

## Exploration of the Concept of Wasat in the Qur'anic Worldview through Izutsu's Semantic Method

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### Abstract

This paper aims to explore the meaning of the word *wasat* and its various derivations in the Qur'an. This word is closely related to an important theme that is highly relevant in people's lives, namely moderation. Moderation plays a key role in creating balance, harmony and tolerance at various levels, whether local, national or international. In order to comprehensively understand the concept of moderation, this study focuses on three main questions: what is the basic and relational meaning of the word *wasat*, how has it developed historically, and how is the *weltanschauung* or worldview associated with the word *wasat* reflected in the Qur'an. This research is a literature study that collects data through the documentation method. The main sources used include the Qur'an, translations, tafsir, as well as various dictionaries to identify the meaning and derivation of the word *wasat*. In the analysis, the author applies Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic theoretical framework, which includes three main aspects: (1) basic and relational meaning, (2) meaning in synchronic and diachronic contexts, and (3) *weltanschauung* or worldview related to the word. The basic meaning of the word *wasat* is "middle". Relationally, through syntagmatic analysis, this word contains the meaning of justice, choice, excellence, best, and dominance, and refers to a just and superior figure. In paradigmatic analysis, the word *wasat* has similar meanings with *janibun* and *qalibun*, but contrasts with *haddun*, *shafā*, *tarafun*, *aṭrafūn*, *'azīmun*, and *karīmun*.

**Keywords:** Alquran, Semantic, Moderation, Wasat

### Introduction Section

Religious moderation is an important issue that is very relevant for Indonesian society. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (RI) emphasizes three main reasons why religious moderation is needed. First, to maintain human dignity as a creature of God. Second, to protect human civilization from destruction due to conflicts rooted in religion. Third, in the context of nationality, religious moderation is a cultural strategy to maintain and strengthen Indonesianness (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, n.d.). Moderate attitudes that reject extremism and liberalism in religion are seen as an effective way to create harmony and tolerance at the local, national and global levels, so as to promote peace and sustainability of civilization.

In Islam, the concept of tolerance and moderation has long been recognized and applied (Nugroho et al., 2024). The Qur'an mentions in several verses, one of which is in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143. This verse became the basis for the concept of *wasatan* (Nashrul Hidayat, 2016). which later developed into various perspectives of Islamic moderation in various aspects of life. The goal of this moderation is to build a balanced Islam, away from extremism and liberalism.

The concept of *wasat* in quran is increasingly interesting to study as various thoughts and movements emerge in the name of Islam. One of the main causes of this phenomenon is the difference in understanding among Muslims, which often starts with the interpretation of word meanings. One's initial understanding of the meaning of a word can influence subsequent interpretations. Therefore, it is important to examine the meaning of the word *wasat*, which is key in understanding moderation, through a linguistic approach, especially semantics (Yayan Rahmatikawati dan Dadan Rusmana, 2013).

Semantics, a branch of linguistics that deals with the meaning of words, has a wide theoretical and methodological scope. One semantic method that is widely used in Qur'anic studies is Toshihiko Izutsu's approach. As a non-Muslim scholar, Izutsu made an important contribution to Qur'anic studies (Ayuni et al., 2024).

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According to him, semantics is the analysis of terms or keywords in language that reflect the worldview of the people who use the language (weltanschauung). (Toshihiko Izutsu, 1997). In the context of the Qur'ān, semantics needs to be analyzed from the perspective of the Qur'ānic world to understand the concepts contained therein (Fadhilah & Nugroho, 2024).

The word *wasat*, which is related to moderation, is one of the key words in the Qur'an. According to Aş-Şalaby, this word is mentioned five times in four suras (Alī Muḥammad Aş-Şalaby, n.d.). In Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143, the word *wasat* is juxtaposed with the word *ummah*, which is the basis of the understanding of a moderate, just and chosen *ummah*. This concept of *ummatan wasatan* has been the concern of Muslim scholars, especially in discussions about Islamic moderation (Nashrul Hidayat, 2016).

