

# Javanese Interpretation of Moderatism: Contribution of Tafsir Al-Ibri>z on Moderate Understanding in Sharia and Mu'amalah

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**Submission date:** 28-Apr-2023 04:38PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 2078113275

**File name:** justicia\_ibriz\_zainal\_published.pdf (327.14K)

**Word count:** 8947

**Character count:** 48219

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JAVANESE INTERPRETATION OF  
MODERATISM: CONTRIBUTION OF TAFSIR AL-IBRIZ  
ON MODERATE UNDERSTANDING IN SHARIA AND  
MU'AMALAH

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**Abstract:** Recently, some Muslims tend to stay in an extreme position related to their religion. They consider the scriptures as textual-exclusive source of religious teachings which then results in radical understanding of Islam. Meanwhile, others understand Islam contextually and free which cause the emergence of liberal Islam. Most of the two behave excessively in applying religion related to sharia and mu'amalah. In between the two, a group having moderate view of Islam appears with Bisri Mustofa, a Javanese interpreter whose thought could be found in Tafsir al-Ibriz, as its figure. This research utilizes descriptive-analytical method looking more on al-Qur'an understanding in sharia dan mu'amalah. This writing suggests that: 1) Bisri Mustofa has moderate thought in his interpretation of Qur'anic messages with fair, middle, balanced, and tolerant characteristics 2) Bisri Mustofa's moderate thought of sharia could be reflected in some aspects in performing five prayers, dhikir, and pray, and reciting al-Qur'an, tashbih, and tahlil. 3) Bisri Mustofa's moderate thought of mu'amalah is reflected in the ethics of visiting, working, and economic management.

**Keywords:** Moderation, Tafsir al-Ibriz, Sharia, Mu'amalah

## Introduction

Allah has created everything in the universe in pairs, for either those have known or not by human (Qs. Yāsīn: 36). In their creation, for instance, humans consist of elements which basic parts are physic and soul. The first is visible while the latter is not. In addition to this example, there are many more pairs that could be found in the universe. This confirms that the '*tawhīd*' (one) only is Allah the Almighty.

Nevertheless, none of Allah's creation is identical to another. This should never be an issue for human but as a great blessing given by Allah, since pair creation could create a balance. Such sophisticated

system has been planned and set by Allah that life in the universe is running properly. Therefore, the wheel of life continues to spin as we witness today.

Life in the earth, however, could be in a mess if the system is ruined. Thus, humans as its keepers (*khalīfah*) are required to maintain the balance by acting fairly and avoid exaggeration. The balance is always needed in human life, including religion. Humans (particularly Muslims) have been created as *ummataṅ wasaṅatan* (Qs. al-Baqarah: 143).

Qur'anic interpreters have different opinions on the term *al-wasaṅatan*. In *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, Ibnu Katsir contended that *al-wasaṅatan* means the best choice. It refers to the Prophet who came from Quraisy tribe which was the best tribe for its descendant compared to other Arabic tribes. Furthermore, Ibnu Katsir stated that Allah regards Muslims as *ummataṅ wasaṅatan* as a distinctiveness and having perfect sharia, the right path, and the clearest understanding.<sup>1</sup>

A contemporary Indonesian interpreter, M. Quraish Shihab,<sup>2</sup> defined *ummataṅ wasaṅatan* as 'midst people'. In logic, to be able to be visible from all directions, one must be in the middle position. This position can be seen from any angle and does not hold an extreme position for either right or left one.<sup>3</sup> Even though al-Qur'an has taught humans to rely on the Prophet's behaviour completely, yet some still leaves it. They may fail to remember the midline set by al-Qur'an and the Messenger. Some Muslims may behave 'exaggeratedly' that they are not in the middle and moderate.

Mohd Sukhri Hanapi cited opinions of several interpreters on the meaning of *wasaṅatan* such as al-Tabari, al-Mahalli, and al-Suyuti who defined it as 'selected people, the best people, and the just people'. Meanwhile, Ibnu Kathir translated it as the best people, humble, and the just people. Al-Qurtubi, al-Zamakhsari and al-Nasafi described it as the fair and the best people. Sayyid Quthb interpreted it as good, humble, and moderate people who do not behave extremely to one of worldly or spiritual issues.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, Juz I, (Ttp: Dār al-Ṭayyibah: 1999), h. 454.

<sup>2</sup> M. Quraish Shihab is an Indonesian interpreter who is categorized as a moderate interpreter. One of his moderate interpretations is dealing with *jihād*. See Thoriqul Aziz & Ahmad Zainal Abidin, "Tafsir Moderat Konsep Jihād dalam Perspektif M Quraish Shihab", in *Jurnal Kontemplasi*, Vol. 5, No. 2, December 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Achlis Hanafi, et. all, *Tafsīr al-Maudhū'ī: Moderasi Islam*, (Jakarta: LPMQ, 2012), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Mohd Shukri Hanapi, "The Wasatiyyah (Moderation) Concept in Islamic Epistemology: A Case of Its Implementation in Malaysia", in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 4, No. 9 (1), July 2014, p. 53.

Nowadays, Islamic moderation has been an interesting talk for Muslim or Western thinkers. This trending topic appears as a result of intolerant acts committed by radicals. Thus, some Western thinkers intensify Islamic moderation as an effort to tame the understanding. However, Islamic moderation carried by the West is different from Muslims'. The West thinkers lead to secularization and liberalization projects. This is considered as the way to destroy Islam.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, Islam moderation by Muslims is regarded as the main feature of Islamic teachings based on Quranic values.

As the main feature of Islamic teaching, this thought had existed with the coming of Islam. Islam moderation is a religious thought with audiences coming from diverse culture. In moderation, Islam could merge into audience and community intricacies from diverse ethnicity and tribe without altering the religious basis. Hence, Islam moderation character could be interpreted in accordance to its people.<sup>6</sup> Take an example of Islam in Indonesia. The particular teaching of Islam can blend with the previous religious tradition due to the intersections and encounters that influence and even enrich each other. Sultan Buton of Southeast Sulawesi still acknowledged Hindu caste system in accordance with the culture. The teachings of *wali songo* carried and spread in Java could acculturate between Islamic teachings and Javanese culture or previous customs, traditions, and beliefs. A concrete example is the shape of Kudus mosque tower which was recognized as the masterpiece of Sunan Kudus. The building reflects the acculturation of Islamic-Hindu culture.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Islam is one, but there are thousand ways and expressions to adhere to Islam. It is not to mention the *wayang* culture with all tools which can combine Islamic teachings and Javanese culture.

