

Kalam science and its urgency in the context of religious moderation (Islam Wasathiyah)

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ABSTRACT

The varying perspectives held by Indonesian society often lead to conflicts between religious groups, particularly when one group believes that safety and truth are exclusive to its membership. It is possible to address this issue by intensely studying Islam and adopting a moderation and tolerance mindset. The Islamic concept of moderation is known as *rahmatan lil alamin*. Islam's spiritual underpinnings ensure global peace, harmony, and fraternity among all peoples. A shallow understanding of religion causes people to act towards extremes, believing that they are right and others are wrong. The results of this research show that kalam science can be a means of contributing to a person's actions and behavior in understanding and realizing the sense of diversity that is *khilafiah* and give birth to a moderate attitude so that *Kalam Science* can present a context and paradigm for religious moderation, and not be quick to place blame on others. This issue appears because a person with a deeper understanding of religion (theology) is more knowledgeable of societal inequalities in both the religious and social domains.

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Article history

Received 2024-02-23

Revised 2024-03-23

Accepted 2024-04-01

Keywords

Kalam Science

Religious Moderation

Diversity

Wasathiyah Islamic

Introduction

In simple terms, *Kalam Science* is a scientific discipline in the Islamic intellectual tradition that has developed since the Middle Ages (Damanik & Surya, 2023). *Kalam Science* focuses on understanding religious concepts in Islam and is often used to formulate rational arguments that support religious beliefs. *Kalam Science*, also known as Islamic theology or Islamic philosophy, is a field of study within the Islamic intellectual tradition that emerged during the Middle Ages. It aims to use rational inquiry and logical arguments to understand religious concepts in Islam, such as the nature of God, free will, predestination, and the afterlife. In simpler terms, *Kalam Science* is like using science and philosophy to explore and explain religious ideas in Islam. Such as zero and

Allah Essence, power and absolute will, heaven and hell, Prophet and Messenger of Allah, and so on. One of the key aspects of *Kalam* Science is its emphasis on rational arguments to support religious beliefs. *Kalam* intellectuals engage in debates, discussions, and writing to defend and explain Islamic doctrines using logical reasoning. They seek to show that belief in Islam is compatible with reason and supported by it. Overall, *Kalam* Science is about bridging the gap between faith and reason within the Islamic tradition, using intellectual inquiry to deepen understanding and provide justification for religious beliefs (Rozak & Anwar, 2012).

Meanwhile, moderation is a concept that emphasizes balance and moderation in various aspects of life, including religion (Khasanah et al., 2023). At the level of Indonesian society, which is pluralist with various understandings, it tends to cause friction or conflict between religious groups if those groups still consider truth and safety only within their group. Religious disputes that often occur today are generally caused by exclusionary behavior and contestation between religious groups to gain support from people who are not based on a tolerant attitude because each uses their strength to win, resulting in conflict. The exclusivism group has a paradigm that tends to be closed to existing differences. It is hoped that this situation (exclusivism) can be reduced by the various roles and participation of multiple parties, both religious leaders and religious communities, to prevent the emergence of multiple interpretations that lead to violence or extremely radical attitudes (Shihab, 1999). In the context of Arabic language and Islamic thought, "*wasatiyyah*" (وسطية) indeed often carries connotations of moderation, balance, and centrism. However, interpreting it specifically as "pluralism" might require a nuanced understanding. While "*wasatiyyah*" advocates for a balanced and moderate approach in various aspects of life, including religious and social spheres, it doesn't necessarily equate directly to pluralism in embracing diversity or multiple perspectives. Instead, "*wasatiyyah*" is often understood as promoting harmony, fairness, and avoiding extremism. It encourages finding a middle ground and avoiding the extremes of any spectrum. While this can foster tolerance and acceptance of differing viewpoints to some extent, it might not inherently imply embracing full pluralism in the modern sense (Akbarzadeh, 2021).

The term "*wasathiyyah*" in Arabic typically translates to "moderation" or "centrism," rather than "pluralism." "*Wasathiyyah*" is rooted in the Arabic word "*wasat*," meaning "middle" or "center," and it often conveys the idea of balance or moderation in various contexts, including politics, religion, and social affairs (Yanti & Witro, 2020). While moderation can sometimes intersect with pluralism in specific contexts, it's essential to recognize that they are not synonymous terms. Pluralism refers to the coexistence of diverse groups within a society, acknowledging and respecting their differences, whereas moderation implies a balanced approach or avoiding extremes. In Arabic discourse, "*wasathiyyah*" is commonly used to promote a balanced

and moderate approach to various aspects of life, including governance, religious practice, and societal interaction. This emphasis on moderation is often seen as a means to foster community harmony and stability. Therefore, while moderation may contribute to pluralistic societies by promoting tolerance and inclusivity, it's not accurate to equate "*wasathiyah*" solely with pluralism (Alwi & Machmudi, 2022).

