reinterpret by interpretive scholars who produce a new work or result so that the reinterpretation is correct. Each era certainly has different interpretive characteristics, starting from the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, Companions to Tabi'in. These differences have causes that result in different understandings, starting from differences in era, social, cultural and societal habits at that time (Samsul, 2015). Differences in era or culture have a big influence on interpretive efforts, because they will influence a interpreter's interpretation. Furthermore, each era has different styles ranging from the classical period to the current contemporary period so as to produce an understanding of interpretation that is appropriate to the current context (Abdul, 2014)

Furthermore, religious moderation must be understood in depth as a balanced religious attitude between religious practice and respect for the religious practices of other people with different beliefs among us.

Harmony and balance or the middle way in religious practice will undoubtedly prevent us from extreme, fanatical and revolutionary attitudes in religion. As previously indicated, religious moderation is a solution to the presence of two extreme poles in religion, ultra-conservative or extreme right poles on the one hand, and liberal or extreme left on the other (Lukman, 2019).

Religious moderation needs to be fostered through workshops, recitations and national dialogue, so that it becomes the attitude of the Indonesian nation. The government, through the Ministry of Religion, Religious Education and Training Centers together with religious instructors can be the driving force for this religious moderation movement (Agus, 2019).

Islam as the last heavenly religion, in terms of terminology, the Lisanul Arabic dictionary includes the terms as-silm and as-salm from Islam (Junaedi, 2019 & Eni, 2021). Islam originates from the words of the Koran.

## How to Cite:

Haqiqi, M. R., Syauqani, S., & Royana, A. (2024). Quraish Shihab's Reinterpretation of Ibn Kathir's Interpretation of Religious Moderation Verses in the Qur'an. *Jurnal Kajian Islam*, 1(1), 8-12. Retrieved from <https://journals.balaipublikasi.id/index.php/jks/article/view/128>

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ  
الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {3}

*On this day I have perfected your religion for you, and have fulfilled My blessings on you, and I have approved Islam as a religion for you. So whoever is forced by hunger to commit a sin, verily Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful. Qs. Al-Maidah [5] : 3*

Every person who claims to be moderate should have a strong and firm opinion and have a high religious spirit. Therefore, he must be able to choose the main points of religious teachings, where he must hold a firm opinion, where he needs to be tolerant, respect other people's opinions, and not blame other people's religions. Regarding the main matters of religion, there must be no compromise in terms of belief and practice. But for religious matters where the nature of the law is debated, and there are various views, a moderate will take the legal stance that is most appropriate for him, but will not force the law to apply to other people, so that is the meaning of moderation (Lukman, 2019)

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ  
الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ  
مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ  
لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ {143}

*And so we have made you (Muslims) a medieval people so that you may be witnesses to human actions and so that the Messenger (Muhammad SAW) may be witnesses to your (deeds). We did not make it the qibla that you (formerly) turned to, but that we may know who follows the Messenger and who turns back. Indeed, moving is very difficult, except for people who have been guided by Allah SWT. and Allah SWT. will not waste your faith. Indeed Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to Man." Qs. Al-Baqarah [02]: 143.*

In Arabic dictionaries, the word wasathiyah is taken from kara wasathiyayah (وسطية) which is taken from the word wasatha (وسط) which has various meanings (Quraish Shihab, 2019). In al-Mujâm al-Wasith compiled by the Egyptian Arabic Language Institute, among other things, it is stated.

وَسَطَ الشَّيْءُ: مَا بَيْنَ طَرَفَيْهِ وَهُوَ مِنْهُ وَالْمُعْتَدِلُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ.  
وَيُقَالُ شَيْءٌ وَسَطٌ: بَيْنَ الْجَدِيدِ وَالرَّجْدِيِّ وَمَا يَكْتَنِفُهُ أَطْرَافُهُ وَلَوْ  
مِنْ غَيْرِ تَسَاوٍ وَالْعَدْلُ وَالْخَيْرُ يُوصَفُ بِهِ الْمُرْدُ وَغَيْرُهُ وَفِي التَّنْزِيلِ

