



## Challenges of Religious Moderation in The Context of Radicalism

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**Abstrak:** Penyebaran global radikalisme agama telah berkembang menjadi masalah dunia, mendorong para intelektual untuk terlibat dalam diskusi dan menyatakan keprihatinan mereka. Data untuk penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan cermat dari sumber yang dapat dipercaya menggunakan pendekatan analitis kualitatif. Fokus analisis adalah pada penanggulangan tren radikalisme yang meningkat melalui lensa moderasi agama. Temuan penelitian menyoroti bahwa seorang Muslim moderat ditandai dengan ketaatan pada interpretasi Islam yang dapat diterima. Interpretasi ini mencakup prinsip-prinsip non-kekerasan dan moderasi, sejalan dengan keyakinan pada pendekatan demokratis dan pluralistik, yang dipadukan dengan semangat toleransi. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada wacana ilmiah mengenai peran instruksi berbasis sastra dalam mempromosikan moderasi agama, memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pembuat kebijakan, pendidik, dan sarjana yang terlibat dalam dialog global mengenai penanggulangan radikalisme dan mendorong koeksistensi damai.

**Kata Kunci:** Moderasi Agama, Tantangan, Radikalisme, Islam yang Dapat Diterima.

**Abstract:** The global dissemination of religious radicalism has evolved into a worldwide issue, prompting intellectuals to engage in discussions and express their concerns. Data for this research were meticulously gathered from reliable sources utilizing a qualitative analytical approach. The focus of the analysis is on countering the escalating trend of radicalism through the lens of religious moderation. The study's findings highlight that a moderate Muslim is characterized by adherence to an acceptable interpretation of Islam. This interpretation incorporates principles of non-violence and moderation, aligned with a belief in democratic and pluralistic approaches, coupled with a spirit of tolerance. This research contributes to the scholarly discourse on the role of literary-based instruction in promoting religious moderation, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and scholars engaged in the global dialogue on countering radicalism and fostering peaceful coexistence.

**Keyword:** Religious Moderation, Challenges, Radicalism, Acceptable Islam

## INTRODUCTION

The act of categorizing individuals into distinct groups and scrutinizing their allegiances on the basis of their religious beliefs has the potential to impact their perception of belongingness and personal identity. The ongoing war on terror has sparked extensive debate and poses numerous challenges. The distinction between moderate and radical Muslims has become a prominent topic in contemporary discourse (Abdel-Fattah, R., and Krayem, M., 2021; Schmidt, L., 2021; Cherney and Murphy, 2016). According to Ardiansyah and Erihadiana (2022), individuals who identify as moderate Muslims are typically characterized as non-radical and deemed suitable partners for governments, as well as social and political organizations, in their collective endeavor to combat radicalism. Moderation, despite its lack of coherence stemming from diverse interpretations of its meaning and content, is widely regarded as a central tenet of Islam. It is argued that moderation has the potential to mitigate conflicts between religious and secular political ideologies and instead foster the belief that Islam can peacefully coexist with pluralistic political systems (Achilov & Sen, 2017; Zaduqisti et al., 2020). Gutkowski (2015) argues that the inclusion of well-grounded theoretical and empirical analyses in critical examinations of moderation holds the potential to make valuable contributions to various domains, including global politics, global trade, transnational activities, international law, foreign policies, state and private alliance formation, social structuralist literature on negotiation, norm diffusion, democratization, humanitarianism, and the mitigation of nuclear proliferation. In a separate study, Ibrahim (2018) emphasized the significance of moderation as a distinct value in facilitating the formulation of suitable, equitable, and ethical behavioral assessments.

Religious moderation has garnered significant media and scholarly scrutiny in both Western and Eastern contexts (Ibrahim, H., 2018). However, when applied to the sizable Muslim communities, these terms can be perceived as offensive and perpetuate the notion that social context and identity are interconnected concepts, a notion that these communities consistently challenge and refute (Cherney and Murphy, 2016). Abdel-Fattah and Krayem (2021) argue that the term "moderate" is employed as a means to suppress dissenting voices and exert authority over the discourse and implementation of Islam within acceptable boundaries. Ahmad (2011) argues that moderation holds great importance for Muslims, as it serves to elucidate the fundamental attributes of the Muslim community and delineate their roles and responsibilities towards humanity as a whole.

