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Submission date: 26-Jul-2021 08:20AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1623984180

File name: Nurdi_Bakry_Article_Scopus_Q2.docx (60.69K)

Word count: 5974

Character count: 32573

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE INTERPRETATION OF WASATIYYAH ISLAM IN THE QUR'AN

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Abstract: Contextual interpretation is a necessity for people at the present time because it connects the Qur'an with the current condition of mankind. Muslims are now facing a crisis of intolerance, so the concept of wasatiyyah (moderation) has emerged which tries to mediate between extreme and liberal thought. This study reveals the concept of wasatiyyah, the interpretation of the scholars on the verses of the Qur'an, and the contextualization of the interpretation of these verses. This study used literature review. The research resulted in the ideal concept of moderate Islam, which is not exaggerating in religion like Christians and also not underestimating the Shari'a of Allah SWT like the old Jews. Moderate Islam is balanced in prioritizing the life of the world and the hereafter, individual and social interests and has a dynamic law. The contextual interpretation of the verse wasatiyyah is; Moderate Islam does not take an extreme attitude, such as being involved in terrorism and infidelity of fellow Muslims and is illiberal in thinking so as to annul the sharia of Allah. Muslims take a firm stand against perpetrators of deviations, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Keywords: *Wasatiyyah*, Contextual, Interpretation, Qur'an

A. Introduction

As the last holy book, Qur'an breaks through the times, crosses geographical boundaries, and penetrates pluralistic cultural layers because its content is always in line with the benefit of humans. Where there is benefit there is found the guidance of the Qur'an and where there is guidance of the Holy Book there is also benefit (Said, 2016; Susanto, 2016; Amirudin & Maisarah, 2020; Wiguna, 2015). So blessed are the scholars of the Scripture.

The paradigm of interpreting the Qur'an has certainly shifted from time to time. The book that came down in a *mujmal* form requires continuous interpretation because it has manifested itself as a guide for mankind from time to time. A contextual interpretation is needed to maintain its existence to silence critics and guide people to the right path (Al-Ghazali, 2008). Some of the verses of the Qur'an interpreted by classical scholars became the main reference in their time and became material for re-examination by scholars after them, according to the conditions they faced.

The preaching period of Medina of Prophet Muhammad PBUH faced two groups of religious communities, namely Jews and Christians. Since the beginning the Prophet has shown a positive and appreciative attitude towards the Jews in Medina. However, the interaction of the Prophet Muhammad with the Jews in Medina has given rise to various religious debates and has inspired the revelation of a number of verses from the Qur'an that even harshly criticized them (Abdullah, n.d.). Among their behaviors criticized by the Qur'an is their arrogant and demeaning

attitude towards others, inconsistency in religion and even killing the prophets, and materialism (Abdullah, n.d.). On the other hand, the Prophet Muhammad dealt with Christians who worship man, give the man the characteristics of *rububiyah*(*oneness*), even cultize him (Al-Qardhawi, 2001). They also left the world and all its bodily delights (Al-Maraghi, n.d.).

Responding to the above situation came Surah Al-Baqarah [2]; 143.

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

³ “And it is thus that We appointed you to be the community of the middle way so that you might be witnesses to all mankind and the Messenger might be a witness to you (Al-Baqarah [2]:134).

When the Prophet got pressure from the two parties, Allah calmed the heart of the Prophet and the Muslims by labeling them as *ummatan wasaṭan* (middle *ummah* /people). Initially the word *wasat* means everything that is good according to its object. Something good is in a position between the two extremes. Those facing two rival parties are required to be *wasit* (referees) and be in the middle position in order to be fair. From here, the meaning of *wasat*, which is fair, was raised. *Ummatan wasaṭan* is a moderate *ummah*, whose position is in the middle, to be seen by all parties, and from all angles (Muhammad Quraish Shihab, 1996).