This was expressed by the Team of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (RI) which stated that the diversity in various regions in Indonesia requires a comprehensive religious teaching system that can represent everyone without leaving out the text (al-Qur'an and Hadith), as well as the urgency of using reason as a solution to every existing problem (Fauzi, 2018). Islam in Indonesia uses local wisdom to create harmony between religious communities. One of the crucial arguments for religious moderation, especially in Indonesia, is that Indonesian society is very plural and multicultural. Our nation comprises various tribes, ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultures. This can be seen from Indonesia's diverse, complex, and extensive geographical and socio-cultural conditions. Thus, every Indonesian society needs to instill awareness of pluralism to create moderation and tolerance with humanitarian principles. This awareness is essential to socializing and preventing assumptions that contrast the text traditions in Islam with the reality of multiculturalism in Indonesian society. As a participatory ideology, multiculturalism promotes diversity, equality, and respect as the moral message of Islam itself to fight for total humanity (Haq, 2017).

In various literature, the discourse on *Kalam* Science thought and its urgency in the context of moderation has yet to escape the discussion struggles of intellectual groups in the current contemporary era because issues of intolerance, radicalism, and extremism in the name of religion are still crucial. This will undoubtedly lead to conflict and friction between religious adherents, so the function and purpose of religion as goodness and peace becomes distant and contradictory to what is expected. As stated by Rouf, moderation of spiritual life is through strengthening the theological aspects of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as a pluralistic and inclusive understanding of religion to support efforts to realize an attitude of openness and tolerance (Rouf, 2020). In line with Setiawan, tolerance is necessary in the face of nations and regions characterized by various religious aspects. Religious diversity that emerges in society can cause civil conflict and intolerance issues. Maintaining harmony and maintaining the principle of tolerance between religious communities, which is accommodated through the role of government and spiritual leaders, is an important part of community life to support the acceleration of the meaning and substance of tolerance, which is transformed into social life so that horizontal conflict can be avoided with a moderate lifestyle (Setiawan, 2023).

Astri explained that it was clear that differences in people's lives caused the existence of a

conflict. This difference is not perceived as a benefit in life but is perceived as a form of rejection of the difference itself (Astri, 2011). The current reality, as expressed by Santoso, et.al, is that religion has become a commodity that exploits substandard "bottomless" morality, this is one of the triggers for cracks in religious harmony (Santoso et al., 2022). According to BM, this reality shows how important it is to find a solution that can escape potential conflict and extremism by creating a religious understanding that is peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, pluralist, cool and beneficial for all parties by placing the concept of moderation in spiritual life as a solution by strengthening the theological basis is to create an attitude of openness, so that national and state life can be lived productively and harmoniously. In reality, differences have an actualization that brings benefits to the social life of society, for example, helping each other, working together in various needs, creating stability, mutual respect, and making better and better quality environmental conditions for social life, for the benefit and welfare of all citizens (BM., 2014).

Faizah and Baedowi revealed that several significant scholars in Indonesia also provided the basis for Islamic theology in implementing attitudes of religious moderation. One of them is KH. Hasyim Asy'ari provides the basis of Islamic theology regarding religious moderation in Indonesian society. In his ideas written in the book *Risalah Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah* KH. Hasyim Asy'ari provides an understanding of Islam by focusing on character building, gentleness, politeness, and a moderate understanding of Islam. KH. Hasyim Asy'ari also teaches us to continue to do good to everyone despite different religions and the foundations of moderation between religious communities in Indonesia are unity, brotherhood and tolerance (Faizah & Baedowi, 2022). Apart from that, as stated by Rohim, KH. Ahmad Dahlan also provided his theological views on religious moderation. This is stated in the text of his final speech at the Mukhtamar Congress in 1922, that religion has a spiritual tendency and turns away from lust, which rises to the sky of perfection, which is holy, which is accessible from the captivity of objects. People need and must be religious. At first, religion was radiant and sparkling, but it became increasingly gloomy over time. What is gloomy is not the religion but the people who use religion. Humanity's problems must and must be resolved with the teachings of Islam. This is because Islam is a religion *Rahmatan Lil Alamin*, which means that Islam is a religion that is accepted by all groups even though there are differences within it (Rohim, 2022).

Heriyanti explained that religious moderation is our perspective on moderate religion, namely understanding and practicing religious teachings without being extreme. To minimize religious conflict, religious moderation is the solution. Religious moderation can be realized by applying the theology of harmony. The theology of harmony is how every religious community understands the religion they believe in comprehensively and then tries to find common ground in the values of other religions, not in the realm of religious beliefs that they want to unite; these values are what

they want to unite. Togetherness rather than differences in values. Harmony between religious communities is one of the main sticks in maintaining good, peaceful, united, and agreed relations between religious communities of different religions so that they can live in harmony (Heriyanti, 2020). Strengthening religious moderation can be strengthened through theological education. This is as stated by Pasaribu that theological education framed as religious moderation means theological education that teaches and implements four indicators, namely national commitment, religious tolerance, non-violence, and accommodating local culture (Pasaribu, 2023).

