

CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION VERSES ACCORDING TO ABDURRAHMAN WAHID

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Abstract: *Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) is recognized as the father of Indonesian tolerance because his ideas reflected wasatiyyah (moderate) Islamic values. His progressive approach aims to overcome socio-religious and national problems through contextual interpretation of the Qur'an and birth to a moderate thinking model that aligns with principles of tolerance, brotherhood, and nationalism. Research from the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta shows that a lack of external and internal empathy deficits for Muslims as the majority causes low tolerance. Therefore, it is essential to highlight Gus Dur's thoughts on religious moderation from his work Islamku, Islam Anda, and Islam Kita. Gus Dur views Islam as a unique experience that should be understood, not forced. Gus Dur distinguishes Islam Anda as an obligation to respect the beliefs and traditions held by a particular community. This research was carried out through a literature study using the content analysis method and Gus Dur's writings, especially my Islam, your Islam, our Islam. The aim is to revitalize the concept of religious moderation in the style of Gus Dur, who prefers to be called the father of humanity. The result shows Gus Dur's concept of religious moderation, including awareness of religious diversity, implementing the function of religion for the public good, adopting a nationalist orientation, emphasizing interreligious dialogue, and upholding the principles of justice professionalism, and tolerance.*

Keywords: *Abdurrahman Wahid, Contextual Interpretation, Religious Moderation.*

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Abstrak: Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) diakui sebagai bapak toleransi Indonesia karena gagasan pemikirannya tercermin nilai-nilai Islam *wasatiyyah* (moderat). Pemikiran progresifnya bertujuan untuk mengatasi masalah sosial-keagamaan dan kebangsaan melalui interpretasi kontekstual Al-Qur'an dan melahirkan model pemikiran moderat yang sejalan dengan prinsip-prinsip toleransi, persaudaraan, dan nasionalisme. Penelitian dari Pusat Studi Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta menunjukkan bahwa rendahnya toleransi disebabkan oleh kurangnya empati eksternal dan internal Muslim sebagai mayoritas. Oleh karena itu, sangat penting untuk menyoroti pemikiran Gus Dur tentang moderasi beragama dari karyanya *Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita*. Gus Dur memandang Islam sebagai pengalaman khas yang seharusnya dipahami bukan dipaksakan. Gus Dur membedakan *Islam Anda* sebagai kewajiban untuk menghormati keyakinan dan tradisi yang dipegang oleh komunitas tertentu. Sementara *Islam Kita*, masa depan bersama antara *Islamku* dan *Islam Anda*, serta menghindari klaim kebenaran tunggal. Penelitian ini, dilakukan melalui studi pustaka tulisan Gus Dur, terutama *Islamku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita*. Tujuannya untuk merevitalisasi konsep moderasi beragama ala Gus Dur yang lebih senang disebut bapak kemanusiaan. Hasilnya menunjukkan moderasi beragama Gus Dur, di antaranya kesadaran terhadap keragaman keagamaan, implementasi fungsi agama untuk kebaikan umum, mengadopsi orientasi nasionalis, menekankan dialog antar-agama, dan menjunjung prinsip-prinsip keadilan, profesionalisme, dan toleransi.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Abdurrahman Wahid, Interpretasi Kontekstual, Moderasi Beragama.*

Introduction

Indonesia is regarded as the cradle of humanity with its diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions. This diversity is something that needs to be handled with respect. In addition to the primary religion, Indonesia is also associated with local customs, language, and faith. Despite speaking a single language, Indonesian, different types of views, beliefs, and interests emerge in different situations leading to friction. From a religious perspective, diversity is seen as a tool used by God to create dynamics, teach, and understand human nature. This kind of failure is inevitable, and Indonesians must be vigilant about failures that are not just in religion; in every religion, there is also a lapse in faith-related teachings, particularly in religious practices and rituals that frequently result in a group of adherents with different religious beliefs. Therefore, solutions that can prevent extremes, intolerance, and acts of violence must be found.¹

Fathu Yasik, the Wakil Rektor of Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia (UNUSIA), stated that moderation is prevalent in Indonesia, particularly in terms of tolerance. As one of the main indicators of diversity moderation, tolerance is measured by attitude's ability to give others space and not undermine their right to engage in conversation. Yasik presents the results of the PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, which indicate that the lack of tolerance is caused by the Muslims' varying degrees of internal and external empathy toward minority groups. The impact of low tolerance includes a decline in state authority, a weakening of the national economy, and an increase in intolerance which can harm the nation's personality.²

1 Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 2–7.

2 Aru Legu Triono, "Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia Masih Rendah pada Aspek Toleran-

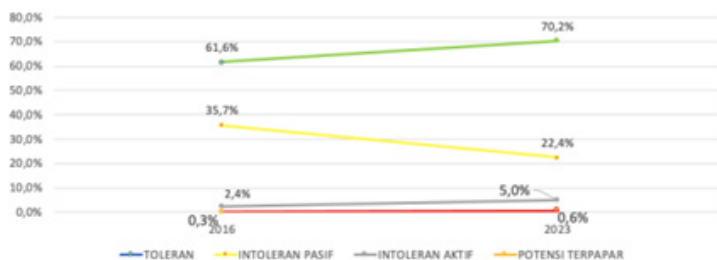


Figure 1 Graphic image of the institute’s equivalent tolerance survey

In his speech, BNPT RI, Rycko Amelza Dahniel stated that the COVID-19 pandemic and the advancement of IT technology were to blame for the increasing radicalization of the internet, including the phenomenon of lone-wolf terrorism. The Institute of Setara Studies is conducted among students in five major cities (Bandung, Bogor, Surakarta, Surabaya, and Padang). According to data collected in Indonesia between 2016 and 2023, student tolerance falls into three categories: passive, active, and even radical ideology. All of this indicates that there should be mutual respect and understanding. Because of this, digital literacy needs to be strengthened to counteract the negative effects of online radicalization, tolerance value needs to be taught, and sensitive areas need to be covered.³ The above Institute’s Graphic Study shows that roughly 70,2% of SMA students fall into the category of tolerance, and 22,4% fall into the category of passivity.

Abdurrahman Wahid is known as the father of tolerance in Indonesia, because of the *wasatiyyah* Islamic values in his thinking to overcome social, religious, and national challenges in Indonesia. His contextual ideas regarding Al-Qur’an verses, for example, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208, emphasized that Islam does not require the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia.⁴ Gus Dur also translated Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208 as “*Enter Islam/peace as a whole*,” which shows that Gus Dur also applies religious moderation in the translation or interpretation of the Al-Qur’an.⁵

His contribution to introducing religious moderation with universal Islamic principles remains relevant in responding to conflicts religious diversity and

si,” NU Online, accessed December 12, 2023 <https://webdisk.nu.or.id/nasional/moderasi-beragama-di-indonesia-masih-rendah-pada-aspek-toleransi-NRliV>.