Prophet Muhammad is a figure capable of displaying Islamic moderation. Differences of opinion among the Muslims have existed since his lifetime, but they can be resolved well by the presence of the Prophet among them (Kamal, 2019). Once he allowed one thing, other times blamed the other thing, and often times the Prophet allowed both. It can be said that at that time the Muslims were united without any group emerging (Shihab, 2019). However, it is very sad if we look at the attitude of Muslims today which is inversely compared to their idol, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

Researchers see that currently Muslims are trapped in two extreme sides of Islam; namely radicalism and liberalism, these two often trap religious activists. Radicalism is a notion that seeks to understand religious arguments and teachings more strictly so as to give birth to strong and assertive (radical) religious views and behaviors. Meanwhile, liberalism is a notion that seeks to understand the arguments and teachings of religion more loosely so as to give birth to religious views and behavior that are very free (radical). The two groups above have support groups, even very fanatical ones who claim to be the most correct and try to formulate logic to strengthen their opinions while looking for the weaknesses of other groups (Umar, 2019) (Shihab, n.d.).

This study aims to reveal the ideal concept of *wasatiyyah* contained in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 143 and Al-Fath [48]: 29 and interpretations of classical, medieval and modern *mufassir* (interpreter) on *wasatiyyah* verses, as well as contextualizing the interpretation of these verses in the present era.

This research is qualitative in nature using the library research method. Data collection was carried out by examining books and writings that discussed textual and contextual interpretation,

the concept of *wasatīyyah* in Islam, and the interpretation of the scholars of the Qur'anic verses related to *wasatīyyah*. Researchers used content analysis techniques to find actual data from a number of available literatures.

There are several studies related to this research, including Iffati Zamimah in her journal entitled *Moderatisme Islam dalam Konteks Keindonesiaan: Studi Penafsiran Islam Moderat M. Quraish Shihab* (Islamic Moderation in Indonesian Context : Study of Moderate Islamic Interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab), a journal that she published at the Institute of Alquran Sciences (IIQ) Jakarta discussing the concept of moderation in interpretation of Quraish Shihab. The method used in researching is a qualitative method or literature study to review the literature that can be used as a reference. This journal discusses the beginning of the emergence of radical Islam from the first to the third century of Hijriah. Furthermore, she explained about the radical movements that have emerged in the world today, in the form of terrorism, intolerance and *takfiri* (accuses another Muslim(s) of apostasy) movements as well as the challenges both internal and external facing Muslims today. The author also contained a biography of M. Quraish Shihab, his moderate attitude who attempts to create a peaceful Indonesian society through his phenomenal works. The researcher examined all the concepts of *wasatīyyah* in the Qur'an through the approaches of contemporary Muslim scholars (Zamimah, 2018; Majid, 2008; Suharto, 2017; Maarif, 2009).

Meanwhile, this research has a different study, which describes the concept of *wasatīyyah* - the moderate attitude that Muslims must have as shown by the prophet Muhammad through the traditions that he inherited. Furthermore, this thesis also describes the interpretation of verses related to the substance of *wasatīyyah* from the classical period to the present, then tries to contextualize the interpretation of these verses according to the needs of today's Muslims.

B. Discussion

1. Evolution of Qur'an Interpretation

Etymologically, *tafsir* means to explain, that is, a detailed explanation, which is taken from the words to open and to reveal. In the dictionary of *lisānu al-'Arab*, *tafsir* is an explanation. Terminologically, Al-Zarkasyī defines *tafsir* as the knowledge to understand the book of Allah, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Al-Dhahabī, n.d.; Muharrahman, 2017). In addition, there are many interpretations defined by other scholars. The method for understanding and interpreting the Qur'an was then standardized in a particular discipline which became known as *ilmu tafsir* (The Science of Interpretation).

The science of Qur'anic interpretation as an effort to understand and explain the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an has produced a number of exegetical works. The dynamics of these interpretive activities continue to evolve in line with the guidance of the times. The diversity of the backgrounds of individuals and groups of people also enriches the interpretation and method of approaching the Qur'an with all its weaknesses and strengths. In this area, many concepts and theories regarding how best to interpret and understand the Qur'an have been raised (Faiz, 2001).

