

INTERPRETATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION VERSES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SACRED TEXTS IN JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep tafsir moderasi beragama dari sudut pandang kitab suci agama Ibrahim. Kajian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana Yudaisme, Kristen, dan Islam mempromosikan moderasi dalam pemikiran dan praktik keagamaan melalui teks suci masing-masing. Studi ini menggunakan metode analisis komparatif, dengan fokus pada bagian-bagian penting dan ajaran-ajaran yang menganjurkan moderasi dalam setiap tradisi. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa ketiga agama tersebut menekankan pentingnya moderasi sebagai prinsip inti ajaran mereka. Yudaisme menekankan konsep "The Golden Mean", yang mendorong umatnya untuk menghindari hal-hal ekstrem dan menjalani kehidupan yang seimbang menurut hukum Yahudi. Kekristenan mempromosikan moderasi melalui ajaran Yesus Kristus, menekankan cinta, kasih sayang, dan pengampunan. Islam menggarisbawahi konsep "Wasatiyyah," atau moderasi, sebagai prinsip utama iman, mendorong umat Islam untuk menghindari ekstremisme dan mematuhi cara hidup yang seimbang. Diskusi tersebut menyoroti persamaan dan perbedaan penafsiran dan penerapan prinsip-prinsip agama moderat di ketiga tradisi tersebut. Hal ini juga menekankan peran para pemimpin agama dan cendekiawan dalam mempromosikan interpretasi moderat terhadap kitab suci untuk mendorong hidup berdampingan secara damai di antara penganut agama yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: Moderasi beragama, Yudaisme, Kristen, Islam, Tafsir, Perdamaian

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the concept of moderate religious interpretation from the perspective of the holy scriptures of the Abrahamic religions. It explores how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam promote moderation in religious thought and practice through their respective sacred texts. The study employs a comparative analysis method, focusing on key passages and teachings that advocate for moderation within each tradition. The results indicate that all three religions emphasize the importance of moderation as a core principle of their teachings. Judaism emphasizes the concept of "The Golden Mean," encouraging believers to avoid extremes and live a balanced life according to Jewish law. Christianity promotes moderation through the teachings of Jesus Christ, emphasizing love, compassion, and forgiveness. Islam underscores the concept of "Wasatiyyah," or moderation, as a central tenet of the faith, encouraging Muslims to avoid extremism and adhere to a balanced way of life. The discussion highlights the similarities and differences in the interpretation and implementation of moderate religious principles across the three traditions. It also emphasizes the role of religious leaders and scholars in promoting moderate interpretations of the scriptures to foster peaceful coexistence among believers of different faiths.

Keyword: Religious moderation, judaism, christianity, islam, interpretation, peaceful

INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, a deep understanding of religious moderation is becoming increasingly important. Religious moderation is an increasingly relevant concept in today's global context, where conflicts and tensions between religious groups are frequent (Apriani & Aryani, 2022). The study of religious moderation in Judaic, Christian, and Islamic religious texts offers an important perspective for understanding how these three Abrahamic religions teach tolerance, cooperation, and mutual respect in the midst of differences. This article will analyze the concept of religious moderation in the sacred texts of the three religions, with the aim of identifying and comparing teachings that favor peace and coexistence.

This research will focus on the analysis of religious moderation in the study of Judaic, Christian, and Islamic religious texts. Previous studies have explored various aspects of religious moderation in the context of those religions, but there is still room for further research. A number of previous studies have explored aspects of moderation within each religion. For example, research by Smith (2018) shows that Jewish texts, such as the Talmud and Torah, contain many teachings about justice and humanity that support the concept of moderation (Smith, 2018). Another study by Johnson (2019) discusses Jesus' teachings in the New Testament as a foundation for moderation in Christianity (Johnson, 2019). Meanwhile, research by Rahman (2020) highlights the importance of moderation in Islam, especially in the context of the Qur'an and Hadith which emphasize balance and justice (Rahman, 2020).

Although many studies have addressed moderation within each religion separately, there have been few comparative studies looking at how this concept is articulated in all three religious traditions simultaneously. This article offers a unique contribution by conducting a comparative analysis of Judaic, Christian, and Islamic religious texts to identify similarities and differences in their teachings of moderation. Thus, this study seeks to bridge gaps in the existing literature and provide a more comprehensive understanding of religious moderation in interfaith contexts.