Here, it can be understood that Islam moderation is not a new thought. According to Muslim thinkers, this thought appeared despite its function as main teaching of Islam, also in its development, since a strong conflict occurred between two groups in Islam, such as "Right Islam" dan "Left Islam" thoughts.<sup>8</sup> In the history of Islam, some Muslims tended to stay in any of two extreme positions. In

<sup>5</sup> Abd Rauf Muhammad Amin, "Prinsip dan Fenomena Moderasi Islam dalam Tradisi Hukum Islam", in *al-Qalam*, Vol. 20, special edition of December 2014, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Darlis, "Mengusung Moderasi Islam di Tengah Masyarakat Multikultural", in *Rausyan Fikr*, Vol. 13, No. 2, December 2017, p. 231.

<sup>7</sup> Mutawalli, "Moderate Islam in Lombok: The Dialectic Between Islam and Local Culture", in *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 10, No. 2, December 2016, p. 317.

<sup>8</sup> Mutawalli, "Moderate Islam in Lombok.", pp. 311-312.

understanding al-Qur'an, for instance, some Muslims relied on texts that their understanding looked exclusive and close. This led to radical understanding of Islam. Meanwhile, others ignored the text and this led to freedom in understanding and resulted in liberal schools of Islam. Such text understanding has implications for other behaviors reflected in the practice of Islamic teachings relating to sharia and *mu'amalah*.

11 From this reality, a group of moderate Muslims appeared. Moderate Islam could be understood as middle position thought between two extreme poles inherited from al-Qur'an values and Prophet's traditions. This thought is not too strict or flexible. Due to its position in the middle of two positions, it could be considered a better choice. For their followers, Islam moderation should be spread and echoed. Efforts were promoted to Muslims by giving thorough insight into the nature of Islam. Another way to inflame Islam moderation is by interpreting<sup>27</sup> al-Qur'an moderately. It is based on the fact that interpretation in the initial step to understand the messages of al-Qur'an.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Islamic scholars are competing to interpret al-Qur'an to be life guidance according to the reality that surrounds it.

One of moderate interpreters in Nusantara is KH. Bisri Mustofa. He is a *kiai*, pesantren founder, politician, and also interpreter. He wrote an interpretation book entitled *al-Ibriz li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*. This work is written using Arabic writing but Javanese words or known as Arabic *pegon* which could be the sign of Arabic and Javanese acculturation. Bisri Mustofa is a moderate interpreter that can be recognized from his special characters in the way he interpreted Qur'anic verses.

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### A Glance of Bisri Mustofa and Tafsiral-Ibri>z

Bisri Mustofa was born in Sawahan village, Palen, Rembang Central Java. In this research, the writer could not obtain detail data on Bisri Mustofa's birth date. The year of his birth is known before Indonesian independence in around 1915. He was a charismatic *kiai* who founded pesantren Raudatut Thalibin of Rembang, Central Java (which is now cared for by his son, Mustofa Bisri/Gus Mus). In his childhood, he was known as Mashadi. Yet, after returning from the

<sup>9</sup> The word *tafsir* is from etymology of a linguist Ahmad Ibn Faris in his work *al-Maqāyisfi al-Lughah*<sup>6</sup> as cited by Quraish Shihab, that any words containing *fa-sin-ra'* mean openness and clarity. M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir; Syarat, Ketentuan, dan Aturan yang Patut Anda Ketahui dalam Memahami Ayat-ayat al-Qur'an*. (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2015), p. 9.

holy land, his parents, H. Zainal Mustofa and Chodijah in 1923 changed his name Bisri Mustofa at the age of 8.<sup>10</sup>

As a child, Bisri was lazy to study at pesantren. But, later, he finally realized and returned to the 'right path'. He recited and deepened the religious sciences and learnt from Kiai Kholil who cared for Pesantren Kasingan Rembang who later became his father in law. In this pesantren, Bisri learnt and studied knowledge benefited for his future.<sup>11</sup>

Not only in Pesantren Kasingan, Bisri also studied in Tebuireng boarding school of Jombang cared by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. Bisri was eager to learn more knowledge that in 1936 on his 21 he decided to go to Mecca. This city was famous as the center of knowledge by most Islamic scholars in Nusantara. In 19th century, many scholars migrated to the Middle East for this purpose. In addition to Bisri, some other Indonesian interpreters who wrote interpretation in Javanese and who also studied in Mecca were K.H. Saleh Darat, K.H. Raden Adnan, and K.H. Moenawar Chalil.<sup>12</sup>

In Mecca, young Bisri learnt *tafsir*, hadist, and *fiqh* for two years. Some of his teachers came from Indonesia, including KH. Bakir from Yogyakarta, who taught *Lubāb al-Uṣūl* by Syaikh al-Islam Abi Yahya al-Zarkasyi, and *Umdāt al-Abrār* by Muhammad bin Ayyub, and *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* written by a Mu'tazilite scholar, Imam Zamakhsari. Others were Syaikh Umar Khamdan teaching him hadist book of *ṣaḥīḥain*, Syaikh 'Ali Maliki teaching *himal-Ashbah wa al-Naḍāir* by Imam al-Suyuthi and *al-Hajaj al-Qushairi* by al-Naisaburi, Sayyid Amin teaching him *Alfiyah Ibn 'Aqil* by Ibnu Malik, Syaikh Hasan Masysyath teaching him *Manḥaj Dzawi al-Naḍar* by a Nusantara scholar named Syaikh Mahfudz Tirmasi, Sayyid Alwi al-Maliki teaching *Tafsīr Jalālain* by al-Mahalli and al-Suyuthi.<sup>13</sup> These books of *tafsir* seem to influence his interpretation works.<sup>14</sup>

Returning home from Mecca, Bisri Mustafa was married to the daughter of Kiai Kholil, Ma'rufah. From this marriage Bisri was blessed with eight children: Cholil, Mustofa, Adieb, Faridah, Najicah,

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<sup>10</sup>Fejrian Yazdajird Iwanebel, "Corak Mistik dalam Penafsiran Kh. Mustofa Bisri (Telaah Analitis Tafsir Al-Ibriz)", in *Jurnal Rasail*, Vol. 1, No. 1 of 2014, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>Iwanebel, "Corak Mistik..", p. 25.

<sup>12</sup>Gah Gusmian, "Al-Qur'an Bahasa Jawa: Peneguhan Identitas, Ideologi, dan Politik", in *Jurnal Sastra*, Vol. 9, No. 1 June 2016, p. 145.

<sup>13</sup>Maslukhin, "Kosmologi Budaya Jawa dalam *Tafsīr al-Ibriz*", in *Mutawātir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadis*, Vol. 5, No. 1, June 2015, p. 78.

<sup>14</sup>Iwanebel, "Corak Mistik..", pp. 25-26.

