

Revealing Religious Moderation: Hermeneutics Study in Al-Qur'an and Tripitaka Scripture

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the role of religious moderation in strengthening unity amid the diversity of Indonesian society, which is rich in ethnic, linguistic, and religious variations focusing on Islam and Buddhism. Using a hermeneutic and qualitative approach that combines theoretical, philosophical, and critical analysis, this study explores the principles of religious moderation as depicted in the Qur'an and the Tripitaka. It aims to discover ways to manage diversity in Indonesia and prevent religious conflicts, contributing to scholarly discussion on how religious moderation can support peaceful Coexistence in a diverse society. The finding highlights the support of Islam and Buddhism for the concept of moderation and their rejection of extremism, which is in line with the national principles of "Unity in diversity" (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika). The study concludes that implementing religious moderation based on tolerance and mutual respect is key to maintaining harmony and avoiding inter-religious friction, offering a practical framework for more inclusive social integration.

Keywords: Hermeneutics; Moderation; Al-Qur'an; Tripitaka; Scripture.

INTRODUCTION

Lately the, Muslims - especially the modernists - have used Hermeneutics a lot to explore the contents and content of the Koran (Çelik, 2023). Some use this knowledge in interpreting the Koran to place it as a complement and some as a subelement. The use of hermeneutics in the world of interpretation of the Koran is a new thing that has never been done by the previous *mufassir*. In the Islamic scientific tradition, the science of interpretation has been known, and it functions to interpret the Koran, so this knowledge is considered to be well-established in its field. In terms of epistemology and methodology, this science has been recognized as capable of carrying out its task of exploring the contents of the Koran. Indonesia is one of the cultural countries who has many different cultures, ethnic, religions, language and customs that laid the foundation of the state as Pancasila to establish the State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

One of the problems of diversity in Indonesia is the tendency for inter-religious divisions, especially those caused by extremist and radical currents that damage the harmony of citizens in general. According to Setara Institute, during 2020, there were 62 acts of intolerance, 32 reports of desecration of religion, 17 rejections of places of worship activities (Institute, 2021). This fact is a strong enough argument for the government to strengthen tolerance between religions and eradicate all forms of radicalism with various real action programs. One of the programs implemented is religious moderation. In Islam, there is the concept of *ummatan* wasatan, which is aimed at individuals and groups in teaching the balance between the development of era and Syari'ah, which aims to implement human values that are tolerant, recognize religious, cultural and political plurality and affirms the rights of minorities. In the early 20th century, during the period of Dutch colonialism, Buddhism saw a revival in what is now Indonesia (Yulianti, 2022) also has. The concept of religious moderation is aimed at upholding brotherhood and prosperity. Applying the Buddhist principle, "do no bad deeds, increase good deeds, purify the heart and mind." The principle that means the middle way or moderation directs humans not to go to extremes and always do good to fellow humans to reduce all forms of extremism that harm society.

The paradox of the moderation gap to the lack of implication has become an issue that has attracted the attention of scholars. Some argue that it discusses the concept of religious moderation in Buddhism, specifically through the middle way or the noble eightfold path (JMBD). The author explains how extreme attitudes, intolerance, radicals, and terrorism are manifestations of uncontrolled greed and hatred and how JMBD can help combat these issues.

Practicing religious moderation can help individuals become more tolerant, accepting of differences, and less prone to extremist views and actions. Overall, this article provides valuable insights into the concept of religious moderation in Buddhism and its potential applications in promoting peace and harmony in diverse societies (Purnomo Ratna Paramita, 2021). The concept of moderation relying to the Muslim and Buddhist perspectives, which explores the similarities and common ground between these two concepts, highlighting a shared emphasis on moderation, balance, and avoiding extremism. Both *Ummatan Wasatan* and *Majjhima-Patipada* encourage avoiding extremism, be it religious fundamentalism or excessive materialism (Yusuf, 2023).

