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THE BIBLE IN ISLAMIC EXEGESIS: A GENEALOGIC BASIS FOR RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of Islamic exegesis in the Indonesian Archipelago traces its genealogic roots to the thought of the Prophet's contemporaries and many scholars in the Middle East. The Bible has had a tangible impact on the process, especially in matters of religious moderation. This study seeks to fill the gaps in the literature, which has only viewed Indonesian culture and Biblical values as being linearly correlated with the practice of moderation rather than as providing important and mutually complementary sources for exegesis and society's everyday behaviors. This study is a library research type using a qualitative approach with an analysis of religious literature on religious moderation in the Bible and Indonesian Qur'anic exegesis. This study finds that basis tafsir Islam Nusantara, Islam Nusantara and the Bible are similar in their approaches to and conceptualizations of religious moderation, and this implies that Christians and Muslims can live in harmony and inclusivity. This article emphasizes the importance of developing an accommodative approach to exegesis, one that promotes religious moderation to address conflict and violent behavior in society, so that sustainable development can be realized.

KEYWORDS: Genealogical Basis, Accommodative Exegesis, Islam Nusantara, Religious Moderation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic thought in the Indonesian Archipelago (Islam Nusantara) evidences significant Biblical influences, particularly in matters of religious moderation.¹ Biblical values such as honesty (Proverbs 23:16), doing well by others (Titus 3:8), love (Peter 4:8), and gentleness (Ephesians 4:2-3) have shaped Indonesian scholars interpretations of the Qur'an,² including Surah Al-Ahzab, passage 23 (33:23; on honesty), Surah Al-Isra', passage 7 (17:7; on doing well by others), Surah Ali 'Imran, passage 14 (3:14; on love), and Surah Fussilat, passage 34 (41:34; on gentleness). This contrasts sharply with the view that exegesis in Indonesia traces its roots solely to four sources: (a) the Quran, (b) the Hadiths, (c) exegesis from generation of Muslim (i.e. contemporary to the Prophet,[*Shahab*]), and (d) exegesis from the time of the second generation of Muslims (i.e. the *Tabi'in*).³

Generally, the literature on religious moderation in Indonesian exegesis falls into three categories. *First*, studies that trace the evolution of Islam Nusantara as influenced by Middle Eastern exegesis.⁴ *Second*, studies that explore the Bible's influence on Indonesian exegesis and views of religious moderation,⁵ and *Third*, studies that illustrate how local wisdom has influenced current understandings of religious moderation, including its potential to create social harmony.⁶ Such studies have yet to analyze how the similarities in Biblical and Islam Nusantara views of religious moderation can influence the practice of said moderation in everyday life.

This study seeks to fill the gaps in the literature, which has only viewed Indonesian culture and Biblical values as being linearly correlated with the practice of moderation rather than as providing important and mutually complementary sources for exegesis and society's everyday behaviors. It thus answers three research questions: (a) how is religious moderation conceptualized and constructed in Islam

Nusantara; (b) how have the values of religious moderation in the Bible influenced the construction of religious moderation in Islam Nusantara; and (c) given the similarities between Biblical values and the traditional conceptualization of religious moderation, what are the implications for religious conflict and conformity in the Indonesian Archipelago. The answers to these questions provide the basis of this article. To date, understandings of moderation have rarely accommodated the diversity and variety of religious paradigms.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Genealogical Basis

Genealogical basis is the study of descent, origins, and family history traced through bloodlines or kinship, using records, archives, or genetic analysis to build a chain of evidence from individuals to their ancestors.⁷ In a philosophical context, its basis is the critical historical method for understanding how power and knowledge shape social reality. In essence, it seeks the "origin" (descent) or "origin" (the emergence of a concept/practice).⁸

Genealogical basis is the systematic study and tracing of family lineages, relying on historical records (births, marriages, census), oral traditions, and sometimes DNA analysis to build documented family trees (pedigrees) showing ancestor-descendant relationships, forming a chain of evidence from present to past, crucial for understanding kinship/historical identity. It uses standardized charts and symbols to map out family connections across generations, moving from known individuals backward to discover unknown ancestors.

In the social sciences, "genealogical basis" refers to two distinct but related concepts. The use of genealogical data and methods for studying social phenomena, and the genealogical analytical framework (primarily associated with Nietzsche and Foucault) for critiquing the historical emergence of

¹Inayatillah, Kamaruddin, and M. Anzaikhan, "The History of Moderate Islam in Indonesia and Its Influence on the Content of National Education," In *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 17, no. 2 (2022), 213-226.

²Cut Linda Marheni, "Intellectual Attitudes Toward Islam Nusantara and Their Religious Ideas," In *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 18, no. 1 (September 2023), 75-98.