Apart from that, as stated by Singgih, training in educational models and non-classroom dialogical training regarding religious moderation coordinated by educators from religions adhered to in Indonesia is undoubtedly expected to be able to build moderate attitudes and actions in the spiritual field. above social-community (Singgih, 2022). For this reason, according to Sembiring, one of the concepts, strategies and actions that are being developed and promoted is religious moderation to deradicalize people exposed to radicalism's ideas and actions. Literacy and religious moderation actions are needed internally and externally in religious life to build togetherness among religious communities in responding to it so that diversity is maintained, and the ideals of a nation and state can be achieved. Religious moderation programs must be applied to all, and not just to adherents of specific religions. Sacred violence and intolerance can exist in all religions. Therefore, every component, including the government, religious leaders and educators, participates in socializing the religious moderation program collectively and effectively (Sembiring, 2019).

Islam is clear evidence of attitudes and values compatible with a pluralistic nation. Islam shows greatness with its very firm attitude in conveying the values of truth, morality and respect for diversity. The presence of Islam is not intended to destroy the local values of a nation. The specialty of Islam is evident in its doctrines, which show the universality of its teachings so that it is readily accepted by nations with different languages, cultures, religions or beliefs (Umar, 2019). The urgency of *Kalam Science* in building harmony lies in its potential to bridge theological differences and promote understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among diverse religious communities. While *Kalam Science* is often associated with theological debates, its significance extends beyond mere intellectual discourse. Here are several reasons highlighting the urgency of *Kalam Science* in fostering harmony:

First, understanding and respect. *Kalam Science* provides a platform for individuals to understand the theological perspectives of different religious groups. By engaging in scholarly discussions and debates within *Kalam Science*, individuals can develop a deeper respect for the beliefs and values of others, fostering mutual understanding and acceptance (Damanik & Surya, 2023). *Second*, conflict resolution. In societies where religious diversity exists, conflicts often arise

due to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of theological doctrines. *Kalam Science* can serve as a tool for resolving these conflicts by facilitating constructive dialogue and promoting peaceful coexistence based on shared values and principles (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

Third, promoting tolerance. Through studying *Kalam Science*, individuals can learn to appreciate the diversity of religious beliefs and practices. This knowledge fosters a culture of tolerance where people can embrace differences without resorting to prejudice or discrimination (Sidik, 2024). *Four*, social cohesion. By emphasizing the universal principles of justice, compassion, and morality embedded within religious teachings, *Kalam Science* contributes to the creation of cohesive and inclusive communities. It encourages individuals to uphold these values in their interactions with others, regardless of religious affiliation (Hajam, 2018).

Fifth, counteracting extremism. In contexts where religious extremism and radicalism are prevalent, *Kalam Science* is a counter-narrative by promoting moderation, reason, and critical thinking. Individuals can challenge extremist ideologies and promote a more balanced and nuanced understanding of religion by engaging in rigorous intellectual inquiry. *Six*, peaceful coexistence. Ultimately, *Kalam Science* aims to foster harmony and peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities with diverse religious beliefs. By promoting dialogue, understanding, and respect, *Kalam Science* contributes to the creation of a more harmonious and inclusive society where people can live together in peace and mutual respect (Sidik, 2024).

In summary, the urgency of *Kalam Science* in building harmony lies in its ability to promote understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among diverse religious communities. By engaging in scholarly discourse and promoting universal values, *Kalam Science* can create a more inclusive and harmonious society. Thus, to create a moderate society and prevent radicalism in Indonesia, people need to re-understand the basic principles of the Islamic religion, in other words, study the science of *Kalam* comprehensively (widely), so that it is hoped that it will be able to make the perpetrators wiser and more moderate in looking at existing problems. Even though *Kalam Science* and religious moderation have their discussions in substance, they both have the same goal: realizing peace and upholding the truth. Through this article, the author will discuss the critical role of *Kalam Science* in the context of moderation and how the two can coexist to create a balanced and peaceful understanding of religion.

Discussion

A Glimpse into *Kalam Science*

The birth of the *Kalam Science* of the pen cannot be separated from the problems people face. Although in the historical aspect, the birth of the knowledge of the pen comes after the event arbitration (tahkim) between Ali ra's group and Muawiyah, who gave birth to the *Kalam* flow of

Islam, which contain debates between groups *mutakallimin* regarding the issue of the existence of God and humans. Answers and solutions were sought for all the fundamental problems he faced by relying on revelation and reason. Starting from issues related to the existence of God (theological) to issues involving human understanding (anthropological) (Rozak & Anwar, 2012). In Arabic, *Kalam* is a word or pronunciation with a compound form (provision or agreement). Technically, *Kalam* is a reason or rational argument to strengthen words. In language, *Kalam* is a word about words, little or much, that can be used for every form of speech (*likulli ma yatakallamu bihi*), or successive sound expressions until the meaning of the sound messages is clear. In Q.S. al-A'raf verse 144 and Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 75, *Kalam* and means Allah SWT. spoke directly to Prophet Musa As. or the law of Allah SWT. known as the religion *al-Islam*, and according to al-Baidawi, the meaning *bi kalami iyyaka* (I'm talking directly to you). In Q.S. al-Fath verse 15, *kalama Allah* means a promise or provision of Allah SWT. which all mankind must follow (Ridwan et al., 1994). As a noun of *taklim*, *Kalam* contains two meanings: speaking and law (law). In Q.S. at-Taubah verse 6, *kalam* is the word of Allah SWT. or the content contained in the religion of Islam in a real and comprehensive way.