The study of Islamic moderation or *wasatiyah* can be divided into three trends. First, the analysis of the meaning of *wasat* textually and contextually. Second, the study of the concept of *wasatiyah* from the perspective of tafsir figures. Third, the analysis of the application of the concept of *wasatiyah* in certain institutions or environments. However, studies on the evolution of the understanding of the meaning of *wasat* from the time before the Qur'an was revealed until today are still rare, even though this is important to achieve a comprehensive understanding.

With this background, this study aims to analyze more deeply about “The Concept of Moderation in the Qur'an: Toshihiko Izutsu's Semantic Review of the Word *Wasat* and its Derivations (Rosyid et al., 2024). This study is important to ensure that the Qur'ānic message is well conveyed through a proper understanding of the meaning of key words such as *wasat*.

## Research Methods

This study is qualitative, and is a type of library research, therefore the focus of this study is based on materials sourced from various kinds of references and has a correlation with the theme of this study, both in the form of books, articles, journals, theses, theses, and so on.

The data collection applied in this study is the documentation technique. Regarding data sources, the author divides them into two aspects; first, primary data sources. The primary data used in this analysis is based on the Qur'an itself, its translation and interpretation, dictionaries to find the word *wasat* and its derivations found in the Qur'an, such as *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras Li Ma'an al-Qur'an*, as well as previous (classical) dictionaries to find the meaning of the word *wasat*, such as *Lisān al-'Arab*, *Mufradāt fi Gharīb al-Qur'an*; second, secondary data sources. As for secondary data, the author uses other Arabic dictionaries, books of tafsir, books of hadith, articles, journals, theses, theses, dissertations and other information media that can be accounted for the validity of the data and have a correlation with this research.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. ANALYSIS OF WASAT SEMANTICS TOSHIHIKO IZUTSU

#### a. Basic Meaning

The basic meaning of a word refers to the original meaning attached to the word, regardless of its context or usage. In Arabic, the word *wasat* consists of three letters: *و-س-ط*. This word is a form that indicates balance and a position in the middle. In the linguistic sense, something that is considered the fairest or most appropriate is usually in the middle position. The word *wasata-yasiṭu-wastan* also has the meaning of an arbiter in terms of truth and justice. In *Qāmūs Al-Muḥīṭ*, this word is defined as something that is most just. The term *سَطٌّ وُ شَيْءٌ* is used to describe something that is between two things, namely between good and harm. (Muḥammad Al-Murtaḍa, n.d.)

The word *wasat* can also be interpreted as a balance between two things or a position in the middle between two extremes: the excessive and the negligent. Hence, *wasat* refers to a balance or middle way that can incorporate goodness or virtue in it. This middle position becomes the center that becomes the reference or axis for various directions (Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Al-ṣawi, n.d.).

Yusuf Al-Qarḍawi explains that *wasat* is the midpoint or balance between two opposing ends. This concept does not ignore one side or marginalize the other, but rather gives the appropriate rights to each without being excessive or unjust (Yusuf Al-Qarḍawi, n.d.).

#### b. Rational Meaning

After understanding the basic meaning of the word *wasat*, the next step in the semantic approach offered by Toshihiko Izutsu is to explore its relational meaning. Unlike the basic meaning, the relational meaning contains connotations that arise when the word is placed in a certain context and relates to other important words in a

system (Toshihiko Izutsu, n.d.-b). According to Izutsu, to find the relational meaning of the word *wasat*, two stages of analysis are needed: syntagmatic analysis and paradigmatic analysis.

## Syntagmatic Analysis

In a sentence, new surrounding elements can affect a word and thus change its basic meaning. Syntagmatic analysis aims to trace the change in meaning of the word *wasat* by paying attention to the words in front of and behind it (Hudlor, 2019). The word *wasat*, which literally means “middle,” undergoes a change in meaning when juxtaposed with certain elements around it (AN & TH, n.d.).