³Muhammad Husain Az-Zahabi, *At-Tafsir Wa al-Mufasssirun* (Jakarta: IIQ Press, 2020). Syamsun Ni'am, "Pesantren: The Miniature of Moderate Islam in Indonesia," *IJIMS: Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 5, no. 1 (June 2015), 111-134.

⁴Edris Zamroni, Puji Handayani, Gudnanto, "Mapping Religious Moderation and Its Impact on Islamic Education in Indonesia: A Bibliometric Approach," *Munaddhomah* (2025), 1-14.

⁵Merilyn Setinawati, Isabella, Maidiantius, "The Framework of Religious Moderation: A Socio-Theological Study on the Role of Religion and Culture from Indonesia's Perspective," *Social Science and Humanities Open* 11 (2025), 1-14.

⁶Nu Online, "Sunan Kalijaga's Cultural Da'wah Model in Nusantara (Indonesia) Islamic Syi'ar," February, 5, 2025).

⁷Mathieu Gomes, Sylvain Marsat, Jonathan Peillex, and Pijourlet, "Does Religiosity Influence Corporate Greenwashing Behavior?," In *Journal of Cleaner Production* 434 (1 Januari 2024): 40-51.

⁸Michele Bigoni, UK Laura Maran, and Zeila Occhipinti, "Of power, knowledge and method: The influence of Michel Foucault in accounting history," In *Accounting History* 29, no. 3 (2024): 344-387.

knowledge and power structures.⁹ The explanation is as follows:

1. Genealogy as a Data and Research Method

This approach uses family lineage and kinship data to study multigenerational social processes, that is: (a) Kinship Studies (Anthropology): Genealogy was foundational to 20th-century social anthropology. Researchers systematically recorded blood and marriage connections to understand social organization, descent, marriage rules, and inheritance patterns in different cultures. This method provided a framework for comparative studies of kinship systems worldwide, (b) Social Stratification and Demography: The availability of large-scale genealogical microdata (linked historical records, censuses, and population registers) allows researchers to go beyond traditional two-generation studies (parent-child) and examine the influence of extended kin networks and ancestral socioeconomic characteristics across multiple generations, (c) Sociological Imagination: Family genealogy, as a personal pursuit, can serve as a vehicle for the "sociological imagination" (C. Wright Mills), helping individuals link their personal biographies to broader social and historical contexts, such as race, class, gender, and national identity.¹⁰

2. The Genealogical Analytical Framework (Foucault and Nietzsche)

This philosophical and historical method, prominent in the humanities and post-structuralist social sciences, is a mode of inquiry that challenges the assumed origins and universal truths of current ideas and practices. That is: (a) Critique of Universality: It does not seek a singular, pure origin but rather traces the complex, often messy and power-laden, historical development of social phenomena. It reveals that what is often considered natural or inevitable is actually a historical construction, (b) Knowledge and Power: Primarily inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche and developed by Michel Foucault, this approach examines the intimate relationship between knowledge (discourses) and power. It analyzes how

specific social and institutional practices accumulate bodies of knowledge and produce "subjects" and "objects" of social science discourse itself (e.g., the "delinquent," "homosexual," or "patient"), (c) Destabilization and Evaluation: By exposing the contingency of accepted beliefs, the genealogical framework aims to destabilize naturalized categories and evaluate the limited, political meanings of practices, often highlighting marginalized voices and suppressed knowledges. It helps to understand how "things" have become the way they are and opens up new possibilities for understanding and change.¹¹

Among the results of the study in this article, it shows that the origin of the tradition of religious moderation in Nusantara Islam was shaped by Nusantara exegesis and the concept of religious moderation in Nusantara exegesis originates from the Bible.¹²

2.2. Accommodative Exegesis

Accommodative exegesis is a method of interpreting the Qur'an that tries to adjust or accommodate cultural values, social contexts, and modern developments so that the message of the Qur'an remains relevant and easy to understand by contemporary society, often by looking at the current historical (micro/macro) and social context, without eliminating the substance of the original text, bridging the understanding between classical texts and contemporary realities.¹³

Accommodative exegesis stems from the basic values of religious moderation, which consist of four core values: (1). A comprehensive understanding of Islam, (2). A balance between the dictates of sharia and the changing times, (3) Support for peace, and (4) Respect for humanitarian values, recognition of religious, cultural, and political plurality, and recognition of minority rights. This corresponds with the concept of religious pluralism promoted by the Ministry of Religion, which incorporates the values of justice, balance, and tolerance.¹⁴

⁹Friedrich Nietzsche, *Genealogy and History*, In Bouchard, onald F. (ed.): Bouchard, onald F. and Simon, Sherry (trans.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Cornell: Cited as NGH, 1977).

¹⁰Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (Yogyakarta, IKON, 2002). Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (Yogyakarta: Qolam, 2002). Michel Foucault, *Religion, Culture, and Sexuality* (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2007).