Current studies aim to reveal the similarities between Islam and Buddhism, such as the work of (Hosein, 1972) and (Yahya, 2003), which tries to analyze the basic beliefs and major themes of the two religions comparatively. Yet, their objectives do not provide a significant meeting point to create a better space for understanding and interfaith cooperation between the two religions. As a result, Harun Yahya attempted to criticize Buddhism using Islamic quotes. Similarly, these works lack detailed explanations of the conceptual ideas that promote peaceful coexistence between Buddhists and Muslims. Other scholars' (Novak, 2017)'s work is a significant effort to elucidate some structural similarities between the two beliefs. Similar to (Yusuf, 2023) and (Berzin, 2008), findings focus on historical encounters rather than identifying doctrinal or philosophical similarities. Likewise, these works aim not to compare specific spiritual practices to foster buddhis-Muslim interfaith understanding. Other scholars argue with the different methods that the concept of *Brahmaviharas* in Buddhism and *Maqasid al-Shariah* in Islam to promote peaceful Coexistence and emphasize love and justice as fundamental principles, their significance in fostering inter-religious understanding and reconciliation among diverse religious communities (Ashath & Nor, 2021) (Ashath, 2021). Those findings contrast with the argument (Obuse, 2014) that Islam and Buddhism are frequently portrayed as two entities that are vastly different and irreconcilable doctrinally, with their similarities confined to the ethical-philosophical spectrum. This limitation renders the concept of theology nearly nonsensical. The latest research highlights the importance of implementing moderation in today's digital era to create a moderate generation that is not easily influenced by radical ideas propagated from cyberspace (Nisa et al., 2021). Still, there are no works published for promoting religious moderation interfaith through the concepts of *Ummatan Wasatan* of Muslims and *Majjhima Pattipada* of Buddhist.

The highlighted issue leads to the following question: how does the concept of religious moderation from both religions contribute to increasing pluralism and tolerance among religious communities? This paper investigates the fundamental roles of Buddhists (*Majjhima patipada*) and *ummatan wasatan* method in framing a harmonious life by implementing interfaith moderation values. The similarities between these two concepts are hoped to foster a better interfaith understanding.

METHODS

The research discussed in this article is a qualitative study aimed at deeply exploring and understanding the concept of religious moderation in the Qur'an and the Tripitaka scriptures. This approach focuses more on conceptual and theoretical understanding rather than quantitative measurement, which involves text analysis and interpretation of meanings. According to Creswell, qualitative research is also described as an ongoing model in a natural setting, allowing researchers to develop a high level of detail from experience involvement. One identifier of qualitative research is the social factors of phenomena investigated from the participant's perspective. Various research designs utilize qualitative research techniques to frame the research approach. Consequently, different techniques dramatically affect the explored research strategies (Marvasti, 2018). The data collection process includes literature study and document analysis, where research examines religious texts to identify and understand sections related to the principle of spiritual moderation and review relevant secondary literature.

The hermeneutic method encompassing theoretical, philosophical, and critical hermeneutics was adopted to delve into the meanings of religious moderation contained within these texts. This approach aims to deepen the understanding of how teachings of religious moderation can be applied in a pluralistic society such as Indonesia to avoid inter-religious conflicts and reinforce the values of unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). Through this hermeneutics analysis, the study hopes to contribute to academic and universal comprehension of religious moderation and promote peaceful coexistence among religious communities. The hermeneutic approach allows researchers to comprehensively understand how religious moderation is articulated and practiced in Islam and Buddhism and its implications for religious and social life in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religious Moderation in Al-Qur'an and Tripitaka Scripture

1. *Ummatan Wassatan* (Middle notion in Al-Qur'an)

Moderation is a central pillar of the Islamic faith. In the context of diversity in all spheres, including religion, culture, race, and the nation itself (Darlis, 2017), moderate Islam is an extremely pertinent religious understanding. The implementation of moderation in the notion of religion in Indonesia is to moderate understanding of religion, which means that the understanding of religious moderation must be contextual, not textual. This is linked to Indonesia's diverse ethnicities, customs, and cultures.

Wasathiyah, an Arabic word that is used in Islamic terminology to describe practicing moderation, is known. Wasathiyah in this context, refers to what is fair, essential, and balanced between two opposing viewpoints. The phrase "the best choice" is known as "*wasathiyah*" in Arabic. Regardless of the word used, they all refer to the same concept, which is "fair," which in this instance refers to picking a middle ground between opposing extremes (Kamal, 2015). Additionally, the word wasath is defined as "everything that is good according to its object" in the book "Religious Moderation" by the Ministry of Religion's Drafting Team (Yanti, 2019). For instance, "generous" denotes a mindset somewhere between frugal and extravagant, whereas "brave" denotes a mindset somewhere between cowardly and desperate. The Indonesian Ministry of Religion Compilation Team (2019:16) lists a number of more Arabic examples after that.