### a. The Meaning of Fair and Chosen

When *wasat* is associated with the word *ummah*, the meaning evolves to “the chosen” and “the just.” This refers to the verse that describes Muslims as *ummatah wasat*—a just and chosen people, charged with bearing witness to all humanity. In addition, this verse is also related to the movement of the Qibla direction for Muslims. This is found in QS Al Baqarah verse 143

"وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَبْغِي الرُّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ إِيْمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَّءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ"

(“Likewise We have made you (Muslims) a middle nation that you may bear witness to the people and that the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) may bear witness to you. We have not fixed the Qiblah (Baitulmaqdis) to which you used to turn, except that We may know (in reality) who follows the Messenger and who turns back. Verily, it is very hard, except for those to whom Allah has guided. Allah will not waste your faith. Verily, Allah is indeed merciful to mankind.”)

The word *wasat* in the verse functions as a *na'tun* or adjective for the word *ummah*. This word has two meanings, a close meaning and a distant meaning, known in the science of *balaghah* as *al-tauriyah*. (Ahmad et al., 2024) The near meaning of *wasat* is “mediator,” which in the context of this verse refers to the position of the mediator in determining the Qibla for Muslims. Meanwhile, its distant meaning is “choice. (Muḥyī Ad-Dīn bin Aḥmad Muṣṭafa Darwīṣī, n.d.) Basically, *wasat* means a place of focus or direction, and in this verse, it refers to something noble. Thus, there is no doubt that those who practice noble things are the chosen and just. They are individuals who fill their lives with knowledge and charity, so that their daily lives are never separated from both. From this, it can be concluded that the primary meaning of *wasat* in this verse is the remote meaning of “choice.”

This verse also emphasizes the great task of Muslims in the world, which is to become *ummatah wasat* or the middle people, which means just and chosen. This middle community does not only focus on the spiritual or material aspects, but balances the fulfillment of spiritual and physical needs. This is in line with the principle that the best is that which is in the middle or balanced. According to Kalbī, the people in question are those who adhere to religion with moderation, moderation, and negligence. Extremes or negligence are both considered reprehensible in the eyes of the religion (Abū Muḥammad Al-Ḥusayn Al-Syafī'i, n.d.).

## Paradigmatic Analysis

Paradigmatic analysis focuses on comparing words based on similarities (synonyms) and differences (antonyms). In this context, the author tries to explore the meaning of *wasat* by tracing its synonyms and antonyms. The following are details related to the synonyms of the word *wasat*:

Synonyms of the word *Wasat* are :

The word *wasat* has several synonyms, including:

ندل, جانب, خسيس, دنيء, عرض, قلب, كيد, لنيم, مركز, مهين, منتصف, وغد, واسطة

However, in the Qur'an, there are only two synonyms that are explicitly mentioned, namely *jānib* and *qalb*.

### a. Jānibun (QS. Al-Isra': 68)

In the Qur'an, the word *جانب* is mentioned seven times, and all of them refer to the meaning of place. (Muḥammad Fuad 'Abdul al-Bāqī, n.d.-b) One example is found in QS. Al-Isra': 68, which shows the context of using this word to describe a certain location or side.

"أَفَأَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ يُخْصِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَكِيلًا"

“Do you feel safe from the possibility that He will submerge part of the land with you or send pebbles, and you will find no one to protect you?”)

This verse warns those who turn away from Allah after being saved from the dangers of the sea. Do they feel safe from Allah's threats on land and only fear disasters at sea? In fact, Allah has the full power to send disaster anywhere, both on land and at sea (Sayyid Quṭub Al-Syāribī, ). This verse reminds people that true security and peace can only be felt when they are under the protection and shelter of Allah SWT.

b. Qalbun (QS. Al Baqarah verse 97)

The word qalbun comes from the verb qalaba - yaqlubu - qalban, which means to turn, turn around, or turn over. (Raja Lottung Siregar, 2016) In addition, qalbun can also be interpreted as heart, core, content, or heart. In the Qur'an, the word qalbun and its various forms and derivations are mentioned 168 times (Muḥammad Fuad ‘Abdul al-Bāqī, n.d.-a). One of the verses that mentions the word qalbun is QS. Al-Baqarah verse 97.

“قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى  
وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ”

“Say (Prophet Muhammad), “Who is the enemy of Gabriel?” Yet, it is he who has sent down (the Qur'an) into your hearts by the permission of Allah as a vindication of what came before, and guidance and glad tidings for the believers.”