The terms "radical" and "moderate" are frequently used to assess the stance of individuals or groups in relation to established economic, social, and political systems or practices (Schwedler, 2011). People talk about moderate Muslims a lot these days, but it makes more sense to compare them to non-moderate or radical Muslims (Lubis, Bahri, & Ayuhan, 2022). These people are seen as major threats to democratic political systems in the region and around the world (Schwedler, 2011). The issue of the moderate-radical division continues to pose challenges, as individuals or groups may exhibit moderate ideological stances on certain matters while holding radical perspectives on others. This phenomenon has garnered significant scholarly interest in recent years, with efforts focused on differentiating moderates from radicals. These efforts generally characterize moderates as advocates for democratic and liberal reforms, employing nonviolent methods (Schwedler, 2011).

Gutkowski (2015) asserts that the concept of moderation is employed within the Middle East region to denote a political approach characterized by pragmatism, nonviolent tendencies, tolerance, and alignment with Western nations. From an Islamic standpoint, the concept of moderation, or *Wasatiyyah* (considered the most favorable choice), can be understood as justice or equilibrium, virtue or excellence, or a preferable middle ground (Yousif, A. F., 2015; Islam and Khatun, 2015; Subchi et al., 2022). From an Islamic perspective, moderation is understood as a system of ethical principles rooted in the Quran, the sacred text of Islam. These principles

encompass virtues such as patience, humility, and tolerance. It is important to note that the concept of moderation should not be limited solely to Muslims, as it holds relevance beyond this specific religious community (Nasir, M., 2021). Nasir M. (2021) defines moderation as the act of avoiding extremes and the overemphasis on materialistic pursuits inherent in a purely commercially oriented way of life. This concept primarily pertains to an individual's conduct and political viewpoints. While Islam is commonly regarded as a religion that promotes tolerance, moderation, and compatibility with democratic principles, the concept of moderate Islam encompasses various discursive and political frameworks. It extends beyond the political realm and encompasses temperate intellectual, moral, legal, and behavioral approaches in all facets of life (Islam and Khatun, 2015; Umar, 2016). Akmaliah, Sulistiyanto, P., and Sukendar (2022) emphasize the importance of combining moderation and Islam as a single concept to prevent misinterpretation. In this context, moderation does not signify a deficiency in moral virtue or a lack of a clear religious stance. Rather, it signifies the avoidance of any excessive behaviors or practices associated with being Muslim. This study aimed to investigate the significance of religious moderation in governing plural and multicultural societies in Indonesia. Religious moderation is crucial for establishing harmonious relationships between different religions externally as well as fostering internal unity among various factions that prioritize justice and tolerance in religious diversity.

The phenomenon of radicalization frequently stems from socio-economic factors, such as unemployment, poverty, and marginalization. The exclusive reliance on religious moderation may prove insufficient in tackling these intricate matters, and its efficacy might be constrained unless concurrent endeavors are made to address socio-economic inequalities. According to Kaya (2021), the efficacy of religious moderation initiatives may be compromised if they fail to adequately consider and address the underlying socio-economic factors. This oversight can contribute to the persistence of conditions that foster radicalization.

## **METHODS**

The study utilizes a descriptive qualitative technique to carry out the research, and a specific data gathering method is used. Arikunto (2013) introduced the concept of "library research," which he defines as a form of inquiry that seeks to offer a theoretical depiction and analysis of a phenomenon by examining books. "Documentation and data sources refer to the process of gathering information by consulting a range of diverse sources, such as books, archives, documents, and other relevant materials, for the purpose of research." In addition, the researcher did a comprehensive examination of relevant literature sources, such as books, papers, journals, and articles, to get valuable insights and uncover potential discoveries pertaining to the research issue. The act of objectively acknowledging the reality that exists within the topic being studied is widely known as the descriptive method. This strategy can be seen as a strategic tool for categorizing, monitoring, and organizing all elements related to the provided topic matter in a thorough manner.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Concept of Religious Moderation and Radicalism**

The concept of moderation in the context of religion encompasses a diverse array of viewpoints and behaviors. The contemporary societal sphere often establishes connections between elements of religion and religious symbols and rituals, while the concept of moderation emerges from preceding occurrences. Brocker (2013) posits that moderation can be conceptualized as a mode of adjustment that incorporates elements of public elections, peaceful coexistence, and the avoidance of confrontation. The primary objective is to attain a mutually agreeable settlement and harmonious resolution of conflicts by employing non-electoral methods, thereby circumventing confrontational and belligerent approaches that have

the potential to escalate into acts of violence. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the exercise of moderation may intermittently require the implementation of contentious measures.