الْعَزِيمِ (وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا ) عَدُولًا أَوْ خَبَارًا وَهُوَ مِنْ  
وَسَطِ قَوْمِهِ مِنْ خِيَارِهِمْ وَتَجَالُ الشَّيْءِ وَيَبِينُهُ

"The wasath of something is what is between its two ends and it is part of it, also meaning the middle of everything. If it is said: syai'un wasath then it means something is between good and bad. This word also means 'what is contained on both sides even though they are not the same'. The word wasath also means fair and good. (This is characterized as singular or non-singular). In the Koran, "and thus we made you an ummatan wasathan," in the sense of bearers of justice or good people. If you say, 'He is from the wasath of his people, then that means he is among the best of his people. This word also means the circle of something or its environment."

In the verse above, classical interpretive scholars interpret the meaning of the verse (أُمَّةً وَسَطًا) as a medieval people, which means a just people, a chosen people, because if you look at or review the era, tribe, culture and customs of that time, the interpretation is still only for that time (Quraish Shihab, 2000).

From these two, differences were found. The division of eras from the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, Companions and Tabiin provides breadth of discussion for tafsir scholars to discuss in more depth related to problems that cannot be resolved in tafsir (Wely, 2020).

## Method

In explaining this research, the author will use a descriptive qualitative research approach with the type of library research. Because of this. The research study is a literature study that discusses religious moderation from the perspective of the verses of the Koran (Andri, 2022 & Suharsimi, 2000).

To obtain accurate data in this research, the researcher used two data, namely primary data, where the researcher understood and analyzed the interpretation of al-Qur'an verses regarding religious moderation. Secondary data, where researchers carry out an in-depth understanding of moderate religion through book literature, journal articles, magazines and so on (Andri, 2022 & Lexy, 2005).

Meanwhile, data analysis techniques are used by researchers to obtain data accurately, namely by reducing data, presenting data and drawing conclusions. So, the study of religious moderation in terms of the verses of the Koran can be used as an appropriate and objective research finding (Sugiono, 2010).

## Results and Discussion

*Ibn Kathir's interpretation of religious moderation verses*

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ  
الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ  
مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ  
لَرَّءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ {143}

*And so we have made you (Muslims) a medieval people so that you may be witnesses to human actions and so that the Messenger (Muhammad SAW) may be witnesses to your (deeds). We did not make it the qibla that you (formerly) turned to, but that we may know who follows the Messenger and who turns back. Indeed, moving is very difficult, except for people who have been guided by Allah SWT. and Allah SWT. will not waste your faith. Indeed Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to Man." Qs. Al-Baqarah [02]: 143.*

According to Ibn Kathir the word (أُمَّةً وَسَطًا) (wasath) here is the best choice. As revealed, the Quraysh were the chosen Arab people, both in lineage and place of residence, meaning the best was said by the Prophet Muhammad. Wasathan fi Qaumih which means he is the best and noblest person. Furthermore, when referring to the wustha prayer sentence, which is the best prayer as confirmed in the authentic books and other hadith books (Abdullah, 2003).

Al-Asfahaniy defines "wasathan" with "sawa'un" which is the middle between two boundaries, atan with justice, the middle or the standard or the ordinary, wasathan also means guarding against being ifrath and tafriith (Nur, 2015)

Prioritizing a moderate attitude is indeed very much in line with the recommendations of the paragraph above, but it must be realized from an early age that its implementation is not an easy matter. Therefore, pioneering efforts are needed so that moderation or washatiyah becomes a reference and basis for thinking for every Muslim in Indonesia.

Allah SWT. made the ummah wasathan, then He gave it specialization with the most perfect Shari'a, the straightest path and the clearest understanding.

