

Expression of the Campus Intellectual Group on Moderate Islam: A Preliminary Study in Indonesia and Malaysia

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Abstract: Moderation means an individual applies a balance between beliefs, strong Islamic beliefs and tolerance in understanding amidst other understandings. This kind of understanding is built on the basis of straight thinking and no exaggeration. There is a balance between abilities and paying attention to abilities as well as synergizing spiritual and material dimensions, individual and community dimensions, textual and contextual dimensions, stability and change and prioritizing actions in the aspect of equality between theo-centric and anthro-centric. This research aims to understand the basic reasons used by Indonesian and Malaysian people, especially intellectuals or lecturers and students on campus. The aim of this research is to describe a) the Islamic discourse of moderation for society or intellectuals based on Islamic knowledge and contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia; and (b) what are the basics of Islamic moderation discourse for intellectuals based on Islamic knowledge among contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia. Data is collected through interviews and work that has been published in journals or books by the subjects studied. After the data is collected, it is analyzed using descriptive (narrative) to find the core that can be used as a conclusion. The conclusion presented is that the expression of society in Malaysia regarding moderation (wasatiyah) is almost the same as in Indonesia. But among Malaysian society it is more fluid. This is because the population is diverse in ethnicity and religion, which is relatively the same in number. However, among scholars, this discourse is still considered closed and as if it does not need discussion. In reality, the life of the Islamic community in Malaysia is more extreme and fundamental. Because the challenges of secular life are more visible. Efforts to fortify the Muslim population are more serious and massive, especially among the younger and educated generations. This is a consequence of being called an Islamic country. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the expression of religious moderation is an important part of the government's program with the aim of ordering national life and preventing the emergence of fundamentalist and radical groups. More than that, it serves as material for providing solutions from researchers in the form of comments sourced from moderate experts. The target of this research is to be published in a reputable international journal.

Keywords: *Expression, Scholarly, Moderate Islam, Indonesia-Malaysia*

1. INTRODUCTION

The general concept of moderation is that an individual applies and acts in a balance between strong Islamic beliefs and tolerance in understanding amidst other understandings. This kind of understanding is built on the basis of straight thinking and no exaggeration. There is a balance between abilities and paying attention to abilities as well as synergizing spiritual and material dimensions, individual and community dimensions, textual and contextual dimensions, stability and change and prioritizing actions in the aspect of equality between theo-centric and anthro-centric.

In life, reality is different from concepts depending on the understanding and reality of society and local geographical conditions. Likewise, the understanding of the intellectual group will color society's understanding. But a uniform society will tend to understand religious moderation more narrowly and fundamentally, while a diverse society will be more relaxed. In fact, the expression of Islamic society in Malaysia appears fundamental even though the life of the community is diverse. Meanwhile, expressions in Indonesia appear more liberal even though the majority of the population

is Muslim.

This research aims to understand the basic reasons used by Indonesian and Malaysian people, especially intellectuals or lecturers and students on campus. The aim of this research is to describe a) the Islamic discourse of moderation for society or intellectuals based on Islamic knowledge and contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia; and (b) what are the basics of Islamic moderation discourse for intellectuals based on Islamic knowledge among contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious moderation is a moderate way of viewing religion, namely understanding and practicing religious teachings without extremes, both extreme right (a very rigid understanding of religion) and extreme left (a very liberal understanding of religion) [1]. The noble attitude of religious moderation in Islam is an order to its followers to always uphold truth and justice towards anyone, anytime and anywhere, including defending justice for people of different religions for the sake of upholding the truth [2].

Moderation means that individuals act in a balance between beliefs, strong Islamic beliefs and tolerance in understanding amidst other understandings [3]. In this kind of understanding, it is built on the basis of straight thinking and not exaggerating. There is a balance between abilities and paying attention to abilities as well as synergizing spiritual and material dimensions, individual and community dimensions, textual and contextual dimensions, stability and change and prioritizing actions in the aspect of equality between theo-centric and anthropo-centric [4][5].