¹¹Aaron Ridley (ed.), Judith Norman (trans.), *Nietzsche: The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols: And Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cited as Ecce Homo, 2005). Bernard F. Harcourt, "The Illusion of Influence: On Foucault, Nietzsche, and Fundamental Misunderstanding." *Columbia Public Law Research Paper* 11 (28 Mei 2019).

¹²Setinawati, Isabella, Maidiantius, Merilyn, "The Framework of Religious Moderation: A Socio-theological Study on the Role of Religion and Culture from Indonesia's Perspective," *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 11, (2025): 1-11.

¹³Juhrah M. Arib, Siti Rohmah, and Sabil Mokodenseho, "The Development of Interpretation Styles in Qur'anic Exegesis," In *An-Nubuwwah Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (June 2024): 152-181.

¹⁴Andi Suhardiyanto, Wijayanti, and Hendri Irawan, "Exploring the Concept of Cultural Divinity in Supporting Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan* 22, Issue 1 (2025), 58-74. Hektaviandri, Suarti, Irawati, Sri Ningsih, M. Effauzi, and Mahyudin Ritonga, "Diversity and Urgency of Religious Moderation Education

Such understandings of moderate Islam are manifested in Islam Nusantara, which seeks to: (a) create a harmonious and pluralistic civilization, (b) respect different opinions, (c) avoid using violence to promote one's views, and (d) acknowledge the existence of different perspectives.¹⁵ Moderation is thus a central part of Islam Nusantara, being necessary to achieve its three fundamental goals: upholding human dignity, preventing excessive fanaticism, and maintaining a specific Indonesian identity.¹⁶ Central to religious moderation is self-restraint, as manifested by living honestly and piously, doing well by others, loving others, and remaining humble.¹⁷

2.3. Islam Nusantara

The term Islam Nusantara was first coined by Musa,¹⁸ and later developed by Siradj.¹⁹ According to Siradj, Islam Nusantara is Islam with a cultural approach, avoiding rigid and harsh doctrines. Islam Nusantara is developed by embracing culture, preserving it, respecting it, and not killing it. According to him, Islam Nusantara is characterized by a friendly, anti-radical, inclusive, and tolerant Islam. This contrasts with Arab Islam, which is always at odds with other Muslims and leads to civil war.²⁰

According to Azra, Islam Nusantara is a distinctive Islam resulting from the interaction, contextualization, indigenization, and vernacularization of universal Islam with the social, cultural, and religious realities of Indonesia.²¹ According to the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, Islam Nusantara is a moderate Islam.²²

Moderate Islam is a middle-ground Islam, a uniquely Indonesian Islam, synonymous with Muslims who adhere to the principles of Ummatan Wasathan (Surah al-Baqoroh, passage 143 [2:143]), namely Muslims who consistently maintain balance,

not siding with either the extreme right or the extreme left, and who avoid acts of violence.²³ Therefore, moderate Islam in the archipelago is seen as effective in stemming the tide of radical terrorism. According to Muzadi, the concept of Ummatan Wasathan refers to Muslims who consistently adopt a middle-ground attitude (tawashut) and a just and balanced attitude (i'tidal), which strikes a balance between faith and tolerance.²⁴

Meanwhile, the Islamic Ummah examines the terminology of moderate (al-Wasathiyah) from an Islamic perspective and contrasts it with Western terminology. According to the Islamic Ummah, moderate Islam is a term that holds a very important and noble meaning, although in practice it is often misunderstood. Moderation in Islam is not merely a "third and new attitude," but also a method that mediates two conflicting extremes, by rejecting excessive attitudes (exagerism) on either side. Ultimately, this leads to a preference for one of two opposing poles. Moderation in Islam is a principle that requires every Muslim to embrace and combine various elements that can be synergized into a harmonious whole that is not mutually antagonistic at the two opposing poles, but rather fosters an interrelationship between these elements.²⁵

Furthermore, according to Imarah, the concept of Wasathiyah Islam is a method (manhaj) that integrates the spirit and the body, this world and the afterlife, religion and state, subject and object, the real and the ideal, goals and means, reason and naql, local and global, ijtiḥad and taqlid, religion and knowledge, the general and the specific, the sacred and the profane, and das sein and das sollen. Therefore, moderate Muslims can be defined as those who stand between these two opposing extremes, not taking sides with either camp, and taking a line or "third way" by offering comprehensive, balanced, and just solutions.²⁶

According to the Public Perception," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 2 (2024): 506-522.

¹⁵Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah* 10 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 167.

¹⁶Oman Fathurrahman, *Statement Delivered at the National Congress of Buddhist Students in Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: May 17, 2019).

¹⁷Ash-Shalabi, Ali Muhammad, *Al-Wasathiyah fi Al-Qur'an [Moderation in The Quran]* (Kairo: Maktabat at-Tabi'in, 2001), 14-15.