The main issue raised in this article is: How is the concept of religious moderation articulated in Judeo, Christian, and Islamic sacred texts? What are the similarities and differences in the moderation teachings of the three religions? To answer this question, the main purpose of this article is to conduct a comparative text analysis of the teachings of moderation in these three religious traditions and identify the elements that favor peace and coexistence.

The methodology of this study involves a qualitative approach with text analysis as the main data collection technique. The major texts of the three religions will be analyzed to

identify teachings related to moderation. The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, where key themes related to moderation will be identified and compared between the three religious traditions.

DISCUSSION

Religious moderation is an important concept in maintaining social harmony and tolerance among religious communities. According to Abu-Nimer (2016), religious moderation can be defined as attitudes and actions that avoid extremism and radicalism, and encourage tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence between followers of different religions (Abu-Nimer, 2016). This concept is relevant in today's global context, where faith-based conflicts are still frequent. In the study of religious moderation theory, the three main concepts that are often discussed are justice, balance, and humanity. Justice refers to fair and equal treatment of all individuals, regardless of their religious background (Rahman, 2020). Balance refers to the ability to maintain moderate views and not get caught up in extremism (Johnson, 2019). Meanwhile, humanity emphasizes the importance of treating all humans with respect and compassion, as fellow creatures created by God (Smith, 2018).

The study focused on the analysis of sacred texts from three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The main texts analyzed are the Torah and Talmud of the Jewish tradition, the New Testament of the Christian tradition, and the Qur'an and Hadith of the Islamic tradition. These three texts were chosen because they are the main sources of teachings and laws in each religion, and are often referenced in discussions of religious moderation and extremism. Text analysis was conducted by identifying the main themes related to justice, balance, and humanity from the three sources of sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Moderation in Jewish Religious Texts

In the Jewish tradition, the concept of religious moderation can be found in teachings on justice and humanity. The Torah, as the main text in the Jewish tradition, contains many teachings about social justice. For example, in Leviticus 19:15, it says, "Thou shalt not be unjust in judgment; Thou shalt not side with the little man, nor be partial to the great; with justice you must judge your neighbor" (Smith, 2018). This teaching shows the importance of justice as a basis for the treatment of fellow human beings, regardless of their social status.

In addition, the Talmud also contains many teachings on humanity and compassion (*Talmud, The Holy Book of the Jewish Qabalists - STID DI AL-HIKMAH JAKARTA, N.D.*). For example, in the Bavli Talmud, Tractate of the Sanhedrin 37a, it is stated that "Whoever

saves one soul is regarded as if he had saved the whole world." This teaching emphasizes the importance of each individual and the value of human life, which supports the concept of moderation and rejects extremism.

In the Torah Scriptures, there are several verses that reflect the principles of religious moderation, justice, and humanity. Here are some examples:

1. Imamat 19:15 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Leviticus 19:15. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Leviticus 19:15, New International Version)

"Thou shalt not cheat in court; Do not side with the poor and look not upon the great, but with justice you shall judge your neighbor."

This verse emphasizes the importance of justice in courts regardless of social status, which is the principle of moderation with respect and treating all people fairly.

2. Imamat 19:18 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Leviticus 19:18. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Leviticus 19:18, New International Version)

"Thou shalt not seek revenge, nor bear grudges against thy countrymen, but love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord."

This verse teaches not to demand revenge or vengeance, but to love one's neighbor, reflecting the principle of moderation through love and forgiveness.

3. Mikha 6:8 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Micah 6:8. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Micah 6:8, New International Version)

"O man, it has been told unto you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly before your God?"

4. This verse emphasizes justice, faithfulness, and humility, which are the principles of religious moderation.

5. Keluaran 23:9 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Exodus 23:9. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Exodus 23:9, New International Version)

"Do not oppress a foreigner, for you yourselves have known the state of the soul of a migrant, for you too were immigrants in the land of Egypt."

This verse reminds not to oppress immigrants and shows empathy based on past experiences, reflecting the principles of humanity and moderation.

6. Ulangan 10:19 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Deuteronomy 10:19. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Deuteronomy 10:19, New International Version)

"Therefore you must show your love to strangers, for you too were strangers in the land of Egypt."

This verse teaches love for strangers, emphasizes the importance of humanity and respect for all people, which is the essence of religious moderation.