The Prophet was given the authority to interpret the Qur'an. The Prophet received the teachings of the Qur'an from Allah through Jibril (Suma, 2014; Izzan, 2011). The companions always studied the Qur'an after the death of the Prophet, they understood the Qur'an through the companions who often attended the ceremony of the Prophet, among the companions who are famous for mastering *tafsir* are the Rashidun khulafaur, Abdullah bin Mas'ud, Ibn Abbas, Ubay bin Ka'ab, Zaid bin Tsabit and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, and Abdullah bin Zubair (Al-Maraghī, n.d.). The tradition of interpretation in the era of Prophet's companions was still oral using the narrative method. The results of teaching the interpretation of the Prophet were transmitted to the next generation. In the era of *tabi'in* (the successors of the companions), there have been different kinds of interpretation based on region. That is due to the *mufasssirs* from among the *tabi'in* who used to study with the companions then spread to several areas. Even ideological sectarianism began to emerge (Mustaqim, 2008). In the *Aqidah* (Creed) or theology, there are 5 (five) kinds of interpretations. They are and *Khawarij*, *Murji'ah*, *Mu'tazilah*, *Ash'ariyah* and *Maturidiyah* (Nasution, 1998). Interpretation in the heyday of Islam began when there was a very significant conquest and expansion of the territory of Islam, and Muslims began to recognize Greek, Persian and Indian civilizations. The massive debate with Jews and Christians has encouraged Islamic scholars to write various encyclopedias in the field of very comprehensive exegesis that did not exist in the past (Al-Maraghī, n.d.).

In the modern era, interpretation as an effort to understand and explain the meaning and content of the Qur'an has undergone quite varied developments. As a result of human work, the occurrence of diversity in interpretations is something that cannot be avoided (Shihab, 2002).

The reformist-progressive Muslim movement emerged in this period. They were thinkers who encouraged Muslims to go towards and build their future through substantive ideas in the Qur'an and Hadith. Progressive reformist Muslims are contextual, critical and historical in interpreting the Qur'an (Affani, 2019). The orientation of the interpretation in this period is; normative interpretation; rational interpretation; scientific interpretation; interpretation of social reform; language-literary interpretation; and interpretation of *da'wah* (Affani, 2019).

In the contemporary era, interpretation as an effort to understand and explain the meaning and content of the Qur'an has undergone quite varied developments. As a result of human work, the occurrence of diversity in interpretations is something that cannot be avoided. Various factors can cause this diversity, including differences in trends, interest and motivation of the interpreters, differences in the mission carried out, differences in the depth and variety of knowledge, differences in the mass and the surrounding environment, differences in situations and conditions faced (Affani, 2019). In this era, the interpretive paradigm is divided into two, namely textual and contextual interpretation.

Textual interpretation means interpreting the Qur'an outwardly which in the history of *fiqh* was pioneered by the *Zāhiriyyah* school. This textual interpretation is built on two conceptual frameworks. First, understanding the Qur'an only stops in its historical context. This textually oriented interpretation does not attempt to develop the substance of the text into contemporary problems. Second, not including social phenomena in the framework of the main objective of the

revelation of the Qur'an (Syafurudin, 2009). This reading of *harfiyah* (text) is commonly referred to as a literalist or scripturalist which is a way of reading that follows what the written verse sounds like, without having to dig further into the contents of the meaning that may be contained in the text (Hidayat, 1996). This interpretation is often taken by classical scholars.

The development of science, technology, and art has greatly influenced the paradigms, perspectives, methods and approaches of Qur'anic reviewers in an effort to study it. In addition, the various problems faced by Muslims as well as the changes and demands of a dynamic world community have required its researchers to adapt a number of new approaches and discoveries. This is done so that the results of the study and interpretation of the Qur'an remain up to date, applicable, and can be used as alternative solutions to various problems faced by the Muslim community and the world (Rahtikawati & Rusmana, 2013).