Unfortunately, this crucial idea from the Qur'an is currently overshadowed by the extreme viewpoints of a select few, who use the political philosophy of Islamism, which emerged in the 20th century as a political critique of the secular ideology of Muslim nationalism, to support their positions and actions (Yusuf, 2023). In other words, the terminology of *ummatan wasathan* or *wasathiyah* Islam in Islam is a key to reach tolerance in society. The Qur'anic concept of *Ummatan Wasatan* (middle nation or people of moderation) is enshrined in the following verse:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

Similarly, We have made you (Muslims) a middle nation) so that you may be witnesses to the (actions of) mankind and that the Prophet (Prophet Muhammad) may be a witness to your (actions) (Al-Baqarah [2]: 148).

Ummatan wasathan is referred to as a moderate ummah or as Wasathiyah Islam, a picture of a "middle" ummah that does not tend to the left or right, an ummah who mediates

between other ummah. These people will later become intermediaries and guides for other people. In reality, humans cannot avoid things that are opposite. Therefore, Ummatan Wasathiyyah implements the elements of rabbaniyyah (divinity) and insaniyyah (humanity), combines maddiyyah (materialism) and spiritualism (spiritualism), combines revelation (revelation) and reason (reason), between maslahah ammah (al-jamāiyyah) and individual maslahah (al-fardiyyah) (Almu'tasim, 2019). Al-Asfahaniy defines "wasathan" with "sawa'un" which is the middle between the two limits, atan with fairness, the middle or standard or mediocre, wasathan also means to guard against ifrath and tafrih. The words wasath with various derivations in the Qur'an total 3 times, namely sura al-Baqarah verses 143, 238, sura al-Qalam verse 48 (Al-Ragīb al-Isfahānī, 2009).

Meanwhile, Ibn 'Asyur defines the word "wasath" with two meanings. First, according to etymology, the word wasath means something that is in the middle, or something that has two ends that are comparable in size. Second, the meaning of wasath is Islamic values built on a straight and moderate mindset, not exaggerating in certain matters. As for the meaning of "ummatan wasathan" in surah al-Baqarah verse 143 is a just and elected people. That is, this Muslim ummah is the perfect religious community, the best morals, the most important charity. Allah swt has bestowed knowledge, gentleness of character, justice, and goodness that is not given to other people. Therefore, they become "ummatan wasathan", a perfect and just people who will be witnesses for all mankind on the Day of Resurrection. According to (Yusuf, 2023), the idea of ummatan wasatan suggests that Muslims should maintain friendly and reciprocal relationships with other communities in accordance with the Qur'anic perspective on religious plurality, which is represented in the following verses;

...وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ

“Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation. However, God wants to test you about the gift He has bestowed upon you. So, compete in doing good (Al-Maidah [5]: 48)”

2. *Majjhima-Patipada* (Middle way in Tripitaka)

To delve into the modern revival of Buddhism in Indonesia, it is crucial to recognize its historical roots in the region. Archaeological findings, including temples and inscriptions, showcase the enduring legacy of Buddhism. (Aciri, 2016) sheds light on Esoteric Buddhism, a variant that flourished in Java and Sumatra from the 7th to the 13th centuries. Buddhism positions religious moderation as the core of Buddhist teachings. Moderation means middle-

class, balanced, not extreme, and fair in religion. Buddhists believe that anyone can follow the Noble Eightfold Path, regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender, or cultural conventions, to free oneself from the extreme perspectives (greed and hatred) that are the source of suffering. Following are the eight guiding principles: “Right views, right intent, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.”(Trenckner & Chalmers, 1888).

