

The Meaning of Wasath: The Return of the Holistic Paradigm of Islam Through the Approach of Tafsir bil Ma'na

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Abstract The concept of wasath in Islam is often associated with the principles of balance, moderation and justice in various aspects of life. However, the partial meaning of wasath often obscures its essence as a holistic paradigm in Islam. This research aims to review the meaning of wasath through the approach of tafsir bil ma'na, which is a tafsir method that emphasises understanding the meaning of the Qur'an contextually and integrally. Using library research and qualitative descriptive analysis of linguistic roots, usage in the Qur'an, as well as the interpretations of classical and contemporary mufasirs, this study finds that wasath is not merely a concept of moderation, but a basic principle in Islamic epistemology that includes theological, social and ethical dimensions. The tafsir bil ma'na approach allows reinterpretation that is more in line with the challenges of the times, restoring wasath as the foundation of Islam's holistic paradigm in facing modern problems. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the study of tafsir and a more comprehensive moderate Islamic discourse.

Keywords: Wasath, Islamic holistic paradigm, Tafsir bil Ma'na.

1. Introduction

Previous research on the study of wasathiyah has been discussed in Al-Wasathiyah's thesis in al-Qur'an (Study of Tafsir al-Maraghi, al-Munir and al-Misbah) by Iffaty Zamimah, but this time the focus in this study is complementing in paradigm variables Islamic, this is because Islam law serves as an intermediary in the fulfillment of science, Ilham Muchtar also presented a study entitled Ummatan Wasatha, in the perspective of tafsir al-Tabary even in the realm of the Indonesian ministry, he also made a book on religious moderation with a prologue by Lukman Hakim Saifuddin in order to counteract radicalism in Indonesia in particular which

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There needs to be a deep interpretation of *wasath* in the paradigm of Islamic law, because Islam is a teaching that is *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. However, in reality, there are often interpretations and behaviours that do not reflect the values of Islam that bring mercy to all nature. This leads to misunderstandings and distortions in the application of Islamic teachings, especially in legal and social aspects. Therefore, an objective interpretation of the *wasath* concept is needed so that Islam remains in line with its fundamental values, namely justice, balance and moderation. One approach that can be used to understand this concept objectively is *tafsir maudhu'i* (thematic interpretation). This approach allows the study of Islam to be carried out more comprehensively by looking at various related verses in one particular theme. Thus, an understanding of *wasath* can be more complete and relevant in the lives of Muslims.

2. Methods

This research is a literature research, which is research conducted by relying on various literature sources as the basis for analysis. The sources used include books, notes, scientific journals, and reports on previous research results that are relevant to the topic under study. This approach aims to gain a deep understanding and enrich the perspective in analysing the issues raised. By reviewing various academic references, this research can develop stronger and more systematic arguments based on theory and previous findings. In addition, the literature method allows researchers to identify patterns, trends and gaps in previously conducted studies, so as to make new contributions to the development of science. Through critical analysis of various literatures, this research is expected to produce conclusions that are objective,

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comprehensive, and in accordance with applicable academic rules. Source of Data is from tafsir al-Maraghi, is a data collection technique using the method of al-farmawi in his approach with tafsir maudhui.

This library research with qualitative descriptive analysis primarily draws on the interpretations of al-Maraghi. The analysis reveals the patterns and methods of interpretation used by al-Maraghi. The approach used is interpretation. Data analysis in this study was conducted after data collection, and the data was analysed to draw conclusions. Data Collection Techniques, in this case, the author will identify discourse from the Qur'an and maudhui interpretations from al-Maraghi that are related to wasat, both textually and contextually, which contain the meaning of moderation.

3. Result

Ummatan Wasathan is the concept of an ideal society described in the Qur'an, by promoting a harmonious and balanced life with moderate nature which has a position in the middle or can be called moderate. Moderate Islam is a form of Islam that can combine spiritual and physical, material and spiritual aspects, Conceptually in Latin Moderatio which means moderate, and in KBBI has 2 meanings, namely the reduction of violence and the avoidance of extremism or in a reasonable sense in the view of life and he wants to consider the views of others.

Wasathiyah is Arabic from the word moderate, as described in Surah al-Baqarah 2: 143, which means the best and most perfect and in the hadith it is also stated that a good problem is in the middle, this verse calls for fair and just be objective. Moderate Islam tries to be in the middle in dealing with any differences, whether religious differences or madzhab by prioritizing an attitude of tolerance, mutual respect, with their respective beliefs.