The verse explains that the descent of the Qur'an into the human heart is entirely the command of Allah SWT, not the will of Jibril himself. Jibril only carries out the task given by Allah. In the context of this verse, the heart is interpreted as a center of understanding in general, not just a physical organ. The heart also functions as a place of entry and exit of faith. From this it can be concluded that the qalb is the core of a person, which acts as the main driver in the process of thinking and acting.

b) Antonyms of the word Wasat

The antonyms or opposites of the word Wasat are

أثيل, أخير, جانب, حافة, حد, شريف, طرف, عظيم, كريم. However, what is stated in the Quranic verse is as follows:

1) Haddun (QS Al Mujadalah: 4)

The word ḥaddun means the final limit of something. (Muḥammad Ad-Dīn Abū Ṭāhir, n.d.) In Lisān al-'Arab, it is explained that the final limit of something is referred to as ḥadduhu, which refers to finality or final conclusion. In the Qur'ān, this word comes from the three root letters ح-د-ح and is mentioned 14 times, all in the plural, ḥudūd. (Muḥammad Fuad ‘Abdul al-Bāqī, n.d.-c) One of the verses that mentions this word is QS. Al-Mujadalah [58]: 4.

“وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ”

“These are the decrees (laws) of Allah. The disbelievers have a painful punishment.”

The verse discusses the ruling on zihar - the act of a husband who equates his wife with his mother in terms of honor, which is considered a despicable act in Islam. The verse also explains the various forms of kaffārah (ransom) that must be made by the husband who commits zihar. Allah established this law as a restriction (ḥudūd) that must be maintained by His servants. The purpose is for people to live by following the guidelines set by Allah and not to exceed these limits.

2) Syafa (QS Ali Imran: 103)

The word shafā in the Qur'an is mentioned twice, namely in QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 103 and QS. At-Taubah [9]: 109 (Muḥammad Fuad ‘Abdul al-Bāqī, n.d.-d). The meaning of the word shafā is the end or edge of something. In QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 103, this word describes a condition that is vulnerable or on the verge of destruction. This

verse reminds Muslims to hold fast to the rope of Allah so as not to fall into the abyss of division and destruction, as explained in the context of the verse.

وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝

“(Also remember when) you were on the brink of hell, then Allah saved you from it. Thus Allah explains His verses to you so that you may be guided.”

This verse explains one of the two main principles that Allah commands as the foundation of His servants' lives in this world, namely ukhuwah (brotherhood) (Setiawan & Dahliana, 2022). Allah commands Muslims to build brotherhood on the basis of faith in Him, so that the Muslims become a solid community like a strong building and are able to carry out their duties as implementers of *amr ma'rūf* (inviting to good) and *nahī munkar* (preventing evil).

In the context of this verse, the word *shafā* means “the edge,” i.e. the edge of the pit of hell. This hell is reserved for people who die in a state of disbelief, which results in their being put into hell. However, Allah saved the Aus and Khazraj from hell through the guidance of Islam. This is proof of Allah's compassion for His servants by giving them the opportunity to return to the truth.

### 3) Tarafun or atrafun (Hud: 114)

The next antonym or opposite word of *wasaf* is *ṭarf* which in plural form becomes *atraf*, meaning “the end of things.” (Ahmad Mukhtar 'Abdul Hamid 'Umar, n.d.) This word comes from the three-letter root *ṭ-r-f* and has many derivations. However, in the Qur'an, only 11 forms of derivation are mentioned.

Of these, the word *ṭarafun* or *atrafun* is mentioned only four times, once as *ṭarafun* and three times as *atrafun*. One of the verses that mentions this word is QS. Hud [11]: 114, which talks about the performance of prayers at certain parts of the time, as a form of expiation of sins and a reminder to always be on the straight path.

“وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبُنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَىٰ لِلذَّكْرَيْنِ ۝

“Pray at the two ends of the day (morning and evening) and in the part of the night. Verily, good deeds erase wrongdoings. It is a reminder for those who always remember (Allah).”