One can reach enlightenment (nirvana) through adhering to the eightfold path's course of wisdom, moral behavior, and mental discipline. Adopting the right views (samma-ditthi) and right intentions (samma-sankappa), the first two required practices, place emphasis on the growth of the panna (wise/wisdom) dimension of personality. These make up the necessary preparations for adopting the Middle Way. These include a clear conceptual grasp of reality, which will enable one to act with the proper intention when faced with life-or-death situations and to perceive things as they truly are (Ashath, 2021). The subsequent three practices, namely samma-vaca (right speech), samma kammanta (right action), and samma-ajiva (right livelihood), emphasize the sila (ethical development) of the personality as a means of breaking the cycle of suffering. Restraining oneself from unethical behavior will keep one from speaking or acting in a way that might taint one's conscience. Mental cleansing through ethical conduct will lead to clear concentration (Bhutto & Munir, 2014).

Buddhism is often referred to as “*The Religion of Peace*” because its teachings emphasize self-awareness as a means to sustain peace in physical, verbal, and internal aspects (Tanabe, 2016). In order to become attuned to the Middle Way, the final three practices of the eightfold path—samma vayama (right effort), samma-sati (right mindfulness), and samma-samadhi (right concentration)—place a strong emphasis on cultivating mental discipline. This will help one deal with the various facets of the human experience with mental peace, relaxation, and composure and guard against falling victim to skewed viewpoints. However, enlightenment requires going beyond simple intellectual comprehension: "Enlightenment consists in fully internalizing that understanding, realizing it in its truest sense, and therefore silencing the desires. The Buddha's Middle Way is the road to liberation by overcoming the forces of the five skandhas (aggregates), which are the mental formations and conditioning that cause suffering, such as body/matter, sensation/feeling, perception, and mundane consciousness to which one clings and thereby suffers. One believes they are the genuine self, yet they are not (Dhammadhîro, 2018).

The five aggregates are mara (demons), and they are what ties and attach one to the others. The Eightfold Path's Middle Way is a means of liberation from attachment to the Five Aggregates or overcoming materialism. The Buddhist Middle Way appears to be a viable solution to the modern scourge of excessive materialism, which is posing a threat to all forms of religion. The Middle Way is the path of avoiding extremes of anger and fanaticism as well as hedonism and asceticism. It is the path of moderation, peace, and compassion. The path leads to the realization of sunyata (emptiness). Upon attaining nirvana, one does not abandon the Middle Way but continues its practice to develop further one's adherence to morality, meditation, and wisdom. The Middle way is explained further in Dhamanapada (Yusuf, 2023).

1. Violence: “All beings tremble before violence. All fear death. All love life. See yourself in other. Then whom can you hurt? What harm can you do? He who seeks happiness. By hurting those who seek happiness. Will never find happiness. For your brother is like you. He wants to be happy. Never harm him. And when you leave this life, you too will find happiness.” This passage encapsulates a profound teaching on empathy, non-violence, and the pursuit of happiness, principles deeply rooted in many spiritual and philosophical traditions.
2. Anger: “Let go of anger. Let go of pride. When you are bound by nothing, You go beyond sorrow”. Anger is like a chariot careering wildly. He who curbs his anger is the true charioteer. Others merely hold the reins. With gentleness, overcome anger. With generosity, overcome meanness. With truth, overcome deceit. This passage emphasizes the transformative power of letting go of negative emotions such as anger and pride, suggesting that freedom from these bindings enables one to transcend suffering. Anger is depicted as a destructive force, likening an uncontrolled temper to an unguided chariot, implying that true mastery over oneself comes from restraint and compassion.

Hermeneutic Study: The Meanings of “Religious Moderation” in al-Qur’an and Tripitaka in Religious Actor Perception

Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word hermeneutic, which means to interpret. Hermeneutics, as the art of interpreting, requires three components: text, interpreter, and delivery to listeners. Hermeneutics plays the role of explaining what kind of text the maker of the text wants. According to (Rahman, 2018) the word Hermeneutics originally referred to the name of the Ancient Greek god, Hermes whose job was to convey news from the Supreme

God addressed to humans. Husein Nashr argues that Hermes is none other than the prophet Idris As., who is mentioned in the Koran. According to the legend circulating among the Islamic boarding schools, Prophet Idris job was as a weaver. If the profession of a weaver is associated with the Greek myth about the role of the god Hermes, it turns out that there is a positive correlation. The verb to spin is equivalent in Latin is *tegere*, while the product is called *textus* or *text*, which is a central issue in hermeneutics.