3 Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, “Kepala BNPT RI: Indonesia Tidak Boleh Lengah Hadapi Gerakan Radikalisme di Bawah Permukaan,” BNPT, July 28, 2023, <https://www.bnpt.go.id/kepala-bnpt-ri-indonesia-tidak-boleh-lengah-hadapi-gerakan-radikalisme-di-bawah-permukaan>.

4 Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islamku Islam Anda Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Demokratis* (Jakarta: Democracy Project, 2011), 3.

5 Wahid, 148.

national challenges. Therefore, a study of Gus Dur's contextual interpretation of religious moderation verses, as in the title "Contextual Interpretation of Gus Dur's Version of Religious Moderation Verses," is important to study to build dialogue, looking for common ground, and realize the concept of *ummatan wasaṭan* as taught in the Koran.

Based on a literature review, the author found at least two journals and one thesis that discussed Gus Dur's contextual interpretation. However, of course, the results will still be different with the three. The author tries to discuss this title more comprehensively in terms of the contextual interpretation methodology proposed by Gus Dur than the three studies mentioned above. These three studies will at least provide an overview and complement for the author. The research includes, among others; the first was in the form of a journal, with the title Abdurrahman Wahid's Contextual Interpretation Model: Study of Al-Qur'an Verses about the Concept of Religious Moderation written by Wildah Nurul Islami.⁶

Second, it is in the form of a journal entitled Interpretation of the Al-Qur'an from Gus Dur's Perspective in the Book My Islam, Your Islam, Our Islam, written by Syafrî Fajarwanto.⁷ Finally, it took the form of a thesis with the title Contextual Tafsir Abdurrahman Wahid (A Study of the 9 Main Values of Gus Dur's Thought) written by Qathrun Nada.⁸ This paper methodologically uses the type of library research or qualitative research with a descriptive-analytic approach. The primary data source was taken from Gus Dur's works, especially those entitled My Islam, Your Islam, Our Islam. Meanwhile, secondary data sources come from books, journals, articles, and writings that are related to the research title. The author found that the difference between this research and previous research is seen in terms of the method of interpreting moderation verses. The second journal is more inclined to discuss justice verses that are relevant today

Religious Moderation and Its Significance

Religious moderation is a term that arises from combining two words, namely moderation and religion. One of the syllables comes from English borrowing, namely moderation. Meanwhile, the word religion comes from the word religion, which has the additional prefix *ber*. Religion itself has its origins in Sanskrit which means tradition. Etymologically, the word moderation has its origins in the Latin *moderatio*, which contains the concepts of simplicity, without excess, and balance.⁹

6 Wildah Nurul Islami, "Model Tafsir Kontekstual Abdurrahman Wahid: Telaah Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an Tentang Konsep Moderasi Beragama," *MAGHZA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 6, no. 2 (December 28, 2021): 273–93, <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v6i2.5041>.

7 Syafrî Fajarwanto, "Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Perspektif Gus Dur dalam Buku Islam Ku, Islam Anda, Islam Kita," *Syariati: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Hukum* 8, no. 2 (November 1, 2022): 175–88, <https://doi.org/10.32699/syariati.v8i2.4250>.

8 Qathrun Nada, "Tafsir Kontekstual KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Telaah 9 Nilai Pemikiran Utama Gus Dur)" (Skripsi, Jakarta, Institut Ilmu Al Quran (IIQ) Jakarta, 2020), <http://repository.iiq.ac.id/handle/123456789/1196>.

9 Oman Fathurrahman, "Moderasi Beragama," DetikNews, accessed December 11, 2023,

The word moderation has various meanings. In English, moderation comes from the word *moderation*, which is often used to refer to average, core, standard, or non-aligned. According to the *Oxford Lexico Dictionary*, moderation is defined as the quality of being moderate; restraint; avoidance of extremes or excesses; temperance (effort to be moderate; restraint; avoidance of extreme or excessive action; moderation).¹⁰

Apart from that, in the vocabulary.com English dictionary, the term moderation has several meanings. First, moderation refers to striving to be moderate and avoiding extremes (quality of being moderate and avoiding extremes). Second, moderation also refers to the trait of avoiding excesses. Third, moderation can be interpreted as the action of reducing severity or intensity (the action of reducing in severity or intensity); and fourth, moderation can be understood as a change for the better (a change for the better). In the *Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI)*, moderation is explained as an act of reducing violence and avoiding extremes.¹¹

Meanwhile, the concept of moderation is defined as the tendency to always stay away from extreme behavior or expressions, as well as favoring the middle dimension or path.¹² For example, when it is said that someone is moderate, this indicates that the person is showing reasonable behavior, not excessive, and not taking extreme paths. This definition emphasizes that the concept of moderation is the antithesis of extreme right attitudes which can lead to radicalism and extreme left attitudes which support liberalism.

From the perspective of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, moderation is defined as a middle way and as something that is best. This concept refers to the idea that the best is often in the middle, between two bad things. In this context, someone who has a moderate attitude is called a moderator, because of his role as a mediator who does not take sides with either party.¹³ Based on the description above, it can be concluded that moderation in the context of English and Indonesian, includes several meanings as follows: Simplicity, without excess, balance, avoiding extreme actions, avoiding violence, tending to the middle way, and something that is best.

In Arabic, the word moderation is interpreted as *al-wasatiyyah*. Etymologically, *al-wasatiyyah* comes from the word *wasat*, the perpetrator is called *wasith* which has the equivalent in Indonesian of the referee, which has three meanings, namely as 1) mediator or intermediary, as in trade or business, 2) mediator or separator

<https://news.detik.com/kolom/d-5305354/moderasi-beragama>.

¹⁰ "Moderation Definition & Usage Examples," Dictionary.com, accessed December 11, 2023, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/moderation>.

¹¹ "Moderasi," in *KBBI VI Daring* (Jakarta: Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016), <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/moderasi>.

¹² "Moderat," in *KBBI VI Daring* (Jakarta: Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016), <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/moderat>.

