

A Conceptual Analysis of the Relationship Between *Wasaṭiyyah* and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

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Received: 20/06/2025

Accepted: 15/08/2025

Abstract

This study explores the intricate relationship between *wasaṭiyyah* (moderation) and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law) within Islamic epistemology. It begins by examining the meaning of *wasaṭiyyah* as interpreted from the Qur'anic concept of *wasaṭ* by prominent Islamic scholars, highlighting its essence as not merely a middle ground but a state of excellence characterised by fairness and justice. This study analyses the implementation of *wasaṭiyyah* in various aspects of life, including worship, social interactions, economics, politics, and education. It further delves into how *wasaṭiyyah* serves as a fundamental guiding principle for achieving *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, specifically the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. This study argues that adherence to *wasaṭiyyah* is crucial for the well-being of the Muslim *ummah* and for navigating the complexities of the modern world while upholding the core tenets of Islam. The study concludes with emphasis that *wasaṭiyyah*, as the inherent path of moderation within Islam, necessitates a balanced approach in all aspects of life, guided by *sharī'ah* and aimed at spiritual purification and closeness to Allāh ﷻ.

Keywords: Extremism, Islamic Ethics, Islamic Epistemology, Islamic Scholarship, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, Law.

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1. Introduction

The concept of *wasatiyyah* (moderation, centrism) is a fundamental principle in Islamic jurisprudence (Hassan, 2015), often cited as a means to navigate the complexities of life and avoid extremism. This principle advocates for balance and justice in all human endeavours, aligning with the inherent equilibrium of creation. In an increasingly interconnected and diverse world, marked by rapid globalisation and the proliferation of information, the principle of *wasatiyyah* takes on heightened significance in this domain. This is particularly true as societies grapple with a spectrum of ideologies, where polarised viewpoints and extremist narratives often find fertile ground, leading to social fragmentation, segregation, and conflict. In such a landscape, *wasatiyyah* offers a vital ethical and intellectual framework for fostering mutual understanding, promoting tolerance, and encouraging constructive dialogue and engagement across cultural, religious, and political divides. By emphasising the importance of the middle path, it provides a means to avoid the pitfalls of extremism, its ideologies, and promotes harmonious coexistence within diverse communities. Moreover, within academic discourse and particularly in the context of Islamic studies in South Africa (Mohamed, 2018), a deeper understanding of *wasatiyyah* is essential for addressing the various social and intellectual challenges prevalent in the country's diverse religious landscape. Central to the realisation of a just and balanced society envisioned by Islamic teachings, *wasatiyyah* serves as a crucial methodological lens through which the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law) can be effectively understood and implemented in diverse contexts within South African society (Auda, 2008). However, despite the recognised importance of *wasatiyyah* in fostering balance and preventing extremism, its application and understanding remain contested within contemporary Muslim discourse. This study identifies several approaches to the concept, ranging from those potentially seeking worldly gain to those sincerely pursuing divine pleasure, as well as individuals who may lack a comprehensive understanding of its nuances. This ambiguity underscores the necessity of a thorough examination of *wasatiyyah* within its Islamic epistemological framework.

Firstly, this study aims to define the concept of *wasatīyyah* within Islamic epistemology, drawing primarily from the Qur’ān and the *ḥadīth*, and elucidate its intricate relationship with the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah*. Secondly, this study will analyse the implementation of *wasatīyyah*, particularly within Muslim societies, given its foundational role in Islamic teachings. The study argues that *wasatīyyah* in Islamic epistemology transcends a simplistic notion of a mere middle ground. Instead, it embodies a proactive pursuit of excellence, righteousness, steadfastness, and the consistent avoidance of all forms of harmful excess or deficiency (Hassan, 2015). This approach ultimately reflects a holistic balance in striving for spiritual closeness to Allāh ﷻ and adherence to the teachings of Raṣūl-Allāh (the Prophet) ﷺ.