Over time, hermeneutics is interpreted as an activity to uncover a text's meaning, while text can be understood as a network of meanings or a structure of symbols, whether stated in writing or in other forms (Mukmin, 2019). If the text is widely understood as a network of meanings or a structure of symbols, everything that contains a network of meanings or a structure of symbols is text. Behaviors, actions, norms, expressions, values, content of thoughts, conversations, cultural objects, historical objects, etc. text. Because all things related to humans are interpreted by him, namely culture, religion, society, country, and even the entire universe, all of which are texts. If so, hermeneutics is needed to understand all of that.

1. *Majjhima Patipada*: Moderation in Buddhist Perspective

In the case of Buddhism, he found the teaching of moderation from the creator itself, Suddharta Gautama, who wants his life to be full of modesty. The value of this teaching was pledging the fourth prasetya such as helping each other, rejecting worldly desires, learning to practice Dharma, also strive to attain perfect enlightenment (Institute, 2021). This is what creates the values of the implementation of moderation from the teachings of Buddha who is convinced by his own creator. A joke among scholars of Buddhist studies suggests that what is practiced as Dharma in the West should be referred to not as the middle way but rather as the upper middle way. The implementation value of goodwill towards religious believers will have an impact on their relationship with inter-religious human beings so that they will be in a condition where all groups of people can live together peacefully without reducing the freedom rights of each adherent in carrying out their religious duties. It is also proven that Buddhism has grown among more than a thousand years. Buddhism is also known as the lowest religion who caused the problem of violence in the name of religion. In its history, Buddhism has never been involved in conflict or violence in the name of Buddhism (Sukarno, 2019). Especially in Indonesia, the lack of information of conflict in Buddhism also proves that Buddhists had implemented the value of their religion to tolerate each other.

According to the Buddhist study, the meaning of moderation or middle path is a path that is not extreme, balanced, neither excessive, not deficient. It is just right and moderate. In the pali language, it is called *Majjhima Patipada* also known as the noble eightfold path that aims to teaches every human being to be free from suffering. This eightfold path establishes a practical way to transform a person from self-mortification to a balanced life endowed with wisdom love (Dastagir & Ramzy, 2019). This story based on Prince Siddharta, before becoming a Buddha who did two extreme things. First, he lived in the palace with all the worldly pleasures and enjoyed it excessively with all the splendor he got, then at the age of 29 he did the second extreme torture, which is meditating in the forest in order to seek happiness without drinking and eating and after six years, he did the second extreme torture (Davids, 1927). He realized that it was not leading him to truth and happiness. He said “by this agonizing asceticism, it has not attained any human stature or the vision that the noble ones are capable of”(Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2008).

After gaining enlightenment, he practiced the eightfold path. There are eight principles: right view, right speech, right action, right pursuit, right effort, right attention, and right concentration. These principles are categorized into three groups, *sila* (morality), *samadhi* (meditation), and *panna* (wisdom), that support and relate to each other (Rāhula, 1978). Morality supports control of the mind; meditation built by morals will produce an attitude of wisdom, and an attitude of wisdom will practice morality and meditation. Practicing these eight principles can direct humans toward the middle way, in other words, being able to think, act, and speak well and appropriately (Ashath & Nor, 2021).

2. *Wasatiyyah*: Moderation from the Muslim perspective.

The concept of moderation is mentioned in several times in the Qur'an. One of them is in surah Al-Baqarah [2]:143, which reads: “*And thus have we willed you to be a community of the middle way, so that (with you lives) you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind*”. Indonesia is one of the countries that have many ethnicities and religions, which makes it easy to cause divisions among the people. The division itself comes from liberal and extreme ideologies that come into Indonesia. Religious moderation is a way to address all conflict triggered by these differences. Yusuf al-Qardawi as a pioneer of religious moderation for more than three decades, defines moderation with various meanings such as being fair (*al-adl*), being straight (*istiqamah*), doing good (*al-khairiyyah*), salvation (*al-amn*), strength (*al-Quwwah*) and unity (*al-wahdah*) (Hassan, 2011) which in conclusion refers to the balance in life.