The wasathan ummah in the Qur'an textually seems to be collided with another verse in Surat Al-Baqarah: 28 "*Udkhulu fi silmi kaffah*" which has been translated into Islam in *kaffah*, is studied with a multicultural concept with a reorientation of interpretation that approaches the concept multiculturalism by stating the existence of other entities in life which in fact is to have a correlation with the ummah wasathan or religious moderation.

Wasath with its various derivations is repeated 5 times in the Qur'an, namely in Surat al-Baqarah verse 143, al-Adiyat verse 5, al Maidah verse 89, al Qalam verse 28 and al Baqarah 238. In Arabic al-wasath is the noun, its use can be masculine and feminine, single and plural, then, if the word wasath is based on the word ummat then it means a balanced ummah, and if it is based to Islam, then it becomes moderate Islam, or Islam that carries the concept of deep moderation this will be revealed in al-Maraghi's tafsir.

Al-Maraghi emphasizes that the moderate people are the chosen and just people, by emphasizing the true meaning of wasathiyah, as well as as interpreted by Imam Suyuti, that moderation is the middle of the mean fair, choice and main and not on the meaning of figure of speech as expressed by Qurasih Shihab in interpreting wasathiyah. moderate Islamic character possessed by Muslims, namely not exaggerating or not underestimating in various issues related to religion and the world. Moderation is a combination of body and spirit, and all aspects that surround it, a way of looking at things as a whole, that is, objectively, comprehensively and consistently.

The theory of paradigms in science was first developed by Thomas S Khun who stated that paradigms are initial and general theoretical assumptions which are the source of values, laws, methods and applications in science so that they become properties, characteristics and characters. science itself, and it can be said that a paradigm is a perspective, values, ways of solving problems, frameworks of thinking.

Meanwhile, epistemologically, it was discussed by Usman Abu Bakar that the paradigm of Islamic law which states that in the current era of globalization, the new paradigm of Islamic law is an effort to avoid a dichotomy between the religious sciences and the general sciences, what exists is the quality and competence of knowledge. The Islamic view of the two sciences is interrelated and one unit of the Knowledge of Allah, and in the context of Islamic law it is time to re-examine the scientific paradigm that will become the basis of the law system in one science that is able to meet the needs of society and the times.²

The holistic paradigm of Islam has been widely discussed, for example in relation to the transformation of the holistic paradigm system of Islam and state law. This is due to the importance of the holistic paradigm of Islam as a determining factor in the framework of thinking and acting in Islam.

In the history of the holistic paradigm of Islam, the pattern of integrating knowledge into a unified whole, the culture of integrating knowledge and religious moderation in Islam is a legacy of a civilisation that emerged from the early days of Islam, which was spread with moderation and integration among Muslims. The holistic paradigm and pattern of scientific integration have been fundamental characteristics since the early days of Islam's spread. This tradition of moderation and scientific integration reached its peak during the Abbasid era, particularly during the reigns of Caliphs Harun al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun. Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad became a tangible symbol of this holistic Islamic paradigm. This institution was not merely a library or academic centre, but a hub of scientific activity that brought together scholars from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds with the common goal of pursuing knowledge. This approach reflects

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the values of Islamic moderation, which provides extraordinary tolerance, freedom, and equality for all citizens living within its territory.

Building religious moderation means fostering awareness of balanced and moderate behavior that should be developed by all levels of society according to their capacity and understanding. Moderation requires the integration of religion and law so that neither stands apart but rather complements each other in guiding human life. The establishment of institutions based on a holistic Islamic paradigm, firmly grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith, is crucial for ensuring that moderation is practiced authentically and consistently. These institutions can provide guidance, education, and regulation, enabling society to live harmoniously, respecting differences while upholding shared universal values.

The character of *wasathiyah* is divided into several principles, namely justice, balance, and tolerance, and has characteristics that consist of understanding reality, understanding *fiqh*, leaning towards goodness, calling for peace and openness in responding to differences, and a steadfast attitude that is a must. The rapid development of society today, along with increasingly rapid technology, has given rise to many problems and challenges. Maudhui interpretation then offers a solution to study the Qur'an comprehensively in a particular field or issue, and this method can also establish universal laws for all Muslims with one source, namely the Qur'an.