This verse explains that Allah commands His servants to pray properly, in accordance with the pillars, conditions, and stipulations. The prayer is to be performed at the two ends of the day, namely morning and evening, which includes the times of Fajr, Zuhr, and Asr. In addition, Allah also commands prayer at the beginning of the night, which includes Maghrib and Isha. Additional prayers such as Witr and Tahajjud are also encouraged as forms of night worship that draw closer to Allah. This verse emphasizes the importance of keeping prayers as a reminder of sins and a reminder to always be on the path of righteousness (M. Quraish Shihab, n.d.-b).

### 4) Adzimun (QS Al-Baqarah: 7)

In the Qur'an, the word *ʿaẓīm* is mentioned 107 times. (Muhammad Fuad 'Abdul al-Baqī, n.d.-e) This word means something that is beyond measure, so great, or so high that it exceeds the limits of the human mind's ability to imagine its form or nature. (Muhammad Abū Al-Faḍal Jamāluddīn, n.d.-b) This meaning describes something that is great, large, or extraordinary in the context of nature, events, or circumstances. As stated in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 7, this word is used to describe the grave consequences of the condition of the heart, hearing, and sight that have been closed by disbelief, so that they cannot understand Allah's guidance. This verse emphasizes the serious repercussions of rejecting the truth.

“حَتَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝

“Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing. On their sight there is a covering, and for them is a very severe punishment.”

This verse explains that Allah has locked the hearts, hearing and sight of the disbelievers so that they cannot receive the light and guidance of the truth. This is a reward for their persistent disbelief in the warnings that Allah has given. In addition, this verse also emphasizes that they will receive a very severe punishment in the hereafter as a result of their rejection and defiance of Allah's guidance" (Sayyid Qutub Al-Syāribī, n.d.-a).

#### 5) Karimun (QS Al Anfal: 74)

The word karīmūn comes from the root كَرَمٌ which means something that includes various kinds of goodness, glory, and virtue. Something that is called karīmūn would not be so called unless it contained great goodness. The word karīmūn is used to describe a trait that is full of goodness, generous, noble, or great.

In the Qur'an, the word karīmūn is mentioned 27 times, one of which is found in QS. Al-Anfal [8]: 74, which speaks of the great reward given by Allah to those who believe and strive in His way.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

“Those who believe, migrate, and strive in the cause of Allah, and those who give shelter and help (to the Muhajirin), they are the true believers. For them is (great) forgiveness and glorious sustenance.”

The verse explains the position of those who believe in Allah SWT and His Messenger, who emigrated to the city of Medina, and fought in the way of Allah SWT. In addition, it also explains about those who help believers who are migrating. They are people who have a very deep and strong level of faith, so that Allah gives them forgiveness and abundant sustenance.

The word karīmūn in this verse means “noble” and is used to describe the nature of something that is perfect and praiseworthy, according to its object. Therefore, the word rizqun karīmūn in this verse refers to a diverse and very satisfying sustenance, which is not only limited to the sustenance given in this world, but also includes extraordinary sustenance in the hereafter, namely Allah's paradise which is full of incomparable pleasure (M. Quraish Shihab, n.d.-a).

## Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis

Toshihiko Izutsu offers a modern linguistic approach to analyze the meaning of the word wasaṭ in depth through synchronic and diachronic analysis. Synchronic analysis focuses on understanding the word meaning system in a static state, while diachronic analysis emphasizes the changes in word meaning over time. Within this framework, Izutsu divides his analysis into three historical periods, namely the period before the Qur'ān (pre-Qur'ānic), the period when the Qur'ān was revealed (Qur'ānic), and the period after the Qur'ān (post-Qur'ānic) (Toshihiko Izutsu, n.d.-a).

### 1) PRE QURANIC PERIOD

To understand the meaning of the word wasaṭ in the pre-Qur'anic period, which is the period before the revelation of the Qur'an, the analysis is carried out by examining the language used by the Jahiliyyah Arab community in everyday life. One of the main sources that can be used as material for analysis at this time is Jahiliyyah Arabic poetry. These poems are believed to be able to provide a comprehensive description of the life of the Jahiliyah community, including daily activities, characteristics, economic conditions, and political situations. This is due to the ability of Arab poets to express what they see, hear, and feel with beautiful and detailed expressions (Bachrum Bunyamin dan Hamdy Salad, 2017).