Ahmad (2011) says that the results show a difference between how people today understand moderation in speech and how religious orthodox people understand it in the Quran, which has a history that goes back more than a thousand years. Within the context of Western scholarly discourse, moderate Islamists are generally understood as individuals who refrain from employing violent means and instead operate within established political frameworks. Conversely, the Quran emphasizes the significance of moderation as a fundamental attribute encompassing principles such as justice, equilibrium, merit, excellence, progress, and mediation. This moderation is attributed to credible witnesses whose testimonies are deemed reliable for the purpose of safeguarding the integrity of the religion, preventing the distortion of textual content by extremists, the manipulation of authority by deceitful individuals, and the misinterpretation of its significance by the uninformed. From the research that has already been done by Somer (2014), it is clear that the modern label of "moderate Muslims," which refers to Islamists who support counter-extremism, behave modestly in religious and social matters, and support less strict laws, came from academic and media circles.

The current study suggests that moderation is commonly understood as a multifaceted process that encompasses both implicit and explicit elements. It embodies a liberal perspective on individual rights and a democratic concept of tolerance, political pluralism, and cooperation (Lessy & Rohman, 2022). Previous research has primarily categorized moderates, particularly Islamists, as predominantly young, educated Muslim individuals who actively engage in civil society. These individuals demonstrate a strong interest in politics and strive for democratic governance and liberal reform. They advocate for civil liberties and endorse the coexistence of both secular and Shari'a law. Moderates pursue gradual change through legal entities and the political system, while also supporting an electoral system that ensures equal opportunities for all parties to compete. Furthermore, they exhibit a more open and tolerant attitude towards alternative perspectives (Achilov and Sen, 2017; Umar, 2016; Gutkowski, 2015; Kassam, 2015; Hamdi, 2013; Schwedler, 2011; Ab Rashid, R, 2020). It is evident that, in accordance with this delineation, an individual must possess a favorable disposition towards democracy and exhibit a willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of alternative viewpoints, albeit not necessarily on par with their own, in order to embody moderation. Nevertheless, the mere display of behavior that seemingly embraces democratic and liberal norms of governance, such as engaging in democratic processes or elections while covertly holding radical political agendas, is insufficient.

Within the framework of Islam, the notion of religious moderation finds embodiment in the teachings of *wasatiyyah* Islam, which underscore the significance of adopting a balanced and moderate stance towards religious convictions and rituals. The school of thought known as *wasatiyyah* Islam has gained prominence as a significant discourse in response to the frequent association of acts of violence with Muslims who may possess a limited comprehension of the principles and teachings of Islam (Yousif, A. F., 2015; Jubba, H. et al., 2021).

Moreover, the emergence of *wasatiyyah* Islam, commonly referred to as Islamic Moderation, can be seen as a reactionary approach towards factions that tend to categorize other factions as heretical and apostate (takfiri). According to Yousif (2015), *wasatiyyah* education entails having a thorough understanding of moderate Islam. This encompasses the principles of combating violence, fanaticism, and extremism while advocating for the rights of the oppressed and firmly rejecting intimidation and terrorism. Ibrahim (2018) has emphasized the proposition of employing moderation as a prospective approach to address radicalism or extremism).



The topic of moderation has been selected as a means to address the current and urgent concern of extremism. The significance of this matter lies in the current accusation that religion and tradition are implicated in harboring the concept of extremism and are being held accountable for disseminating this concept to extremist adherents.

Most scholars in the West agree that moderate Islam is based on values like acceptance, progressivism, democracy, secularism, and not supporting violence, especially Jihad (Cohen, 2005; Lindgren et al., 2022). According to Hussain (2010), the term "normal" is proposed as a suitable designation for the concept of moderation. According to John L. Esposito, the definition of moderate Islam is subject to the political and religious affiliation of the individual tasked with making this determination. Islam, similar to other religious traditions, encompasses a wide range of followers, including progressives, modernists, and liberals, as well as conservatives and traditionalists.

Esposito (2005) argues that moderate Islam refers to the majority of Muslims who engage in societal matters and disavow the use of violence, terrorism, and other extremist religious approaches.