¹⁸Ali Masykur Musa, *Grounding Islam in the Archipelago: Islam's Response to Current Issues* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2014). Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Masterpiece of Nusantara Islam: Sanad and the Ulama-Santri Network (1830-1945)* (Tangerang: Pustaka Compass, 2015).

¹⁹For further details, see the title, "NU Asked to Respond to Challenges", In Kompas (Monday, June 15 2015), 1.

²⁰Report by BBC Indonesia Reporter, Heyder Affan with the title: Polemics Behind the Term Islam Nusantara (June 15, 2015), 1.

²¹Rosmani Ahmad, "Understanding Azyumardi Azra in Islamic Thought," in *Jurnal Analytica Islamica* 2, no. 2 (2013), 352-370.

²²Letter from the Director of Islamic Higher Education Number: Dj.I/Dt.IV/1/PP.00.9/3012/20015 concerning Notification of Assistance for Writing Islamic Nusantara (19 August 2015), 1.

²³Azyumardi Azra, "Moderate Islam is the Real Islam in Revitalization of Wasathan Islam," (Jakarta: Article, February 18, 2011).

²⁴Muhammad Makmun Rasyid, "Islam Rahmatan lil 'Alamin: The Perspective of Kyai Haji Hasyim Muzadi," in *EPISTEME, Journal of Development of Islamic Science* 11, no. 1 (2016), 94-116.

²⁵Muhammad Imarah, *The Terminological War of Islam versus the West* (Jakarta: Logos, 1989), 267-269.

²⁶Muhammad Imarah, *The Terminological War of Islam versus the West* (Jakarta: Logos, 1989), 267-269.

2.4. Religious Moderation

According to Schwedler,²⁷ the term *moderation* refers to a transformative process driven by the liberal emphasis on individual rights as well as the principles of tolerance, pluralism, and cooperation. It has existed for decades, during which time it has been challenged by various political groups—including socialist and Catholic parties, as well as ‘radical popular organizations’ that threaten its very existence. Hadiyanto,²⁸ notes that, in Indonesia, moderation emerged in response to the radical Islamism promoted by some of the country’s organizations. According to Arifinsyah,²⁹ moderation refers to ‘simplicity’, a humanism that unites. As such, Schwedler³⁰ recommends that moderation be understood by focusing not only on its liberal and democratic norms, but also on its transformative models and mechanisms.

In Islam, the concept of religious moderation is known as *wasatiyyah*. According to Asyur,³¹ the term *wasatiyyah* is derived from the root *wasat* (‘middle’). This concept emphasizes justice and compromise, a ‘middle of the road’ between two extremes. Niam³² writes that the concept commonly applies when religion intersects with culture, when *aqidah* (‘creed’) meets tradition, in local communities. As such, Kamali³³ argues that *wasatiyyah*—as an Islamic concept of moderation—can be used to create good relations between communities, between religions, and between social groups, as well as for bridging members’ different understandings. *Wasatiyyah* offers an answer to the challenges of the modern world and its paradoxes by emphasizing belief, piety, unity, and kinship.³⁴

3. METHODS

This study is a library research type using a qualitative approach with an analysis of religious

literature on religious moderation in the Bible and Indonesian Qur’anic exegesis.³⁵ Data for this article were collected through a review of the literature on religious moderation in the Bible and Indonesian Qur’anic exegesis, then analyzed through content analysis.³⁶ Documents provided the main source of data, then analyzed using a qualitative approach.³⁷ The procedure for qualitative data analysis in literature (literature study) involves collecting, reading, recording, processing, and organizing data from literature sources (books, journals, documents). Then, analytical techniques such as data reduction (selecting and summarizing), data presentation (displaying patterns), and drawing conclusions are applied to discover systematic meaning and patterns in the text, often using content analysis.³⁸

It seeks to show that Qur’anic exegesis in the Indonesian Archipelago has not referred solely to Islamic sources. As such, it acknowledges written references such as *Tafsir Munir* by Nawawi al-Bantani, *Tafsir Al-Quranul Majid* by Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, *Tafsir Hidayat ar-Rahman* by Munawar Khalil, and *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* by Muhammad Quraish Syihab, all of which provide examples of Islamic moderation. The reasons for selecting the sources of exegesis are: (a) The four Nusantara exegesis were compiled during the colonial and early post-colonial periods, (b) The four exegesis have become the main references for Muslim scholars at Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI) in Indonesia, (c) The three of the four exegesis use Indonesian which is easy for the researchers to understand, and (d) The four exegesis are known as exegesis that promote moderate thinking. The reasons for choosing the Biblical source are: The Bible has a clear concept of religious moderation, easy to understand, and easy to implement in social life.³⁹ At the same time, it recognizes non-Islamic sources of religious moderation, including not only the Bible but also

²⁷Jilian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁸Luthfi Hadiyanto, Putri, “Religious Moderation in Instagram: An Islamic Interpretation,” 2, no. 4 (2025), 1–13.