One of the poems containing the word wasaṭ comes from a poet born in the region of Abyssinia (Nigeria) in the mid-6th century. This poet was known by the people as a black romantic poet and was nicknamed the “Black Knight of Steel” of Abyssinia.

The text of Antarah bin Shadad's poem reads,

“مَا رَأَيْتُ إِلَّا حَمُولَةً أَهْلَهَا وَسَطَ الدِّيَارِ تَصْفَعُ خَ الْجَمْحِمِ”

“No one saw me but the family's load-carrying camel, In the middle of the courtyard, he was eating the seeds of the khimkhim plant.”.

The word *wasat* in the mentioned poem has two meanings related to position or place, namely:

The meaning of place in general (center): When the letter *sin* in the word *وَسَطَ* is given a sukun harakat (وَسَطَ), it refers to a middle position in the sense of a specific location or place, such as the center of a courtyard or a physical position between certain areas.

The meaning of being between two ends: When the letter *sin* in the word *وَسَطَ* is given a fathah harakat (وَسَطَ), it describes something that is between two extremes or two ends. In this context, the word also contains deeper symbolic nuances, such as balance or moderation (Naurah et al., 2024).

As is the case with a verse from *Lisān al-'Arab*: (Muḥammad Abū Al-Faḍal Jamāluddīn, n.d.-a)

“إِذَا رَحَلْتُ فَاجْعَلْنِي وَسَطًا إِنِّي كَبِيرٌ لَا أَطِيقُ الْعُنْدَ”

“When I travel, place me in the middle, For I am old, I am not able to face the extreme whims of camels.”

The word *wasat* in the verse you mentioned refers to a position or place “in the middle,” with the letter *sin* being assigned a sukun (وَسَطَ). This confirms that the word denotes a location or position that lies in the middle, in this context probably relating to a place between two ends or parts.

In addition to the two poems above, there is also a jahiliyy poem delivered by Labid bin Rabi'ah : (Abī ‘Abdullah Husayn Al-Zauzanī, n.d.)

“فَتَوَسَّطَا عَرْضَ السَّرِّ وَصَدَّعَا مَسْجُورَةً مَتَجَاوِرًا فَلَاهُمَا”

Translation:

“Then both of them walked towards their Eid, Breaking a spring filled with vegetation, both of them next to each other.”

From the Jahiliyyah verses mentioned, it can be inferred that the word *wasat* in the Qur'anic period was used to refer to a position or place that was between two things, or simply, in the “middle.” In the poems, *wasat* describes a location or position that lies in the middle between two opposite ends or parts. This suggests that the meaning of the word *wasat* in the Qur'anic context is similar, namely as a symbol of a middle position that often reflects balance, moderation, or a place at the center of things.

In the Qur'anic context, *wasat* is often understood as something ideal, which is in the middle and avoids extremes, whether in terms of behavior, beliefs, or social situations.

## 2) QURANIC PRIODE

Having analyzed the meaning of the word *wasat* in the pre-Qur'anic period, we can proceed to examine the meaning of the word in the Qur'anic period, i.e. when the Qur'an was revealed. In this period, the word *wasat* not only retained its original meaning as “middle” or “position between two ends,” but also underwent a broader and deeper development of meaning.

In the Qur'anic period, the word *wasat* appears in a more complex context, not only limited to a physical position or place, but also contains positive connotations that reflect the principles of balance, justice and moderation.(Nurrohim et al., 2024) This can be seen in several Qur'anic verses that mention the word *wasat* with

a broader meaning, leading to the ideal and perfect traits desired by Muslims. For example, in verses containing the concept of *ummatan wasaṭa* (a moderate ummah), the word *wasat* implies justice and balance in all aspects of life.

Although the word *wasat* experienced an expansion of meaning during the Qur'anic period, its basic meaning referring to the “middle” position remained. This shows that the original meaning was not lost, but rather developed and transformed according to the broader context, leading to moral and social notions. Hence, *wasat* in the Qur'anic period not only denoted a physical position, but also reflected values such as justice, moderation and balance in Muslim life.