In the modern period, the figures appeared who wanted the teachings of the Qur'an to be re-applied. They interpret the Qur'an with a contextual method, which is a method of interpretation that considers the circumstances or motives for the passage of a verse. This method is taken as an effort to break through the stagnation of the textual method which is considered static and stagnant because it is always shackled by the sound of the text alone, so that the values of the Qur'an cannot be developed according to the present condition. Contextual interpretation tends to be relative, because of the local environment in which the interpreter is located. The factor of the depth of knowledge of a *mufassir* will certainly dominate the style of their respective interpretations (Yaqub, 2001).

2. Islam *wasatiyyah* and non-*wasatiyyah*

a- Islam *wasatiyyah*

Islam itself is moderate (*wasatiyyah*), but after significant developments, the expansion of Islamic rule, and the spread of the Muslims worldwide, as well as the emergence of quite diverse groups and sects, resulted in the growing Islamic teachings that were quite diverse with their respective styles which sometimes deviate far from the core teachings of Islam (Q. Shihab, 2019). In Indonesian, the word *wasatiyyah* is often translated as moderate. Moderation is defined as reducing violence and avoiding extremism. *Wasatiyyah* or moderation is often interpreted as something that leads the perpetrator to carry out activities that do not deviate from the stipulations outlined or previously agreed / established rules. In addition, the word *wasat* has several synonyms, for example, *as-sadād*, *al-qashd* / *al-iqtishād*, and *al-istiqāmah* (Q. Shihab, 2019; Fahmi, 2017).

Wasatiyyah has concepts that must be possessed by a Muslim. In ideology, Islam is neither atheism nor pantheism. But Islam invites its people to worship the One True God. This is what makes the point of difference between Islam and other religions. Islam provides a balance to its adherents in matters of worship and activities of worldly life, which is not excessive in spiritual and material. This is illustrated in surah Al-Jumu'ah, which is to trade and work for the world before Friday prayers and then rush towards *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) and leave buying and selling and various other worldly pursuits, then scatter on the earth and return to seek sustenance after Friday prayers (Al-Qaraḍawī, 2013).

Islam is moderate between extreme idealists who imagine humans at the level of angels, and extreme pragmatists (realists) who think humans are like animals. Humans according to the

Islamic viewpoint are combinative creatures contained in their intellect, lust, animal instincts and the spirituality of angels. Islam has a *wasatiyyah* attitude in its laws and statutory and social systems. Islam also divides individual and social needs, integrated in a harmonious and fantastic form in which individual freedom and the freedom of the social community are balanced, the rights and obligations thereof are compatible; balanced, the benefits and responsibilities thereof are divided on a straight scale (Al-Qaraḍawī, 2013). This is different from the philosophy of individualism or capitalism.

Islam has a balance in the determination of law (*tasyri* ') and its legal rules. Islam came with provisions on what is lawful and what is forbidden for which there is no human intervention. *Wasatiyyah* taught by Islam in the field of law is found, among others, with the term *Maqāsid Asy-Syariah*, which is the purpose of religious guidance that should always be considered in setting its laws. The purpose is formulated in 5 things that must be preserved (1) religion itself, (2) soul, (3) intellectuality, (4) property, and (5) human dignity. In addition, there are legal provisions that are definite and unchanged, but in their application the fulfillment of the conditions is required by considering the social conditions and circumstances of the perpetrators (Shihab, 2019).

The uniqueness of other Islamic treatises is the balance of principle (*tsabat*) and development (*tatawwur*), or between the firmness of principle (*tsabat*) and flexibility (*murūnah*). Islam combines the two in a beautiful harmony, by placing each of the two in its rightful place. This is in contrast to other heavenly religions which seem so rigid that they were rejected by renaissance practitioners. This is the beauty of the miracles of religion and as a proof of the universality, eternity (immortality) and validity (truth) of Islam for every age and place (Al-Qardhawi, 2001).

b- Non-wasatiyyah; Fundamentalism, Extremism, and Liberalism

The term fundamentalism comes from the English language *fundament* which can be interpreted as the basis of something or something that is fundamental. The word fundamentalism came from Western Christianity, to be precise in the United States, to define schools that want to return Christian understandings back to the literal interpretation of the Bible as the foundation of Christianity from the modernist interpretation that adapts the interpretations of the Bible with the concepts of progressive liberalism of modern science (A. Shihab, 1999). There are two very prominent characteristics, which are often shown by fundamentalists - the tendency to interpret religious texts rigidly and literally. These two characteristics often have implications for their attitude which are radical, militant, narrow-minded, excessively excited or tend to want to achieve goals violently.