Labib, Nihayah, dan Atikah. Bisri experienced an unfavorable life due to Indonesian social and political instability. He experienced the Japanese colonial period, the beginning of independence and also the heartbreaking events of G/30-S.PKI.<sup>15</sup>

After the death of his father-in-law, Bisri Mustofa taught at Kasingan Rembang Islamic boarding school. The Pesantren was destroyed by Japanese ruler. Bisri was a firm and tenacious man which then he moved and founded a pesantren at Leteh, Rembang named Pesantren Raudatut Thalibin. He was a highly dedicated person, despite being busy in his family he used to try not to miss teaching.<sup>16</sup>

Bisri Mustofa, according to KH Cholil Bisri, wrote about 176 books.<sup>17</sup> One of his monumental works is *al-Ibriz li Ma'rifati Tafsiir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*. In his preface, Bisri Mustofa stated that this work is a translation of al-Qur'an. Nevertheless, Bisri Mustofa frequently gave other information as indicated by *tanbihun, faidatun, muhimmaturun*, and soon. He had reasons for writing his interpretation in Javanese with Arab *pegon* scripts. According to Izzul Fahmi's observation, Bisri Mustofa had conducted hermeneutics activities. *First*, Bisri Mustofa had translated the "sky-high" language of al-Qur'an by lowering it using the "earth language". *Second*, Bisri Mustofa had understood his surrounding context with different place and time.<sup>18</sup> With this hermeneutics activity, Bisri Mustofa "had succeeded in conveying God's messages to humans.

This interpretation features *gandul* (hanging) translation. The use of *gandul* translation is related closely to pesantren tradition. It is proven by Muhammad Asif's research which concludes that such interpretation characteristic is not possessed by other interpretations in Bahasa Indonesia or Arabic. This asserts the way traditional Muslims maintaining their tradition. This "pesantren featured" interpretation could be seen from its writing format using *gandul* translation, in *pegon* letters, and hierarchical language usage.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Izzul Fahmi, "Lokalitas Kitab Tafsir al-Ibriz Karya KH. Bisri Mustofa", in *ISLAMIKA INSIDE: Jurnal Keislaman dan Humaniora*, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 2017, p. 106.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Asif, "Tafsir dan Tradisi Pesantren: Karakteristik Tafsir *al-Ibriz* karya Bisri Mustofa", in *Suhuf*, Vol. 9, No. 2, December 2016, p. 262.

This interpretation was written for about nine years from 1951 AD to 1960 AD.<sup>20</sup> However, according to Mrs. Ma'rifah as written by Abu Rokhmad, the writing of *Tafsiral-Ibriz* was completed at the birth of his youngest daughter (Atikah) in 1964.<sup>21</sup>

This book is printed in three editions, first is per section edition in 30 volumes, second is three volumes edition written in Arabic *pegon*<sup>22</sup>, and the newest edition in one large volume. The book owned by the writer here is the newest edition in one large edition with complete thirty sections published in 2015 by Menara Kudus publisher using Roman characters in Latin Javanese copied according to the original book (Arabic *pegon*).

In this interpretation, in interpreting the Qur'anic verses, Bisri Mustofa quoted from *mu'tabar* interpretations, such as *Tafsir Jalalain*, *Tafsir al-Baidawi*, *Tafsir al-Khazin*, and others. Before being printed and disseminated to the wider community, this interpretation had been *tashih* by Islamic scholars including: KH. Arwani Amin of Kudus, KH. Hisyam of Kudus, and KH. Sya'roni Achmadi of Kudus.<sup>23</sup> This book has very simple characteristics in explaining the meaning of al-Qur'an. There is no dominant approach and style of interpretation because it combines various forms of interpretations. Meanwhile, its genre is categorized as traditional and *ma'thur*.<sup>24</sup> This book is still now being studied in many *pesantren*, *madrasah diniyah*, and *majlis tabligh* in various regions.

### Moderation in Tafsir Al-Ibriz

The word moderation derives from English which means moderate or not extreme attitudes. Meanwhile, in Arabic it is called *wasatiyah* or *wasat* which basic meaning is "every good thing related to its object". Someone who has *wasat* character is called *wasit*. This term has been absorbed in Bahasa Indonesia with the following meanings: 1) mediator (for instance in business trading, etc.), 2) separator, (arbiter, peace maker) between the disputants, and 3) leaders in the competition.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*, (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 2015), dalam pamflet, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>Abu Rokhmad, "Telaah Karakteristik Tafsir Arab Pegon Al-Ibriz", in *Analisa*, Vol. XVIII, No. 01, January-June, 2011, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup>Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia: Dari Hermeneutika Sampai Ideologi*, (Yogyakarta: LKis, 2013), p. 53.

<sup>23</sup>See preface of *tafsir al-Ibriz*

<sup>24</sup>Abu Rokhmad, "Telaah Karakteristik ..", p. 37.

<sup>25</sup>Muchlis Hanafi, et. all *Tafsir al-Maudhu'i: Moderasi Islam*, p. 5.



In al-Qur'an, the term *wasat* from its various derivation is mentioned five times, including Qs. al-Baqarah: 143, 238, Qs. al-Māidah: 89, Qs. al-Qalam: 28, Qs. al-'Ādiyāt: 5.<sup>26</sup> The term moderation refers to its basic form in English and in other languages, for example in Bahasa Indonesia it refers to normal and not deviant behaviour. Another term in al-Qur'an beside *wasat*, which meaning is related to moderation is *'adl, mizān*.<sup>27</sup>

Moderate interpretation is found in *Tafsiral-Ibrīz*. For readability reason, the writer divides this article into three: 1) basic principles of Islam moderation, 2) moderation in sharia, and 3) moderation in *mu'amalah*.

### **Justice as Islam Moderation Principle**

Moderation in Islam has three basic principles, such as justice (*'adālah*), balanced (*tawāzun*), and tolerance (*tasāmuh*). One basic principle in *Tafsir al-Ibrīz* is justice (*'adālah*). Bisri Mustofa highly upheld justice values in his interpretation. Muslims have to fight to uphold justice, since the injustice is really detested by Islam. This could be recognized when he interpreted Qs. al-Ḥadīd: 25, and the interpretation is as follows:

*"(Tambihun) Ayat nomer 25 iki anggone nutur wesi sawuse nutur kitab lan keadilan. Iki isyarat supoyo umat Islam kejobo nyiar-nyiarake agomo Islam lan nekaaken keadilan, ugo kudu toto, siap-siap kekuatan, rupo alat-alat kang digawe saking wesi. Sebab keadilan iku sejatine ora biso dilakokake tanpo kekuatan. Kejobo ayat iki ugo aweh isyarat yen sejatine kang diparingi wesi iku umat Islam, perlune kanggo negaake agamane Allah Ta'ala. Dene wesi-wesi banjur digunaake deneng wong-wong kafir kanggo numpes lan nindes agomo Islam. Iku salahe wong ora bener. Wallāhu a'lam"*<sup>28</sup>

In the interpretation above, Bisri Mustofa explained 25th verse of surah al-Ḥadīd. He argued that after Allah revealed the holy book and justice then it was accompanied by sending the iron. Why iron? Due to its strength and it could also be materials for weapon to protect oneself from their enemy. This could also be a sign that Muslims must always promote justice. In addition to promotion, it must also be upheld even

<sup>26</sup>Muhammad Fu'ad Abdal-Bāqiy, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrās li Alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. (Kairo: Dār al-Hadits, 1424 H), p. 750.