Throughout history, various movements and ideologies have manifested extremism, leading to conflict and societal upheaval. In response, various efforts, including those grounded in religious principles, have sought to combat extremist ideologies by promoting moderation. This study explores how the Islamic concept of *wasatīyyah* offers a framework for addressing such challenges.

The discussions in this study are structured around three key areas. First, an examination of the *wasatīyyah* concept as presented in Islamic epistemological sources, namely the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*. Second, an analysis of the implementation of *wasatīyyah* in contemporary contexts. Third, a discussion on the parallelism between *wasatīyyah* as articulated in these foundational sources and *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah* in practical application.

2. Rationale

The rationale for this study stems from the foundational importance of *wasatīyyah* as a guiding principle in Islam, advocating for balance and justice in all aspects of life, while recognising that this concept is often misunderstood. By exploring the intrinsic link between *wasatīyyah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah*, this research aims to provide a clearer theoretical framework for understanding and implementing this principle (Mohamed, 2018). This is particularly relevant in contemporary times marked by the challenges of extremism, where a robust understanding of *wasatīyyah* can offer a vital framework for promoting a balanced approach to religious and worldly affairs (H. Ibrahim, 2018). Ultimately, this paper seeks to clarify a core Islamic

concept and underscore its significance in achieving the wisdom and goals of Islamic law.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study operates within the theoretical framework of Islamic epistemology, drawing primarily from the foundational sources of Islam, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah (Prophetic traditions). It centres on two core Islamic concepts.

3.1 *Wasatiyyah*

The first concept, *wasatiyyah*, is examined through the lens of classical and contemporary interpretations of the Qur'anic term *wasat*. The framework posits that *wasatiyyah* is not merely a midpoint between extremes but rather an active pursuit of balance, justice, excellence, and adherence to divine guidance in all aspects of life. This concept serves as a central analytical tool for understanding and evaluating actions and principles within an Islamic context (Jr, 2012).

3.2 *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah*

The second concept, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework, focuses on the higher purposes and wisdom behind Islamic legislation. This study explores the intrinsic link between *wasatiyyah* and the realisation of these objectives, particularly the preservation of the five essentials: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. The theoretical framework suggests that *wasatiyyah* is not just a desirable attribute but a guiding principle for understanding and implementing the aims of Islamic law in a just and balanced manner (Ibrahim, 2018).

This article utilises a method of textual analysis and conceptual exploration, drawing upon interpretations of the Qur'ān and the views of various Islamic scholars (*mufasssirīn*). It aims to establish a theoretical understanding of *wasatiyyah* within Islamic thought and to demonstrate its practical relevance as a framework for achieving the objectives of the *sharī'ah* in individual and communal life. The context of contemporary challenges, such as extremism, further informs the exploration of *wasatiyyah* as a means to uphold Islamic values while engaging with the modern world.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in classical Islamic methodologies, aiming to elucidate the relationship between *wasatiyyah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* within an epistemological framework. The following analytical tools are employed.

4.1 Conceptual analysis

This paper uses conceptual analysis in a detailed examination of the key concepts of *wasatiyyah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. It explores their meanings, nuances, and interrelationships as understood within Islamic thought.

4.2 Primary Islamic sources

It draws heavily on primary Islamic sources, namely the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. As a textual analysis, it examines specific verses and references, considering their linguistic and contextual significance in relation to the concepts under investigation (Aswadi et al., 2022).

4.3 Interpretive analysis

An interpretive analysis that incorporates the interpretations and views of various *mufasssīrīn* from classical and contemporary periods to understand the meaning of *wasat* and the broader principles of Islamic law. This involves reviewing and synthesising different scholarly perspectives to arrive at a comprehensive understanding.

4.4 Philosophical inquiry

This study employs philosophical inquiry to engage with the philosophical underpinnings of *wasatiyyah* as a guiding principle in Islam and its connection to the wisdom and objectives of *sharī'ah*.