²⁹Arifinsyah, “The Urgency of Religious Moderation in Preventing Radicalism in Indonesia,” *Esensia: Journal of Islamic Theology* 21, no. 1 (2020), 91–108.

³⁰Jilian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation...*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³¹Ibnu Asyur, *Kasyfu Al-Mugatta Min Al-Ma’ani Wa Al-Faz Al-Waqi’ah fi Al-Muwattha* (Al-Qahirah: Dar al-Salam, 2006), 7–8.

³²Zainun Niam, “The Concept of Wasathiyah Islam as a Form of Islam Rahmatan Lil ‘Alamin: The Role of NU and Muhammadiyah in Realizing Peaceful Islam in Indonesia,” *Palita: Journal of Social Religion Research* 4, no. 2 (2019), 91–106.

³³Mohammad Hasim Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur’anic Principle of Wasathiyah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 9.

³⁴Nazrul Islam, “Faithful Participation: The ‘Ulama in Bangladeshi Politics,” *Politics Religion and Ideology* (2022), 1–12.

³⁵Noeng Muhadjir, *Qualitative Research Methodology* (Yogyakarta: Rake Sarasin, 2015), 68.

³⁶Jack Fraenkel Norman Wallen, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*, 8th ed. (Boston, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2012), 83.

³⁷Matthew Miles, and Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 2015), 40–48.

³⁸Sugiyoyo, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2023).

³⁹Setinawati, Isabella, Maidiantius, and Merilyn, “The Framework of Religious Moderation: A Socio-theological Study on the Role of Religion and Culture from Indonesia’s Perspective,” In *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 11, (2025): 1–11.

supplementary resources such as books, journal articles, and other manuscripts related to the research questions. The results are presented descriptively, and conclusions are drawn to answer the research questions and underscore this study's significant findings.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The Concept of Religious Moderation in Islam Nusantara

The term *moderate* according to Hektaviandri,⁴⁰ thirty values are fundamental to moderation in Islam. These values, generally speaking, fall into four categories: (1) obtaining a comprehensive understanding of Islam, (2) striking a balance between Islamic doctrine and changing social environments, (3) promoting peace, and (4) promoting humanitarian values, respecting religious, cultural, and political pluralism, and acknowledging the rights of minorities. From these values, it is apparent that religious moderation incorporates critical and inclusive understandings that advocate for peace, balance, pluralism, and minority rights. This corresponds with the concept of religious pluralism promoted by the Ministry of Religion, which incorporates the values of justice, balance, and tolerance.⁴¹

Such understandings of moderate Islam are manifested in Islam Nusantara, which seeks to: (1) create a harmonious and pluralistic civilization, (2) respect different opinions, (3) avoid using violence to promote one's views, and (4) acknowledge the existence of different perspectives.⁴² Moderation is thus a central part of Islam Nusantara, being necessary to achieve its three fundamental goals: upholding human dignity, preventing excessive fanaticism, and maintaining a specific Indonesian identity.⁴³ Central to religious moderation is self-restraint, as manifested by living honestly and piously, doing well by others, loving others, and

remaining humble.⁴⁴

4.2. Religious Moderation in Islam Nusantara: Moderate Values in the Qur'an and the Bible

Interestingly, the values of religious moderation embodied in Islam Nusantara, including such works of exegesis as Nawawi's *Tafsir Marah Labib*, Musthofa's *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*, Shihab's *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, and Ash-Shiddieqy's *Tafsir Al-Quranul Majid*, share similarities with non-Islamic sources such as the Bible. In *Tafsir Marah Labib*, *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, *Tafsir al-Quranul Majid*, and *Tafsir al-Misbah*, exegesis *Ummatan wa Sathan* (QS Al-Baqarah, passage 143 [2:143]) is the same, i.e. "the middle, tolerance, and wise group."⁴⁵ The Bible also defines the word moderate as balance, tolerance, and wise.⁴⁶ In the Indonesian context, there is an understanding between NU⁴⁷ and Muhammadiyah.⁴⁸

Religious moderation is understood as necessary to achieve *Ummatan wa Sathan*, a just community characterized by a blessed character (*akhlaqul karimah*).⁴⁹ This resembles the concept of moderation offered by the Bible, which promotes living a blessed life (Ecclesiastes 1:12–18) and living a life that benefits others (Ecclesiastes 5:19). In other words, just people are people who live with God's blessings, and those who live to serve others. Several similarities can thus be noted:

First, the value of living a blessed and honest love. Blessedness and honesty are fundamental values that are taught by all religions to create good relations between the faithful. Exegeses of Surah Al-Ahzab, passages 23–24 (QS 33:23–24), Surah Az-Zumar, passages 33–34 (QS 34:33–34), and Surah At-Taubah, passage 119 (QS 9:119) have emphasized the importance of being honest and trustworthy in all of one's social interactions. Allah will be with the honest Surah At-Taubah, passage 33 (QS 9:33), and in the hereafter they will find a noble place by His side Surah Al-Ahzab, passage 34 (QS 33:34). Such

⁴⁰Hektaviandri Mahyudin Ritonga, Suarti, Irawati, Sri Ningsih, M. Effauzi, "Diversity and Urgency of Religious Moderation Education According to the Public Perception," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 2 (2024), 506–522.