¹³ Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Tanya Jawab Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 1.

who defuses conflict. between disputing parties, and 3) the leader in a match.¹⁴ As an expression in Arabic, but according to Gus Dur it is the words of the Prophet.¹⁵

Kḥayrul umūri awsātuhā (the best thing is /problems are those in the middle), for example, a generous attitude is an attitude between stingy (*al-bakhīl*) and wasteful (*al-isrāf*), and courageous is an attitude between the cowardly (*al-jubn*) and reckless (*al-mutahawwir*).¹⁶

Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī (d. 502 H) interpreted *al-wasāṭiyyah* as encompassing the meaning of the middle between two boundaries in the sense of not tending too far to the right (*ifrāṭ*) or too far to the left (*tafrīt*) or justice (*al-‘adl*), as a standard or mediocre. The concept of *wasāṭan* also contains the meaning of guarding against being uncompromising, even leaving the line of religious truth. The word *al-wasāṭiyyah* has its roots in the words *al-wasṭ* (with the sin letter being *sukūn*) and *al-wasṭ* (with the sin letter being *fathḥ*), both of which are *maṣḍar* (infinitive) of the verb *wasāṭa*.¹⁷ The word *al-wasāṭiyyah* also has an equivalent meaning to the words *al-tawasuṭ* (middle), *al-i’tidāl* (fair), and *al-tawāzun* (balanced).¹⁸

Meanwhile, according to Iffati Zamimah, in the Qur’an the term *wasāṭa* is mentioned 5 times, namely: first, *shāra fī al-wasṭ* (moving to the middle of the line); The verse which describes horsemen charging into the middle of enemy lines to ravage them, uses the word *wasṭ*. This word is found in Surah Al-‘Adiyāt verse 5. Second, *‘adalu wa ‘aqālu* (fairer and more sensible); verses that use the words *awsātuhum* and *wuṣṭā*. This word is found in Surah Al-Qalam verse 28 and Al-Baqarah verse 238. Third, the verse that describes the appropriateness between extravagance and profligacy; uses the word *awsāṭ*. This word is found in Surah Al-Mā’idah verse 89. And fourth, the verse mentions the nature of virtue and justice; using the word *ummatan wasāṭan*. This word is found in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143.¹⁹

So, what is the significance of religious moderation? Or why is religious moderation important for the Indonesian people in particular? The Ministry of Religion once stated at the Diniyah Takmiliyah Education Quality Assurance System event in Jakarta that, according to former Minister of Religion Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (LHS), three tendencies give rise to the importance of religious moderation. First, religious practices that conflict with human values, where religion

14 Amru Almu’tasim, “Berkaca NU dan Muhammadiyah dalam Mewujudkan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Islam di Indonesia,” *Tarbiya Islamia: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keislaman* 8, no. 2 (August 25, 2019): 199–212.

15 Wahid, *Islamku Islam Anda Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Demokratis*, 116.

16 Jamal Makmur Asmani, “Tawassuth Kiai Sahal,” *Pesantren.ID* (blog), March 10, 2020, <https://pesantren.id/tawassuth-kiai-sahal-2176/>.

17 Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī, *Mu’jam Mufrodāt al-Fāz al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2004), 549–95.

18 Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama*, 16.

19 Iffaty Zamimah, “Moderatisme Islam dalam Konteks Keindonesiaan,” *Al-Fanar: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (August 31, 2018): 83, <https://doi.org/10.33511/alfanar.v1n1.75-90>.

should encourage inclusivity. Second, the emergence of interpretations of religious scriptures that are difficult to justify scientifically, leads to potentially misleading truth claims. Third, there is a visible way in which religion destroys national ties through the politicization of religion and the attitude of majoritarianism (the attitude of arrogance on the part of the majority who consider themselves able and entitled to do whatever they want towards the minority).²⁰

Chancellor of the Toraja State Christian Religion Institute (IAKN), Joni Tapingku. In his writing, he also said that the importance of religious moderation for the Indonesian people can be explained by several reasons. First, religious moderation upholds human values, considering that religious teachings should encourage inclusivity and maintain human dignity. Second, in the context of the growth and spread of humanity as well as changes in religious interpretations, religious moderation is needed to return religious practice to its essence, preventing the exploitation of religion for personal gain or politics, and avoid conflicts based on religion. Third, in Indonesia, religious moderation is a cultural strategy for caring for Indonesians, maintaining unity in diversity, and preventing the growth of extremism which can damage the Indonesian character of being polite, tolerant, and capable of dialogue with diversity. Religious moderation is therefore a common moral good that is relevant for individuals, communities, and institutions.²¹

Religious moderation is also important, because religion has a central role in the lives of Indonesian society, as reflected in Pancasila in the first principle, Belief in One Almighty God. More than 83% of Indonesians believe that religion is an important aspect of making Indonesia the most religious country in Asia Pacific. However, stereotypes about religion without awareness of diversity can give rise to fundamentalist segments that have the potential to create tension in society. Awareness of diversity, when combined with education, can produce tolerant societal collaboration. Therefore, carefully maintaining diversity is the key to harnessing the potential for unity and avoiding religious conflicts that could threaten peace in Indonesia.²²

The limits of a religious understanding and practice are said to be excessive (not moderate) if they violate three important aspects: first, human values; second, mutual agreement; and third, public order. This principle emphasizes that moderation in religion means achieving a balance between spiritual aspects related to God (*ḥablumminallāb*) and social benefits involving society (*ḥablumminannās*).

20 Moh Khoeron, "Ini Tiga Kecenderungan Penyebab Pentingnya Moderasi Beragama," <https://kemenag.go.id>, accessed December 11, 2023, <https://kemenag.go.id/moderasi-beragama/ini-tiga-kecenderungan-penyebab-pentingnya-moderasi-beragama-b7aprr>.

21 Joni Tapingku, "Opini: Moderasi Beragama Sebagai Perikat dan Pemersatu Bangsa," IAIN Parepare, September 15, 2021, <https://www.iainpare.ac.id/en/blog/opinion-5/opini-moderasi-beragama-sebagai-perekat-dan-pemersatu-bangsa-1079>.

22 Bob Marta, "Konflik Agama dan Krisis Intoleransi: Tantangan Atau Mimpi Buruk Keberagaman Indonesia?," *Pusat Studi Kemanusiaan dan Pembangunan* (blog), August 6, 2020, <http://www.pskp.or.id/2020/08/06/konflik-agama-dan-krisis-intoleransi-tantangan-atau-mimpi-buruk-keberagaman-indonesia/>.