*Wasatiyyah*, also known as moderation, is a core principle in Islamic teachings that promotes the observance of principles such as fairness, balance, benefit, and proportionality. It is widely acknowledged as a concept that encourages moderation in different aspects of human existence. The concept of *wasatiyyah* in Islamic thought is prominently characterized by principles of inclusivity, humanism, and tolerance, as evidenced by scholarly works (Anshori, Prasjo, & Muhtifah, 2021; Maarif et al., 2022). The intellectual response to the increasing prevalence of extremism within the Muslim community in the Middle East has led to the development of the concepts of *ummatah wasathan* and *wasatiyyah* Islam (Ali, M. M., & Rafeeqe, M. M., 2018). The genesis of the notion of Islamic moderation, alternatively referred to as *Wasathiyatul* Islam, can be ascribed to apprehensions pertaining to two discrete schools of thought and movements within the Islamic religion. The initial concept and trajectory are marked by a dogmatic viewpoint that regards Islam as an immutable religion that does not allow for modifications or discussions within its doctrines, particularly in matters pertaining to belief, worship, jurisprudence, and transactions. The aforementioned concept has led to the dissemination of adverse generalizations and the marginalization of Islam, depicting it as a complex, inward-looking, extremist, intolerant, and inhumane religious belief. Furthermore, there is a secondary ideological and activist movement recognized as the Islamic Liberation Movement. This ideological movement promotes rationalist narratives and beliefs, advocating for the unhindered advancement of Islam. Therefore, it is argued that Islam should undergo adaptation in order to maintain its relevance within the context of modern society. This is particularly important in various aspects, including sharia, worship, law, muamalat, and even matters pertaining to faith (Van Es, Laan., & Meinema, 2021). The aforementioned thoughts and actions exemplify the principles of inclusivity and tolerance, thereby positioning Islam as a religion that is open and flexible in response to societal changes.

According to al-Qardhawi (2007), individuals who identify as moderates (*al-wasat*) possess the ability to consistently maintain principles of justice and balance in their actions and speech, even in the presence of a diverse society. This commitment to fairness and equilibrium fosters an environment of peace and tolerance, devoid of any acts of anarchy or exclusivity. This comprehension elucidates that the concept of *wasatiyyah* embodies a moderate stance, avoiding both radical left and radical right ideologies. Additionally, it signifies the inclination of individuals to exhibit tolerance and embrace others within the framework of an open society. The study discovered attitudes that align with Islamic principles and community traditions, demonstrating a significant balance in matters of belief, worship, and ethics. Religion, in its essence, embodies moderation, necessitating a moderate approach to the religious disposition of individuals when navigating their lives.

### **Religious Moderation in The Context of Radicalism**

The concept of religious moderation refers to the practice of adhering to a balanced and tempered approach in matters of faith and spirituality (Subchi et al, 2022) It plays a pivotal role in effectively addressing the challenges posed by radicalism originating within religious communities. The allure of radical ideologies lies in their ability to provide individuals with a sense of certainty and purpose, yet religious moderation presents a more equitable and accepting perspective. This literature review examines the notion of religious moderation and its importance in mitigating radicalism.

Religious moderation prioritizes the promotion of inclusivity and acceptance by emphasizing the significance of embracing diverse beliefs and practices within religious communities. Religious moderation has the potential to mitigate the exclusivist and divisive propensities commonly associated with radical ideologies by cultivating an atmosphere that values diverse interpretations and promotes constructive discourse (Ibrahim, Prasajo & Sulaiman, S., 2019). It facilitates the cultivation of solidarity and collaboration among individuals from diverse religious affiliations, thereby nurturing social integration and fostering religious concord.

Religious moderation fosters the cultivation of critical thinking and rationality by encouraging individuals to approach the interpretation of religious texts and ideologies with a thoughtful and reasoned mindset. It promotes the active involvement of individuals in scholarly analysis, contextual comprehension, and interpretation grounded in rationality and substantiated by empirical evidence. Religious moderation is a way of thinking about how to deal with complicated issues in a way that reduces the chance of extremist interpretations and challenges literal and dogmatic ways of doing things (King, 2019).