Kalam as a verb is often used in the Qur'an, which means speaking to someone subjected to an action. Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari in *al-Ibanah* interprets words *taklim* with *al-Musyafah bi al-Kalam* (talking in a certain way). Say *Kalam* others that have a neutral meaning, namely talking, conversing and discussing, namely the *la takallamu* found in Q.S. Hud verse 105, *na takallamu* in Q.S. an-Nur verse 16, and *ya takallamu* in Q.S. ar-Rum verse 35 and Q.S. an-Naba verse 38 (Ridwan et al., 1994). Many experts have given explanations for the meaning of pen knowledge. For example, Musthafa Abd ar-Raziq mentions the science of *Kalamby* in several names, among others: the science of *Ushuluddin*, the science of *Tauhid, Fiqh al-Akbar*, and Islamic theology. It is called *Ushuluddin* Science because this science discusses religious subjects. Meanwhile, the science of *Tauhid* is a science in which it is studied about *asma'* (names) and the characteristics that are obligatory, impossible and *ja'iz* for God, it is also a mandatory, impossible and *ja'iz* for His Messenger. The science of monotheism also discusses the oneness of Allah SWT. and matters related to Him. Temporary *Fiqhul Akbar* is a science that discusses beliefs. Conditions like this show us that the science of *Kalam* is the same as that of *Tauhid*; only the arguments of *Kalam* Science are concentrated on mastering logic. For this reason, some theologians or *Kalam* experts (*mutakallimin*) differentiate between the science of *Kalam* and the science of *Tauhid* (Rozak & Anwar, 2012).

Ahmad Hanafi states that the science of penmanship is the science that talks about the existence of God (Allah), the attributes that He must have, the attributes that He does not have and the attributes that He may have, as well as talking about God's messengers, to establish his

apostleship and to know the attributes that must be present in him, the attributes that cannot be present in him and the attributes that may be present in him. Some say that *Kalam* is a science that talks about establishing religious beliefs (Islamic religion) with convincing evidence. Furthermore, Ahmad Hanafi explained that the scope of discussion of the science of *Kalam* is the same as that of theology. Just as the knowledge of *Kalam* also talks about God's surroundings, His existence, His oneness, His attributes in all aspects of God's relationship with humans and nature, in the form of justice and wisdom, *qadla* and *qadar*, the sending of messengers as a link between God and man and questions related to prophethood, then about the afterlife (Hanafi, 1974).

Meanwhile, according to Harun Nasution, theology in Islam is called *'ilm al-Tauhid*. The word *Tauhid* contains the meaning of one or Oneness and Oneness in the view of Islam, as a religion monotheism is the most important attribute among all the attributes of God. Islamic theology is also mentioned *'ilm al-Kalam*. *Kalam* is words, so with this understanding of *Kalam* two understandings emerge. *First*, *Kalam* is the word of God. The issue of *Kalam* as the word of God or the Qur'an among Muslims in the 9th and 10th centuries AD once caused fierce opposition, resulting in persecution and murders against fellow Muslims at that time. *Second*, what is meant is *Kalam* are human words because Islamic theologians struggle with words in defending their respective opinions and positions. Theologians in Islam are named after *mutakallimin* namely a debater who is good at using words (H. Nasution, 1986). The science of monotheism and the science of *Kalam* are intended to differentiate between *mutakallimin* and Muslim philosophers. *Mutakallimin* and Muslim philosophers defend or strengthen their beliefs using philosophical methods but differ in their initial foundations. *Mutakallimin* starts from the al-Qur'an and Hadith (revelation) he believes in, then includes proof of rational arguments. While philosophers rely on logic, they carry out proof rationally and then accept it. However, the goal to be achieved is one, namely the Oneness of Allah and the Almighty of Allah SWT (WS., 2006).

Meanwhile, according to Nurcholish Madjid, *Kalam Science* is often translated as Theology, even though it is not entirely the same as the meaning of theology in Christianity. For example, in terms of Christian theology, *Fikih Science* in Islam includes theology. Because of this, some experts want a more practical understanding to translate the science of *Kalam* as dialectical Theology or rational Theology, and they see it as a discipline that is unique to Islam (Madjid, 1992). Some reasons for naming the science of *Kalam* are: *First*, the most critical issue among the discussions of the first period of Islam was the word of Allah SWT., the Qur'an, whether it is *azali* or new. Therefore, the entire content of *Kalam Science* is significant. *Second*, the basis of *Kalam science* is rational postulates whose influence is visible in the discussions of Islamic scholars, so that they appear to be expert speakers. The arguments of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* are only used after they have determined the truth about a problem from a rational perspective. *Third*, the proof of

religious beliefs resembles logic and philosophy. Proofs using logic are called *Kalam Science*. People who are experts in the science of *Kalam* are called *mutakallim* (plural *mutakallimin*) (Ridwan et al., 1994).