In other words, religious moderation includes efforts to maintain harmony between spiritual observance and social welfare.²³

Abdurrahman Wahid and Contextual Interpretation

Abdurrahman Wahid, who is familiarly called Gus Dur, was born on 4 Sha'ban 1359 Hijriah or 7 September 1940 in Denanyar, Jombang, East Java. His full name is Abdurrahman ad-Dakhil which means the conqueror, taken from a pioneer of the Umayyads who established a milestone in the glory of Islam in Spain.²⁴ Gus Dur was the first son of KH. Wahid Hasyim was Indonesia's first Minister of Religion and the grandson of the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama, which is the largest organization in Indonesia, namely KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. Gus Dur is the incarnation of a great cleric, and his lineage extends back to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH via Maulana Ishaq.²⁵

His mother, Mrs. Sholehah is the daughter of the founder of the Denanyar Islamic boarding school Jombang, namely KH. Bisyrri Syamsuri was a key figure in the birth of NU.²⁶

Gus Dur actively studied and fought for the nation and state even though he came from a large ulama family. Gus Dur married Sinta Nuriyah on 11 July 1968, who was represented by his grandfather KH. Bisyrri Syamsuri because at that time Gus Dur was still in Egypt. The couple was blessed with four daughters, namely Alisa Qotrunnada, Zannuba Arifah Chafsoh, Anita Hayatunnufus, and Inayah Wulandari.²⁷

Gus Dur remained persistent in his struggle and devotion even though he had descendants of great scholars. Since childhood, Gus Dur studied religion from his grandfather KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, and at the age of five, Gus Dur was already fluent in reading the Koran. His education began at the Jakarta People's School (SR), but his family's experience of being involved in the war for independence brought Gus Dur to move to Jombang.²⁸

After his father died in 1953 due to a car accident in Bandung, at that time Gus Dur was 12 years, so that in 1954 by his mother, Gus Dur was transferred from junior high school in Jakarta to Yogyakarta Secondary School of Economics (SMEP) and finished in 1957.²⁹ Furthermore, Gus Dur continued his education at several Islamic boarding schools, including the Tegalrejo Islamic Boarding School, Magelang and Denanyar Jombang, Tambakberas Jombang, and Krapyak

23 Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Tanya Jawab Moderasi Beragama*, 8.

24 M. Hamid, *Jejak Sang Guru Bangsa* (Yogyakarta: Galang Pustaka, 2014), 4.

25 Mukhlis Syarkun, *Ensiklopedi Abdurrahman Wahid*, vol. 1. (Jakarta: PPKI, 2013), 2.

26 Greg Barton, *Biografi Gus Dur The Authorized Biography of Abdurrahman Wahid* (Yogyakarta: Saufa, 2016), 58.

27 Hamid, *Jejak Sang Guru Bangsa*, 19.

28 Ali Masykur Musa, *Pemikiran dan Sikap Politik Gus Dur* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2010), 5.

29 Musa, 52.

Yogyakarta.³⁰

In 1964—1966, Gus Dur continued his studies in Egypt (Al-Azhar University) and Iraq (University of Baghdad) 1966—1970 to study religion and Arabic literature and returned to Indonesia in 1971. Even though he was offered a doctorate from a university in Australia in 1979, Gus Dur still chose to focus on developing Islamic boarding schools and religious activities in his country. Water, study religion, and explore local Indonesian wisdom. His activities are not only limited to the world of Islamic boarding schools but also involve him in student organizations and writing for magazines. Gus Dur also continued to develop as an intellectual, religious, and social figure in Indonesia, devoting himself to building diversity and sustainability of religious traditions.³¹

As explained above, Gus Dur grew up in an Islamic boarding school environment, and his understanding of the Koran was ingrained from childhood. Despite reading the history of Gus Dur's biography written by Greg Barton, the author did not find Gus Dur's special work in the field of Al-Qur'an interpretation. However, when he was a teenager, Gus Dur began studying Arabic systematically and became interested in classical Arabic literature. Along with the growth and formation of his thinking, Gus Dur questioned the concept of religion in the context of state sustainability. Through a study of Islamic thought after World War II, such as the works of Sayyid Qutub, Ḥasan al-Bannā, 'Alī Sharī'atī, Sa'īd Ramaḍān, and others.³² Gus Dur realized that Islamism did not provide complete answers to social problems.³³

With courage and sincerity, Gus Dur began to formulate his ideas about moderate Islam, which emphasized the importance of connecting religious texts with social reality. Gus Dur views that Islam can provide answers to problems such as injustice, poverty, and oppression. His understanding of moderate Islam is reflected in the concept of interpretation from text to context/from sacred text to social reality (from religious texts to social reality/context).³⁴

Even though he believes that the Al-Qur'an and Hadith are a source of religious truth, Gus Dur also opened himself to the truths contained in other human cultural products.³⁵ This understanding is emphasized in the words of Ibn Rushd, *al-ḥaqqu lā yuḍādu al-ḥaqqi bal yuwāfiqubū wayashadu labu* (a truth will not contradict the truth, but be in line with it and become a witness).³⁶

Gus Dur not only spoke but also implemented the values of truth in real action. Through his religious lectures and writings, Gus Dur always offers actualization

30 Barton, *Biografi Gus Dur The Authorized Biography of Abdurrahman Wahid*, 51–53.

31 Hamid, *Jejak Sang Guru Bangsa*, 34–37.

32 Barton, *Biografi Gus Dur The Authorized Biography of Abdurrahman Wahid*, 99–100.

33 Barton, 100.

34 Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-nilai Indonesia & Transformasi Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2007), 27--31.

35 Barton, *Biografi Gus Dur The Authorized Biography of Abdurrahman Wahid*, 100.

36 Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad Amān bin 'Alī Jāmi 'Alī, *Al-'Aql wa al-Naql* Inḍā Ibn Rushd (Madinah: Al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah bi Madinah al-Munawwarah, 1978), 79.

of understanding of religious texts by considering the context of social life. With a living interpretation approach, Gus Dur succeeded in presenting an inclusive and contextual understanding of Islam.³⁷ In his other work, Gus Dur also provided views on interpretation, proposing ideas about how Islam should reconstruct an understanding of the interpretation process.³⁸

Abdurrahman Wahid's concept of contextual interpretation in the issue of religious moderation values. The steps he implemented were to bring up themes that were the focus of the problem (*mawdū'ī*), and then describe the social phenomena of religion and nationality in which these two dimensions were simultaneously studied in one theme by linking the verses of the Al-Qur'an. He examines the *lafāz* in a verse and analyzes its meaning in terms of language, bot etymology, and terminology, then determines the correct meaning when related to current conditions in Indonesia, sometimes also related to conditions in the Islamic world in general. His style pays attention to aspects of the *asbāb al-nuzūl* verse but not all themes are explained. Because the themes of his discussions are always related to social, Religious, and nationalism which are all in line with the concept of religious moderation, his interpretation style includes *ijtimā'ī*.