The repudiation of violence and extremism constitutes a fundamental principle of religious moderation. The ideology places significant emphasis on the principles of non-violence, the recognition and protection of human rights, and the pursuit of peaceful means for resolving conflicts. Religious moderates, along with their respective communities, actively disavow and dissociate themselves from extremist ideologies that advocate or endorse violence under the guise of religious beliefs. According to Pajarianto et al. (2022), the promotion of religious moderation plays a significant role in fostering a religious culture characterized by peace and compassion, as it offers an alternative perspective to radicalism

By actively participating in interfaith dialogue, religious moderation serves to foster interfaith dialogue and collaboration. Through active dialogue and cooperative efforts with individuals representing diverse religious beliefs, religious moderates foster an environment conducive to the cultivation of mutual comprehension, esteem, and concord (Sihombing, A. A. et al., 2020; Jati, W. R. et al., 2022). In the context of religious moderation, it is acknowledged that socio-economic factors can play a role in the process of radicalization (O'Brochta, W. et al., 2022). The initiative proactively acknowledges and confronts fundamental societal concerns, such as poverty, inequality, and marginalization, which can render individuals vulnerable to adopting radical ideologies.

Religious moderation places significant emphasis on the enhancement of education and religious literacy as effective measures to counter radical ideologies Maarif, Rofiq & Sirojuddin., 2022). Religious moderation, through its emphasis on fostering a comprehensive comprehension of religious teachings, traditions, and histories, empowers individuals with the requisite knowledge and critical thinking abilities to discern and challenge misconceptions, misinformation, and extremist ideologies. The primary objective is to cultivate a religious community that is knowledgeable and capable of making informed judgments.

*Wasatiyyah*, a concept rooted in Islamic teachings, highlights the importance of moderation, equilibrium, and the avoidance of extremes. Within the context of radicalism, the concept of *wasatiyyah* promotes a philosophical framework that supports a balanced and

refined approach to understanding and applying religious beliefs. The current literature review explores the concept of *wasatiyyah* and its potential effectiveness in reducing radical ideologies (Yousif, A. F., 2015).

The rejection of extremism and violence is often linked to the rise of radicalism, which typically stems from an overly literal or extreme interpretation of religious doctrines, thus serving as a justification for violent behavior. *wasatiyyah* is a theoretical framework that promotes the rejection of radical perspectives and advocates for a peaceful and non-violent approach to addressing societal issues. The statement emphasizes the importance of maintaining peace, promoting justice, and resolving conflicts using nonviolent approaches, while discouraging the adoption of extreme ideologies and radicalization (Yousif, A. F., 2011).

The contrast between tradition and modernity often causes radical ideologies to reject modernity and progress, instead adhering strictly to a literal interpretation of religious traditions. The concept of *wasatiyyah* highlights the importance of preserving religious heritage while also recognizing the need to adapt to the contemporary world (Syihab, A. H., and Muhamad, A. 2017). This phenomenon involves the decline in the appeal of radical ideologies that reject social advancement. The concept of *wasatiyyah* highlights the importance of fostering resilient communities that have the capacity to withstand and effectively challenge radical ideologies (Zaduqisti, E. et al., 2020). Through fostering strong social connections, empowering individuals to exert their agency, and promoting active engagement in civic matters, since extremist factions frequently exploit these traits, the *wasatiyyah* principle discourages tendencies toward seclusion and susceptibility. Developing a shared sense of accountability and creating networks of support within the community can effectively reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies.

### **The Causes of Radicalism**

Different factors also elicit various types of radicals. Pajarianto et al (2022) identified a minimum of four factors that contribute to an individual's willingness to engage in violent acts in the name of religion. Firstly, it pertains to the comprehension of religion. Secondly, it is connected to the inequitable implementation of laws. Thirdly, it is associated with the inequity prevalent in the political, economic, and legal systems of a nation. Lastly, it is linked to educational concerns that prioritize indoctrination and neglect the exploration of certain issues. These four points are commonly recognized as the causes that are well-known among society and intellectuals. Gaining an understanding of the contrasting radical movement factor will result in recognizing the significance of the moderation movement, which is also not singular. The significance of the family in influencing the personality, identity, and traits of individuals are important. A person is more likely to develop a positive self-identity that can prevent them from embracing extremist ideologies if they grow up in a nurturing family environment with strong moral principles, guidance, and an abundance of love and affection. On the other hand, individuals who grew up in families characterized by a lack of adequate care and attention and where divorce, violence, abuse, or instances of extrajudicial death or manslaughter took place may experience adverse effects on their personal development and self-esteem. Consequently, these individuals may be more susceptible to being influenced by a trajectory of radicalism (Scremin, N., 2023).