⁴¹Andi Suhardianto, Hendri Irawan, Wijayanti, "Exploring the Concept of Cultural Divinity in Supporting Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan* 22, no. 1 (2025): 58–74.

⁴²M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2010), 415.

⁴³Oman Fathurahman, "Statement Delivered at the National Congress of Buddhist Students in Yogyakarta," May 17, (2019), 37.

⁴⁴Muhammad Ali Ash-Shalabi, *Al-Wasathiyah Fi Al-Qur'an [The Moderation in the Quran]* (Kairo: Maktabat at Tabi'in, 2001), 13–15.

⁴⁵Bisri Musthofa, *Al-Ibriz Li Ma'rifat Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Aziz*, Juz 1 (Kudus: Menara, 2012), 46.

⁴⁶Setinawati, Isabella, Maidiantius, "The Framework of Religious Moderation: A Socio-Theological Study on the Role of Religion and Culture from Indonesia's Perspective," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (2025), 1–12.

⁴⁷Sekar Ayu Aryani, M. Yusuf, Asroni, Fauziyah, Budi Wiranto, Waston, "Synergy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Muhammadiyah in Driving Religious Moderation SDGs Targets," *Profetik: Jurnal Studi Islam* 25, no. 02 (2024): 433–454.

⁴⁸Alisa Fauzia, Nazila, Oktiany, Nazila, "Muhammadiyah's View on Moderate Islam for the Progress of Islamic Civilization in Indonesia," *Masterpiece: Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2024), 141–153.

⁴⁹Subhi Harimukti, "The Understanding and Implementation of Religious Moderation and National Insight by Islamic Student Movements," *INJIRE: Indonesia Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 1, no. 1 (2023), 11–26.

teachings are reflected in the Bible, including in Proverbs 21:16, Psalms 25:2, and Colossians 4:1, all of which emphasize the importance of honesty, sincerity, and justice. Colossians 4:1 even underscores that all those who act justly and honestly will enter Heaven.⁵⁰

Second, the concept of living a life that benefits others, rather than causing harm, is shared between Islam and Christianity. Exegeses of Surah Al-Isra', passage 7 (QS 17:7) and Surah Al-A'raf, passage 56 (QS 7:56), have underscored the importance of doing good to others and abstaining from doing harm. The best people are those whose lives benefit others.⁵¹ Likewise, in the Bible (in Timothy 3:16-17, and Titus 3:8), it is stated that all humans belong to God, and He has entrusted them to do good deeds. Indeed, Ephesus 2:10, holds that human beings were created to spread goodness.⁵²

Third, the command to live of love. In Surah Ali 'Imran, passage 14 (QS 3:14), it is stated that man was created to love women, children, and "treasures of gold and silver". Meanwhile, Surah Ar-Rum, passage 21 (QS 30:21), and Surah Al-Mumtahanah, passage 7 (QS 60:7) note that humans were created with sincerity and love, and that this sincerity and love exists not only for those similar views, but also for those whose ideas differ, such as Shihab's exegesis Surah Ar-Rum, passage 21 (QS 30:21).⁵³ A similar point is made in Corinthians 13:1, which holds that the Holy Spirit holds love for all humanity. Human beings, thus, have a duty to love each other sincerely (Romans 12:9-10; Peter 4:8).

Fourth, humility and flexibility are understood in both the Qur'an and the Bible as key to creating harmony. One must avoid coercion in spreading the divine word; one should "spread Allah's word with kindness" (Surah Ali Imran, passage 154 [QS 3:154]), as this will stave off evil (Surah Fussilat, passage 34 [QS 41:34]). This corresponds with John 4:7-8, which

underscores the importance of kindness and love in finding God.⁵⁴ Similarly, Ephesus 4:23, Colossians 3:14, command to help each other kindly, as this will help unite all people.⁵⁵

4.3. The Implications of Religious Moderation in Islam Nusantara for Religious Life

By their very nature, human beings require harmony, pluralism, and accommodativeness in their religious lives. However, religion often presents with two different faces. On the one hand, religion provides a place to find true peace; on the other hand, religion is often used to legitimize or even promote an unending conflict.⁵⁶ As argued by Kung,⁵⁷ religion should serve to create a true kinship, to realize harmony, and pluralism, to manifest eternal peace. Ricoeur⁵⁸ identifies three means of facilitating the creation of a critical mindset and inclusive attitude, thereby promoting harmony: (a) ideological criticism, (b) deconstruction, and (c) game analogies.⁵⁹