The concept of moderation is interesting to study because of some extreme views that justify radical actions that began to emerge in the 20th century. According to Ibn Katsir: the meaning of "*wasath*" here is refers to the best option. When Allah made this Ummah as *ummatan wasatan*, He gave it the most perfect Syari'ah, the straightest path and the clearest understanding."(Imad ad-Din Abu al-Fida Ismail bin Katsir al-Dimasyqi, 2005). In other words, Ibnu Katsir in interpreting the ayah refers to the events during the prophetic period, considering the specialty of tafsir Ibnu Katsir which uses the interpretation of the Qur'an with the Qur'an, and collects other verses that indicate the verse in question as an explanation reinforcement and support by using the "asbabun nuzul" approach, explained the direction of the Qibla to the Ka'bah in order to make them the chosen people who will be witnesses on the Day of Resurrection, because the whole Ummah recognizes your superiority". From the author's perspective, the ayah takes the meaning of the previous Arabs when choosing the most truthful people from the Quraysh tribe. At that time, the population between the Quraish who worshiped the idols and the followers of the Prophet Muhammad was still relatively small before he migrated to Madinah, so the ayah was revealed as an explanation for all people that the followers of the Prophet Muhammad were the most correct to follow.

In another statement, Sayyid Qutb, as a contemporary figure, has a different view of interpreting the meaning of "*wasath*" in the verse. Sayyid Qutb interprets "*wasath*" with several meanings, such as goodness and superiority, fairness and moderation, or the word *wasat*, which connotes sensory physicality. One of them is the meaning of "Moderation/*Wasath*" in thought and feeling, which means not sticking to what is known and closing the doors of experimentation and knowledge, not indulging in blind *taqlid*. Rather, they uphold their perceptions, *manhaj* and principles and then examine the results of their thoughts and experiences. Their slogan was, "The essence of truth belongs to the hila believer, wherever it is found, he has the right to take it carefully and confidently"(Sayyid Qutb, 2011). Sayyid Qutb interpreting the ayah uses a literary and social style that makes the author argue that in understanding the moderation verse above, Sayyid Qutb sees the social conditions of society that some feel fanatic about their religion so that interpreting one of the moderation meanings is not to take sides with only one thought. Humans are given the freedom to seek knowledge and understand the perceptions of others so that with this knowledge, humans can understand and respect each other without being extreme towards certain understandings.

Quraish Shihab, as an Indonesian mufassir, interprets moderation/*wash* in verse about the life of this world. It does not deny or consider it an illusion, but it does not think that worldly life is everything. The Islamic view of life is that in addition to the world, there is also an afterlife, and success in the afterlife is determined by faith and good deeds in this world. Man should not sink into materialism, nor should he soar into spiritualism. While the vision is directed to the heavens, the feet must remain on the earth. Islam teaches its ummah to achieve worldly materials but with heavenly values.”(M.Quraish Shihab, 2000).

A hermeneutic approach is used by considering the social, historical, and cultural context. The author argues that the sentence is interpreted as an attempt by Quraish Shihab to offer a view of Islam that is relevant to the social context of life today. The meaning of "wasath" encourages Muslims not to get caught up in the two possible social extremes of excessive materialism or spiritualism that ignore the realities of the world. In the social context, Quraish Shihab underlines that worldly life is not something completely virtual or meaningless. Rather, it emphasizes that this world has real value and role in the Islamic view. Islam recognizes the existence of Islam as where human beings live and live their lives. In this view, Islam is taught to guide people to achieve worldly goods while adhering to heavenly values. This shows that religion can be a source of inspiration and guidance in a social context, helping Muslims to live a balanced and meaningful life and providing direction in interacting with the world and society around them.

Pluralism, Religious Moderation, and Tolerance

The Latin term plural, which means "more than one," is the source of the English word plural. It also has a connection to flow or comprehension. In light of this, pluralism can be defined etymologically as having more than one material and referring to both the presence of and reality (Rohman & Munir, 2018). The definition of plurality is important to pluralism. Pluralism can transform the reality of diversity and differing value systems and attitudes into long-lasting societal harmony. In comparison, Diversity makes a difference in culture, ethnicity, and religion. In other cases, Religious moderation does not mean moderating religion itself, for religion inherently embodies the principles of moderation, including justice and balance. It would not be a religion if it taught destruction on earth, injustice, and unbridled anger. Religion does not need further moderation. However, the way a person practices their faith must always be guided towards the middle path and must continually be moderated as it can become extreme, unfair, or even excessive (Arif, 2021).