The terms Islamic Theology, *Kalam Science*, and *Tauhid Science* essentially have the same meaning around the following issues: *First*, belief in God in all its aspects, including matters of His being, His oneness, His attributes, and so on. *Second* is His relationship with the universe, which includes the question of the occurrence of nature, God's justice and wisdom, and *qadla* and *qadhr*. The sending of messengers is also included in the question of the human relationship with God, which also consists of the question of receiving revelations and news of the supernatural world or the afterlife (Ridwan et al., 1999). However, it needs to be emphasized that *Kalam science's* discourse is on themes that are still debated, while *Tauhid* talks about things that have become fundamental values and agreements.

Basic Concepts of Religious Moderation

The word moderation in Arabic is interpreted *al-Wasathiyah* (وسطية). In language, *al-wasathiyah* is derived from the phrase *Wasath*. According to, al-Asfahaniy *Wasath* with *sawa'un*, the middle between two limits, or in fairness, the middle of the standard. *Wasathan* also means guarding against being uncompromising and even leaving the line of religious truth (Al-Asfahaniy, 2009). The same meaning is also found in *Mu'jam al-Wasit* which is *adulan* (simple) and *khiyaran* (selected) (Dhoif, 1972). Muhammad Thahir Ibn 'Assyria defines the word *Wasath* in two ways. *First*, by definition by language, the word *Wasath* means everything in the middle of something with two ends that are comparable in size. *Second*, in terms of meaning, *Wasath* are Islamic values that are built based on a straight and middle way of thinking, not excessive in certain things ('Asyur, 1984). So, it can be understood that religious moderation is anyone who is always given guidance to follow all the instructions of the Qur'an consistently in carrying out the teachings that have been revealed by Allah SWT. to His Prophets and transmitted by the Saleh scholars who succeeded the Prophet, to be moderate in all areas, from worship, *muamalah*, to matters of personality and character. Neither extreme right nor extreme left applies.

Religious moderation behavior has a special path taught by the ulama *salafussalih*, with some principles as the basis. Every follower of a religion based on religious moderation is a commendable understanding and practice and needs to be applied in everyday life, at least religious moderation can prevent a person from two types of character *madzmumah* that is: *First*, *Ifrath* (exaggeration) in matters of religion. Assuming that this religion is holy, there is no need for contextual understanding of the rules of the Shari'a; as a result, the sacredness of the religion does not enable its adherents to understand its essence. *Second*, *Iqtashir* (reducing) in matters of religion, reducing the rules of Allah SWT. This attitude tends to facilitate all kinds of things under

the pretext of religion, trivializes religion, and understands Divine texts with contemporary, updated contextual understanding so that it sometimes obscures the true meaning of the holy verses (Ismail, 2012).

In the Islamic view, moderation cannot be illustrated unless combined into a unified whole with the main elements, namely honesty, openness, compassion and flexibility. So it is not surprising that the Rabithah Alam Islami (World Muslim League) organization when holding an international conference in Mecca which 500 Muslim scholars from 66 countries attended made the above principles the theme of the event (Misrawi, 2007). The benefit and peace of diverse lives in a pluralistic society will be realized by actualizing the concept and understanding of religious moderation. Religious moderation will form a straight attitude and mentality, accepting differences, balance, and fairness and that is an essential point in realizing a peaceful and harmonious life (Faizah & Baedowi, 2022). At the practice stage of *amaliyah*, the concept of religious moderation in Islam is classified into: *First*, moderation in belief; *Second*, moderation in worship; *Third*, moderation in morals and behavior; *Fourth*, moderation in the formation of sharia (tasyri') (Yasid, 2010). *Wasathiyah* (moderate understanding) is one of the characteristics of Islamic teachings, based on *Islam Rahmatanlil'alam*. Moderate understanding calls for tolerant Islamic preaching, opposing all forms of liberal, fundamentalist, conservative or exclusive, and radical thinking (Habibie et al., 2021).

According to Afrizal Nur and Mukhlis, the understanding and practice of religious practice of a moderate Muslim has the following characteristics: *First*, *humble* (balanced), namely understanding and practicing religion in a balanced manner which covers all aspects of life, both worldly and spiritual *ukhrawi*, is firm in stating the principles that can differentiate between *inhiraf* (deviation,) and *disagreement* (difference); *Second*, *i'tidal* (straight and firm), namely putting things in their place and carrying out rights and fulfilling obligations proportionally; *Third*, *Tasamuh* (tolerance), namely recognizing and respecting differences, both in religious aspects and various other aspects of life; *Fourth*, *tawassuth* (taking the middle path), namely understanding and practicing what is not *ifrath* (exaggeration in religion) and *tafrith* (reducing religious teachings); *Fifth*, *shura* (deliberation), namely every problem is resolved by deliberation to reach consensus with the principle of placing benefit above all else;

Sixth, *ishlah* (reformation), namely prioritizing reformative principles to achieve better conditions that accommodate the changes and progress of the times based on the general benefit (*mashlahah 'ammah*) while still adhering to the principle *sal-muhafazhah 'alaal-qadimi al-shalih wa al-akhdu bi al-jadidi al-ashlah* (preserving old traditions that are still relevant, and implementing new things that are more relevant); *Seventh*, *tahadhdhur* (civilized), namely

upholding noble morals, character, identity and integrity as *khairu ummah* in human life and civilization; *Eighth, exchange* (egalitarian), namely not being discriminatory towards others due to differences in one's beliefs, traditions and origins; *Ninth, alawiyah* (putting priorities first), namely the ability to identify things that are more important and should be prioritized for implementation compared to those that are of lower importance; *Tenth, tathawwur wa Ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative), namely always being open to making new changes for the benefit and progress of humanity (Nur & Mukhlis, 2015).