The maudhui method of interpretation is one of the most popular methods of interpreting the Qur'an compared to other methods, such as *ijmali*, *tahlili*, and *muqaran*. The popularity of this method is inseparable from its characteristics, which are considered more practical and relevant to the needs of modern society. In the maudhui method, an exegete collects all the verses of the Qur'an that discuss a particular theme, then analyses them systematically to obtain a complete picture of the Qur'an's view on that topic. In this way, Muslims can immediately obtain comprehensive and applicable answers to the issues they face, without having to refer to the interpretation of each verse individually, which would take a long time. The current tendency of society to want quick results and instant solutions makes this method very suitable, as it is able to present a concise, thematic understanding of the Qur'an that directly addresses contemporary issues for the needs of daily life.

Thematic interpretation is one method of interpreting the Qur'an by gathering all verses that have the same purpose or theme, then discussing them in depth to gain a complete understanding. In the process, the verses are not only collected, but also organised according to the order in which they were revealed (*asbâb al-nuzûl*), and their relationship with other verses that have a connection in meaning (*munâsabah*) is taken into account. With this approach, the mufassir can understand both the historical context and the universal message contained in the verses. The end result is a comprehensive and thorough drawing of legal conclusions or normative conclusions. This method of interpretation is highly relevant because it is able to answer contemporary issues thematically, as well as provide clarity on how the Qur'an

addresses a particular issue in a complete, systematic, and integrated manner in accordance with the needs of the ummah.

Judging from its meaning, the verses of the Qur'an on Islamic moderation teach a balanced and moderate approach to religion and life. Moderation positions Muslims as a just, tolerant community that respects differences and shuns extremism. This approach encourages harmony, unity, and simplicity in practising religious teachings in accordance with the context of the times and culture without abandoning the core values of Islam. Moderation is the key to maintaining social harmony and building a peaceful, tolerant society that can avoid conflicts caused by extremism and narrow-minded fanaticism.

Table 1.

No	Lafadh	Meaning	Surah: Ayah
01	وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ	Chosen people	Al-Baqar ah 143
02	الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ ۚ فارجع البصر ۚ هل ترى من فطورٍ ۚ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۚ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشَى اللَّيْلُ النَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ	In the balance of natural phenomena	Al-Mulk: 3, ar-Ra'd: 3
03	إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِأَمْرِكُمْ أَنْ تَقُولُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا	Meaningful justice	An-Nisa 58
04	وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (٧٧)	Balanced lifestyle	Qasas:77
05	وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ	In attitude	Lukman: 19
06	وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا (7) فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا (8) قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ (زَكَّاهَا) (9)	In morals	As-Syam 7-9
07	يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ	In nationhood and statehood	Hujurat: 13

4. Discussion

Religious moderation based on *maudhui* interpretation and its derivative meanings is found in seven verses of the Qur'an, which are the main references. Al-Maraghi, in his interpretation, explains that in general terms, moderation in the Qur'an is a balanced attitude adopted by Muslims in carrying out their religious and social lives. This concept is called *ummatan wasathan*, which is a community that is just, not extreme, and is in the middle between excess and deficiency in all aspects, whether in worship, *muamalah*, or social interaction. This moderation teaches Muslims to be wise, tolerant, and respectful of one another, thereby creating harmony and peace. The *maudhui* approach emphasises the importance of comprehensively understanding the theme of moderation by collecting relevant verses, organising them, and exploring legal values as guidelines for life that are highly relevant in the modern era.

The interpretation of Al-Baqarah verse 143 on religious moderation in Al-Maraghi's tafsir means the chosen people, namely those who set an example in balance and justice. Al-Maraghi explains that the chosen people are those who are upright and just in their thoughts, deeds, and morals. This moderate attitude encompasses a balance between spiritual and worldly aspects, as well as between individual rights and social interests. This community maintains harmony with other creatures and is proportional in all things, so that there is neither excess nor deficiency. In this context, religious moderation is key for Muslims to become role models of integrity, wisdom, and insight in facing various challenges of the times, in accordance with the principles of justice and benefit taught in Islam. This *wasathiyah* attitude avoids extremism and excessive fanaticism that can destroy the unity of the *ummah*.

This is in line with Surah An-Nisa' verse 58, which emphasises the importance of religious moderation, meaning fairness. Allah commands that the mandate be conveyed to those who are entitled to receive it and that when establishing laws between humans, it should be done fairly without discrimination. Fair decisions are the best form of teaching from Allah, the All-Hearing and All-Seeing. This makes the principle of justice the main foundation of moderation, so that Muslims always maintain balance in their attitudes, actions, and decisions in order to create social justice and harmony in society. Fair religious moderation can prevent extremism and discrimination that destroy unity and integrity among the people. Therefore, this verse is very relevant in building a civilised society that respects the rights of every individual in a balanced manner within the framework of Islamic teachings.