About contextual interpretation, Gus Dur has also asked the Indonesian Muslim community, especially religious scholars and teachers, to understand that medieval commentary books are not dogmatic and anti-renewal, and emphasized the importance of contextualization or developing discourse and understanding in interpreting Islamic texts which has been explained by ancient scholars. Gus Dur described an example of a popular interpretation of Surah Al-Kawthar, which threatens humans who only focus on increasing wealth and offspring. Gus Dur believes that this interpretation can be developed as a warning to politicians and rulers who only care about obtaining electoral votes without paying attention to the fate of the people after being elected. Gus Dur encouraged religious scholars and teachers to be open to scientific developments in Islam so that people can understand and assess the situation of society more honestly according to their scientific capacity.³⁹

From the results of previous research, as stated by Qathrun Nada the contextual interpretation carried out by Gus Dur can be included in the category of *bi al-ra'yi* interpretation, which uses the basis of linguistic analysis, rules of interpretation, and *uṣūl fiqh*. However, its consistency cannot be ascertained because Gus Dur never claimed to be an interpreter. In terms of method, the interpretation is thematic, starting from social problems which are then connected to the precise meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, although not in too much detail, both rationally and supra-rationally. Gus Dur's style of interpretation is *ijtimā'ī*, based on humanitarian and national issues. In several interpretations of verses, Gus Dur

37 Nada, "Tafsir Kontekstual KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Telaah 9 Nilai Pemikiran Utama Gus Dur)", 100."

38 Wahid, *Islamku Islam Anda Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Demokratis*, 10.

39 Syaifullah Amin, "Gus Dur: Perlu Kontekstualisasi Tafsir," NU Online, accessed December 12, 2023, <https://nu.or.id/warta/gus-dur-perlu-kontekstualisasi-tafsir-BB4gR>.

often auto-criticizes the understanding of Islamic texts which are often the subject of debate. The interpretation also contains several ideas as a form of contemplation, especially to resolve humanitarian and national problems. Gus Dur tends to use take in interpreting the verses of the Koran, which are formulated by the principles of moderate Sunni ideology.⁴⁰

Contextual interpretation explains the meaning of Al-Qur'an verses by considering grammar, the relationship between words in sentences, and the use of that language by society. This approach is adapted to the dimensions of space and time, covering various contexts such as language, time, place, and social culture. The contextual interpretation process focuses on two aspects, namely linguistic aspects and aspects of space and time, both when the text was created in a particular society or environment and in the present which is the context of space and time for the interpreter of the text.⁴¹

The contextual interpretation paradigm views the Al-Qur'an not only in terms of the outward meaning of the text but also involves the socio-historical context in which the verse was revealed. This interpretation focuses on the ethical aspects rather than the literal meaning of the Qur'an, paying attention to political, social, historical, cultural, and economic elements in understanding the text. In contrast to traditionalist interpretation which is theological, contextual interpretation is more sociological, axiological, and anthropological. The contextual religious understanding paradigm involves three main aspects: defense of the characteristics of the mission of Islamic messages, recognition of the noble values of each community environment that need to be preserved, and focus on the core Islamic teachings in the form of faith and morals which are implemented through the sharia. Contextual interpretation rejects all forms of coercion and violence in the Islamic struggle, prioritizing a peaceful, civilized, and sustainable approach by the principle of balance between change and continuity.⁴²

Contextual Interpretation of Abdurrahman Wahid's Religious Moderation

Gus Dur's work entitled *My Islam, Your Islam, and Our Islam* consists of seven discussion chapters, and there are many verses from the Koran in several subtitles that Gus Dur interpreted. The author then collected these verses from the Qur'an and read them. The author found several verses from the Qur'an that Gus Dur often used. In the author's findings, there are nine verses that Gus Dur often uses and interprets. The nine verses include:

40 Nada, "Tafsir Kontekstual KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Telaah 9 Nilai Pemikiran Utama Gus Dur)", 143.

41 Achmad Luqman Tsani, "Kontekstualisasi Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Tentang Memaafkan dalam Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab" (Skripsi, Kediri, IAIN Kediri, 2023): 16–17, <https://etheses.iainkediri.ac.id/9902/>.

42 Muhammad Hasbiyallah, "Paradigma Tafsir Kontekstual: Upaya Membumikan Nilai-Nilai Al-Qur'an," *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Al-Hadits* 12, no. 1 (August 30, 2018): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.24042/al-dzikra.v12i1.2924>.

1. Gus Dur's Contextual Tafsir of Surah Al-Baqarah 208 and 177

Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208 in five places. First, in the subtitle *Is There an Islamic System?* Gus Dur said that in the verse which means “*Enter into Islam (peace) in full*” there is a difference in interpretation between those who interpret the word *al-silmi* as Islam, which implies the necessity of a formal Islamic entity with an Islamic system, and those who interpret the word *al-silmi* as peace which refers to a universal entity without the necessity of a particular system, including the Islamic system. According to Gus Dur, those who translate the word *al-silmi* as Islam tend to support the existence of the Islamic system and Islamic political parties as representatives of the overall aspirations of Muslims in politics, and the democratic system certainly teaches to respect the existence of these political parties, but there is no obligation to follow him. However, this will cause non-Muslims to be considered second-class citizens, also impacting nominal Muslims (not fully practicing Islamic teachings) or abangan. Abangans will also be considered less Islamic than those who are active in parties, organizations, or groups that fully implement Islamic teachings known to the santri, so this difference is something worth questioning.⁴³

Next, Gus Dur asked a question which he answered himself with Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177. If the Islamic system is necessary, why is it that in the Al-Qur'an there are non-organizational provisions that must be implemented to be considered a devout Muslim? Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177 states the five conditions, including, accepting the principles of faith, implementing the pillars of Islam in their entirety, helping those who need help (relatives, orphans, the poor, and so on), upholding professionalism, and being patient when facing trials and tribulations. So, if a Muslim has fulfilled these five conditions, he does not need a systemic framework according to Islamic teachings (Islamic system) and is not included as a requirement to be called a devout Muslim. Then Gus Dur said that this was a very important point of difference, because many understandings had grown that did not prioritize the meaning of the system.⁴⁴

Gus Dur continues his interpretation, that if there is an Islamic country, of course, the system must be Islamic. However, when a citizen of a country with an Islamic system makes a mistake, in this case, a punishment will be imposed because, with an Islamic system, of course, it can be said whether the punishment will free him from the punishment of hell because he has been punished in a world/country with an Islamic system, or this case as a representative of Allah (in the name of Allah). This will result in a wrong concept in the relationship between religion and the state in the future. So, according to Gus Dur, to form a concept of the relationship between religion and the state, deep and clear thinking is needed not without thought or in this case rash (reckless) in voicing the necessity of an Islamic state, and this is what a Muslim must avoid.⁴⁵