The tendency to interpret religious texts in a rigid and literalist manner is not only found in the Protestant Christian, but also found in adherents of other religions. So the term Muslim fundamentalism, Jewish fundamentalism, Hindu fundamentalism, Sikh fundamentalism and others are well known. The word Extremism is taken from the word extreme which comes from the English language. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* defines it by (1) the very end (highest, loudest

and so on); (2) very stern and steadfast; fanatic: Extremity is an exaggeration. The word is also interpreted to exceed the limits of reasonableness (Shihab, 2019). Islamic *Nash* always calls for *i'tidal* (moderate attitude, moderation), and forbids excessive attitude, which is commonly termed as *ghuluw* (overstepping the limit), *tanaftu* '(always smart, always concise etc.) and *tasydīd* (complicate) . In fact, anyone who wants to study these *nash*, will certainly find it clear that Islam does not like extreme attitudes and warns strongly not to embrace it (Al-Qaraḍawī, 1993).

Many factors have triggered the emergence of extremism including psychological factors, social and political conditions, economic factors and social inequality. Actually, all of these trigger the movement of extremism, but extreme thoughts can be born from those who are very diligent and sincere in their religion. Here the extremities are caused by a misunderstanding of the demands of religion. It is this unconscious misunderstanding that often accompanies every perpetrator or is used by the perpetrator in an attitude of exceeding the boundaries. Even the perpetrators and the advocates use verses of the Qur'an and hadiths, but understand them textually and out of context (Q. Shihab, 2019).

Liberal means; (1) be independent; (2) independent -minded (wide and open). In fact the emergence of liberal Islam is a form of resistance against radical Islam, militant Islam and Jihad (Kurzman, 2001). Entering the 19th century AD, there had been a tremendous urge by the expansion of human civilization that had sprung up in the West to the Islamic world, which made the Muslims stunned as if they were helpless after realizing how backward the Muslims were when compared to the progress of the West. In order to advance Muslims, reformers generally undertake two stages of work. The first stage, they initiated the implementation of *ijtihad* (efforts) on various aspects of Islamic teachings to answer problems faced by Muslims in the modern age. The second stage, they initiated selective retaking from world civilizations that emerged in the West which were considered legalized in basic Islamic teachings (Harahap, 1961).

The mistake of understanding liberal Islam is that it defies modernity, so that Islam must be adapted to modernity. If there is a conflict between Islamic teachings and the achievement of modernity, what must be done is not to reject modernity, but to reinterpret the teachings (Husaini & Nuim, 2002). The next mistake is to exalt reason rather than revelation. If reason can show benefit, then that benefit must be taken even though it is contrary to particular religious texts from both the Qur'an and the hadiths. As smart and as high as any science, human reason must always need Allah's guidance in the form of revelation. So that the revelation can show things that are *shubhat*(doubtful), detect error and give instructions (Al-Qaraḍawī, 2007).

3. Contextual Interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 143 and Surah Al-Fath [48]: 29

Among the verses that contain the meaning of *wasatīyyah* is surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 143:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ إِيْمَانَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

“And it is thus that We appointed you to be the community of the middle way so that you might be witnesses to all mankind and the Messenger might be a witness to you. We appointed the direction which you formerly observed so that We might distinguish those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels. For it was indeed burdensome except for those whom Allah guided. And Allah will never leave your faith to waste. Allah is full of gentleness and mercy to mankind”.