<sup>27</sup>Muchlis Hanafi, et. all, *Tafsir al-Mau'ū'ī: Moderasi Islam*, h. 7-8. The word *mizān* comes from 23 derivations in al-Qur'an, including: Qs. al-A'rāf: 8, Qs. al-Rahmān: 7, 8, 9, Qs. al-Ḥadīd: 25, etc. Lihat Abdal-Bāqiy, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrās*, p. 750.

<sup>28</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibrīz*, p. 548.

though with weapons. This is the reason, according to Bisri Mustofa, why Allah sent iron to human, particularly to Muslims.<sup>29</sup>

Justice (*'adālah*) derives from the word *'adl* (just) as a noun which does not only refer to this term, another term also becomes a patron, it is called *qisṭ*. The word *'adl* derives from root *'a-d-l* in al-Qur'an from which derivation is mentioned 29 times.<sup>30</sup> The word *'adl* originally means 'equal'. The existence of two parties or more could be inferred from this word, and 'equality' would never be there with only one party. It could be concluded then that the position of *'adl* is in between two parties.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, the term *qisṭ* formed from root *q-s-t* with its various derivation is repeated 25 times.<sup>32</sup> The basic meaning of this word is (nature and proper) 'part'. It may not lead to 'equity' since one part could be obtained by only one party. Therefore, the word *qisṭ* is more general than *'adl*, and also when al-Quran demands someone to be fair for themselves, the word *qisṭ* is employed.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, according to Dawam Raharjo, the definition of justice is not limited only to *'adl* and *qisṭ*. In the *Ensiklopedi al-Qur'an*, some words indicate broader meaning of justice, including *aḥkām*, *qawām*, *amtsāl*, *iqtashada*, *shadaqa*, *shidiq*, or *barr*.<sup>34</sup>

From several basic meanings of 'justice' above, to affirm his moderation position, Bisri Mustofa chose "not exaggerating in everything" definition. This could be found from one of his interpretations of Qs. al-Aḥzāb: 56.<sup>35</sup> From this verse, Bisri Mustofa indicated that he did not want to reduce or exaggerate in giving a tribute, likewise his interpretation of other verses. Therefore, it can be concluded that moderation principle is Islamic teaching basis applied by Bisri Mustofa in his interpretation.

<sup>29</sup>In line with Quraish Shihab, dealing with this verse Quraish Shihab share Bisri Mustofa's opinion. He argued that justice must be upheld anywhere anytime, even if with a violence as one of its ways: "Justice must be upheld wherever, whenever, for whoever. Even with assertive action. One verse of Al-Quran pairs "scale" (justice measuring tool) with "iron" which is used as weapon. It indicates that violence could be one way to uphold the justice. See Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an*, p. 118. See *Tafsir al-Mishbāh: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, Vol. 14, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), p. 56.

<sup>30</sup>Abdal-Bāqiy, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrās*, pp. 448-449.

<sup>31</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an: Tafsir Tematik atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat*, Cet. 13. (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), p. 111.

<sup>32</sup>Abdal-Bāqiy, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrās*, pp. 544-545.

<sup>33</sup>Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an*, p. 111.

<sup>34</sup>Dawam Raharjo, *Ensiklopedi Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Sosial Berdasarkan Konsep-Konsep Kunci*, Eds. 2, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2002), p. 373.

<sup>35</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p. 426.

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Furthermore, the characteristic of moderation in Islam is promoting tolerance. Tolerance in al-Qur'an could refer to the term—in religiosity cases for instance - *Laa ikrāh* (no coercion, as in Qs. al-Baqarah: 256).<sup>36</sup>This verse is evidence and a platform of tolerance in classical discussion (*locus classicus*) in the history of early Islam.<sup>37</sup>Not only for interfaith, tolerance must be carried out in all matters relating to the rights of others. In *al-Ibrīz*, tolerant characteristic appears in several interpretations, including the interpretation of Qs al-A'rāf: 206. In this verse, Bisri Mustofa contended that one should not recite al-Qur'an in too low voice that their own ears could not hear it nor too loud,<sup>38</sup> which can disturb others. His moderate attitude is clear here.

### Moderation in Sharia

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"Sharia" original meaning is "a path toward water"; water is one of the most important elements in life. Every creature on earth needs water, including humans. Human need in water even not for their physic only, but also for their soul. Human soul needs "water of life". This is the role of sharia to take humans toward the water source of life.<sup>39</sup>Muslims believe that Allah always sends His messengers on earth with their own sharia and as the guidance for them: (Qs. al-Māidah: 48). From this verse, it shows that Allah's apostles for earlier people had been given sharia as their life guidance. Their sharia is different from one brought by Prophet Muhammad pbuh for his people. Previous sharia is burdensome. Bisri Mustofa also believed it in one of his verse interpretation of Qs. al-A'rāf: 157.<sup>40</sup>In this interpretation, he explained the sharia for bani Isra'il. He exemplified allowed and forbidden cases of the time, including the prohibition of eating lamb, beef, and their fats. In addition, in the sharia of Prophet Moses, part of body or clothes exposed to excrement must be cut. This should certainly be a troublesome.

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<sup>36</sup>Yohanan Friedmann, "Tolerance and Coercion", Ed. James Dammen Mc Auliffe, *Encyclopaedia of The Qur'an*, Vol. 5, Brill Leiden-Boston, 2006, p. 290.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 291-292.

<sup>38</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibrīz*, p. 176.

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<sup>39</sup>M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an: Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Masyarakat*. (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), p. 40. Meanwhile, according to H. M. Amin Syukur, sharia as any determination given by Allah to human through His messengers, either related to the application of amal (action) *furū'iyah* (18) (inch) stated in *fiqh* or dealing with main belief written in *ushuluddin* (basic religion). H. M Amin Syukur, *Pengantar Studi Islam*, (Semarang: Pustaka Nuun, 2010), p. 85.