43 Wahid, *Islamku Islam Anda Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Demokratis*, 3–4.

44 Wahid, 4–6.

45 Wahid, 7–8.

Second, in the subtitle Islam: Main and Details. According to him, those who advocate an Islamic state base their opinions on two words of Allah, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208 “*Enter Islam/peace as a whole*” and Al-Mā'idah verse 3 “*Today I have perfected your religion for you, I have completed it for you I grant you My blessings and I grant you Islam as a religion.*” However, they forget that Islam rejects the specialization of one group of people from other groups. This is found in Surah Al-Mu'minūn verse 53 and Surah Al-Anbiyā' verse 107. Is the Islamic system perfect as in Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3, and must be realized in a certain form of statehood? If yes, then that is an obligatory order from Allah through Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3. Those who disobey them must be punished and dealt with. It also includes the command in Surah Al-Anfāl verse 72 “*And strive for jihad with your possessions and yourselves/souls.*” So, where is the perfection of Islam? This needs to be understood with other commands or verses to achieve a rational and complete understanding, not based on emotion and irrationality. Other verses are Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256 “*There is no compulsion in religion, because it is clear what is straight and what is false*” and Al-Kafirūn verse 6 “*For you is your religion and for me is my religion.*” These two commandments or verses do not state that a particular institution must guarantee superiority over other religions, but rather leave it to human common sense to reach the truth.⁴⁶

So, this means that the perfection of the Islamic system as a religion does not depend on the power or authority of certain institutions but on the ability of the human mind to make its comparisons. Gus Dur then concluded that awareness of diversity (pluralistic) must be maintained, and it is not certain institutions such as the state that must be prioritized. This is by the mission of the Prophet PBUH to bring brotherhood among fellow human beings as related in Surah Āli 'Imrān verse 85 “*Whoever takes anything other than Islam as a religion, none of his (deeds) will be accepted and he will be included in the hereafter*” as a person who has lost” which confirms the rights of every people to feel right, even though Islam believes in its truth. After Gus Dur explained various problems regarding Islamic movements, he then stated that today's challenges are very big, and Surah Al-Ahzāb verse 21 “*Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah there is a good example for people who hope for Allah's pleasure, happiness in the afterlife, and always remembering the signs of Allah's greatness,*” is an important reminder for us to understand the meaning of environmental conservation and safeguarding our interests in the context of macro cases.⁴⁷

Third, in the subtitle Islam and National Orientation. Gus Dur also interpreted Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208 with a different interpretation, namely that the formalist group in Islam interpreted the verse “Enter into Islam as a whole” by interpreting the word *al-silmi* as Islam in the context of the system (Islamic system). However, this view only has a few followers, while the majority of Muslims, especially the ulama, understand Islam as protecting. This means that the Koran demands tolerance because the meaning of Islam is the protector of

⁴⁶ Wahid, 11–13.

⁴⁷ Wahid, 13–22.

everyone, including non-Muslims. This is by Surah Al-Anbiyā' verse 107 "We did not send you except as a mercy for the worlds." The words *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn* are interpreted by commentators as mankind, not all creatures in this world.⁴⁸

Fourth, Gus Dur interpreted verse 208 in the subtitle *Ulil and Liberalism*, that Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208 and Al-Mā'idah verse 3 stated as if the way for free thinking had been closed. However, what these two verses mean is the realization of the principles of truth in Islam, not details about the truth in Islam. Finally, fifth, in the subtitle *NU and the Islamic State (1)*. Gus Dur also interpreted it with a different interpretation. According to him, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208 "*Enter ye into Islam (peace) as a whole*" shows the obligation to apply the teachings of life which are unlimited, and which are perfected are Islamic principles. This means that Islam is appropriate to all places and times (*al-Islām yaslukhu likulli zamānin wa makānin*), in this case, related to the lack of necessity to establish an Islamic state (NI).⁴⁹

As for Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177, Gus Dur interpreted it in four places. First, as in the subtitle *Is There an Islamic System?* Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177 as loyalty to the profession. According to him, there is no promise more valuable than the promise to one's profession, which is conveyed when reading the pledge of allegiance when accepting a position. Second, Gus Dur interpreted the subtitle *Islam: A Social Teaching* with different interpretation results. The verse which means "*People who stick to their promises, when giving their allegiance,*" clearly shows professionalism. For example, people often prioritize professional promises when giving loyalty. Gus Dur combined this with Charles Torrey's observation that the holy book (Al-Qur'an) uses professional terminology to express the deepest things from the human heart. It was concluded that Islam gives high respect to the profession. However, this value has sometimes been lost in the lives of Muslims over the last few centuries due to giving too much attention to the authorities and political policies, while ignoring aspects of professionalism in people's lives.⁵⁰

Third, in the subtitle *Reinterpretation of Relative Truth*, Gus Dur uses Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177 as an example of reinterpretation. Before it was reinterpreted, the meaning was to carry out an oath of allegiance when making a promise, in this verse, it was considered a general promise, but after the reinterpretation, it gave a new meaning of upholding professionalism. Because the highest promise is when taking the oath of office, it means that Islam prioritizes professionalism. And finally, fourth, Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177 in the subtitle *Islam: Between Bureaucracy and the Free Market*. Gus Dur explained that the interpretation of this verse shows the importance of creating full professionalism in the civil service system with the translation "*Fulfilling their promises when taking the oath of allegiance to their position.*" With professionalism in the bureaucracy, it

48 Wahid, 76–77.

49 Wahid, 104.

50 Wahid, 129–30.

will help in making appropriate decisions, so that people can prosper.⁵¹

2. Gus Dur's Contextual Tafsir of Surah Al-Ḥujurāt Verse 13 and Āli 'Imrān Verse 103

The interpretation of Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13 was interpreted by Gus Dur in eight places and Surah Āli 'Imrān verse 103 in the same four places as Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13. First, in the subtitle Islam: Person and Society, Gus Dur explained, that the balance between individual and social factors in religion is often felt as a necessity. However, the complexity of the problem arises because the holy book Al-Qur'an does not separate its commands for individuals and society. It all depends on our ability to understand the holy book and determine which is individual and which is social. For example, Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13 "*And I made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other*" which is meant by all of humanity, and what is desired is an unwritten reality, namely brotherhood between fellow human beings.⁵²

After Gus Dur discussed the differences in the meaning of the Prophet's hadith, it became difficult to find clarity and agreement. Then Gus Dur explained that Islam respects differences of opinion because what is not allowed is conflict and division, and the holy book teaches this. This is confirmed in Surah Ali 'Imran verse 103 "*Hold on to the ropes of Allah completely, and do not be divided or conflict with each other*". Those differences of opinion are important, while disagreements and divisions are disastrous. Differences which are at the core of individual attitudes and views must be distinguished from contradictions and divisions, as a collective effort of society as a whole.⁵³