In the traditional-classical Islamic encyclopedia, the meaning of moderation has many definitions from scholars who agree with this understanding, such as al-Thabary, Ibn Katsir, Ibn 'Assyur al-Asfahany, Wahbah al-Zuhaily, and so on [6]. For Ibn 'Ashur, the word "*wasath*" means something in the middle, there are two shoots that are equal in measure. For al-Asfahany, the term "*wasathan*" means the center between two partitions (a'un) or also means two standard boundaries. It also means protecting against behavior that goes beyond limits (*ifrath*) and extremities (*tafrith*). Meanwhile, Wahbah al-Zuhaily explains in Al-Munir's interpretation the term "*al-wasath*" which is something that is found in the center, then this meaning is also used for good character and behavior such as daring to be in the middle between the two ends.[7]

In the Qur'an it says "and thus We made you a middle nation", the meaning of the translation is "and thus We have guided you all to the straight direction, namely the religion of Islam. We moved you to the direction of the Prophet Abraham and We chose it so that We can make the Muslim community the best option, doing justice, middle in everything, no *ifrath* and *tafrith* on religious or worldly matters. And without exceeding the limits (*ghuluw*) in practicing religion and not arbitrarily carrying out their obligations. Meanwhile, Al-Tabary's opinion has a distinctive tendency, namely when giving meaning, it is often based on historical studies. There are thirteen narrations that show the meaning of "*al-wasath*" which means "*al-'adl*", because people who can be balanced can be called chosen people [8];[9].

Departing from the understanding of the scholars above, there are several special meanings contained in "*wasath*", namely: something that is in the middle, protects from transgressive actions (*ifrath*) and reduces religious teachings (*tafrith*), namely that which is chosen, fair and balanced [10]. From the terminology aspect, the meaning of the word "*wasathan*" is the middle, balance (*al-tawazun*), namely the balance between two opposing paths or two arrows, namely spiritual (*ruhiyah*) and material (*madiyah*) and between individuality (*fardiyyah*) and collectivity (*jama'iyah*). Apart from that, it is contextual (*waqi'iyah*) with textual and consistent (*tsabat*) with changes (*taghayyur*). Therefore, balance is actually a characteristic of the universe, and a characteristic of the Islamic religion as an eternal message. Almsgiving in the Islamic religious view is an act of piety if placed on the principle of balance between theo-centric (*hablun minallah*) and anthropocentric (*hablun min al-nas*).

Based on the description above, there are still differences of opinion among Muslims, especially among intellectuals regarding this issue. In this case, the researcher wants to know and understand what is the basis of thinking that approves or rejects. On this basis, the formulation of the research problem is; (a) What is the discourse of Islamic moderation for intellectuals based on Islamic

knowledge among contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia; and (b) What are the basics of Islamic moderation discourse for intellectuals based on Islamic knowledge among contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia.

This research uses a qualitative approach. The data analyzed is in the form of interview data and publications produced by the subject in the form of journals and written books. After obtaining these data they were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis [11]; [12] to obtain the core substance of moderate Islamic expression and discourse. After carrying out the analysis and knowing the results, the researcher offers a solution in the form of a description and related statement as an alternative solution regarding moderate Islam sourced from experts and moderate principles in the lives of Islamic communities with different cultural and social backgrounds.

Recently the word "moderation" has emerged among politicians who have a knowledge base of Islam which has become a debate in the world of politics. There are those who are of the view that Islamic moderation is only attached to Islam for political purposes that benefit practical politics and power. Meanwhile, there are those who believe that moderation in Islam actually exists in Islam.