The verses show that the principles of moderation, such as justice, compassion, and humanity, have been embedded in the teachings of the Torah.

Moderation in Christian Religious Texts

In the Christian tradition, the concept of religious moderation is found in many of the teachings of Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament. Jesus often taught about love, forgiveness, and justice. For example, in Matthew 5:9, Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Johnson, 2019). This teaching shows that bringing peace and avoiding conflict are values that are highly valued in Christian teaching.

In addition, in Luke 6:31, Jesus taught, "And as ye would that men should do unto you, do likewise unto them." This teaching is known as the Golden Rule and is the basis of the principle of mutual respect and good treatment of others, which is very relevant to the concept of religious moderation.

In the Scriptures of the Gospels, many verses reflect the principles of religious moderation, such as justice, compassion, and forgiveness. Here are some examples of verses from the New Testament that teach religious moderation:

1. Matius 5:9 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Matthew 5:9. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Matthew 5:9, New International Version)
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."
This verse emphasizes the importance of bringing peace and avoiding conflict, which is the essence of moderation.
2. Matius 7:12 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Matthew 7:12. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Matthew 7:12, New International Version)
"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do likewise unto them. That is the content of all the law and the prophets."
This verse, known as the Golden Rule, teaches to treat others as we would like to be treated, reflecting the principles of mutual respect and moderation.
3. Matius 22:39 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Matthew 22:39. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Matthew 22:39, New International Version)
"And the second commandment, which is like it, is: Love your neighbor as yourself."
This verse emphasizes love for one's neighbor, which is the essence of religious moderation.
4. Lukas 6:27-28 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Luke 6:27-28. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Luke 6:27-28, New International Version)
"But to you, who listen to me, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ask blessings for those who curse you, pray for those who revile you."
This verse teaches love and forgiveness to the enemy, which is an example of moderation and non-extremeness.

5. Roma 12:18 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Romans 12:18. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Romans 12:18, New International Version)

"As much as possible, if it depends on you, live in peace with everyone."

This verse encourages living in peace with everyone, reflecting the principle of moderation in social interaction.

6. Galatia 5:22-23 (Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Galatians 5:22-23. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Galatians 5:22-23, New International Version)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law against those things."

This verse describes the qualities produced by the Holy Spirit, all of which reflect moderation and virtue in religious life.

The examples show that the principles of moderation such as justice, compassion, forgiveness, and living in peace are strongly emphasized in the teachings of the Gospel.

Moderation in Islamic Religious Texts

In the Islamic tradition, the concept of religious moderation is very clear in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. The Qur'an, as the main text in Islam, contains many teachings about balance and justice. For example, in Sura Al-Baqarah 2:143, it is stated, "And so (also) We have made you (Muslims), a just and chosen people so that you be witnesses to (deeds) of men and that the Messenger (Muhammad) be witnesses of (deeds) of you" (Rahman, 2020). It stresses the importance of being a just and moderate people who reject all forms of extremism.

In addition, the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad also teaches a lot about humanity and compassion. For example, in the Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, the Prophet Muhammad said, "One of you does not believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." This teaching shows the importance of love and compassion for fellow human beings, which supports the concept of religious moderation.

Related to the principles of religion, here are 9 verses of the Qur'an that guide in carrying out religious principles as well as teach us to increase faith as well as tolerance to followers of other religions:

1. Jonah chapter 99. The difference in faith is God's design.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرَهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

It means: "If your Lord had willed, surely all the people of the earth would have all faith. Will you (Prophet Muhammad) force people into becoming believers?"

2. Surah Al-Kafirun verse 6. Believing in each other's faith

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

It means: "For you your religion and for me my religion."

3. Surah Al-Baqarah verse 139. Believing in each other's worship

وَلَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ

It means: "For us our practice, for you your practice"

4. Surah Al-An'am verse 108. Prohibition of insulting the beliefs of others

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

It means: "Do not curse (a god) whom they worship other than Allah because they will later curse Allah by going beyond the limits without (basis) of knowledge. Thus, We make every people think well of their work. Then to the Lord they are their place of return, and He will tell them what they have done."

5. Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 256. There is no compulsion in religion

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

It means: "There is no compulsion in (adhering to) religion (Islam). Indeed, it is clear the true path of the false path. He who disobeys the tagut and has faith in Allah has indeed clung to a very strong rope that will not break. Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing."