<sup>40</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibrīz*, p. 170.

In contrast to the previous sharia, Islamic sharia brought by the Prophet pbuh is not at all onerous. Only ignorant people consider it difficult. There are three basic principles in Islamic sharia: 1) the absence of difficulty (تقليل التكاليف); 2) reduce the burden (عدم الحرج); 3) gradual law determination (التدرج في التشريع).<sup>41</sup> Since it has been regulated by Allah, sharia should never burden and encumber as stated in the interpretation above.

Sharia is divided into two, broad and narrow sense of sharia. In broad sense, it includes *akidah*, *akhlaq*, and *amaliah* with all aspects of Islamic doctrines and practices. Meanwhile, in narrow sense, sharia only encompasses *amaliah* practices or worships. It is the main discussion of this paper. Bisri Mustofa's moderate interpretation in sharia could be found in some points as follows:

### 1. Performing prayers

In *al-Ibriz*, a moderate interpretation is found about prayers.<sup>42</sup> The interpretation is in Qs. Tāhā: 2, as follows:

“(tambīhun): ” *sakdurunge ayat iki temurun, kanjeng Nabi. Mempeng anggenipun ngibadah. Sak wengi-wengi ora sare. Sak wengi-wengi sembahyang terus. Bareng ayat iki temurun tindake kanjeng nabi banjur di owahi*”<sup>43</sup>

In interpreting this verse, Bisri Mustofa utilized one method of understanding al-Qur'an by revealing *asbāb al-nuzūl*. According to al-Zarqani, in *Manāhi al-'Irfān*, *asbāb al-nuzūl* means an event occurred at the Prophet pbuh era or a question asked to him, then one or several verses were revealed from Allah to explain cases related to the verses, or to answer the questions.<sup>44</sup> The verse says: “*wenever reveal al-Qur'an for you to burden*” (Qs. Tāhā: 2). The verse, according to Bisri Mustofa, is dealing with the Prophet's behaviour who previously performed night prayers without sleeping every night. After the revelation of this verse,

<sup>41</sup>Muchlis Hanafi, et. al, *Tafsīr al-Maudhū'ī: Moderasi Islam*, p.105.

<sup>42</sup>The word *shalat*, according to Jawwad 'ali, derives from Aramaic in *shad-lam-alif* (*shala*) syllables, which mean bow down. Meanwhile, some orientalist assumed that the word *shalat* was not recognized when Islam came, but their opinion is weak since it was not supported with strong arguments. See Jawwad 'Ali, *Sejarah Shalat: Asal-usul, Bilangan dan Kedudukan Shalat dalam Islam*, transl. Irwan Masduki, Eds. 2, (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2013), p. 3.

<sup>43</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p. 312.

<sup>44</sup>Muhammad 'Abdul 'Adzim al-Zarqani, *Manāhi al-'Irfān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, transl. H. M. Qadirun Nur Ahmad Musyafiq, (Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama, 2002), pp. 111-112.

the Prophet pbuh changed his tradition. This event is equal to what is stated by al-Wahidi in his *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*.<sup>45</sup>

According to 'Abd al-Baqi, the word '*shalat* (prayer)' and its derivations are stated 98 times.<sup>46</sup>The frequency of the word *shalat* appearance in al-Qur'an indicates its importance. A face to face dialogue between two parties, human and God, occurs in prayers. All Islamic schools of thoughts agree that Muslims must perform five times prayers a day. In addition to these obligatory prayers, some prayers are recommended. According to Bisri Mustofa, Muslims are required to perform prayers in the predetermined portion. Bisri Mustofa chose moderate way, as shown that the Prophet's previous choice was too extreme that he never slept at night for praying. Allah regarded it as poor actions as the Prophet pbuh did not consider his physical benefit. As a human, Prophet pbuh also needed sufficient rest. Both Prophet and Muslims have to care on this issue to create a harmony. Therefore, in performing prayers, we should be moderate as stated by Bisri Mustofa in his interpretation.

## 2. *Dhikir*

*Dhikir* means 'to remember'. Bisri Mustofa in his interpretation also suggested Muslims to always remember Allah. It is stated in the interpretation of Qs.al-A'rāf: 205-206.<sup>47</sup>In this verse interpretation, Bisri Mustofa described various kinds of *dhikir*, including reciting al-Qur'an, praying, reciting *tashbīh* and *tahlīl*, and others. In Muslim society, these activities are applied after each prayer at *mushola* or mosques. A tradition carried out from generation to generation is reciting *dhikir* loudly. Such way of *dzikir* is criticized by Bisri Mustofa. In his interpretation, Bisri Mustofa quoted a verse related to this in Qs.al-A'rāf: 205-206. Bisri Mustofa quoted: *walā tajhar bisalātika walā tukhāfit bihā, al-ayat.*" *siro ojo banterake doa iro, lan ojo nyamarake doa iro nganti kupinge dhewe ora krungu*". From this interpretation, Bisri Mustofa suggested that a Muslim should not recite *dhikir* too loudly or too faint to be heard by our own ears. Thus, Bisri Mustofa chose a moderate way in reciting *dhikir*.

Sayyid Bakri al-Makki categorized *dhikir* into two, visible *dhikir* (*zikir jahr*) and silent *dhikir* (*zikir khafi*). The first is done by moving the

<sup>45</sup>Al-Wahidi al-Naisaburi, *Asbab al-Nuzul: Sebab-sebab Turunnya al-Qur'an*, transl. Moh. Syamsi, (Sura 2 ya: Amelia, 2014), pp. 476-477.

<sup>46</sup>Abdal-Baqiy, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrās*, pp. 412-414.

<sup>47</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p176.

lips and it can clearly be seen that they are reciting *dhikir*. Meanwhile, the latter is performed without moving the lips so that no one knows whether they are reciting *dhikir* or not.<sup>48</sup>

Regardless its distinctive application, *dhikir* should bring positive impact for those who recite it; one benefit is curing the inner illness. When Mustofa al-Maraghi interpreted Qs. Yunus: 57, for instance, concluded four functions of *dhikir* with al-Qur'an, including a) as good advice, as a means of giving pleasure and warning; b) as a cure for any inner illness, such as *nifak* and *syirik* c) as the right guidance and to avoid misguidance in trust and charity; d) al-Qur'an is as a mercy for those who believe.<sup>49</sup>

Continuing the above interpretation, Bisri Mustofa confirmed his moderate position in interpreting Qs. al-Isrā': 109-111:

*"(tambihun): ...Miturut Sayyidatina 'Aisyah 'ṣolātika' iku dongo. Dadi dongo iku banter nemen-nemen ora bagus. Alon-alon nemen-nemen sehinggo awake dhewe ora krungu, iyo ora bagus"*<sup>50</sup>

In this interpretation, Bisri Mustofa cited from Siti Aisha's narration. *Dhikir* which means pray is not good to be recited too deafeningly or too faintly or could not be heard at all. Thus, Bisri Mustofa moderate attitude on worships is evidently found here.