This debate is very visible in the world of power and prolonged politics which is constantly voiced by moderate groups, many of whom are among bureaucrats or ruling circles. On the other hand, mainstream Islamic groups or most traditional groups want to maintain Islam like their predecessors. The issue of moderation in Islam in Indonesia has become a topic of discourse for intellectual circles, both lecturers and students on campuses and ulama in society. Although this study activity did not lead to a long-term intellectual conflict. While at first glance on campuses and in Malaysian society it feels sensitive to moderate Islam. This research will provide information and new treasures in the form of new propositions or statements regarding moderate Islamic perspectives among Indonesian and Malaysian society.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was carried out for 2 (two) years, the first year is expected to provide a description of moderate Islamic discourse for intellectuals based on Islamic knowledge and contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia; and in the second year, you will get the basics of Islamic discourse on moderation for intellectuals based on Islamic knowledge, contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia and Malaysia. In accordance with the objectives and unit of analysis, this research uses the social definition paradigm (social action) [13], [14]. Research Approach uses a qualitative approach [15]. Meanwhile, the type of research is a qualitative descriptive type. The data collection methods are observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

The collected data was analyzed using an interactive model [12]. This model views analysis as three concurrent activities: (1) data compression, (2) data display (skill), and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. Thus, exploring each of these components in more depth when researchers read the existing data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religious Moderation Religious moderation conceptually comes from the word moderation, where the word moderation itself is taken from English, namely moderation which means moderation, moderation and impartiality. Meanwhile, in the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word moderation comes from the word moderate, which refers to behavior or actions that are reasonable and not deviant. The data from the interview results of the subjects selected purposively are as follows. A Malaysian intellectual, lecturer at UM Malaya, explained that regarding moderation, in general, religious moderation is a teaching that teaches each individual to always be balanced in terms of beliefs, morals and character, which is an expression of religious teachings applied by individuals or groups. This balanced behavior can then enable each individual or group to understand each other without losing their belief in their respective religions. So it can be understood that religious moderation is a balance in understanding religious teachings, which are expressed continuously in daily life by upholding the principles of the religion one adheres to and recognizing the existence of other parties around them.

Religious moderation in Islamic terms is known in Arabic as *wasathiyah*. Where in language it means fair, main, the best and balanced choice between two opposing poles as stated by Malaysian

Intellectuals, in academic Islamic studies, Islam wasathiyyah can be called justly balanced, the middle path and the middle way of Islam, and Islam is a mediating and balancing power to play a mediating and balancing role. From this meaning it can be seen that, *wasathiyyah* Islam always emphasizes balance in order not to get caught up in attitudes or From the various meanings explained above, it can be concluded that, religious moderation is a characteristic that every individual must have, which then protects the individual from behavior that tends to extremes. Moderation can then be referred to as a person's way of thinking and acting in seeing the various differences that exist around them. And if moderation is well understood by society, it will lead to an attitude of tolerance between religions and humans as a whole. The problem was further stated by Malaysian intellectuals as follows, that tolerance itself can be interpreted as being open-minded, meaning that individuals can like anything, accept different opinions from the person they are talking to, do not disturb other people and disturb other people's beliefs. In this context, tolerance becomes an attitude of accepting existing differences and has a function, namely, being able to express one's own opinion while being able to accept other people's opinions without mixing one's beliefs.

Therefore, when we talk about moderation, we will automatically talk about tolerance. This is because the two are mutually bound to each other, where if individuals have an attitude of moderation within themselves and apply it in everyday life, it will give birth to tolerant individuals. Thus, moderation is very important to instill from an early age in the young generation of this nation. because it is by understanding moderation that individuals will have an attitude of tolerance which will have a good effect on a diverse nation and country like Indonesia, where there are various ethnicities, customs and religions.

In terms of implications, in Indonesia, educational institutions hold heavy responsibilities, as Ridwan Nasir said, educational institutions (schools) are a very appropriate means of channeling understanding about the importance of moderation values. Especially in Indonesia which has a religious population in it, including ethnicity, customs and religion. Therefore, it is important for every school to foster a good mindset in each of its students. It also provides an understanding that an exclusive attitude that gives rise to acts of violence in the name of religion will actually damage the structure of a nation with its various religious and ethnic adherents. Responding to situations like this, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, in its efforts to strengthen religious moderation, has included it in one of its medium-term plans. This is marked by the creation of the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) for the 2020-2024 period.

Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas in his speech at the Dissemination Webinar which discussed the results of research on "Portrait of Religious Moderation among Muslim Students", said that "the mainstream of spreading the principles of religious moderation through educational institutions has become very strategic" where the focus of the study was on three Islamic campuses which in Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta. which was held at the Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah. This explanation is confirmed by Indonesian Intellectuals as follows, Educational institutions are without exception very important for building an understanding of religious moderation as a whole in the context of relationships between humans as social creatures. where institutions like this teach to develop sensitivity in students about how to respond to various existing differences. Why educational institutions, because that is where deviant understandings begin to enter which then give birth to intolerant behavior towards fellow social creatures. So how should education play a role in spreading understandings about religious moderation in Indonesia?

To answer or respond to issues related to religious moderation in Indonesia through educational institutions, you must start from the existing system, where the education system must also monitor developments and anticipate various developments that are currently occurring in the era of globalization. Where increasingly developing science, technology and communications can influence people's thought patterns and lifestyles. and this will continue to progress and develop which will ultimately influence society and also the current and future generation of young Indonesians.

Indonesian intellectuals say that in Indonesia the discourse of moderation has become a reality among pupils and students. In implementing learning in educational institutions based on religious moderation, the most important thing is how to place goals and objectives that will be achieved within a mutually determined time, in order to realize these goals and objectives. So, in general there are

three strategies for implementing religious moderation-based learning.

First, insert (insert) moderation content in each material. Most of the material taught in schools or lectures essentially contains religious moderation content at all levels of education under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. However, what is most emphasized here is how the substance of the teachings of moderation in sports can be applied in everyday life.

Second, maximizing an approach that produces students who have critical thinking, respect differences, respect other people's opinions, are tolerant, democratic, dare to convey ideas and are responsible.

Third, organize programs, education and provision with a special theme of religious moderation. However, this will add to the burden on students because of the additional time spent studying. To maximize these conditions, the content of religious moderation is not required to stand alone as a subject in an educational institution, both at the basic education level up to higher education. However, it is mandatory for teachers to always include substantive religious moderation content in every subject taught. without realizing that what they were taught was a form of religious moderation.

Fourth, evaluation, where educators make observations of students simultaneously in order to measure achievements in the teaching process using methods such as dialogue and direct interaction with students. From here, educators can find out the extent of students' understanding and experience of religious moderation. Social Media In this day and age, religious life is becoming increasingly complex, there are many quite rapid and extreme changes experienced by each individual, even at the level of the Nation or State where the differences are very clear before our eyes, starting from the development of science. and information technology which is characterized by the ease with which individuals can access what is available on social media. The development of technology and communication is currently entering digital industry 4.0. It is called an era of disruption which results in intolerant and radical changes in aspects of life.

It is this development and progress in information technology that has given rise to an incredibly massive radical attitude which has had an effect on individual religious behavior. From this it can be said that the progress of the internet has had both positive and negative impacts, which can then influence the religious behavior of an individual or group. The question arises, why have developments in technology and communication, in this case social media, had such an influence on both social behavior and religious behavior? According to Malaysian Intellectuals, this is because social or digital media has a networking nature and does not favor one group, it is interactive in which individuals are involved. And the most dangerous thing is, the narratives that are built often contain deviations in meaning and manipulation is very rampant. Various groups can access the information in it freely without weighing and filtering the contents of the content. This then results in immoderate, intolerant and radical behavior because the messages received are not in accordance with the substance of actual religious teachings. The widespread understanding of exclusive religion is widespread on social media, this is supported by easy and fast access to social media, which then creates space for exclusive or radical groups to spread narratives (doctrines) in the name of religion to social media users. . just like Facebook. According to Malaysian Intellectuals, Facebook, which is massive in content that leads to radical actions, recorded 7,160 pieces of content that lead to the doctrine of radicalism and terrorism. Apart from Facebook, the doctrine of radicalism and terrorism is also found on other social media, and these various media have the ability to campaign (voice) for religious moderation. Campaigns themselves are a form of communication that can take the form of posters, billboards, speeches and advertising.