Human beings require inclusivity, peace, and security in their everyday lives. In Christianity, the current understanding of inclusive theology traces its roots to the Second Vatican Council (Nostra Aetate) of 1965, a summit that (among other things) promoted better relations between the Church and non-Christian religions.⁶⁰ According to Pasaribu,⁶¹ proponents of inclusive theology argue: "Non-Christians can also find salvation, so long as they live with a sincere belief in God, for God's work is in them, even though they have never read the Good Book" [i.e. Bible]. This inclusivity is derived from Rehner's concept of "Anonymous Christian."⁶²

In Islamic theology, the concept of inclusivism refers to Surah Al-Baqarah, passage 143 (QS 2:143), which holds that Allah created Muslims as a just people. Its practice has also referred to the Muslim philosopher Ibnu Taimiyah, who acknowledges both

⁵⁰WPresley Purba, and Widodo, "Meaning of Truth: Justice, Honesty According to Psalm 111," *ELEOS: Journal of Theology and Christian Religious Education* 2, no. 2 (2023), 101-112.

⁵¹Imam At-Tabrani, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Ausath*, Juz VII (Riyadh: Maktabah Ma'arif, 2010), 58.

⁵²Harry Soegijono, and Patora, "Good Works in Evangelism Reviewed from Ephesians 2:10," *Voice of Hami: Journal of Theology and Christian Religious Education* 3, no. 1 (2020), 39-50.

⁵³M. Quraish Shihab, *The Exegesis of Surah Ar-Ruum (QS 30:21) in, Tafsir Al-Misbah*, 10th (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2010), 167.

⁵⁴Stefanus Zalukhul, and Bambang, "Exploring Divine Love in 1 John 4:7-12: Its Impact and Application in Daily Life," *Sukacita: Journal of Christian Faith Education* 2, no. 1 (2025), 67-76.

⁵⁵BPK Penabur, *Best Corner: Advice to Be Humble* (Jababeka City: Penabur High School, 2020), 22.

⁵⁶Hanjbar, Chikrizova O.S., "Positive Peace in the Islamic Perspective of International Relations: The Case of Iran's Foreign

Policy," *Vestnik RUDN International Relation* 23, no. 2 (2023), 278-295.

⁵⁷Hans Kung, *Global Economic and Political Ethics: Looking for a New Vision for the Survival of Religion in the XXI Century* (Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2020), 252-253.

⁵⁸Paul Ricoeur, *Du Texte Al 'Action: Essais d'Hermetique II* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), 37-45.

⁵⁹Haryatmoko, *Etika Politik dan Kekuasaan (Political Ethics and Power)* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), 62-63.

⁶⁰A.J.L.A. Yousif, "Faith and Shared Values: A Dialogue for a Culture of Encounter and Responsible Citizenship," *Humanities and Religious Question* 20, no. 2 (2018), 1-12.

⁶¹Goktondi Pasaribu, "The Evaluation of Soteriology in Inclusivist Theology," *Theological Journal Kerugma* 6, no. 1 (2023), 21-28.

⁶²Leo Freund-Williams, and Vikram Kapoor, "Religious Disaffiliation and Sexually Minoritised Groups: A Scoping Review of the Literature Panagiotis Pentaris," *Journal of Homosexuality* 14, no. 2 (2024), 1-35.

non-Muslims who embody the spirit of Islam (non-Muslim par excellence) and those Muslims who are formally identified as Muslim (Muslim par excellence).⁶³ The spirit of Islam, here, is understood as a "sense of surrender to God" through al-Islam al'Am. Inclusive theology, thus, is possible when one is open to all, thereby accepting harmony and pluralism.⁶⁴

According to Lopes,⁶⁵ the accommodative approach is one of five possible ways of dealing with other perspectives, the other four being a radical approach, a synthetic approach, a dualistic approach, and a transformative approach. One's approach will influence one's religious behavior.⁶⁶ When one is accommodative, different beliefs need not result in opposition; indeed, the values embraced by others may be similar to those promoted by one's own beliefs. Interfaith interactions are entirely possible. People of all faiths can recognize the possibility that some truth exists outside their own, thereby laying the necessary foundation for harmony and pluralism,⁶⁷ as happened in the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) in Indonesia.