### 3. Do'a (pray)

Furthermore, the moderate interpretation of *al-Ibriz* appears in the discussion on *do'a* (pray). Allah says: "And your Lord says: "Pray to me, I will Kuperkenankan bagimu." (Qs. Ghafir: 60). In this verse, Allah encourages everyone to pray. According to Imam al-Tabari, *do'a* is also considered as worship,<sup>51</sup> thus people who try without praying are called as arrogant, whereas those who pray without trying are called as liars. Therefore, both must walk hand in hand so that a Muslim could succeed in gaining what they need.<sup>52</sup> Such moderate attitude also applies in understanding several verses related to prayer: Qs. 'Ali Imrān: 38,

<sup>48</sup> Mahjuddin, *Akhlaq Tasawuf I: Mukjizat Nabi Karomah Wali dan Ma'rifah Sufi*, Eds. 2, (Jakarta: Kalam Mulia, 2011), p. 209.

<sup>49</sup> Ahmad bin Mustofa al-Maraghi, *Tafsir al-Marāghī*, Section 11, (Ttp: Mustafā al-Bāb al-Halabī, 1946), pp. 122-123.

<sup>50</sup> Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p. 293.

<sup>51</sup> Ibnu Jarir al-Tabari, *Jāmi al-Bayān fi Ta'wīl Aiy al-Qur'ān*, Section 21, *Tahqiq Muhammad Syakr*, (Ttp: Muasisah al-Risālah, 2000), p. 407.

<sup>52</sup> Abdur Rahman, *Sufi Modern: Kombinasi dan Landingisasi Gagasan Sufi*, (Yogyakarta: Divo Nusantara, 2016), p. 144.

Qs. al-Zumar: 8, Qs. al-Dukhān: 22, Qs. Yusuf: 108,<sup>53</sup> and others like Qs. al-A'rāf: 206,<sup>54</sup> Qs. al-Isrā': 109-111.<sup>55</sup> It is stated that pray should not be too loud nor too faint. As written in al-Qur'an, praying should be in a soft voice (Qs. al-A'rāf: 55). Al-Tabari interpreted the word *khufyahin* the verse as concentration.<sup>56</sup>

Likewise, in understanding Qs. al-Aḥzāb: 56, Bisri Mustofa contended that in the context of praying for the prophets, apostles, and saints, praying could not be overstated or reduced.<sup>57</sup> Besides, ethics in praying must be based on patience and fortitude. According to Bisri Mustofa, people who rely only on pray are poor; similarly patience without praying is also not good. This is stated in the interpretation of Qs. al-Baqarah: 153:

*"...Gumantung marang dongo sarasan tonpo kesabaran, ora prayogo. Semono ugo ngendel-ngendelake ketabahan sarasan tanpo eling nyuwun pitulung saking pengeran, ugo ora prayogo."*<sup>58</sup>

Bisri Mustofa' moderate interpretation is also noticed above. Hence, this religion is truly teaches moderate attitude in any fields, including patience and endurance in praying.

#### 4. Reciting al-Qur'an

Other moderate interpretation related to al-Qur'an recitation is stated in Qs. al-A'rāf: 206,

*"(fāidah) dawuh wadkur iki umum sawernane dzikir. Koyo moco al-Qur'an, doa, moco tasbeh, tahlil lan sepadhane. Mulo diperintahake kudualon-alon, jalaran alon-alon iku biso murugake ikhlas lan fikir-fikir tegese opo kang diwoco..."*<sup>59</sup>

In this interpretation, Bisri Mustofa includes al-Qur'an recitation into *dhikir*. The procedure of reciting al-Qur'an is the same as reciting other *dhikir*, slowy and not in a hurry to gain sincerity. Al-Qur'an also recommends Muslims to recite it in *tarfil* (Qs. al-Muzzammil: 4). Fakhr al-Din al-Razi explains the meaning of *tarfil* is as clear and concise

<sup>53</sup>Abdal-Bāqiy, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahrās.*, p. 257.

<sup>54</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz.*, p. 176.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>56</sup>al-Tabari, *Jāmi al-Bayān.* Section 12, p. 485.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 426.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p.176.

recitation on the letters and sentences to assist the understanding on the meaning of al-Qur'an.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to above, related interpretation on moderate al-Qur'an recitation in Qs. al-Isrā': 109-111:

“(tambihun): ‘walā tajhar bisolātika’. Dhawuh ‘bisolātika’ iki ulama-ulama suloyo miturut sahabat Ibnu ‘Abbas shalat iki tafsirane moco al-Qur’an. Kolo iku Nabi Muhammad ora oleh banter-banter moco al-Qur’an mundak krungu wong-wong kafir, banjur dadi sebabe wong-wong kafir misuhi al-Qur’an lan Allah Ta’ala. Rehning zaman sak iki mbanterake al-Qur’an iku ora dilarang asal ora taswisy....”<sup>61</sup>

Moderate interpretation point of Bisri Mustofa in this explanation is similar to the previous one, moderate attitude in *dhikir* and *do'a*.

##### 5. Reciting *tashbīh* and *tahlil*

According to Bisri Mustofa, one form of *dhikir* is reciting *tashbīh*. *Tashbīh* is *kalimah tayyibah* which is *subhānallah* (Allah The Holy). The interpretation on reciting *tashbīh* in Tafsir *al-Ibriz* is stated in Qs.al-A'rāf: 206, as follows:

“(faidah) dawuh wadhkur iki umum sawernane dzikir. Koyo moco al-Qur’an, doa, moco tasbeh, tahlil lan sepadhane. Mulo diperintahake kudualon-alon, jalaran alon-alon iku biso murugake ikhlas lan fikir-fikir tegese opo kang diwoco...”<sup>62</sup>

Similar to the previous discussion, moderate ethicis also applicaple in reciting *tashbīh* together with other people at *mushola* or mosque. Bisri Mustofa criticized those who recite it loudly. The right way to recite *tashbīh*, is not too loud nor too faint that could not be heard by their own ears.<sup>63</sup>

The tendency to choose moderate methods is also evident from Bisri Mustofa's interpretation on reciting *tahlil*. *Tahlil* is oneness sentence, *lā ilāha illallāh*. It is also included as *dhikir* and it has a great value and considered as the most important sentence. Anyone could choose any procedure to recite *tahlil*, yet they should never disturb others. This is in line with Bisri Mustofa's interpretation on Qs.al-A'rāf: 206 above.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, moderation point of *al-Ibriz* on praying,

<sup>60</sup> Fakhruddin al-Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghaib*, Eds. 3, Section 1, (Beirut: Dār al-Ihya' al-Turāts al-'Arabi, 1420 H), p. 69.