According to Indonesian Intellectuals, in the process, the message or content becomes very influential in launching narratives for the development of religious moderation on social media, which contain symbols or symbols whose meanings have been agreed upon. The substance of the message conveyed is very important in conveying the narrative of religious moderation on social media. as said by other Indonesian intellectuals, regarding understanding communication and how to apply it, there are three factors that are taken into consideration in the narrative or message. First, the message code, using symbols that are neatly arranged and have meaning for other people. Second, message material, the materials that will be conveyed. Third, the form of the message, making the message as attractive as possible so that readers or viewers are interested in the content and contents contained in it. Siah

then explained what must be paid attention to and taken into consideration in the process of conveying narratives on social media. There are six important categories in creating a message.

First, Clear, meaning that the message conveyed must be clear and easy to understand and not rambling, not using distorted figurative meanings. Second, Correct, has been tested for truth, is based on facts and does not contain lies. Third, Concise, means complete and does not reduce the true meaning. Fourth, Comprehensive, the message is comprehensive and can be understood by the recipients of the message. Fifth, Concrete, the message is real and can be accounted for and is based on data and facts. Sixth, Complete, the message conveyed is complete and systematically arranged. If all the elements described above can be implemented comprehensively and attractively, then the strategy for developing religious moderation, both in educational institutions and on social media, will run well, then it will have an impact on the behavior of Indonesian society which upholds religious moderation, and becomes an ethical value. in the life of the nation and state with various tribes, customs and religions in this pluralistic Indonesia.

According to Intellectual Indonesia, the rise of radicalism and intolerant behavior in the name of religion in Indonesia, which has a diverse population, is increasingly widespread. This then became a doctrine that affected various groups of society. This is a very dangerous threat to individuals, society and even the country. How could it not be, they use education and social media to spread radical and intolerant ideas. Therefore, to inhibit or counter attacks, it is appropriate to use the same device. Namely education and social media to spread the idea of religious moderation in education, social media and various levels of society in this country. Educators, both formal and non-formal, can work together to increase knowledge of religious moderation among students. Social media users can do the same thing to create a kind of group that operates virtually to spread or voice messages of religious moderation in cyberspace. Because with this, society and all groups within the framework of this country will be protected from the ideas of radicalism, and automatically acts of terrorism will disappear from the Indonesian nation.

After reviewing in detail the verses that will be discussed, as well as the *asbab al-nuzul* verse and the *munasabah* verse, the focus will shift to the central issue, namely the interpretation of the *ummah wasata* according to Ibn 'Asyur and M. Quraish Sihab, followed by an analysis of the *ummah wasata* in modern times. Interpretation of Ibn 'Assyur and M. Quraish Sihab regarding the *Ummah Wasatan*. Tafsir Ibn 'Assyur' Ibn 'Assyur describes the *ummah wasata* as follows in his work *al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir: Wasath*, in the literal sense of the word is a place where something else is circled, and there is no difference in distance between the two, and when someone wants to go, someone has to go through something. For example, consider going to a location in the heart of the hills where there are wild animals and cannot reach the center unless they travel through the surrounding hills. So, if seen from the perspective of *wasath*, it is a conflict between two terrible principles, such as there are characters who are very good at one end and evil at the other end, another example of generosity is *wasat* from being stingy and wasteful.

The sentence *wasath* can also mean *khiyar* (chosen one) as the word of Allah SWT, interpreted fairly. Interpretation as narrated by al-Turmudzi and Said al-Khudri. Meanwhile, Ibn 'Assyur suggested that the term be interpreted in two ways, namely *khiyar* and just. The pronunciation of the *ummah* is determined by the pronunciation of *wasath* in the form of *muzakkar*, because *isim jamid* includes *muzakkar* and *mu'annas* naturally. Because with the use of *masdar*, this verse is a praise for Muslims, because Allah Ta'ala has prioritized them and created them as *wasath* people. Imam Fahrudin said that *wasath* is understood as being in the middle between exaggeration and understatement in religion. Unlike Christians who are too discriminating, who exaggerate the divinity of the Prophet Isa to the point of making him the son of God, and unlike Jews who are irresponsible by changing the contents of the book and denigrating the Messenger (Prophet Musa as.).