4.5 Analytical reasoning

Finally, an analytical reasoning that uses logic and deduction to connect the concepts of *wasatiyyah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, demonstrating how the former serves as a methodology for achieving the latter (Qiyas, 2025).

This study's research methodology is characterised by a reliance on scriptural and scholarly sources, interpretive analysis, and conceptual exploration to elucidate the relationship between

wasatīyyah and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* within the framework of Islamic epistemology. It does not involve the collection of empirical data or statistical analysis.

5. The Concept of *Wasat* in Qur'anic Exegesis

To understand the meaning of *wasatīyyah* as derived from the Qur'ān, it is crucial to examine the interpretations of the term *wasat* in the verse:

Thus, have We made of you an `ummah justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves... (Qur'ān 2:143)

Mufasssirīn have offered various insights into the meaning of *wasat* in this verse. Al-Ṭabarī (1992), Ibn Kathīr (1992), and Al-Qurṭubī (1993) concur that *wasat* signifies being “chosen,” “the best,” and “fair.” They highlight that this balanced approach distinguishes the Muslim community from the extremes of other religious traditions, such as the Christian belief in God having a son and the Jewish alteration of holy scriptures and rejection of prophets (Ali & Rafeeqe, 2018; Kamali, 2015). Similarly, Al-Rāzī (1990) elaborates on four meanings: fairness (impartiality), being the best, humility and perfection, and avoiding extremism in religious matters.

Further interpretations reinforce these themes. Al-Nasafī (1996) and Al-Zamakhsharī (1995) emphasise the sense of being “best” and “most fair,” often associating this with a central position that offers protection from the dangers of extremes. Al-Maḥallī and al-Suyūṭī (n.d.), and Hījāzī (1992) echo these sentiments, highlighting the chosen nature, goodness, humility, moderation, and avoidance of extremism in both worldly and afterlife matters. Ashimi (2020) and Al-Zuhaylī (1991) succinctly capture this understanding by stating that *wasat* means being fair, obedient to Islamic teachings, and distanced from the two extremes.

Collectively, these interpretations suggest that *wasat*, and by extension *wasatīyyah*, in the Islamic context does not merely denote a position midway between two extremes. Rather, it signifies a state of excellence, characterised by fairness, justice, and adherence to divine guidance, while actively avoiding both excessive (*ifrāt*) and negligent (*tafrīt*) approaches. As Al-Zuhaylī (1991) emphasises, it is about obedience to the teachings of Islam, staying clear of extremes,

such as the example of the Christians in their veneration of the Prophet Jesus and the Jews in their treatment of prophets as deities. Furthermore, being fair in this context does not necessitate a literal fifty-fifty division but rather entails taking appropriate action within the boundaries of *sharī'ah*. This understanding underscores that *wasatīyyah* is not a passive balancing act but an active commitment to the best and most just path as illuminated by Islamic epistemology.

Expanding on these interpretations, other definitions of *wasatīyyah* emphasise its comprehensive nature. *Wasatīyyah* signifies taking the middle path, being just, moderate, excellent, and professional, and positioning oneself at the centre, thus embodying equilibrium (Biplob & Abdullah, 2021). It adjusts without ignoring any rulings of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. This suggests that *wasatīyyah* is a balanced approach, aligning with the goals of *sharī'ah*. It has been acknowledged that *wasatīyyah* is a core Islamic principle that should permeate every Muslim's life; aiming to avoid extremism and embracing balance in all aspects of life (Mohdali et al., 2019a) It offers a comprehensive notion that integrates and moderates the requisites and delights of this world and the hereafter, as well as the physical and spiritual domains of existence, contributing to unity amongst the *ummah* (Jr, 2012; Mohdali et al., 2019b). Indeed, *al-wasatīyyah* calls on followers of Islam to practice their faith in a balanced and comprehensive manner across all dimensions of life and society, including improving the quality of human life, developing knowledge, fostering human development, establishing sound economic and financial systems, developing just political systems, strengthening nationhood, ensuring effective defence, promoting unity, and upholding equality among races.