The political context in which an individual resides significantly impacts their sense of identity. The impact of an individual's possession of fundamental political liberties, such as the ability to exert influence and engage in the political system or to express and have their opinions acknowledged, frequently influences their conduct (Van Heil *et al.*, 2022). The extent to which an individual perceives their society as secure, fair, equal, and just has a direct influence on their inclination towards radical behavior. When individuals believe that their interests and opinions are accommodated within their society, they are less likely to engage in radical

behavior. On the other hand, the belief that one's society lacks security, exhibits injustice, and is marked by inequalities, corruption, and repression can engender a feeling of frustration within individuals. Consequently, this frustration may drive them towards engaging in extremist behavior and actions as a means to draw attention to their predicament or circumstances.

Moreover, an additional factor to consider is the manner in which individuals perceive the representation (or misrepresentation) of their community or nation's interests on the global stage, as this can significantly impact their sense of identity and psychological growth. The perception of one's community or nation's level of influence or powerlessness, the capacity of one's community to influence its own destiny and foreign policy, and the degree of independence or dependence on other nations for economic development and decision-making are just a few variables that may have an impact on a fanatic's behavior. The contemporary geopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural hegemony of the Western world frequently incites individuals in non-Western nations who perceive a perceived encroachment upon their own identity, cultural heritage, and political influence. There is widespread discontent among various Muslim states towards the interference of Western powers in their internal affairs, which manifests through media influence, technological interventions, military deployments, and the imposition of economic and political sanctions (O'Brochta., Tavits & Aksoy., 2022)

### Islamic Perspective on Radicalism

Contemporary Muslim scholars often engage in the process of defining the concept of "radicalism". However, several terms were found to convey specific aspects of radicalism as it is currently understood in Western literature. Other Arabic terms that are associated with extremism include *al-Ighal* (al-Jerjani, 2004), which denotes going beyond exaggeration; *al-Tashadud* (Ibn Manzur, 1988), which signifies being exceedingly restrictive; and *al-Guluw* (Ibn Manzur, 1988; al-Lowahiq, 1992), which refers to excessiveness. Additionally, *al-Tatarruf* refers to moving to the farthest point and going the extra mile. Some scholars even argue for the inclusion of *al-Tasawwf* (al-Qaradawi, 1991; Mardin, 1993), which pertains to mystical experience.

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Quran said that:

O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. (An-Nisa:171).

Say, "O People of the Scripture, do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth and do not follow the inclinations of a people who had gone astray before and misled many and have strayed from the soundness of the way." (Al-Maidah:77).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that:

'O people, beware of exaggeration in religious matters for those who came before you were doomed because of exaggeration in religious matters.'" (an-Nasa'i, 1930)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that:

"Do not extol me as the Christians extolled [Jesus] the son of Mary. I am merely a servant,' so say: '[He is] Allah's servant and His Messenger.'" (al-Bukhari, 1993).

Social scientists lack definitive criteria to ascertain the precise threshold at which an individual's behavior or actions can be classified as fanatical. However, Muslims have been provided with a "criterion" to discern suitable moral conduct and behavior. The Quran has been



disclosed to adherents of Islam as a fundamental and authoritative text for approximately 1500 years. In the context of Islamic practice, Muslims typically rely on the Quran as the primary reference for establishing criteria to assess the actions and behaviors of individuals or groups. Additionally, they turn to the traditions documenting the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad as a secondary source for determining the appropriate criterion. Similar to other prominent global religions, Islam is a faith that promotes tranquility and temperance, urging its adherents to abstain from opulence and immoderation. The Quran refers to the Muslim community as the Ummah, which denotes the global Muslim community, and emphasizes its equitable and harmonious nature.

Quran said:

And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And we did not make *Qiblah* which you used to face except that we might evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith. Indeed Allah is to the people Kind and Merciful. (al-Baqarah:143)

According to the Tafsir, the commentary on this particular verse elucidates that the purpose of Islam was to bring about a balanced approach to the practices of preceding civilizations. These civilizations had either excessively emphasized adherence to legalistic principles, thereby neglecting the spiritual aspect, or had veered towards an extreme detachment from worldly affairs. This interpretation is supported by Ibn Kathir (1991, p. 203) and al-Sabuni (1981, p. 101). The revelation of Quranic verses is believed to have been intended to guide humanity towards the path of monotheism and moderation across various aspects of life.