An-Nisa' 58 has *Asbab Nuzul* narrated by Ibn Marduwaih from Kalabi from Shalih from Ibn Abbas about *Asbabun Nuzul* surat an nisa' 58: After the city of Mecca fell into the hands of the Muslims in the event of *fathul Makkah*, the Messenger of Allah called Usman Bin Thalhah to ask for the key to the Ka'bah. Abbas stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, give me the key to the Ka'bah, so that I may

combine it with my position as the keeper of the water supply (siqayah).’ Hearing these words, Uthman bin Thalhah withdrew his hand and did not give the key to the Messenger of Allah. Then the Messenger said, ‘This is a trust from Allah.’ Then the Prophet stood up, opened the door of the Ka’bah, and went out to perform tawaf around the House of Allah. The angel Jibril descended with Allah’s command to return the key of the Ka’bah to Uthman bin Thalhah. The Prophet immediately carried out Allah’s command after Jibril recited verse 58.

Religious moderation in the balance of natural phenomena is explained in Surah al-Mulk: 3, which explains that Allah created seven layers of heaven. Nothing unbalanced can be seen in Allah’s creation. So look again, do you see anything flawed? This is also in line with Surah Ar-Ra’du: 3, And He who spread out the earth and placed mountains and rivers upon it. And upon it He created all kinds of fruits in pairs; He causes night to cover day. Indeed, in that are signs for those who reflect.

Moderation, meaning balance in one’s way of life, is reflected in Surah Al-Qasas verse 77, which instructs Muslims to seek reward in the hereafter with what Allah has bestowed upon them, without neglecting their life in this world. This verse emphasises the importance of balance between striving for happiness in the hereafter and enjoying worldly responsibilities and pleasures in a proportionate manner. In addition, Allah commands us to do good to others as He does good to mankind, while forbidding us from causing corruption on earth. This moderate approach teaches believers not to be excessive in pursuing worldly matters to the point of forgetting the hereafter, nor to focus solely on the hereafter to the point of neglecting worldly obligations. Moderation is the key to a balanced and harmonious life, maintaining the well-being of individuals and society as well as the sustainability of nature without causing damage or social inequality.

Religious moderation in behaviour is reflected in Surah Luqman verse 19, which teaches simplicity in walking and gentleness in speech. The verse states, ‘And be moderate in your gait and soften your voice. Verily, the worst sound is the sound of a donkey.’ This means that a person is encouraged to walk with humility, not too fast or too slow, and to speak softly and not raise their voice excessively. A loud voice is considered bad and is likened to the harsh voice of a donkey. This attitude shows the importance of maintaining ethics in interactions, avoiding arrogance and noise that can disturb others, so that harmony and balance are created in social life in accordance with the values of moderation in Islam.

Religious moderation in morality is reflected in Surah Asy-Syam verses 7-9, which read, "By the soul and the perfection (of its creation), He inspired it with its wickedness and its piety. Truly fortunate are those who purify it (the soul)." This verse shows that humans are given two moral potentials by Allah, namely the potential to do evil and the potential to be pious. Moderation is reflected in a person’s ability to choose the path of piety and purify their soul from evil. Those who succeed in purifying their souls and controlling their desires towards goodness are truly

fortunate. Thus, religious moderation is not only balanced in attitude, but also highly moral, maintaining a balance between evil and good impulses in the soul, resulting in noble behaviour in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Religious moderation in nationhood and statehood is clearly reflected in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13. This verse emphasises that humans were created from one man and one woman, then divided into nations and tribes so that they may know one another. Allah emphasises that no nation or tribe is superior to another except in terms of piety and faith. This affirms the principles of justice, unity, and respect for diversity in national and state life. Religious moderation requires tolerance and respect for cultural, tribal, and national differences in order to create social harmony and peace. With this foundation, Muslims are encouraged to place piety as the measure of nobility and avoid discrimination or arrogance that can destroy national harmony.

Verse 13 of Surat al-Hujurat explains that there is no honour for a person in the sight of Allah except through his piety, and that He created mankind in various nations and tribes so that they may know one another and help one another in social life. The reason for the revelation of the above verse is as follows: Ibn Abu Hatim narrated a hadith through Ibn Abu Mulaikah, who recounted that during the conquest of Mecca, Bilal immediately climbed onto the Kaaba and called the adhan. Then some people said, 'How dare this black slave call the adhan on top of the Kaaba?' Some of them said, 'If Allah is angry, He will surely prevent him.' Then Allah revealed His words: O mankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female (QS Al-Hujurat: 13).