The classical *mufasssir*, Abu Ja'far al-Ṭabari considers that the word *wasat* here is something that is between two sides. And Allah gives that label to the Muslims because they are in the middle (moderate) in religion, they are not exaggerated like the Christians who are very spiritualists, and they also do not reduce the law of Allah like the Jews who replaced the book of Allah, killed the prophets, lying and denying their god. But Muslims are fair and moderate (Ṭabari, 1999).

Al-Qurṭubi representing other classical *mufasssir* interpreted Al-Baqarah 143 as follows;

... As the Kaaba is located in the center of the earth, so have we made you a middle nation, that is, we have made you below the rank of the prophets and above other nations. *Wasat* is fair, as narrated from Tirmizi from Abi Sa'id that *wasat* means fair as in the words of Q.S Al-Qalam: 28 "the most just and the best". *Wasat* becomes the best because it is side by side with those who exaggerate and diminish, Muslims are not exaggerated like the Christians who worship their Prophet and also unlike the Jews who kill the Prophets (Al-Qurṭubi, n.d.).

Imam Fakh ad-Dīn Ar-Rāzi interpret the word *wasat* is far from two sides, which are *ifrat* (exaggeration) and *tafri* (reduce), Muslims do not exaggerate like the Christians to consider Isa as a child of God and did not squander the law like the Jews in killing the Apostles and replacing their scriptures (Fakhruddin, 2005). While Ibn Kathīr interpreted the word *wasat* in the verse with the meaning of the selected *ummah*. Allah has appointed Muslims as the best *ummah* because Allah has given the most perfect *shari'a* and the best *manhaj* (path) as well as the clearest *mazhab* (guidance) among all other *ummahs* (Kathīr, 2012).

Aḥmad Muṣṭafa Al-Maraghī, an expert *mufasssir* from Egypt, interprets al-Baqarah verse 143, that is and has been made by the Muslims as choice and fair (middle) as the meaning of the word *wasat*, because they are in the middle and not inclined to exaggeration in religious (*mufriṭin*) and not from squandering groups (*mufarriṭun*). The group of people before Islam was divided into two kinds; materialistic - those who do not think about anything except physical needs such as Jews and *Mushrikins*, and another one are those who really prioritizes spiritual needs, they leave the world and all its physical delights like the Christians and group of paganism Hindu (Al-Maraghī, n.d.).

Quraish Shihab associates the position of *wasat* here with the position of the Ka'bah which is in the center of the earth which is recognized by experts that the Ka'bah is in the center of the earth. The middle position makes a person visible to anyone in different angles, and then he can be an example for all parties. That position also makes it possible to watch anyone from anywhere. Allah made the Muslims in the middle position so that they can become witnesses to the actions of human beings (other people/*ummah*). There are also those who understand the *ummah* of *wasatan* in the middle sense in their view of God and the world. Not denying the existence of God, but also not embracing polytheism (many gods). The Islamic view is that god is omnipresent, and

He is omnipotent. The middle ¹ is also the Muslim view of the life of this world; does not deny and judge it virtual, but also does not view that the life of the world is everything. The Islamic view of life is that in addition to the world, there is also the hereafter. Success in the hereafter, is determined ¹ by faith and pious deeds in the world. Man must not be immersed in materialism, nor soar high in spiritualism, when the gaze is directed to heaven, the feet must remain firmly planted on the earth. Islam teaches its people to attain material things that are worldly, but with heavenly values (Q. Shihab, 2002; Hasmy, 2019; Bunyamin, 2013).

Contextualize the interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 143, Muslims are the best people who are among other people on the condition of not exaggerating in religion to act radically such as easily disbelieving fellow Muslims, accusing them of polytheism, heresy and superstition, and act extreme against groups that are different from them. Islam *wasatiyyah* (moderate) is not one that follows the West blindly to the point of invalidating the Shari'ah that Allah has sent down, and is useless in tolerating by “mortgaging” one's beliefs.

Another verse that contains the substance of *wasatiyyah* is Surah Al-Fath [48]: 29.