Second, in the subtitle NU and the Islamic State (1), Gus Dur interpreted the two verses with the interpretation that Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13 "*Indeed, I have created you from male and female and I have made you into nations and ethnic groups, so that you all get to know each other*" is proof of the concept of the existence of Ummah leadership which only applies specifically to the area concerned based on differences of opinion among Muslims. Surah Āli 'Imrān verse 103 "*Hold on (tightly) to the rope of Allah as a whole, and do not be divided or conflict with each other*" is the basis for the existence of differences of opinion among Muslims, even though it is forbidden to have divisions between them. Third, in the subtitle Islam and Women's Leadership. Gus Dur interpreted the verse "*Indeed, I created you as male and female*" as the basis that Islam considers men and women to be the same, while the differences between the two Societies and women are influenced by this understanding.⁵⁴

Fourth, in the next subtitle Islam and Inter-Religious Dialogue, Gus Dur interprets the verse "*Indeed, I have created you as male and female, and I have made you into nations and tribes so that you will know each other*" as indicating

51 Wahid, 198–99.

52 Wahid, 24–25.

53 Wahid, 27–28.

54 Wahid, 132–33.

that differences in views that always exist between men and women and between nations or ethnic groups. This is something that is recognized by Islam, while what is prohibited is division and separation.⁵⁵

Fifth, Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13 along with Āli ‘Imrān verse 103 in the subtitle Manners and *Ummatan Wāhidatan* with the interpretation as in the subtitle above. According to him, Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13 justifies differences of opinion among Muslims. However, Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 103 shows that what is prohibited is not differences in views but being divided against one another.⁵⁶

Sixth, in the subtitle of Arabization, Is the Same as Islamization there is only one verse, namely Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13. The meaning of this verse is that the adage “Different opinions from leaders are a blessing for the people” comes from the provisions of Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13. According to Gus Dur, both traditionalists and reformers in Islam should recognize the plurality accommodated by Islamic teachings.⁵⁷

Seventh, in the subtitle NU and Terrorism Under the Mask of Islam, Gus Dur said that Islam has its lifestyle which is it does not need to be maintained through violence, but rather developed through cultural forms. Islam also does not need protection from any threats because it can develop on its own, regardless of pressure from Western modernization. Muslims can choose or reject certain elements of the process according to their beliefs and values. Of course, the results will also vary from one person to another and from group to group, so there will be very high variations in these responses. This is by Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13, which orders diversity and prohibits exclusivity from any Muslim community.⁵⁸

Finally, eighth, in the subtitle Different but Not Contradictory, Gus Dur interprets both with the same interpretation as in the subtitle Manners and *Ummatan Wāhidatan*. The view that considers Islam as a way of life that is superior to other ways of life is natural and natural, because every individual considers the system to be the most correct. This is what is expressed in Surah Al-Ḥujurāt verse 13 which shows that differences in views are enriching and not something to be afraid of. However, what is prohibited is division, as in Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 103. Terrorists who act in the name of Islam reject differences of opinion and fight for division.⁵⁹

3. Gus Dur’s Contextual Tafsir of Surah Āli ‘Imrān Verse 85 and Al-Ḥajj Verse 40

Gus Dur interpreted Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 85 in four places and Al-Ḥajj verse 40 in five places. First, in the subtitle Islam: Main and Details, as in the author’s explanation above on the interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah verses 208 and 177.

55 Wahid, 136.

56 Wahid, 257–58.

57 Wahid, 267.

58 Wahid, 329.

59 Wahid, 376–77.

Gus Dur concludes that awareness of diversity (pluralistic) must be maintained, and it is not certain institutions such as the state that must be prioritized, and the mission of the Prophet PBUH to bring brotherhood among fellow humans as related in Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 85.⁶⁰

Second, in the subtitle of Islam: Ethical or Ideological Struggle? Gus Dur interpreted Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 85 through Charles Torrey’s dissertation which stated that the Qur’an uses worldly terms such as loss, profit, and harvest to convey very deep meanings in human beliefs, such as Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 85 “*In the afterlife, they will be the ones who lose (their business).*”⁶¹

Third, in the subtitle Islam and Inter-Religious Dialogue. Gus Dur interpreted Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 85 “*Whoever takes anything other than Islam as a religion, then his good deeds will not be accepted by Allah, and in the afterlife, he will be the one who loses his trade*” as interpreted by Torrey, by explaining that the verse This highlights the differences in beliefs between Islam and other religions without rejecting cooperation between Islam and other religions, in the sense of without rejecting the truth claims of religions.⁶²

And finally, fourth, the interpretation of Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 85 in the subtitle Wanted: Cultural Excellence. Gus Dur explained the verse “*And people who use something other than Islam as a religion, their deeds will not be accepted in the afterlife. And he is a person who loses*”. This shows that the deeds of Muslims who are sincere to their religion have more value in the view of Islam, and Allah will not accept the deeds of a non-Muslim. However, in everyday life, you should not look down on anyone’s work.⁶³

Furthermore, the interpretation of Surah Al-Ḥajj verse 40 is found in five places. First, in the subtitle Islam: Ethical or Ideological Struggle? Before Gus Dur interpreted Al-Ḥajj verse 40, he first interpreted Surah Al-Anbiyā’ verse 107, with the conclusion that this verse shows the main prophetic task, bringing brotherhood which is necessary to maintain human integrity and keep violence away from life. Then Gus Dur interpreted Al-Ḥajj verse 40 with the conclusion that Muslims were permitted to use violence only if their faith was threatened or expelled from their place of residence.⁶⁴

Second, in the subtitle Wanted: Cultural Excellence. Gus Dur interpreted this as saying that they (perpetrators of terrorism and radicalism) did not know the laws of *fiqh*. Then Gus Dur concluded that violence was permissible only if they were expelled from their residence (Muslims), apart from the reasons mentioned above, it was not permissible to use violence against anyone, even based on the superiority of Islamic views, basing it on Surah Al-Ḥajj verse 40.⁶⁵ Third, in the subtitle Sourced from Shallowing. Gus Dur explained that Islam does not condone

60 Wahid, 13.

61 Wahid, 113.

62 Wahid, 135–36.

63 Wahid, 285–86.

64 Wahid, 112–13.

65 Wahid, 284–85.

acts of violence and discrimination, even regarding the violence in Maluku, Poso, Aceh, and Sampit, as well as the bomb blast in Legian, Bali, because it means the murder of many innocent people. Then, Gus Dur mentioned Surah Al-Ḥajj verse 40 and said that the only individual acts of violence that were permissible were if Muslims were expelled from their homes.⁶⁶