Having established the foundational understanding of *wasatīyyah* from Islamic epistemological sources, it is crucial to consider its implications for the future. The effective implementation and future relevance of *wasatīyyah* hinges on the extent to which policies are grounded in a clear understanding of Islamic principles, coupled with a willingness to address the evolving demands of modern society, both material and immaterial. The Muslim *ummah*, embodying the morals of *wasatīyyah*, is seen as a role model for other nations, guiding them through life's challenges (Idrus et al.,

2015). For *wasaṭiyyah* to exert a strong and widespread influence within the community at large and effectively address people's problems, it needs to be adopted as a comprehensive and integrated approach. This necessitates the practice of religious teachings in all facets of individual and communal life, focusing on enhancing faith and piety, fostering unity, and promoting the pursuit of knowledge. *Al-wasaṭiyyah* is a fundamental trait of a Muslim personality and the Muslim community, shaping their activities in a balanced manner in this world and the hereafter by avoiding exaggeration and excessiveness (Ashimi, 2020). It is also a key characteristic of Islam that should be manifested in all spheres of life, including social, political, economic, and educational. Islamic *wasaṭiyyah* is increasingly discussed as Islam is sometimes linked to violence; however, the root causes of violence are often political, social, and economic, not generally stemming from Islam itself, which is a religion of mercy and justice (Ibrahim et al., 2013).

It is important to note Mohd Rumaizuddin's (2011) statement regarding "a willingness to meet the requirements of modern society and their various demands." (Ibrahim et al., 2013, p. 10). This phrase is ambiguous if it implies compromising core Islamic values for perceived modern needs. True *wasaṭiyyah*, while engaging with contemporary issues, must maintain fidelity to the principles of *sharī'ah*. Introducing new practices that could potentially weaken the foundations of the *dīn* (religion), even under the guise of moderation, might not align with the true essence of *wasaṭiyyah*. For example, the emergence of female "Imams" in some contexts, presented under the banner of equality and moderation, raises discussions about adherence to traditional Islamic legal interpretations.

6. Historical Context of *Wasaṭiyyah*

The concept of *wasaṭiyyah* is not a recent innovation but is deeply rooted in the primary sources of Islam (Ramadhan et al., 2024). The term itself originates from the Arabic word *wasat*, which implies the middle, fair, just, or moderate path; its various forms are used frequently in the Qur'ān (Gani, 2019). Notably, the Qur'anic verse (2:143) describes the Muslim community as *ummataṅ wasaṭan*, a justly balanced nation chosen to be witnesses over humankind. This designation in the Qur'ān establishes *wasaṭiyyah* as a fundamental

characteristic of the Muslim community from its very inception. Furthermore, the Sunnah includes extensive literature illustrating the meaning and application of a just and balanced approach in all aspects of life (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Classical and contemporary Muslim jurists have elaborated on this concept, understanding *ummattan wasaṭan* to embody principles of social justice, individual freedom, equality, and inherent rights (Bakir & Othman, 2016). Therefore, the emphasis on moderation and balance has been an integral part of Islamic teachings and thought since the earliest period of Islam.

7. Aspects of *Wasaṭiyyah*

7.1 *Wasaṭiyyah* in All Affairs

Moderation in Islam comprises all matters of religion, this worldly life, and the hereafter. This is doubtless a manifestation of Islam's inimitability and validity for all times and places. The concept of *wasaṭiyyah* extends beyond just personal worship and encompasses the entirety of a Muslim's life, shaping their interactions and conduct in social, economic, and political spheres ("Moderation Is the Way of Islam," 2014). It promotes engaging with life in a balanced manner, pursuing benefits, and avoiding extremism in all its forms (Safei, 2021a).

Wasaṭiyyah in social life encourages fairness, justice, and the establishment of harmonious relationships within the community. It emphasises the importance of treating others equitably and avoiding biases or prejudices that could lead to discord (Arif & Ismael, 2016). In economic dealings, *wasaṭiyyah* advocates for moderation in earning and spending, discouraging both extravagance and miserliness. It promotes just and ethical practices in trade and finance, ensuring that individuals and the community benefit in a balanced way (Zikwan, 2024).