<sup>61</sup> Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p. 293.

<sup>62</sup> Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p. 176.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



performing prayers, and reciting al-Qur'an, *tashbūh*, *tahlīl*, and other *dhikir* is obvious.

### Moderation in *Mu'amalah*

One area of Islamic teachings is *mu'amalah* (interaction) either between people and Allah (*ḥablun minallah*), among people (*ḥablun minannas*) in Islam, or between people and nature (*ḥablun min al-'alam*). Islam not only teaches moderate principle in *aqidah* and sharia, but also *mu'amalah*. This could be understood, for example, from the words *al-dunyā* (الدنيا) and *al-akhirah* (الآخرة) which are stated 115 times in al-Qur'an; also the word *al-ṣalāt* (الصلاة) almost always beriringan with *al-zakāt* (الزكاة). In applying *mu'amalah*, we should do well to anyone: parents, relatives, near or far neighbors, etc (Qs. al-Nisā': 37). In *al-Ibrīz*, the aspect of *mu'amalah* is also highlighted. In this interpretation, Bisri Mustofa explained several aspects as follows:

#### 1. The Ethic of visiting

Human is a social creature who interact and need each other. Thus, everyone must behave properly to others, including neighbors, family or others. Regulation toward other people is called ethic. Islam has well managed any part of life for human benefits. Such relationship must be well maintained. Allah clearly confirms this command in Qs. al-Nisā': 1. At the same time, Muslims are encouraged to do well to parents, close relatives, and near and far neighbors (Qs. al-Nisā': 36).

In *al-Ibrīz*, one important *mu'amalah* is the ethic of visiting. This ethic is related to the interpretation of Qs. an-Nūr: 27-28. In this verse, the most essential ethic of visiting is to ask for permission to the host or land lord and say *salam* before entering the house. Without permission, they have to leave the house. Related to this verse Bisri Mustofa interpreted:

"...masalah: ono ing ayat iki nyebut nyuwun izin lan uluk salam. Opo nyuwun izin disik nuli salam? Opo salam disik nuli nyuwun izin? Ulama podho suloyo: saweneh Qoul kang izin disik saweneh Qoul kang uluk salam disik. Ono maneh kang al-Fakir condong iyo iku di tafshil, yen sajak katon kemliwere wong, prayogo uluk salam disik. Yen ora katon kemliwere wong prayogo izin disik.."<sup>65</sup>

In the above interpretation, Bisri Mustofa discussed issues appeared in the verse, which are asking permission and say *salam*. According to Bisri Mustofa, Muslim scholars had different opinion whether they

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.,p.352.

have to ask for permission first then say *salam* or the opposite order. He argued that an alternative could be taken in accordance with the context. When many people are around, then it is better to say *salam* first before asking permission; however, if there no one other than the host in the house, asking permission should be the first before saying *salam*.

From his opinion, Bisri Mustofa chose a moderate opinion by looking at the circumstance or context. He took middle position between two opinions. Thus, Bisri Mustofa had carried out the basic principles of moderation in Islam, particularly in *mua'malah* which is the principle of justice.

## 2. Working and seeking for sustenance

To stay alive, one must be able to fulfil the need of their family and dependents. They should work. Working in the dictionary is from verb work which means doing something or anything to seek for sustenance. Meanwhile, worker is the person who does the work. Work is also the object the worker does for living.<sup>66</sup>

In Tafsir *al-Ibriz*, Bisri mustofa emphasized on the urgency of working by encouraging people to seek sustenance and fulfil their life needs. This is stated in the interpretation of Qs. al-Qaṣaṣ: 73,

“(fāidah): *wong ono ing alam donyo iki butuh ikhtiar lan nyambut gawe, perlu kanggo nyukupi kebutuhane urip, umume nyambut gawe iku kepenak ono ing wektu padhang utowo rino. Mulo Allah Ta’ala sangking welase, nitahake rino, rehning wong nyambut gawe lan ikhtiar iku ono sayaha, mulo banjur mbutuhake ngaso, istirahat, kepenake istirahat iku ing wektu peteng utowo ing wektu bengi. Biso ugo wong iku istirahat ing wektu rino nanging mengkono iku ora umum.*”<sup>67</sup>

In the interpretation of this verse, Bisri Mustofa explained that someone could make a living at a time determined by Allah. Allah has created bright day (*wektu padhang utowo rino*) for human to work. After working, someone could be tired and for this Allah has created dark night (*wektu peteng utowo ing wektu bengi*) for a rest. The timing is certainly in accordance with the common sense that day is time to work and night to rest. Nevertheless, there is no reason to prohibit working at night for certain condition.

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<sup>66</sup>Muchlis Hanafi, et. al, *Tafsir al-Maudhū'i: Kerja dan Ketenagakerjaan*, (Jakarta: LPMQ, 2012), pp. 28-29.

<sup>67</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p.394.

Bisri Mustofa's moderate understanding could be noticed here where some people work at either day or night ignoring their health, worship, or other duties. Meanwhile, others just laze around, without any job or other effort. Their life only relies on compassion from others. Both conditions are considered poor as there should be wisely balance between working and worshipping and between daytime and night as exemplified by the Prophet pbuh; since his childhood, the Prophet worked with his uncle. He also herded goats, and did other works. The Prophet worked but also took a break for performing prayers and doing other activities. In addition, he disliked lazy people.

Other than that, the ways how people work also get attention from the religion that is in *halal* (permitted) ways. The religion further provides instructions and details of forbidden businesses in its *dhātiyah* and *ṣifatiyah*. Besides, people are required to hold the principle of mutual pleasure and do not each other. This is mentioned in Qs. al-Baqarah: 173, 175, Qs. al-Nahl: 115, Qs. al-Māidah: 1, 95,96.<sup>68</sup>

### 3. Economic management

Another aspect of *mumalahin* Tafsir *al-Ibriz* moderatism is economic management, as interpreted in Qs. al-Syūrā: 19:

"(fāidah) ...komunisme dhewe karep masyarakat dunyo iki supoyo biso sama rata sama rata. Ora keno ono wong suguh, ora keno ono wong mewah, kosok baline kapitalisme. coro kapitalisme, suguh oleh, mewah oleh, malah dianjurake supoyo masyarakat dunyo iki, dadi sugih kabeh, mewah kabeh, saronu berlomba-lomba, cepet dapet, lambat mlarat, nyambut gawe kang giyat, hasile kanggo enak lan kepenak dhewe. Coro Islam bedo karo kang kasebut ono ing ngarep mau. Coro Islam, mewah keno nanging ojo lacut. Sugih keno, nanging kudu zakat, kudu shodaqoh, kudu infaq, kudu ngamal jariyah, kudu tulung lan sepodone. Motore songo likor keno, nanging kudu di zakati..<sup>69</sup>

From above interpretation, Bisri Mustofa described alternative balance in life, particularly for those related to property ownership. Allah has created universe for humans. All are in pairs including the rich and the poor. A balance from 'this pair' (rich and poor) is connection and dependence: the poor needs the rich and vice versa. The poor needs the rich for job and wages. Even, the rich could not do their work without the assistance from the poor. Then, a close

<sup>68</sup>Muchlis Hanafi, et. al, *Tafsir al-Maudhū'i: Kerja dan Ketenagakerjaan*, p. 65.