Indonesia is a diverse country. Therefore, it naturally embodies pluralistic principles from many different perspectives. Indonesia has many other languages, cultures, faiths, and races. The nation's founders were aware of this fact. They highlighted that every citizen has the right to practice their religion and that the State must protect that freedom. Based on this, Pancasila, the tenet of the Indonesian state, was "Belief in One Almighty God," as stated in the first point. In line with that, the 1945 Constitution's Article 29 paragraphs (1) and (2), which state that "The State is based on Belief in the One and Only God," guarantee the freedom of each resident to practice their respective religions and to worship in accordance with their religious and philosophical convictions (Zulkarnain, 2016).

The foundation of cultural and dynamic concord in a pluralistic society is pluralism, which embraces variations in both acquisitions and ethnicity, such as ideas and information, as well as distinctions in race and ethnicity. Additionally, pluralism is not relativism or syncretism. As a result, rather than the other way around, plurality is now considered a way to start peace in pluralism. As mentioned, religious aspects of Indonesia's diversity are also present. Indonesia accepts at least six different religions and philosophical systems, including Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, as stated in Law Number 1 of 1965 about the Prevention of Misuse and Blasphemy of Religion. This official acknowledgment of religion by the state demonstrates how important religion was in creating the state, which also connects to society (Anjum & Mir, 2020).

The bond between society and religion can be said to be very close and influence each other. In several studies, such as those conducted by comparativist scholars, it has been proven that religion (in this case, religious actors) has very strong ties with society so that its presence is very much needed or very crucial in determining the state constitution (Buckley & Wilcox, 2017). In line with this, Busse's (Grzymala-Busse, 2024) research shows that religion has almost the same power as a kingdom. After the war, several European countries adopted a legal system and Church rules to be implemented into royal rules. Meanwhile, according to hermeneutical studies, religious actors' perceptions are influenced by educational background and the conditions experienced by religious actors in interpreting a verse in the scripture.

Implementation of Religious Moderation Values in Community Life

In Islam, the implementation of religious moderation is manifested in the form or attitude of moderation. Several interpretations of waste can be implemented in Muslim daily life. For instance, Sayyid Qutb interprets it with several meanings of goodness and

superiority, fairness and moderation, or the word was, which connotes sensory physicality. Several perspectives of waste in the view of Sayyid Qutb, which are implemented in everyday life, are as follows: first, tashawwur views, thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs. Second, wasthan is in rules and harmony of life, and last, it is "in the middle" in bonds and relationships (Sayyid Qutb, 2011).

There are not many differences in how Buddhist views apply Bergama moderation values. There are additional teachings on religious restraint in the Buddhist tradition. Siddhartha Gautama was the source of the Buddha's enlightenment. Despite being the son of a monarch, Siddhartha Gautama preferred a humble existence. Siddhartha Gautama committed to four prasetya: aiding other beings, forgoing worldly cravings, studying the Dharma, and striving for Perfect Enlightenment (Nisa et al., 2021). Sang Hyang Adi Buddha, known as God Almighty, is the common name for God in Buddhism in Indonesia. The Buddha also professed that metta is the essence of religion. Metta is the Pali word for friendliness and non-violence. Buddhists abstain from evil, hatred, and hostility through metta. Promoting kindness, friendliness, and a love of caring for other people and other animals (Buddharakkhita, 2020). To avoid extremes and lead to ultimate happiness, Buddhism emphasizes the importance of the "middle way," the Buddha Dharma represents.