Muslim individuals are encouraged to lead a life that encompasses both spiritual and materialistic aspects in a harmonious manner. Individuals are expected to prioritize their religious obligations, but they are also cautioned against disregarding their secular responsibilities. Muslim individuals are encouraged to adopt a moderate approach, even in the context of engaging in virtuous actions. As an illustration, the Quran instructs adherents of the Islamic faith to engage in acts of charitable giving, as stated in Quran 2:267. Simultaneously, it advises caution against the imprudent expenditure of wealth and discourages placing it in the hands of individuals who are inclined to misuse or dissipate it, as mentioned in Quran 4:5. The Sunnah, which refers to the sayings and actions of Muhammad or the traditions of the Prophet, holds significant importance for Muslims as it serves as a practical embodiment of the teachings found in the Quran. The majority of adherents to the Islamic faith hold the belief that the Prophet's explicit utterances, behaviors, and rituals serve as a means to reinforce the notion that Islam, akin to other global religions, disapproves of any form of extremism. On multiple occasions, Muhammad emphasized the importance of ensuring that religion is accessible and manageable for individuals rather than burdensome and characterized by excessive zealotry. The Prophet implemented this philosophy in his personal life. Whenever faced with a binary decision, he consistently opted for the option that required less effort, provided it was within the bounds of acceptability. According to the report,

Whenever Muhammad was given the choice between two matters, he would choose the easier of the two as long as it was not sinful to do so, but if it was sinful, he would not approach it. (He) never took revenge over anybody for his own sake, but (he did) only when Allah's legal binfings were outraged... (al-Bukhari, 1993)

Muhammad exhorted his adherents to adopt a similar approach and refrain from embracing radicalism. He cautioned Muslims to exercise caution regarding excessive devotion

to their religious beliefs. During a specific instance, certain individuals belonging to the Muslim community made earnest attempts to emulate his practices by engaging in al-Wisal, a prolonged and uninterrupted fasting period exceeding the duration of one day. This approach contrasts with the conventional practice of fasting from dawn until dusk. The individual expressed strong discouragement towards their actions and conveyed that he personally received sustenance during the nighttime. However, he cautioned them that their actions would ultimately result in self-harm, as documented in al-Bukhari (1993). Prophet Muhammad advocated for his followers to adhere to actions that were within their capabilities, discouraging them from exceeding their limits.

A woman from the tribe of Bani Asad was sitting with me and Muhammad came to my house and said: "Who is this?" I said "(She is) so and so. She does not sleep at night because she engaged in prayer." The Prophet said disapprovingly: "Do good deed which is within your capacity" (al-Bukhari, 1993).

It was reported that "Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As said: Allah's Apostle said to me, "o Abdullah! Have I not been informed that you fast daily during the day and offer prayers every night during all the nights," Abdullah replied, "Yes, o Allah's Apostle!" The Prophet said, "don't do that, fast for a few days and then give it up for a few days, offer prayers and also sleep at night, as your body has a right on you and your wife as a right on you, and your guest has a right on you. And it is sufficient for you to fast three days in a month, as the reward of a good deed is multiplied ten times, so it will be like fasting throughout the year." I insisted (on fasting) and so I was given a hard instruction. I said, "o Allah's Apostle! I have power." The Prophet said, fast like the fasting of the Prophet David and do not fast more than that." I said, "How was the fasting of the Prophet of Allah, David?" He said, "Half of the year." Afterwards when Abdullah became old he used to say, "It would have been better for me if I had accepted the permission of the Prophet (which he gave me i.e. to fast only three days a month)." (al-Bulhari, 1993)

In the context of acquiring knowledge, the Prophetic tradition provided Muslims with the assurance that adopting a balanced approach, characterized by neither excessive arrogance nor excessive timidity, would yield optimal outcomes. Likewise, individuals were discouraged from excessively bestowing praise upon others, as it was believed that such actions could potentially have detrimental effects on their development or character. During a specific incident, Muhammad encountered an individual who was engaged in the act of praising another person while employing excessive exaggeration. According to the Prophet, it has been stated that excessive praise has the potential to harm an individual's reputation (al-Bukhari, 1993).

### **Treatment for Radicalism**

The solution for any problem depends upon the nature of the problem. As we have seen radicalism are diverse lot. Treating radicalism is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach, here are a few strategies that can be employed in the treatment of radicalism. Enhanced education and awareness, promoting education and awareness about different ideologies, religions and culture can help counter radicalism (Zaduqisti., et al., 2020). This can be done through schools, community programs and social media campaigns that promote tolerance, critical thinking and understanding of different perspectives.