5. DISCUSSION

The religious moderation offered by Islam Nusantara has significant similarities with those in the Bible.⁶⁸ The reason: 1) the Bible was revealed before the Qur'an, 2) there have been intense interactions between the Bible and Qur'anic exegesis, 3) dialogue between religious leaders has made it possible for Christian and Islamic theologies to intersect, 4) new understandings that reach beyond religion, and 5) Christianity and Islam share the goal of spreading God's love.⁶⁹

Here, the values of moderation included in the

Bible and Islam Nusantara-including balance, peace, respect, human dignity, and love-can be seen to be interconnected, thereby making harmony and pluralism.⁷⁰ These interconnections have made it possible for the value system contained within the Bible to be manifested in exegesis.⁷¹ As a result, the core elements of the Bible's teachings regarding moderation are also present in Islam Nusantara, and thus Indonesian society has been shaped into a harmonious and pluralistic one. Both the Bible and the Qur'an share the same vision and function, being sacred texts that seek to guide humanity.⁷²

The similarities between the Biblical and Islamic understandings of religious moderation have positive implications for Christian-Muslim relations,⁷³ as they make a moderate society that embraces harmony, pluralism, and inclusivity possible. Religious moderation will continue to affect the lives of the faithful and guide the creation of interfaith dialogue, wherein all individuals respect each other and acknowledge their shared values. Only through religious moderation will a harmonious and pluralistic society be created.⁷⁴

6. CONCLUSION

The development of Islamic thought in the Indonesian Archipelago has been influenced by the Bible. Four factors have contributed to this. *First*, The message conveyed by the Bible regarding religious moderation is believed to be an essential and universal truth. *Second*, The Bible's elaboration regarding religious moderation is very clear, easy to understand, and easy to practice in social life. *Third*, The influence of the concept of religious moderation in the Bible on the interpretation of the Nusantara has positive implications for the formation of a tradition

⁶³Ibnu Taimiyah, *As-Siyasah Asy-Syar'iyah Fi Islah Ar-Ra'i Wa Ar-Ra'iyah [Islamic Political Ethics]* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2010), 60-67.

⁶⁴Nucholis Madjid, *Islam Agama Kemanusiaan [Religion of Humanity]* (Jakarta: Paramadina Waqf Foundation, 2012), 20.

⁶⁵Isabel Lopez, Edward Malthouse, Nathalie Dens, Pelsmacker, "Managerial Response Strategies to EWOM: A Framework and Research Agenda for Webcare," *Tourism Management* 98, no. 3 (2023), 1-14.

⁶⁶Mathieu Gomes, Sylvain Marsat, Jonathan Peillex, Pijourlet, "Does Religiosity Influence Corporate Greenwashing Behavior," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 434, no. 4 (2024), 40-51.

⁶⁷Irwan Abdullah, *Konstruksi Dan Reproduksi Kebudayaan [Cultural Construction and Reproduction]* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), 32.

⁶⁸Mustansir Mir, *Understanding the Islamic Scripture: A Study of Selected Passages from the Quran* (New York: Pearson Education, 2008), 47-50.

⁶⁹Ahmadi Fathurrohman Dardiri, "The Bible as a Source of Interpretation of the Quran, M.A., Tehsis," (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2015), 72-90.

⁷⁰Mohamad Salik, and Bahri Mustofa, "Values of Islamic Moderation in the Idea of Islam Nusantara," *International Journal of Latest Research in Humanities and Social Science (IJLRHSS)* 7, no. 7 (2024), 124-129.

⁷¹Thameem Ushama, "Shah Wali Allah's Methodology of Interpreting the Quran," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Al-Quran and Al-Hadith* 5, no. 1 (2007), 49-70.

⁷²Ahmad Taufiq, "Interreligious Relations: A Critical Study of Textual Interpretation Methodology," *Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies* 3, no. 2 (2014), 141-172.

⁷³Yuliana Wijayanti, "The Concept of Religious Freedom in Islam and Christianity," *Prophetics: Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 1 (2016), 16-22.

⁷⁴Fitriani, Sudarman, and Nafrial, "Implementation of Religious Moderation Based on Inclusive Theology and Dialogue in Indonesia: Opportunities and Challenges," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research of Higher Education (IJMURHICA)* 7, no. 4 (2024), 362-372.

of religious moderation in Indonesian muslim society, and *Fourth*, Religious moderation has become a primary need for all humankind throughout time in order to form a harmonious, pluralistic, and inclusive world civilization.

The article's original contribution to cultural and religious studies, that is: *First*, This study has challenged the argument that exegesis in the Indonesian is derived solely from sources (i.e. the Qur'an, the Hadiths, exegesis from the time of the first generation of Muslims, and exegesis from the time of the second generation of Muslims), but there is also influence from the Bible. *Second*, Biblical

thought has contributed greatly to the development of Nusantara exegesis regarding religious moderation, such as compassion, peace, wisdom, and balance, and *Third*, Islam Nusantara has emerged within the context of extensive historical interactions between religions, especially Christianity and Islam, and as such both the Bible and Islamic exegesis have forefronted harmony and peace. Further research is certainly necessary, by the Government, reviewer, and researcher to address conflict and violent behavior in society, so that sustainable development can be realized.

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