<sup>69</sup>Bisri Mustofa, *al-Ibriz*, p.491.

and unseparable relationships established between the two as a great balance gift. In economic matters, Bisri Mustofa tended to be moderate as being taught by Islam. There are two extreme and opposing economic systems in the world, communism and capitalism. Communism promotes equity in the world, there should be no richest and no poorest. Meanwhile, capitalism encourages people to compete working for all to be successful and rich. So, there would be no poor and neglected. If any, there is no obligation to provide assistance even for an ethical purpose.

The two are very extreme. Communism wants people to be the same, no rich and no poor. This could break world balance and it is proven that now this thought has become extinct in the world. Meanwhile, capitalism wants all people to be rich and lavish that no paupers are around. Such thought becomes a trend and held by most countries in the West. Similar to communism, capitalism would abolish the balance predetermined by the Universe Ruler and it is proven now that this thought is in destruction.<sup>70</sup> Here, Bisri Mustofa chose to be moderate as being taught by Islam. Islamic teachings do not prohibit Muslims to be rich, but they have to do charity through *zakat* and *infaq* for those who need it.

In Islam (read: al-Qur'an), this economic system is called "*rizq*". In al-Qur'an this word with its word formation or *tashrif*, is mentioned 112 times in 41 surahs.<sup>71</sup> The writer considers the importance of economic system in this world, since, as stated by Dawam Raharjo, economy is the most important aspect in current social change and thought.<sup>72</sup>

From the description above, it is evident that Bisri Mustofa was classified as a moderate interpreter emphasizing on moderateism. This could be due to his past where he learnt from KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of one Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama'. KH. Hasyim was a moderate scholar, which can be traced from his work *Risalah Ahlu al-Sunah wa al-Jama'ah*.<sup>73</sup> This relationship of teacher and learner could more or less shape Bisri Mustofa's character and paradigm.

In addition, Bisri Mustofa defended and was also involved in NU organization.<sup>74</sup> NU is the largest Islamic organization in the world which is based on *Ahlu al-Sunah wa al-Jama'ah (aswaja)*. The teachings

<sup>70</sup>Muchlis Hanafi, et. al, *Tafsir al-Maudhu'i: Moderasi Islam...*, p.189.

<sup>71</sup>Dawam Raharjo, *Ensiklopedi Al-Qur'an.*, p. 578.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 574.

<sup>73</sup>See Hasyim Asy'ari, *Risalah Ahlu al-Sunah wa al-Jama'ah*, (Jombang: Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami, tt).

<sup>74</sup>Iwanabel, "Corak Mistik.." pp. 26-27.

of this organization are moderate. Moderation must be applied in any field including theology (*kalam*), *tasawuf* (Sufism), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *akhlaq* (morality), relationship among groups, states and the other.<sup>75</sup>

The coming of NU (beside Muhammadiyah) with moderate understanding is highly expected in Indonesia. Such understanding puts forward Islam with wisdom, central, friendly, tolerant, and rejects any forms of violence. With this diversity, polite, friendly, and tolerant texts can be interpreted. Thus, religious orientation would not stuck on 'to have religion', but 'to be religious'.<sup>76</sup> The moderation of NU could also be found in the research done by Ahmad Najib Burhani,<sup>77</sup> and Masdar Hilmy.<sup>78</sup>

According to Gus Dur, *Ahlu al-Sunah wa al-Jama'ah (aswaja)* thought must be taught from the early age, since it can develop one's character, physic or non-physic. This thought could adapt with local, regional, or even global context. By possessing *aswaja*, Islamic ideology can be acculturated with Indonesian context. In other words, this thought can contribute on maintaining stability between culture and religion.<sup>79</sup> With its moderation, NU teachings could be accepted by Indonesian society. Therefore, Bisri Mustofa's moderate thought appears.

## Conclusion

To sum up, moderate thought of Islam takes middle position between two extreme poles. This thought is not strict or flexible and considered as the best thought. Bisri Mustofa is one of moderate figures with some characteristics. *First*, Bisri Mustofa tended to understand al-Qur'an moderately with fair, balanced, and tolerant features. From this, his moderate thought and interpretation emerged.

*Second*, Bisri Mustofa's moderate thought appeared in sharia, including prayers, where Muslims should never be too excessive in performing prayers as they may ignore their own benefit. In addition, moderation should also be maintained in all behaviors such as *dhikir*, *do'a*, reciting al-Qur'an, reciting *tashbih*, and reciting *tahlil*.

<sup>75</sup> Toto Suharto, "Gagasan Pendidikan Muhammadiyah dan NU Sebagai Potret Pendidikan Moderat", in *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, Vol. 9, No. 1, September 2014, pp. 102-103.

<sup>76</sup> Toto Suharto, "Gagasan Pendidikan..", p. 85.

<sup>77</sup> Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Al-Tawassuṭ wa-l I'tidāl: the NU and Moderatism in Indonesian Islam", in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 40, Issue 5-6 (2012).

<sup>78</sup> Masdar Hilmy, "Whither Indonesia's Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU", in *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 07, Number 01, June 2013.

<sup>79</sup> Mutawalli, "Moderate Islam in Lombok...", p. 318.

*Third*, Bisri Mustofa's moderate thought in *mu'amalah* is reflected in the ethics of visiting. People must visit other's houses such as neighbors, relatives or close friends. The moderation is found in the ethic of asking permission to the host. Besides, Muslims have to be moderate in working or seeking sustenance. Working is required for Muslims since it is used to fulfil their necessity. However, they have to behave moderately to satisfy the needs of the world and hereafter. The last is moderation in *muamalah* according to Bisri Mustofa is in economic management. Moderate economic management is referred to the economic concept in islam which is different from communist and capitalist.

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