Let not some of the believers mock others among the believers. It is not right for anyone to mock another whom he considers lowly because of his ragged appearance, or because he is physically disabled, or because he is physically disabled, or because he is not fluent in speech. A person with such a nature is, in effect, oppressing himself by insulting others who are honoured by Allah Ta'ala. The words of Allah Ta'ala, 'Anfusakum,' are a warning that a person of reason would not insult himself. Therefore, it is not appropriate for them to criticise others. For others are like themselves. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'The believers are like one body. If one part of the body is in pain, the whole body feels sleepless and feverish.'

Moderate Islam is a description of Muslims who prioritise fairness by taking a wise middle path. A moderate Muslim does not lean towards any extremes, either in thought or action. This concept is explained in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143, which refers to Muslims as a chosen people who are wasath (middle), and verse 238, which teaches the importance of maintaining worship in a balanced manner. The meaning of moderation is also related to other verses, such as Al-Adiyat verse 5, which demands sincerity but not excess, Al-Maidah verse 89, which regulates law with justice, and Al-Qalam verse 28, which calls for patience and calmness. Moderate Islam emphasises a balance between tradition and progress, between firmness and tolerance,

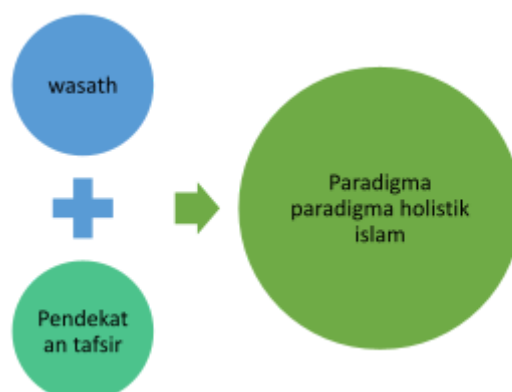
and between religious rules and the welfare of the people in a proportional and rational manner.

The holistic paradigm of Islam serves as a means for the legal implementation of Moderate Islam, as it requires a lengthy and practical interpretation of Moderate Islam itself. This is in line with the development of radical ideas based on the Qur'an and Hadith. Moderate Islam with the Maraghi interpretation approach is the most appropriate to be applied in the Islamic world. Starting from explaining verses by mentioning the context of the verses before and after, giving a general or global meaning and a detailed meaning, the use of the Al-Maragi interpretation in the holistic paradigm of Islam is very appropriate for explaining Moderate Islam.

The term 'Wasath' in the context of the holistic Islamic paradigm refers to the concept of moderation or balance. This is one of the fundamental principles in the holistic Islamic paradigm that emphasises the importance of maintaining balance in life and avoiding extremism. The maudu'i interpretation approach focuses on understanding the meaning of the Qur'anic text based on the content or substance expressed in the text, rather than merely focusing on the literal words. This method prioritises understanding the conceptual meaning or thematic meaning of the verses of the Qur'an. The Maudu'i interpretation approach also focuses on the message, theme, or purpose behind the text of the Qur'an or hadith, not just on the literal or grammatical aspects. This approach takes into account the social, cultural, and legal context that is to be achieved.

In the context of the holistic Islamic paradigm, the concept of Wasath can be applied through the Tafsir Maudhui approach by prioritising a direct understanding of the texts of the Qur'an and hadith without exaggerating in interpretation or emphasising extreme views. Several principles in applying the concept of Wasath through the Tafsir Maudhui approach in the field of the holistic Islamic paradigm include:

1. Justice (al-'adl); giving equal rights to all individuals without discrimination; being fair without favouring one party and/or exploiting another.
2. Balance (tawazun) between rights and obligations; between freedom and responsibility; and between individual and community rights.
3. Legal certainty (Qat'iyyah al-Hukm)
4. Public interest; prioritising public interest and welfare in legal decision-making, in accordance with maqasid al-shari'ah.
5. Social concern (Safqah insaniyah); developing empathy and concern for the needs and social conditions of society, especially the weak and marginalised.
6. Balance in tolerance and compromise.



5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the concept of wasath has many derivations in the Qur'an and al-Ghazali's interpretation also differs, but wasath contains the meaning of balance in many things, not only in attitude, but in all things, so that through a paradigm that balances between several paradigms, it becomes the main solution. The interpretation of wasath in the study of the holistic Islamic paradigm is clearly used, because when we use the paradigm of balance, the holistic Islamic paradigm related to it can also be implemented correctly.

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