In the political sphere, *wasaṭiyyah* calls for just governance, emphasising the importance of *shūrā* (consultation) and the fair treatment of all citizens. It encourages leaders to adopt a moderate approach in policymaking, avoiding both authoritarianism and anarchy (Safei, 2021b). The principle of balance is crucial in maintaining social order and ensuring the well-being of the entire society. Islam, as a religion of moderation, provides guidance for all people at all times and in all places, meeting human needs with a

balanced approach that avoids rigidity and carelessness in both action and giving (“Moderation Is the Way of Islam,” 2014).

7.2 *Wasatīyyah* in Worship and Personal Conduct

One of the evident aspects of Islamic moderation, or *wasatīyyah*, is in the realm of worship. Islam acknowledges the inherent needs of human beings, striking a balance between the requirements of the soul and the body. This principle is underscored by the rejection of both extreme asceticism and excessive materialism. Instead, Islam encourages a harmonious coexistence between the physical and spiritual aspects of life, guided by the teachings of the Qur’ān. This balanced approach is a defining characteristic of good character in Islam (Elias, 2016). The Prophet ﷺ himself emphasised this balance in worship, advising against both excessive loudness and excessive softness in prayer, advocating for a middle path (Sūrah al-Isrā 17:110; Sunan an-Nasā’ī 5034, n.d.).

The Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ further exemplifies this balance. For instance, his refutation of ‘Uthmān bin Maz’hūn’s overly ascetic lifestyle and his disapproval of those who prohibited lawful worldly pleasures for themselves illustrate this moderate path. The Prophet ﷺ stated,

Amongst you, I am the one who fears Allāh ﷻ most and I am the most pious; but yet I fast and I eat, I pray, and I sleep, and I marry women. So, whoever turns away from my way is not of my ‘ummah (Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī 5063, n.d.).

This *ḥadīth* highlights the importance of a balanced approach in religious practice, emphasising that even in devotion, moderation is key. The Prophet ﷺ also emphasised the ease of this religion, saying, “This religion is easy. So, practice it gently. No one is harshened by this religion except that it overpowers him.” This encourages a sustainable and balanced engagement with religious duties (al-‘Awdah, n.d.).

Moreover, *wasatīyyah* in worship also involves avoiding extremism. High levels of religious devotion should not lead to the neglect of other responsibilities or harm to oneself or others. Islam encourages a balance where individuals dedicate time to worship, connect with Allāh, and fulfil their worldly obligations, including family responsibilities, work commitments, and personal pursuits

(Abu Amina Elias, n.d.). The Prophet ﷺ, being the most devout servant of Allāh, was also actively involved in his community as a merchant, husband, father, and statesman, demonstrating this ideal balance between *dīn* (religion) and *dunyā* (worldly life) (Islam 365, n.d.).

7.3 *Wasaṭiyyah* as the Guiding Principle of *Sharī'ah*

The *sharī'ah* itself is designed to bring benefit and well-being to humanity in this life and the hereafter. Its fundamental purpose is to uphold the objectives of creation, and anything deviating from this path is considered injustice and without benefit in this *dīn*. The ultimate aim of *sharī'ah* is to guide individuals towards moderation in Islam, steering them away from the two extremes. This moderation is often referred to as *ahl ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (people of the straight path), signifying the balanced and righteous way of life. While extremes may exist, the most virtuous are those who adhere to this middle path.

Indeed, the principle of *wasaṭiyyah* is not merely an aspect of *sharī'ah*; it serves as a fundamental *maqṣad* (objective) guiding its formulation, execution, and evaluation (Ismail et al., 2016). This means that the overarching aims of Islamic law, such as the preservation of life, religion, intellect, progeny, and wealth, are to be achieved through a balanced and moderate approach. *Wasaṭiyyah* acts as a lens through which these objectives are understood and implemented in various contexts (Zikwan, 2024).