*Quraish Shihab's interpretation of religious moderation verses*

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ  
الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ  
مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى

الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ  
لَرَّءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ {143}

*And so we have made you (Muslims) a medieval people so that you may be witnesses to human actions and so that the Messenger (Muhammad SAW) may be witnesses to your (deeds). We did not make it the qibla that you (formerly) turned to, but that we may know who follows the Messenger and who turns back. Indeed, moving is very difficult, except for people who have been guided by Allah SWT. and Allah SWT. will not waste your faith. Indeed Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to Man." Qs. Al-Baqarah [02]: 143.*

In the verse above, classical interpreting scholars interpret the meaning of the verse (أُمَّةً وَسَطًا) as medieval people, then if you look at contemporary times you will find changes in the meaning of the interpretation, so the above verse fragment is interpreted with fair people, not extreme left or right, in the middle, people who have high tolerance and are role models (Quraish Shihab, 2000)

Every person who claims to be moderate should have a strong and firm opinion and have a high religious spirit. Therefore, he must be able to choose the main points of religious teachings, where he must hold a firm opinion, where he needs to be tolerant, respect other people's opinions, and not blame other people's religions. Regarding the main matters of religion, there must be no compromise in terms of belief and practice. But for religious matters where the nature of the law is debated, and there are various views, a moderate will take the legal stance that is most appropriate for him, but will not force the law to apply to other people, so that is the meaning of moderation (Lukman Hakim, 2019)

*Quraish Shihab's reinterpretation of Ibn Kathir*

In the view of these two Mufasssir, Ibnu Katsir and Quraish Shihab, their views were different from the start, starting from style and method. Religious moderation can then be understood as a perspective, attitude and behavior of always taking a middle position, always acting fairly and not going to extremes in religion (Lukman Hakim, 2019). Religious moderation in the perspective of Quraish Shihab, a famous Indonesian cleric and Muslim scholar, is an approach taught in the Islamic religion that emphasizes a balanced and tolerant understanding of different religious beliefs and practices (Mujamil, 2021).

And likewise, We have made you, O Muslims, moderate and exemplary ummatan wasathan (middle), so that your existence in that middle position is in accordance with the position of the Ka'bah which is also in the middle (Quraish Shihab, 2002). As a country with a large and multicultural population, religious moderation is a crucial idea to eliminate friction between religions or between sects. In the Islamic framework, this

term is known as Islam Wasathiyah which means Islam in the middle (Anzaikhan, 2023 & Junaidi, 2021)

Muhammad Ali As-Shalabiy (2007 AD) has written well and correctly about the problem of manhaj Al-Washatiah in the Koran through his master's thesis at Umm Darman University, Sudan, published by Mu'assasah Iqro. Egypt in 2007, with the title "Al-Washatiah fil Qur'an Al-Karim" (Ahmad, 2020).

## Conclusion

The interpretation of the Verse on Religious Moderation from the perspectives of Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shihab certainly has many differences, starting from styles, methods and backgrounds which are certainly different. So in reinterpreting and comparing Quraish Shihab, researchers found various differences and results from each Mufassir. Among them is the perspective of a verse in the Koran which contains a verse about moderation or tolerance. It is important to remember that interpretations of the Qur'an can vary, and deeper context and understanding are often needed to unearth the deeper meaning of the Qur'an's teachings on religious moderation.

Interpretation made by the Quraish Shihab This is a new view because of differences in time, era and societal culture which allows reinterpretation to occur, looking at the rapid development of the world today so that every decade there is of course a renewal in interpretation. Therefore, M. Quraish Shihab's reinterpretation of Ibn Kathir has been carried out with an explanation of the meaning that the researcher has done. Once religious moderation is understood, high tolerance will emerge.

The question of whether religious moderation needs to be reinterpreted is subjective and can trigger a variety of views. Some people may argue that religious moderation does not need to be reinterpreted, because they see it as a clear principle that can be found in existing religious teachings. However, there are also those who argue that a reinterpretation of religious moderation may be necessary in the face of different era contexts and challenges. Various factors such as social change, technological advances, and global challenges can influence religious views and practices. In facing this reality, some people argue that there needs to be reflection and adjustments in understanding and implementing religious moderation.

This important to note that reinterpretation must be done carefully, taking into account the historical context, culture, and relevant sacred texts. This must also be done with openness to differences of opinion and constructive dialogue between various religious groups and society. Ultimately, whether or not religious moderation needs to be reinterpreted is an ongoing debate in religious studies and among religious scholars and leaders. Thoughts and perspectives continue to evolve as times

change, and it is important for individuals and communities to engage in deep reflection and discussion to promote an inclusive and relevant understanding of religious moderation.