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مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا
سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرَزِعٍ أُخْرِجَ شَطَآءُ فَازَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ
فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سَوْفِهِ يُعْجَبُ الرَّزَّاعُ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, and those who are with him are firm with the unbelievers but compassionate with one another. You see them occupied in bowing and prostrating and in seeking Allah's bounty and good pleasure. They are distinguished from others by the marks of prostration on their faces. Thus are they described in the Torah. And their parable in the Gospel is that of a tilth that puts forth its shoot, then strengthens it so that it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem. This is a sight pleasing to the sowers and one by which the unbelievers will be enraged. As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, Allah has promised them forgiveness and a great reward”.

The above verse explains the condition of the Prophet and his attributes as well as the attributes of the companions who were with him. Allah described the companions of the Prophet with some extraordinary qualities, including harshness towards enemies, mutual love among Muslims, much worship, greed for the reward and pleasure of Allah and there are signs of light both in this world and in the hereafter on their faces.

Al-Ṭabari and al-Qurṭubi interpret al-Fath [48]: 29, that the Companions of the Prophet were people who were strict towards unbelievers and loved one another towards fellow Muslims (Ṭabari, 1999), on their faces there is light because of the worship they do (Al-Qurṭubi, 1985). Ibn Kathīr and ar-Rāzi stated that the verse contains praise to the Prophet and his companions for the qualities they display (Fakhrudin, 2005). Aḥmad Muṣṭafa al-Marāghī said that the praise was a motivation for future Muslim generations to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet's companions

(Al-Maraghī, n.d.). Muhammad Quraish Shihab said that the word kafir in the Koran does not always mean non-Muslim, but anyone who carries out activities that are contrary to religious goals can be considered an infidel (renegade). Violence against non-Muslims is only justified in the context of warfare (Shihab, 2002).

The contextualization of the interpretation of Q.S Al-Fath 29 is the praise that Allah conveyed to the companions of the Prophet is not limited only to them, the Muslims of the 20th century also get the same praise if they follow the steps taken by the companions in ancient times. *Kafir* are those who deny Allah-either by disobeying Him or denying His existence-, are ungrateful for His favors and act arrogant on earth even though he is a Muslim. Such an interpretation aims to motivate Muslims to be virtuous both to fellow human beings and to the Creator regardless of one's religion, tribe and nation. Because Islam is a religion of peace as contained in the main sources of Islamic teachings; The Qur'an and the Sunnah.

C. Conclusion

Islam is a plenary religion whose teachings cover various aspects of human life. *Islam wasatiyyah* describes the moderation of Islamic teachings starting with its moderate ideology, which not associating everything with God and not annulling His existence, balance between the priorities of life in the world and the hereafter, its teachings are balanced between individual and social so that it has a dynamic aspect of *sharia* law.

The classical, medieval, and modern *mufassirs* interpret al-Baqarah [20] verse 143, Muslims are the best because they are not like excessive Christians (*ifrat*) and Jews who reduce (*tafriṭ*) the Shari'a of Allah. Moslems are the chosen people with the best and clearest *manhaj* among the others.

Contextualize the interpretation of Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 143, that the word *ummatan wasatan* in the above verse is that Muslims are the best people among other *ummah* on condition that they are not exaggerating in religion so that they do not act radically, such as being easy to infidel fellow Muslims, accusing them of committing acts of *shirk*, *bid'ah* and *khurafat*, and do not take extreme action towards other religions. *Islam wasatiyyah* (moderate) nor does it follow the West blindly to annul the Shari'a that Allah sent down, and go too far in tolerance by "mortgaging" its *aqidah*.

The *mufassir* interpret al-Fath [48]: 29, that the Prophet's companions were people who were strict towards unbelievers and loved their fellow Muslims, on their faces there was light because of the worship they were doing.

Contextualization of the interpretation of Q.S Al-Fath; 29 is that praise as a motivation for Muslims today to follow the steps taken by ancient companions of the Prophet, harshness and towards those who deny, love each other, and sincerely worship by hoping for the pleasure and grace of Allah alone. Being harsh or stern towards infidels is not only aimed at non-Muslims. Muslims who practice sharia violations are also dealt with firmly.

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