Fourth, in the subtitle *Is Ba'asyir a Terrorist?* Gus Dur, through Surah Al-Ḥajj verse 40, concluded that there was no other reason to carry out acts of terrorism against foreign tourists who came to bring trade to the people they visited. If they violate the provisions of the *shari'a*, then they are not subject to Islamic criminal sanctions, because they are not people of Islamic law, and that only applies to Muslims, not to other religions.⁶⁷ Fifth, in the subtitle *Us and the Bombing of Iraq*. Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Ḥajj verse 40 to mean that Islam rejects the use of violence at will by anyone, and this can only be done by Muslims if they are expelled from their residence.⁶⁸

4. Gus Dur's Contextual Tafsir of Surah Al-Mā'idah Verse 3 and Al-Ḥasyr Verse 7

Gus Dur's interpretation of Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3 in four places and Al-Ḥasyr verse 7 in three places. First, Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3 in the subtitle *Islam: Basics and Details*. Starting with a question, is the Islamic system perfect and must be realized in a certain form of statehood? If yes, then that is an obligatory order from Allah through Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3. Those who disobey them must be punished and dealt with. The perfection of the Islamic system as a religion does not depend on the strength or authority of certain institutions but on the ability of the human mind to make its comparisons.⁶⁹

Second, in the subtitle *NU and the State (1)*. Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3 "Today I have perfected your religion, I have perfected for you (the gift of) My blessings and I have accepted Islam as a religion" that Islam does not establish a religious state, but talks about humanity as a whole, general, and does not have a coercive nature at all.⁷⁰ Third, in the subtitle *Ulil and his Liberalism*. According to Gus Dur, the meaning of Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3 is the realization of the principles of truth in Islam, not details about the truth in Islam.⁷¹ Fourth, in the subtitle *NU and Terrorism Under the Mask of Islam*. Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Mā'idah verse 3 to mean that Islam and Allah do not need defense because both can defend themselves against anyone's harassment.⁷²

The interpretation of Surah Al-Ḥasyr verse 7 includes: first, in the subtitle *Islam: A Social Teaching*. Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Ḥasyr verse 7 to mean

⁶⁶ Wahid, 319–20.

⁶⁷ Wahid, 342.

⁶⁸ Wahid, 400.

⁶⁹ Wahid, 11–12.

⁷⁰ Wahid, 104.

⁷¹ Wahid, 148.

⁷² Wahid, 330.

that Islam is not a political religion the portion of politics in Islamic teachings is very small, and it is directly related to the interests of lower-class people. This means that Islam prioritizes the function of helping the poor and suffering, but there is no special attention to the desired form of state.⁷³

Second, in the subtitle Islam: Ethical or Ideological Struggle? Gus Dur interpreted Al-Ḥasyr verse 7 through textual evidence that the word *dawlah* in the verse is not a state, but its meaning is rotating or circulating. It means “*So that the accumulated wealth does not circulate/circulate only among the rich people in your environment.*” Therefore, this paragraph shows the country’s economic system, not the form of the country. Islam does not attach importance to the concept of the state and does not attach importance to the form of the state.⁷⁴ Third, in the subtitle Islam and Social Justice. Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Ḥasyr verse 7 with the conclusion that Islam pays attention to the just structure of society by defending the fate of the poor/weak.⁷⁵

5. Gus Dur’s Contextual Interpretation of Surah Al-Anbiyā’ Verse 107

The interpretation of Surah Al-Anbiyā’ verse 107 can be found in three places. First, in the subtitle Islam: Main and Details. Gus Dur interpreted Surah Al-Anbiyā’ verse 107 as Islam’s rejection of the specialization of a group of people from other groups and based it on Surah Al-Mu’minūn verse 45 and Surah Al-Anbiyā’ verse 107.⁷⁶

Second, in the subtitle Islam and National Orientation. Gus Dur stated that the Koran asks those who believe in it to be tolerant because Islam is a religion that protects everyone, including non-Muslims. And by Surah Al-Anbiyā’ verse 107 “*I have not sent you except as a link to the ties of brotherhood with fellow human beings*” which ends with the word *‘ālamīn*, this word is interpreted by the interpreters as only human beings and not all creatures in the world.⁷⁷

Third, in the subtitle Islam: Ethical or Ideological Struggle? Gus Dur said that the Prophet PBUH sent for the mandate of brotherhood. The verse uses the word *rahmah* from the meaning of the mother’s womb, meaning all are brothers. The word *‘ālamīn* also means humans, not all creatures. So, it is appropriate that the main task of prophethood is to bring brotherhood to maintain human integrity and away from acts of violence.⁷⁸

Abdurrahman Wahid’s Version of the Concept of Religious Moderation

Based on Gus Dur’s interpretation of the nine verses of the Qur’an above, the author finds the

This concept was applied by Gus Dur to his interpretation regarding religious

73 Wahid, 331–32.

74 Wahid, 113.

75 Wahid, 186.

76 Wahid, 11.

77 Wahid, 77.

78 Wahid, 122.

moderation, through contextual interpretation of the 9 verses that Gus Dur often used in his work *My Islam, Your Islam, Our Islam*. The concept of religious moderation includes:

1. Gus Dur's religious moderation, emphasizes the importance of recognizing differences in views as a blessing for the Ummah (*ikhṭilāfu ummatī raḥmah*).
2. Gus Dur's religious moderation, emphasizes a more inclusive interpretation of verses and universal Islamic values.
3. Gus Dur's religious moderation, emphasizes the rejection of arbitrary violence, rejection of division and conflict between communities, rejection of approaches that prioritize formal Islamic systems, rejection of the religious state in Islam, rejection of the specialization of certain human groups, and discrimination.
4. Gus Dur's religious moderation, emphasizes the importance of maintaining brotherhood among fellow humans. Gus Dur's religious moderation, emphasizes human values, social justice, professionalism, and practicing tolerance within the framework of Islamic ethics.

Conclusion

Gus Dur a charismatic figure and father of tolerance in Indonesia has made a significant contribution through a religious moderation approach in overcoming religious and national challenges. His transformative thinking tries to solve socio-religious and national problems based on the text of the Koran contextually. His contextual interpretation gives rise to a model of moderate thinking that is in line with the principles of tolerance, brotherhood, and nationalism. The concept of religious moderation that he promotes is reflected in the contextual interpretation of the al-Qur'an which teaches the values of tolerance, inclusiveness, and peace in religious practice.

Gus Dur also emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between spiritual aspects and social benefit, creating harmony between obedience to God and the welfare of society. Through this approach, Gus Dur tried to build an Indonesian society that was peaceful, inclusive, and integrated with human values in everyday religious life. Therefore, the values of religious moderation introduced by Gus Dur remain an important foundation in maintaining harmony and peace in Indonesia, a country valued for its diversity and tolerance.

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