On the basis of *ijma'ul 'ulama*, *ushul fiqh* scholars explain why this verse can be used as a proof and explanation: First, according to Fahrudin al-Rozi, Allah Ta'ala has educated this people about their virtues and qualities. If this Ummah only shows its vices, it will be devoid of virtue. Perfect justice is defined as being in the middle of excess and deficiency. Second, according to al-Baidowi, if Muslims agree to falsehood, their justice will disappear (reduced) to the point that it is no longer acceptable to describe Muslims as just (*wasath*). Thirdly, according to academic groups, this verse is addressed to

the Companions, with whom they cannot agree on anything negative. This verse, according to Ibn 'Assyur, shows that the essence of justice is used to flatter all Muslims, not just academics. This verse shows the legitimacy of *ijma'*, where the situation of a particular individual reflects the condition of society as a whole. This verse shows the authenticity of all people whose ways originate from the *Shari'a*, the *qaul* originates from religion with certainty, namely the agreement of Muslims regarding the nisbat of the words, actions or characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad, which includes provisions on the main things or mujmal explanations such as the number of rak'ahs, the nature of prayer, and pilgrimage.

Interpretation of M. Quraish Sihab "*And thus, we have created you, O Ummah Wasata (center) of Muslims, moderate and exemplary, so that your presence in the center corresponds to the location of the Kaaba in the center.*" The middle position makes people less biased left and right, which might encourage humans to be fair. The middle position allows a person to be seen from multiple perspectives, and at that point, he can be an example to all concerned. Additionally, this middle position allows the ability to observe everyone and everything. Allah has placed Muslims in the middle position. Furthermore, a martyr in the meaning of this verse is someone who testifies to the truth of his attitudes and actions, and also testifies to himself, that is, by setting an example with all good activities. There are also those who interpret the *ummah wasata* as being in the middle way in its relationship with God and the earth. Not rejecting the existence of God, but also not supporting polytheism (many Gods). Islam believes that God exists and that He is One.

The Middle Ages are also a Muslim perspective on world life; do not reject or condemn it as fictitious, but also do not defend the idea that the life of the world is everything. According to the Islamic view of life, apart from this world there is an afterlife. Success in the afterlife depends on one's beliefs and actions in this world. Man must not give in to materialism; while the gaze is directed upwards, the feet must remain firmly planted on the ground. Islam encourages its adherents to acquire material goods with worldly value to a certain degree. The part of the verse above (surah al-Baqarah verse 143) which says that you, O Muslims, bear witness to human deeds is also interpreted in the sense that Muslims will bear witness to the good and bad of human ideas and actions in the future. They understand the meaning of the future from the use of the verb future (*mudhari'* or future tense). According to this verse fragment, this verse shows a conflict of viewpoints and a conflict between different isms. However, in the end, it is the *Wasathiya* people who will bear witness to the rights and wrongs of these beliefs and isms; Global society will return to referring to God's values, not the isms that continually emerge. At that time, the Apostle will testify whether the attitudes and actions of Muslims are in line with Divine guidance or not. This also implies that Muslims will be able to be witnesses in the above sense as long as their actions are in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH).

We cannot deny that science, economics, culture and technology will always develop; Thus, a good Muslim is someone who can apply the idea of *ummah wasatha* to all aspects of current developments. The idea of moderation is referred to as *alwasathiya* in the Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah verse 143. This term comes from a root word that originally meant "the middle between two limits, or, more precisely, the middle". Moderation cannot be defined in its entirety until it is reduced to a single entity consisting of four main components: honesty, openness, compassion, and adaptability.

Typology of Religious Moderation The term moderation borrows the Latin word *moderatio* (nothing more and nothing less). The term can also imply both excessive and deficient self-control. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the term moderation is understood in two senses, namely reducing violence and avoiding extremes. For example, if someone is considered moderate, it implies the individual acts as they should, reasonably, on average, not excessively. This shows that the term moderate contains a meaning that is more inclined towards its meaning in the aspect of balancing the dimensions of morality, character and beliefs, both when a person is viewed as an individual and when connected to government institutions. Meanwhile, in Arabic, moderation is most often referred to as *wasath* or *wasathiyah*. The terms *tawassuth* (middle), *ta'adul* (fair), and *tawazun* all have the same meaning (balanced).