Efforts to Achieve Religious Moderation in Indonesia

Creating a moderate society is not easy, especially in a society with different styles of understanding such as in Indonesia, but this is not impossible if it is done with good cooperation by the government, religious leaders, traditional leaders, educational institutions and institutions, as well as all components of the levels public. As a form of realizing a moderate society, several efforts can be made as follows (Fales & Sitorus, 2022). *First*, starting from public awareness. This can be done by involving religious leaders in teaching the correct understanding of religion and how to live side by side amidst existing differences. Apart from that, this awareness can also be done by instilling Islamic values of moderation in educational institutions. Here the need for reconstruction of the government in making policies.

Wiyono stated that to form an attitude of Islamic moderation to stem radicalism, several things were done: (1) through a formal approach, namely creating a special curriculum for each learning activity which contained material about the dangers of radicalism and its causes; (2) social moral interaction approach, namely introducing several people who have different religious, cultural and national backgrounds, so that it is strengthened in their souls that they are both human, and there is no reason to hate each other, and this is one of the keys to tolerance (Wiyono, 2018). *Second*, implementation (implementation). After providing awareness to the Indonesian people, there is a need to implement Islamic moderation through the concept of "Moderation House" which can be a solution to the problems that have been present among Muslims such as divisions, putting each other down, and so on. This house of moderation brings together the diversity in Indonesia, including culture, race, language, and religion, especially Muslims, who were initially divided into dialogues to find common ground so that everyone can accept each other's differences. *Third*, unity unites Muslims. After going through the process of awareness and implementation in every community, the result that will be achieved is the unity of the *Muslim Ummah*. Society realizes the existence of differences every day and it is appropriate to respect each other (R. P. Nasution, 2022).

Indonesian people understand how to respond to things that might cause division, so they avoid them. At this stage of unity, Indonesian society has a high tolerance for multiculturalism, which has long been characteristic of the Indonesian nation. *Fourth*, the peak is the realization of

Muslims who uphold the values of moderation. Once Muslims understand the importance of unity and religious knowledge, especially *Kalam* Science, in-depth, they will reach their peak, namely religious moderation. This is what is called civil society. Namely a society that has high moderation, character, intelligence, and lives in prosperity, as happened during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Integration of *Kalam* Science and Religious Moderation

The birth of *Kalam* Science cannot be separated from the problems that humans face in their lives. Answers and solutions were sought for all the fundamental problems he faced by relying on revelation and reason. Starting from issues related to the existence of God (theological) to the matters related to human understanding (anthropological). *Kalam* Science is an alternative solution to reduce problems (problematics) that are currently still widespread in society (Abdullah, 2022). Studying *Kalam* Science makes your attitude more moderate and less fanatical. Islam has a spiritual basis that guarantees human stability, peace and brotherhood. In resolving various problems, moderate Islam takes a compromise approach and is in the middle, prioritizing an attitude of tolerance, and mutual respect, while still believing in the truth of each religion and school of thought, so that everyone can accept it gracefully, without having to be involved in anarchic actions. A true Muslim is a Muslim who upholds the principle of moderation in all aspects of his life, even in religious activities (Bagir, 2017).

It cannot be denied that historically, incidents regarding *Kalam* have given rise to claims of distrust and even physical fights. However, on the other hand, *Kalam* science can also make Muslims more moderate and tolerant. Scientifically and adequately, someone who studies *Kalam* can become more moderate and tolerant. Studying *Kalam*, or Islamic theology, can lead to increased moderation and tolerance through several scientific and logical pathways (Abdullah, 2022; Sidik, 2024). *First*, deep understanding of religious texts. *Kalam* delves deeply into interpreting and understanding religious texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Through rigorous study, individuals gain a nuanced comprehension of the scriptures, which often reveals the importance of tolerance, compassion, and coexistence with others. *Second*, critical thinking skills. *Kalam* encourages critical thinking and intellectual inquiry. Students learn to analyze complex theological concepts and engage in reasoned discourse. This analytical approach fosters an open-minded attitude and a willingness to consider different perspectives, including those of other religions.

Third, ethical frameworks. Islamic theology provides ethical frameworks for moral behavior and interpersonal relationships. Concepts such as justice, compassion, and empathy are central to Islamic teachings. By studying *Kalam*, individuals develop a deeper appreciation for these ethical

principles and strive to embody them in their interactions with others. *Fourth*, historical context. *Kalam* often explores the historical context of religious texts and theological debates. This historical perspective helps students understand the diverse interpretations of Islam throughout history and the cultural factors that shape religious beliefs. By recognizing the diversity within Islam, individuals become more tolerant of differing viewpoints and practices. *Fifth*, dialogue and debate. *Kalam* encourages dialogue and debate among scholars of different theological perspectives. Through constructive discourse, individuals learn to articulate their beliefs effectively and engage respectfully with opposing viewpoints. This exchange of ideas promotes understanding, mutual respect, and tolerance among religious community members. Overall, the study of *Kalam* equips individuals with the intellectual tools and ethical principles needed to cultivate moderation, tolerance, and respect for diversity within the Islamic tradition and beyond.