The concept of *wasaṭiyyah* is comprehensive and integrated, capable of resolving the demands and issues faced by society by striking a balance in various aspects of life (Muhammad & Hanapi, 2018). This balance avoids the pitfalls of extremism (*ifrāt* and *ghulūw*) that can erode the true understanding and values of Islam (Muhammad & Hanapi, 2018). By adhering to the principle of *wasaṭiyyah*, the *ummah* can fulfil its role as a “justly balanced community” (Qur’ān 2:143; Kamali, 2020), acting as witnesses to humankind with moderation, balance, and fairness.

7.4 *Wasaṭiyyah* in Education

Following the discussion on the broader understanding and implications of *wasaṭiyyah*, it is pertinent to examine its application within specific domains, particularly education. The concept of

wasatiyyah is increasingly recognised as crucial in shaping educational systems that aim for a balanced approach, moving beyond the mere transmission of information and superficial skills to encompass a holistic transformation of individuals and the system itself. The underlying intention is to cultivate individuals who possess both strong religious convictions and refined moral character, achieved through an educational framework that integrates intellectual, physical, and spiritual development. This balanced quality is particularly relevant in contemporary times (Muqowim et al., 2022).

However, many educational systems face the challenge of effectively integrating these different dimensions. A lack of a truly integrated education system can lead to an imbalance, where spiritual development might be emphasised at the expense of knowledge and skills necessary for managing modern systems and resources, especially in fields like science and technology. This can leave individuals with a strong spiritual grounding but limited practical capabilities, potentially making them vulnerable in a competitive global landscape.

Therefore, an educational approach grounded in *wasatiyyah* seeks to consciously integrate mental and physical development with religious education, encompassing both individual and societal well-being. However, the successful consolidation of *wasatiyyah* in education often faces obstacles. For instance, if religious studies are not given the same level of importance as other subjects in national examination systems, it can hinder efforts to achieve a genuine balance between intellectual and spiritual strength. If academic assessments prioritise certain subjects over religious knowledge, students might focus solely on those areas deemed necessary for passing examinations, potentially neglecting the spiritual dimension of their education.

In conclusion, the concept of *wasatiyyah* plays a vital role in shaping a generation that is well-rounded and balanced across intellectual, physical, and spiritual domains. This holistic development is crucial for effectively navigating the complexities and challenges of the modern world (Asmawi, Tahir, & Idhan, 2024).

7.5 Perspectives on a *Wasatiyyah*-Based Educational Model

The implementation of *wasatiyyah* within a national education system can be conceptualised through a framework that emphasises balanced character development through a well-adjusted curriculum encompassing spiritual, intellectual, and physical aspects. This theoretical model can be viewed from two primary perspectives.

Firstly, there is the perspective of fulfilling obligatory duties within Islam to attain salvation. This is based on the understanding conveyed in a tradition where a man inquired of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: “If I perform the required *fard ṣalāh*, fast during the month of *Ramaḍān*, establish what is *ḥalāl* and prohibit that which is *ḥarām*, and do not implement more than that, will I enter Jannah?” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ replied: “Yes.” (An-Nawawī, n.d., Hadith 22).

أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: أَرَأَيْتَ إِذَا صَلَّيْتُ الصَّلَوَاتِ
الْمَكْتُوبَاتِ، وَصُمْتُ رَمَضَانَ، وَأَحْلَلْتُ الْحَلَالَ، وَحَرَمْتُ الْحَرَامَ، وَلَمْ أَزِدْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا،
أَأَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: وَاللَّهِ لَا أَزِيدُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا.

Secondly, there is the perspective of striving for *ihsān* (excellence), which entails going beyond the obligatory acts of worship to seek greater proximity to Allāh through *nawāfil* (voluntary acts). This is supported by a *Hadīth Qudsi* which states:

...there is nothing more beloved to Me than when My servant draws closer to Me in proximity than that which I have made compulsory upon him, and My servant continues to draw nearer to Me through supererogatory works until I love him... (An-Nawawī, n.d., Hadith 48).