## Acknowledgments

We thank Dr. H. Syamsu Syauqani., Lc. M.A. and Agam Royana, Lc. M.Ag. as a lecturer in the Interpretation Science course has guided us in completing this scientific work. May Allah bless every knowledge we gain.

## Author Contributions

All authors carried out each stage cooperatively until this article was completed.

## Funding

This research received no external funding.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Akhmadi, A. (2019). Moderasi beragama dalam keragaman Indonesia. *Inovasi-Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan*, 13(2), 45–55. Retrieved from <https://pusdiklattekniskemenag-e-journal.id/andragogi/article/view/237>
- Anzaikhan, M., Idani, F., & Muliani, M. (2023). Moderasi Beragama sebagai Pemersatu Bangsa serta Perannya dalam Perguruan Tinggi. *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 3(1), 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v3i1.16088>
- Arikunto, S. (2019). *Prosedur penelitian*. Rineka Cipta.
- As-Shalabiy, A. M. (2007). *Al-Wasathiyah fil Qur'an Al-Karim*. Kairo: Mu'assasah Iqra' Linasyri watauzi wattarjamah.
- Dozan, W., & Turmuzi, M. (2020). *Sejarah metodologi ilmu tafsir Al-Qur'an*. Yogyakarta: Bintang Pustaka Madani.
- Fajron, A., & Tarihoran, N. (2020). *Moderasi Beragama: Perspektif Quraish Shihab dan Syech Nawawi Al-Bantani, Kajian Analisis Ayat tentang Wasathiyah di Wilayah Banten*. Retrieved from <https://repository.uinbanten.ac.id/5990/>
- Junaedi, E. (2019). Inilah moderasi beragama perspektif Kemenag. *Harmoni*, 18(2), 182–186. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i2.414>
- Junaidi, & Ninoersy, T. (2021). Nilai-Nilai Ukhuwwah dan Islam Wasathiyah Jalan Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia. *Jurnal Riset Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1(1), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.22373/jrpm.v1i1.660>
- Moleong, L. J. (2005). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Muhammad, A. bin. (2003). *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir juz 2*. Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Syafi'I. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/tafsir-ibnu->

katsir\_202112

- Mustaqim, A. (2012). *Dinamika sejarah tafsir al Qur'an: Studi aliran aliran tafsir dari periode klasik, pertengahan, hingga modern-kontemporer*. Pondok Pesantren LSQ.
- Nur, A. (2015). Konsep Wasathiyah Dalam Al-Quran;(Studi Komparatif Antara Tafsir Al-Tahrir Wa At-Tanwir Dan Aisar At-Tafasir). *Jurnal Annur*, 4(2). Retrieved from <https://ejournal.uin-suska.ac.id/index.php/Annur/article/view/2062>
- Qomar, M. (2021). *Moderasi Islam Indonesia*. IRCiSoD.
- Saefudin, L. H. (2019a). *Moderasi Beragama Kementrian Agama RI*. Retrieved from [https://jdih.kemenag.go.id/assets/uploads/regulation/Materi\\_Moderasi\\_Beragama.pdf](https://jdih.kemenag.go.id/assets/uploads/regulation/Materi_Moderasi_Beragama.pdf)
- Saefudin, L. H. (2019b). *Tanya jawab Moderasi Beragama*. Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI. Retrieved from [https://babel.kemenag.go.id/public/files/kristen/Buku\\_Saku\\_Moderasi\\_Beragama-min.pdf](https://babel.kemenag.go.id/public/files/kristen/Buku_Saku_Moderasi_Beragama-min.pdf)
- Shihab, M. Q. (2019). *Wasathiyah Wawasan Islam tentang Moderasi Beragama*. Lentera Hati Group.
- Sugiyono. (2015). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Sutrisno, A., Haqiqi, M. R., Roza, B. M., & Dalail, M. M. (2023). Qur'anic Insights on Religious Moderation and its Relevance to Religious Harmony in Indonesia. *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies*, 2(1), 102–115. <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v2i1.1470>
- Wathani, S. (2015). Epistemologi Ta'wil al-Qur'an: Sistem Interpretasi al-Qur'an Menurut Ibn Qutaybah. *Quran and Hadith Studies*, 4(1), 19. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.asia/rzgvs>