In addition, moderate Islam is a superior characteristic in Islamic civilization, namely moderate and fair between two sides facing or opposing each other. One must not lean towards one of the two with an influence and stab the opposite party, so as not to take one of the two parties more than it is entitled to, do injustice to the opponent, and do slander. The meaning of the balance between two opposing things is to remove his egoism and give his rights in the middle, neither too much nor too little. Regarding religious moderation, the Qur'an has explained in Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 143 which means: "And likewise We have made you (Muslims) "intermediate people" so that you may be a witness to the (deeds) of humans and that the Messenger (Muhammad SAW.) be a witness to your (deeds)." Religious moderation must be developed as a joint effort to maintain complete balance, where every citizen of Indonesian society, whatever their ethnicity, culture, ethnic group, religion or political preferences, is willing to listen to each other and learn from each other to practice their abilities to manage and overcome differences between them. Realizing this moderation, of course, starts with an open (inclusive) attitude. According to Shihab, as quoted by Agus Akhmadi, the concept of inclusive Islam is not only limited to recognizing the pluralism of society but must also be actualized in the form of active involvement in this reality (Akhmadi, 2019).

The openness (inclusivism) attitude understood in Islamic thought provides space for diversity of thought, understanding and perception regarding Islam. In this understanding, truth is found in one particular group and other groups, including religious ones. This understanding departs from the belief that basically, all religions carry the teachings of salvation (Akhmadi, 2019). This differs from the attitude of exclusivism, which has a paradigm different from inclusivism. The idea of exclusivism threatens the nation because this group tends to be closed to differences, especially in a pluralist nation like Indonesia. In this way, all forms of religious moderation must be under pressure, both in assessing interactions and carrying out religious

guidance. For this reason, efforts to find common ground in the teachings of religions to prevent violence or radicalism need to continue to be improved. *Kalam* science, also known as Islamic theology or philosophy of Islamic science, is deeply rooted in Islam's theological and philosophical foundations. At its core, *Kalam* science seeks to harmonize scientific inquiry with Islamic beliefs, drawing upon key theological principles to understand the natural world. Here's an outline of the theological foundations that underpin *Kalam* science (Frank, 1992):

First, tauhid (Oneness of God). The concept of *Tauhid* is central to Islamic theology. It asserts God's absolute oneness and uniqueness. This theological foundation emphasizes that all creation is contingent upon and sustained by Allah's will. In the context of *Kalam* science, *Tauhid* serves as the basis for understanding the unity and coherence of the universe, viewing natural phenomena as manifestations of divine order and purpose. *Second, fitrah* (primordial nature). *Fitrah* refers to humans' innate predisposition or natural disposition towards recognizing God's existence and seeking truth. *Kalam* science acknowledges *fitrah* as the inherent inclination within individuals to explore and understand the world, leading to scientific inquiry and discovery. This theological concept encourages Muslims to engage in the pursuit of knowledge and scientific investigation as a means of fulfilling their natural inclination toward truth-seeking. *Third, Aql*. In Islamic thought, intellect or reason (*Aql*) is considered a gift from God and a means through which humans can discern truth and comprehend the universe. *Kalam* science strongly emphasizes the rational exploration of natural phenomena, utilizing human intellect to investigate and understand the intricacies of creation. The rational inquiry complements revelation, allowing a deeper appreciation of God's wisdom and design in the natural world.

Fourth, Sunnah. *Sunnah* refers to Allah's divine will and decree, encompassing the laws and patterns that govern the universe. *Kalam* science acknowledges the regularity and orderliness of nature as indicative of divine design and providence. By studying the observable patterns and laws of the universe, *Kalam* scholars seek to uncover the underlying principles that reflect the *Sunnah* of Allah, thereby gaining insights into the workings of creation. *Five, Ibadah*. *Ibadah* in Islam extends beyond ritualistic acts of devotion to include the pursuit of knowledge and the stewardship of the earth. *Kalam* science views scientific inquiry and discovery as acts of worship, reflecting a sincere effort to understand and appreciate the wonders of God's creation. Through the exploration of nature, Muslims are encouraged to develop a more profound reverence for Allah and a sense of awe and gratitude for His infinite wisdom and creativity. These theological foundations provide the framework for *Kalam* science, guiding Muslim scholars to reconcile faith with reason and uncover the natural world's mysteries according to Islamic principles. Several theological foundations (*Kalam* Science) in realizing an attitude of religious moderation to be

harmonious and inclusive are as follows (Wolfson, 1976):

First, intellectual inquiry and rationality. *Kalam Science* encourages intellectual inquiry and the use of reason to understand theological concepts. This emphasis on rationality fosters a mindset of critical thinking and open dialogue, which is essential for promoting moderation and inclusivity. Adherents can appreciate diverse perspectives and find common ground by engaging in reasoned discourse. *Second*, tolerance and pluralism. The theological framework of *Kalam Science* recognizes the diversity of human understanding and interpretation. It acknowledges that individuals may approach religious truths from different angles and with varying degrees of understanding. This recognition promotes tolerance and pluralism, allowing for the coexistence of diverse beliefs within a harmonious religious community. *Third*, ethical principles. *Kalam Science* emphasizes ethical principles derived from Islamic teachings, such as compassion, justice, and respect for others.