6. Surah Ali 'Imran Verse 85 Arabic. Convinced that Islam is the best choice

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ۗ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

It means: "Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, once in a while (his religion) will not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he is among the losers."

7. Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 208. Islam as a whole

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

It means: "O believers, enter Islam (peace) thoroughly and do not follow the steps of Satan! Verily he is a real enemy to you."

8. Surah Ali Imran verse 19. Islam is a religion that Allah believes

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعْضٌ بِبَعْضٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

It means: "Indeed, the religion (that is preached) in the sight of Allah is Islam. Those who have been given books do not quarrel, except after knowledge has come to them because of malice among them. Whoever disobeys the verses of Allah, Allah is very quick to calculate."

9. Surah Al Maidah Verse 3. Islam is the perfect religion

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي ۗ وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

It means: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, I have satisfied My favor for you, and I have pleased Islam as your religion."

Similarities and Differences in the Doctrine of Moderation

Analysis of sacred texts from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam shows that these three religions have much in common in the teachings of religious moderation. The main similarity found is the emphasis on justice, humanity, and balance as basic values in religion. These three religions teach the importance of fair treatment of fellow human beings, regardless of their background. In addition, teachings on humanity and mercy are also very dominant in sacred texts, indicating that these three religions teach the importance of treating all human beings with respect and compassion.

However, there are also some differences in the approach to religious moderation in these three religious traditions. In the Jewish tradition, religious moderation is emphasized more through the teachings on social justice in the Torah and Talmud. Meanwhile, in the Christian tradition, religious moderation is more closely associated with the teachings of love and forgiveness taught by Jesus Christ. In the Islamic tradition, religious moderation is very clear in the teachings on balance and justice in the Qur'an and Hadith.

Scientific phenomena found in the study of the text of the scriptures of the three Abrahamic religions, it was found that the teachings of religious moderation in these three religious traditions had a significant impact in shaping the attitudes and actions of their adherents (Suharto, B: 2021). For example, the teaching of social justice in the Jewish tradition has encouraged many Jewish communities to engage in a variety of social activities that support justice and the common good. The teachings of love and forgiveness in the Christian tradition have encouraged many Christian communities to engage in humanitarian and peace activities. Meanwhile, the teachings on balance and justice in the Islamic tradition have encouraged many Muslim communities to avoid extremism and strive to live in balance and harmony.

In addition, the study also found that the teachings of religious moderation in these three religious traditions can be a strong foundation for interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Commonality in basic values such as justice, humanity, and balance can be common ground that allows for constructive dialogue and cooperation that benefits all parties. In a global context full of interfaith tensions and conflicts, these findings demonstrate the importance of exploring and promoting the teachings of religious moderation in sacred texts as a basis for building peace and harmony between religious communities.

The findings of this study are in line with a number of related studies that emphasize the importance of religious moderation in building a harmonious and tolerant society. For example, research by Abu-Nimer (2016) suggests that religious moderation is key to tackling extremism and promoting peaceful coexistence (Abu-Nimer, 2016). In addition, a study by

Esposito and Voll (2018) also emphasizes that the teaching of moderation in Abrahamic religions can be a strong foundation for interfaith dialogue and cooperation on various social issues (Esposito & Voll, 2018).

In the Indonesian context, this research is also relevant to the efforts made by the government and various civil society organizations to promote religious moderation as part of a strategy to maintain interreligious harmony. For example, research by Wahid (2019) highlights the importance of religious moderation in the context of Indonesia which has high religious diversity (Wahid, 2019). The findings of this study can be an important contribution to the effort by showing that the teaching of religious moderation is already present in sacred texts and can be used as a reference for building harmony and tolerance.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the teaching of religious moderation is found in the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These teachings emphasize the importance of justice, humanity, and balance as basic values in religion. This similarity in the teachings of religious moderation shows that the three Abrahamic religions have a strong foundation for establishing dialogue and cooperation between religions. In a global context full of tensions and conflicts between religions, these teachings of religious moderation can be a strong basis for building peace and harmony between religious communities. This research also shows the relevance of religious moderation teachings in the context of Indonesia which has high religious diversity. These findings can be an important contribution in efforts to promote religious moderation as part of a strategy to maintain interreligious harmony in Indonesia.

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