1. Giving Support in Religious Ceremonies

The implementation of religious moderation values as interpreted by religious actors can be seen in the daily lives of people in Indonesia. For example, during the commemoration of Vesak Day on the slopes of Mount Merbabu, in Tekelan Hamlet, Batur Village, Getasan District, Semarang Regency, Muslims and Christians helped Buddhists prepare the Vesak Day commemoration. The attitude of Muslims and Christians in Merbabu reflects the values of religious moderation, in which they help others based on their beliefs, giving them the mandate to do good to others. The people there state that respecting other religions, such as helping people of other religions prepare for religious ceremonies or holidays, is one of the values of religious teachings that has been applied and has become a tradition since the ancestors' time. According to (Yusuf, 2021), the Qur'an recognizes religious diversity as an inherent aspect of life, individual thought, and societal dynamics, promoting healthy competition among religious groups to encourage acts of kindness. Similarly, budhhist teachings highlight that such diversity contributes to global peace and development, focusing on enhancing the welfare and happiness of many (*bahujanahita-ya bahunasukha-ya*). The Buddha, as quoted in the *sutta-Nipata*, advises against clinging to a single viewpoint and

dismissing others as lesser, labeling such behavior as a bond. Furthermore, (Sarao, 2017) notes that Buddhism deeply values the interconnection and mutual support among people and all living beings as core principles. This proves that a strong bond between society, religion, and the state can create an attitude of tolerance between religious communities. Creating harmony in society. The people of Merbabu believe that inter-religious tolerance is a religious teaching that was implemented by their ancestors and has become a tradition to this day.

2. Wish you a Happy Interfaith Day

The implementation of the teachings of religious moderation (Majjhima-Patipada) is also manifested in the beautiful attitude of inter-religious tolerance from Buddhists who wish them congratulations when Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr. This portrait of inter-religious tolerance occurs in Temanggung Regency, precisely in Krajan Hamlet, Kalimanggis Village, Central Java. In several online media, it can be seen that a Bikkhu (monk) visited the mosque courtyard where Muslims performed the Eid prayer. After the prayer, the monk congratulated while shaking hands with Muslims who were about to return home. Not only that, the non-Muslims in Krajan Village also go around to the Muslim house to apologize to each other. It is recorded that in Krajan Village, the Muslim population is only 2.5% while 97% are Buddhists, and the rest are Christians and Hindus (Musa, 2015). Other non-Muslims also enliven the celebration of Eid al-Fitr every year in Krajan Village. This form of inter-religious tolerance has been carried out for generations in Krajan Village. The implementation of religious moderation teachings can also be seen from the location of places of worship. In the village of Krajan, the Bikkhu Wisu and the mosque are just 500 meters away. Reflecting on Krajan Village, the problem of intolerance should no longer be a big problem that cannot be overcome. By applying the principle of religious moderation, tolerance should be present and inherent in every religious person.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, this study shows that Buddhism and Islam encourage religious moderation to create a peaceful society, emphasizing the importance of avoiding extremism. Both religions teach a balance between theory and practice as well as between action and their consequences, with Buddhism focusing on the interdependent law of cause and effect and Islam on a harmonious life balance. This concept of moderation is particularly important in pluralistic Indonesia to reduce intolerance and promote mutual tolerance and

respect among religious followers, avoiding fanaticism and encouraging mutual respect based on humanity (Kawangung, 2019).

So, we argue that both the Islamic concept of *Ummatan Wasatan* (Central Nation) and the Buddhist concept of *Majhima-Patipada* (Middle Way) place emphasis on moderation and provide a strong framework for encouraging harmony between various communities. This is encouraging because, because extreme religious beliefs can lead to hatred and violence that may be extremely harmful to both humanity and the planet that it inhabits, religious moderation beliefs and practices stand as the most suitable approach to combat radicalism and maintain harmony within the Indonesian archipelago, deeply interwoven with the principles of Pancasila. A mental attitude that is moderate, fair, and balanced is essential for navigating the complexities of diversity (Arifinsyah et al., 2020).

The author realizes that if every religious community discovers the meaning of the teachings of religious moderation, then conflicts between religions can be avoided. And of course, other religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, and Confucianism also have the concept of religious moderation. Future studies will need to take steps toward fostering interreligious contacts and communication between monotheistic religions and Asian religions. Religions from Asia include socially active Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Confucianism, and Islam. This process can get started by having a discourse about life and activity at the level of the entire community, leaving more complex dialogues about theologies, doctrines, scriptures, and experiences to experts.

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