These ethical values serve as guiding principles for promoting moderation and inclusivity in religious discourse and interactions. By prioritizing ethical conduct, individuals can transcend sectarian differences and work towards common goals for the betterment of society. *Fourth*, is contextual interpretation. *Kalam Science* advocates for a contextual interpretation of religious texts and doctrines, taking into account historical, cultural, and social contexts. This approach recognizes that interpretations may evolve and vary across different contexts. By contextualizing religious teachings, adherents can adapt to changing circumstances and engage with contemporary issues constructively and inclusively. *Fifth*, humility and openness. Central to the ethos of *Kalam Science* is humility before the mysteries of the divine and openness to learning from others. This attitude encourages individuals to approach religious differences with humility, acknowledging the limitations of human understanding. By cultivating humility and transparency, adherents can overcome arrogance and dogmatism, fostering a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

In essence, the theological foundations of *Kalam Science* provide a rich framework for realizing an attitude of religious moderation that is harmonious and inclusive. By promoting intellectual inquiry, tolerance, ethical conduct, contextual interpretation, and humility, adherents can cultivate a mindset conducive to dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding across religious divides. Being tolerant is an attitude advocated by Islamic beliefs and teachings. For the following reasons: *First*, a Muslim believes that the holy book he always reads states the existence of various human religions. This reality is the reality that God desires. This is stated in Q.S. Yûnus verse 99. *Second*, the responsibility that someone is *kufr* and misguided is not in this life. But later on, the last day when all actions will be accounted for before Allah SWT. as confirmed in Q.S. al-An'âm verse 164. *Third*, a person *Muslim* is ordered to be able to do justice to everyone, including non-Muslims in

particular *Ahlu Kitab*. This is stated in Q.S. al-Mâidah verse 8. Several verses above must be understood carefully and deeply for theological strengthening to build religious tolerance. Another statement from Rasulullah SAW. Also exemplifies this kind of attitude in implementing an attitude of religious moderation (*Islam Wasathiyah*) (Rouf, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intricate relationship between *Kalam Science* and *Wasatiyah Islam* illuminates the multifaceted nature of Islamic thought and practice. Both concepts are deeply rooted in Islamic tradition and serve as pillars of intellectual inquiry and ethical conduct within the Muslim community. *With* its rich historical legacy and philosophical underpinnings, *Kalam Science* provides a rational framework for understanding and articulating Islamic beliefs. Through dialectical reasoning, theological synthesis, and engagement with contemporary intellectual trends, *Kalam* scholars have contributed to developing a sophisticated theological tradition that continues to inform Islamic discourse today. By delving into topics such as the nature of God, free will, and divine justice, *Kalam Science* encourages critical thinking and intellectual exploration, fostering a deeper understanding of religious doctrines among believers. On the other hand, *Wasatiyah Islam* embodies the ethical principles of moderation, balance, and inclusivity advocated by Islam.

Rooted in Quranic injunctions and exemplified by the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Islamic moderation promotes social harmony, tolerance, and compassion. It calls upon Muslims to embody ethical virtues such as justice, humility, and empathy in their interactions with others, transcending sectarian differences and fostering unity within the *ummah*. The relationship between *Kalam Science* and *Wasatiyah Islam* involves intellectual integration and spiritual balance. While *Kalam Science* provides the theoretical framework for understanding Islamic beliefs, *Wasatiyah Islam* complements this intellectual pursuit by emphasizing the practical application of these beliefs in everyday life. Together, they form a holistic approach to Islamic knowledge that combines theological inquiry with ethical practice, promoting a deeper understanding of religious teachings and fostering virtuous conduct among believers. Moreover, *Kalam Science* and *Wasatiyah Islam* aim to promote peace, harmony, and social cohesion within Muslim societies and beyond. They create a more just, compassionate, and inclusive world by encouraging critical thinking, intellectual engagement, and ethical conduct.

In an era marked by religious extremism, sectarianism, and social polarization, the integration of *Kalam Science* with *Wasatiyah Islam* offers a powerful antidote, promoting moderation, tolerance, and mutual understanding across religious divides. In essence, the synergy between *Kalam Science* and *Wasatiyah Islam* reflects the dynamic and adaptive nature of Islamic tradition,

which continues to evolve and respond to the challenges of the modern world. By upholding the principles of intellectual inquiry, ethical conduct, and social engagement, Muslims can draw inspiration from these rich traditions to navigate the complexities of contemporary life and contribute to the promotion of peace, justice, and human flourishing.

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