These phrases can be combined into "wasathiyah" because they have very similar or even identical meanings. Wasathiyah is Arabic for "middle way" or "balance" between two opposing or different

things. Medium is *al-wasath* in Yusuf, Qardhawi's al-terminology which implies the middle path, neither extreme to the right nor extreme to the left. In terms of religion, religious moderation refers to attitudes and behavior that are illiberal or extreme. According to Indonesian Intellectuals, moderate Islam (wasathiyah) is a strategy or methodology for placing Islam in world culture. Moderate Islam, in other words, is the actualization of *Islam rahmatan lil'alam*. In moderate Islam, the emphasis is on the need for a flexible approach to Islamic law and the rejection of strict interpretations of the Qur'an. Khaled Abou El Fadl argues that the term moderate refers to the texts of the Koran, which constantly command us to be moderate people.

Apart from that, in the hadith of the Prophet it is said that the Prophet's habit was to always choose the middle path (moderate) when facing difficulties. Apart from that, moderate Islam, according to Abou el Fadl, is a Muslim who has a firm stance towards the Islamic religion (strong faith), respects other people's worship of God regardless of their religion, and firmly believes that Islam is a religion that is relevant to their religion. Both the past, current and future periods (all eras of life). The faith takes the form of moderate Islam, which accepts previous achievements and then applies them to the present, adapting them to the contemporary environment to provide solutions to current problems. Meanwhile, Radical Islam is another term for people who adhere to the expression "*al-Islamu dinu wa ad-daulah*" (Islam is religion and state), which refers to the idea that state and religion cannot be separated, with God as sovereign and shari'ah as positive law. In the Indonesian context, radical Islam refers to Islamic groups who want radical and comprehensive change in the way Islamic ideology and teachings are implemented in society and the state; they aspire to establish an Islamic state, and thus continue to make various efforts to replace the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Abdul Jamil Wahab provides several keywords "Discourse and Contestation of Indonesian Islamic Variants" to help readers easily distinguish between moderate and radical Islam in Indonesia, especially by examining the meaning of several current Indonesian social issues. Limitations and Basic Principles of Religious Moderation To be able to assess a person's religious knowledge and behavior, there must be measurements and limits, such as whether the individual is categorized as moderate or non-moderate (extreme). To accurately address these issues, one must consult authoritative sources, including religious scriptures, state constitutions, and popular consensus. Religious moderation must be understood as a balanced religious attitude which is characterized by restraint in applying the rules of one's own religion and an attitude of respect (tolerance) towards the practices of followers of other religions. This balance will benefit society by preventing extreme attitudes and religious fanaticism. The existence of this moderation becomes a bridge between two deviant poles of religious thought, namely the extreme right occupied by conservatives, and the extreme left occupied by liberals. In other words, moderation is essential to promote global tolerance and peace.

With moderation, it is possible to achieve cultural and bodily balance, and the fruit of that balance is peace. This is especially true in the context of Indonesia, which is a multicultural nation with a plurality of diverse religions; thus, moderation is not an option, but a necessity (must). At a practical level, the Islamic version of moderation or middle way can be divided into four categories: moderate in the context of faith, moderate in the context of worship, moderate in the context of morals (character), and moderate in the context of *tasyri Aqidah* (enforcement of sharia). When it comes to *aqeedah*, or Islamic doctrine that is in accordance with human nature, moderates fall somewhere between those who believe in superstition and myth and those who reject everything metaphysical. Along with belief in the supernatural, Islam allows human reason to logically construct its doctrines. Even though Islam is moderate in terms of worship, it also requires its followers to perform worship in very limited ways and quantities, such as praying five times a day, fasting once a year, and hajj once in a lifetime. This is a way to achieve balance or occupy a middle point between human obligations as caliph *fi al-ardh* and the obligations of Allah's followers who must worship Him. Islamic teachings, although moderate in terms of morality (characteristics), recognize and encourage the existence of mental and physical components in humans.