Religious moderates should leverage technology and social media platforms to disseminate their message widely and engaging with individuals online can help challenge extremist narratives and promote dialogue (Schmidt., 2021). Radicalism can be reduced by granting greater political right and freedoms to those concerned, including greater autonomy and decision-making power.

One of the models and soft approaches utilized in addressing religious radicalism is deradicalization (Ma'arif, Sebastian and Sholihan, 2020). In the present context, deradicalization refers to a systematic procedure aimed at diminishing, altering, or eradicating radical ideologies, sentiments, and behaviors that oppose the principles of the Indonesian Republic (NKRI). The objective is to foster a mindset that embraces tolerance, moderation, and nationalist ideals while remaining consistent with the Islamic principles that define the Indonesian populace. Deradicalization encompasses a multidisciplinary framework that involves the utilization of various discourses and actions aimed at countering radicalism.

The absence of tolerance among radicals possesses the capacity to subject various groups to humiliation (Van Prooijen *et al.*, 2015). In contrast, religious moderation pertaining to diverse religious groups, ideologies, institutions, and communities has the potential to alleviate psychological obstacles hindering religious moderation in social engagements. According to Zaduqisti *et al* (2020), the practice of tolerance, including towards individuals who do not adhere to the Muslim faith, has the potential to address socio-psychological obstacles and promote the process of reconciliation with diverse social groups. According to a study by Zaduqisti *et al* (2020) adopting a moderate attitude may help Muslims develop a favorable outlook on peace and reconciliation with people who do not identify as Muslims. Therefore, the cultivation of loving kindness and the practice of moderation in thoughts and behavior contribute to the generation of positive energy that fosters the establishment of peace rooted in tolerance.

The concept of *wasatiyyah*, a fundamental principle in Islamic teachings, is currently facing significant challenges from contemporary radicalism. The term in question, originating from the Arabic language, can be most accurately rendered as "justly balanced."

The provided translation includes both traditional and contemporary Muslim intellectuals' interpretations of *ummatan wasaan* as "a justly balanced community." Consequently, the citizens of this community are believed to experience social justice, freedom, and equality. Indeed, this concept holds relevance within the realms of politics, economics, society, and religion. Further evidence of its significance comes from the historical evidence that Islamic tradition provides regarding its idea and implications.

## CONCLUSION

Islam does not espouse the notion of religious equality but instead promotes the equitable and unbiased treatment of all religious beliefs. This perspective is consistent with the core tenets of Islam, which prioritize egalitarianism and reject any form of religious discrimination. The concept of tolerance, as previously mentioned, involves embracing a moderate stance, as exemplified by the aforementioned characteristics of Islamic moderation. The presence of coexistence and mutual tolerance among the religious population in Indonesia is likely to contribute to the maintenance of stability within religious communities and the reduction of conflicts between them.

The ongoing debate surrounding religious moderation and radicalism persists. The identification of the characteristic of religious moderation holds great importance in establishing the distinction between individuals who ought to be excluded from and those who should be allowed to remain within their respective political communities. To identify and establish credible moderates, it is imperative for governments, legal authorities, and socio-developmental organizations to actively involve conscientious Muslim leaders and their respective community members. This inclusive approach entails genuinely acknowledging their concerns, fostering an environment that encourages critical discourse, and refraining from imposing subjective labels and character prerequisites. It may prove beneficial to foster moderation among Muslims and garner support for counterterrorism efforts by refraining from employing binary categorizations, such as "moderates" and "radicals," and instead focusing on

distinct individuals who exhibit contextualist or legalist perspectives in relation to the interpretation of religious texts. The promotion of diversity and the maintenance of religious harmony are crucial for the purpose of national cohesion and the protection of state sovereignty. The management and protection of society can be achieved through the implementation of religious moderation across all aspects of society. Adopting a mindset that is moderate, equitable, and impartial, while also reinforcing the principles of local knowledge, is crucial for effectively managing the diversity in Indonesia. Hence, it is crucial to foster religious moderation internally by implementing strategic measures that engage the government and enhance the influence of interfaith leaders

In the end, people who do not identify as Muslims shouldn't decide which groups are "radical" or "moderate." In order to ensure the successful attainment of their objectives without causing harm to themselves or others, it is imperative for Islamic activists and movements to engage in a process of self-evaluation pertaining to their ideology, methods, and level of sincerity.

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