In considering the true essence of *wasatiyyah*, which aligns with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the aim is to implement practices that foster closeness to Allāh ﷻ and love for His Messenger ﷺ. It has been observed that environments with restricted non-essential interactions between genders are perceived by some as having remarkable positive effects on the spiritual state of individuals and potentially reducing *fiṭnah*. This viewpoint is held within certain Islamic traditions and should be understood within that context. It relates to the interpretation of the Qur'anic verses: “Do not go near to *zinā* (unlawful sex); surely it is a shameful deed and an evil way” (*Sūrah*

al-Isrā, 17:32), and, “Enjoin the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that is purer for them... Likewise, enjoin the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty, not to display their beauty except what normally appears thereof” (*Sūrah al-Nūr*, 24:30-31).

7.6 *Wasatiyyah* and *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*

The field of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* illuminates the benefits and harms inherent in various actions and rulings, guiding jurists to establish equilibrium in *sharī'ah* (Abdul Saied et al., 2024). Historically, the Muslim *ummah* experienced periods of honour, power, and respect precisely when it adhered to the moderate path of Islam, while times of decline often coincided with neglecting this balance (Bakar & Yasin, 2017). Thus, *wasatiyyah* is intrinsically linked to the realisation and preservation of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, functioning as the lens through which Islamic law fulfils its objectives in practice (e.g., banking ethics) (Bakar & Yasin, 2017).

7.7 Preservation of Religion (*Hifdh al-Dīn*)

Wasatiyyah is fundamental to the preservation of religion. Religion serves as a unifying force for any nation. The necessity of *sharī'ah* is paramount, as its absence can lead to spiritual and moral decay, ultimately affecting the well-being of individuals and societies. Acquainting oneself with the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who exemplified perfect character and a balanced lifestyle, is essential in understanding this. As Wahb bin Manda said, to have a balanced life:

Indeed, for everything there are two sides and a middle. If you should take hold of one side, the other will lean, but if you should take hold of the middle, the two sides will balance, so then it is upon you to hold on to the middle path.

Good character is having the correct *ādāb* (manners) not to incline to any of the two extremes; by maintaining the middle ground and being heedless or negligent with the laws of *sharī'ah*, this is pleasing to Allāh ﷻ (Meinhegemon, 2020; ‘Moderation in Islam’, 2025).

7.8 Preservation of Life (*Hifdh al-Nafs*)

Sharī'ah places great emphasis on the preservation of life, a

principle deeply connected to *wasatiyyah*. Islamic law includes regulations that identify what is beneficial and harmful to human life, as reflected in the interpretation of the verse: “*And slay not the life which Allāh has forbidden save with right*” (*Sūrah al-Isrā*, 17:33). The sanctity of life is underscored by the Qur’anic statement that killing an innocent person is akin to killing all humankind, while saving a life is like saving all humankind (*Sūrah al-Mā-idah*, 5:32). To maintain moderation in this regard, *sharī’ah* prohibits not only unlawful killing but also actions leading to it, such as cursing and slander. Furthermore, *wasatiyyah* dictates that one must not stray into the extreme of taking one’s own life, as explained in a tradition of Rasul-Allāh ﷺ when he says:

Should he throw himself from a mountain, or drink poison, or kill himself with a metal object, he will be raised with it and spend everlasting life in hellfire, killing himself in the same manner over and over again (Sahih al-Bukhārī 5778, n.d.).

7.9 Preservation of Intellect (*Hifdh al-‘Aql*)

The preservation of the intellect through moderation is also a key objective of *sharī’ah*. The intellect enables individuals to distinguish right from wrong. In Islam, *taḳlīf* (accountability) is contingent upon *mukallaḳ* (being of sound mind). Extremes such as prioritising intellect over divine guidance or, conversely, neglecting intellectual reasoning are contrary to *wasatiyyah*. The Qur’ān frequently encourages reflection and the pursuit of beneficial knowledge, which is obligatory in Islam. It is within itself the means to empowerment, growth, and protection from extremism. The prohibition of intoxicants in Islam serves the purpose of safeguarding the intellect (Abdul Rahman & Rahman, 2021), which may lead to many harms found within society.