Therefore, humans are urged to always appreciate the joy and beauty of the earth, while the element of spirit urges them to seek guidance from heaven. Apart from that, God included two additional components into the spirit element as a symbol of human perfection, namely reason and desire. The balance of components inherent in people promotes a balanced nature in human behavior and everyday

social interactions. Where reason is able to triumph over desire to direct and encourage us to virtue. In the context of *tasyri* (creation of *shari'ah*), moderation refers to balance in determining Islamic rules such as *halal* and *haram*, which are always related to benefit-harm, pure-unclean, and clean-dirty.

In other words, the Islamic standard for determining halal and haram is the benefit of the people, or what is called *kalbu al-mashalih wa dar-u al-mafasid* (efforts to bring benefit and prevent damage). In Indonesia, the discourse of moderation (*wasathiyah*) is structured based on three basic principles: moderation of thought, moderation of movement, and moderation of action. With regard to the first principle, moderation in religious thought is recognized by the ability to synthesize text and context. For example, when reading the holy book, moderation is not only understood through the *dhohir* condition of the text, which then removes elements of context. In Islamic thought, moderation means combining the two dynamically to achieve a more comprehensive understanding, thereby producing moderate Muslims who are not only textually correct, but also contextually correct. Because it is very important to understand Islam from an environmental perspective, both spatial and temporal. The second principle is moderation in the movement, namely in the activity of spreading (preaching) religion with the aim of encouraging good and avoiding evil. It must be emphasized that the movement must not use violence or coercion to welcome goodness. Instead, people should act in a kind, pleasant, and polite manner without intending to harm or judge others. Must be able to maintain a pleasant face rather than an angry face, and must always prioritize love above those who have a spirit of hatred. The third element, moderation in summary, a moderate religious attitude is more likely to be achieved if a person has three characteristics, namely knowledge, honesty and courage. Wise in attitude as a result of depth of religious knowledge, sincerity in acting without giving in to temptation, and courage in expressing opinions based on knowledge without giving in to self-justification to accept the truth of others.

5. CONCLUSION

People's expressions in Malaysia regarding moderation (*wasathiyah*) are almost the same as in Indonesia. But among Malaysian society it is more fluid. This is because the population is diverse in ethnicity and religion, which is relatively the same in number. However, among scholars, this discourse is still considered closed and as if it does not need discussion. In reality, the life of the Islamic community in Malaysia is more extreme and fundamental. Because the challenges of secular life are more visible. Efforts to fortify the Muslim population are more serious and massive, especially among the younger and educated generations. This is a consequence of being called an Islamic country.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the expression of religious moderation is an important part of the government's program with the aim of bringing order to the nation's life and avoiding the emergence of fundamentalist and radical groups. This is a policy pursued by the Ministry of Religion in various fields to encourage a moderate understanding of religion in Indonesia's diverse society.

The programs, First, to begin with, promote religious moderation among prospective brides and grooms through pre-marital counseling programs. Second, promoting religious moderation among young activists, students, lecturers and other religious leaders through cadre training for religious moderation instructors. Third, it requires all universities in Indonesia, especially Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI), to create Moderation Houses, with the aim of defending all aspects of higher education from conservative views and religious extremism. Fourth, Ma'had Al-Jami'ah PTKI. Fifth, to strengthen religion for lecturers who do not have an Islamic religious education background, it is recommended that a series of Islamic strengthening programs be established, such as regular discussions or short courses on religious moderation, as well as other programs that ensure the continuity of activities. Sixth, PTKI's main task is *tafaqquh fii ad-diin*, namely the determination of religion. Seventh, improving the methodology of Islamic studies through curriculum reform within PTKI, with special emphasis on courses in critical thinking, Sufism, Islamic cultural history, and Islamic reform. Eighth, establish a policy, namely the need for all State Civil Apparatus (ASN) and TNI (TNI), both active and in the recruitment process, to have a moderate religious perspective.

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