7.10 Preservation of Lineage (*Hifdh al-Nasl*)

Moderation in the preservation of lineage and honour is encouraged in Islam through the institution of marriage. Marriage is promoted, and polygamy is permitted under specific conditions to protect families and ensure the continuity of generations (Ghafoor & Elatrash, 2021), and to protect society from the ills commonly seen, such as family segregation, fornication, children born out of

wedlock, etc. Conversely, *sharī'ah* prohibits fornication and encourages the growth of one's progeny within the bounds of marriage. As Imām al-Shāṭibī says in *Al-Muwāfaqāt*: "The objective in increasing offspring is the preservation of humanity" (*'Maqasid'*, 2024).

7.11 Preservation of Wealth (*Hifdh al-Māl*)

Wasatiyyah also guides the preservation of wealth. Islam emphasises the necessity of earning and maintaining sufficient wealth to provide for oneself and one's family in a moderate manner, ensuring their health, sustenance, shelter, and clothing. This economic well-being facilitates worship, reflection, and gratitude towards Allāh ﷻ. Neglecting this aspect can lead to systemic corruption. Rasūl-Allāh ﷺ said: "For indeed your blood, your money, your dignity is *ḥarām* upon you (it is *ḥarām* for the next individual to transgress and harm the other) (Sahih Muslim 1679b, n.d.).

8. Conclusion

In reflecting on the concept of *wasatiyyah*, this paper underscores its essence as the inherent moderation within the *dīn* of Islam. Acting upon this principle correctly illuminates its reality, as understood and articulated by one of the author's teachers. This involves firmly adhering to the teachings of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in a balanced and proportionate manner, upholding Islamic laws appropriately in all interactions, including worship, and abstaining from the disliked extremes of extravagance and stinginess, as well as negligence and heedlessness.

Establishing *wasatiyyah* necessitates *khuluq al-ḥasan* (beautiful and non-blameworthy character) and the restraint of one's desires and anger, which are part of *fiṭrah* (natural human inclinations). It is the unchecked pursuit of these inclinations that often leads to problems and destruction in the world. However, by applying the guidance of *sharī'ah* and intellect, individuals can cultivate their souls, transform negative traits, and honour the path of righteousness.

This cultivation, or *tazkiyah* (purification), was entrusted to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as highlighted in several Qur'anic verses. Allāh ﷻ states, "It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying

them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they were before in clear error” (Sūrah al-Jumu’ah, 62:2). Furthermore, Allāh ﷻ states, “Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know” (Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:151). Lastly Allāh ﷻ states, “Certainly, did Allāh confer [great] favour upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error” (Sūrah āli-`Imrān, 3:164).

Ultimately, success lies in purifying the soul, as Allāh ﷻ declares: *“He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instils it [with corruption]” (Sūrah al-Shams, 91:9-10).* Therefore, regardless of the apparent magnitude of one’s actions, if they are not in accordance with *sharī’ah* in a moderate and balanced way, one may be considered a loser. This understanding aligns with the work of scholars such as Ḥabīb `Umar bin Ḥafīdh, who emphasises the importance of *wasatiyyah* in a Muslim’s life.

While closely related, *wasatiyyah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah* serve distinct roles. *Maqāṣid* represent the overarching objectives and higher purposes of Islamic law, such as preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, the “what” of Islamic legislation. *Wasatiyyah*, on the other hand, embodies the principles of moderation and balance, representing the “how”, the methodology, and the straight path for Muslims to effectively realise these objectives in a just and righteous manner. *Wasatiyyah* guides the implementation of *sharī’ah* to ensure its goals are met without resorting to extremes or imbalances.

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