As stated in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 238,

“حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ”

“Observe all the (obligatory) prayers and the *Wustā* prayers. Stand for Allah (in prayer) with solemnity.”

In the verse, the word *wusta* refers to a more specific meaning, namely the 'Asr prayer. This meaning is corroborated by a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad narrated by Imam Ahmad from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. In the hadith, the Prophet said about the events of the Battle of Ahzab (Syaykh Ṣafiyurrahman al-Mubārakfuri, 2006). where he said:

“شَغَلُونَا عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ صَلَاةِ الْعَصْرِ”

“The disbelievers have occupied us from the *wusta* prayer, the 'Asr prayer.”

There is also a hadith narrated by 'Ali ibn 'Isā, in which Sa'id ibn Sulayman narrates from Ḥafṣ ibn Ghayāṣ, who narrated from Abī Ṣālih, who in turn heard from Abī Ḥurayrah that the Prophet Muhammad said:

“قال النبي : جعلناكم أمة وسطاً” قال، عدولٌ”

“We made you a people of *wasatan*,” which is further explained to mean “i.e. just.”

A similar hadith was also narrated by Salmā b. Junadah and Ya'qub b. Ibrāhīm, who mentioned that Ḥafṣ b. Ghayāṣ heard from A'masy, who in turn narrated from Abī Ṣālih, who heard from Abī Sa'id, who relayed the words of the Prophet Muhammad (Muḥammad bin Ḥarir, n.d.-b).

If we refer to the original meaning of the word *wasat*, which means “middle,” we can understand that the 'Asr prayer is considered the most important because it is performed in the middle of the five obligatory prayers. Before it, there are two prayers (Fajr and Zuhr) that are performed during the day, and after that there are two prayers (Maghrib and Isha) that are performed at night. Therefore, the 'Asr prayer is in the middle position in the series of daily prayers.

The meaning of fairness is also related to this middle position, which describes a balanced state, with no tendency towards either extreme, which could lead to imbalance or injustice.

### 3) POST-QURANIC PERIOD

The Post Qur'anic period began after the Qur'an was revealed in its entirety, with the overall vocabulary system heavily influenced by the language and terms in the Qur'an. In this period, the development of the Arabic language and its usage was influenced by the understanding and teaching of the Qur'an that had spread in the community.

As discussed earlier, the Post Qur'anic period is divided into three main stages:

The Classical Period (1st-IIth Century A.H.): In this period, the Qur'anic influence was very strong in the development of the Arabic language, both in the fields of literature, tafsir, and fiqh. Arabic at this time tended to focus on understanding and teaching the Qur'an and hadith.

The Medieval Period (3rd-IXth Century AH): At this stage, there was a wider development in the study of Arabic, with the development of linguistic sciences, tafsir, and kalam. Many major works in the fields of language and religion appeared during this period.

Modern-Contemporary Period (XII-XIV centuries AH): This period is characterized by major changes in the Arabic language, both in the context of everyday language use and in scientific and literary works. Here, Arabic underwent adjustments to the times, although the influence of the Qur'an remained a strong foundation in the use of language. (Eko Zulfikar, 2018)

### 1) CLASSICAL PERIOD

In the classical period, the mufasssirs generally used the bi al-ma'sur approach, where the arguments used as the basis of argumentation came from naqli sources, both from the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. At this time, the meaning of the word wasaṭ experienced a wider development, so that the interpretation of this word varied. Some of the interpretations that have emerged include the interpretation of the word wasaṭ found in several verses, such as QS. Al-Baqarah verse 143, QS. Al-Ma'idah verse 89, and QS. Al-Qalam verse 28.

Muqātil ibn Sulayman explained that in the context of the verse ummatanwasatan, the word wasaṭ means just (AN et al., 2023). He interpreted that the people of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the afterlife will be a fair witness among the Prophets and their people regarding the delivery of the message brought by the Prophet Muhammad. The same interpretation applies to the other two verses, where wasaṭ is understood to mean the fairest (Abū Al-Ḥasan Muqātil bin Sulayman, n.d.).

Meanwhile, in his tafsir, At-Tabari explains that the word wasaṭ means part of two ends. In this context, the word wasaṭ refers to tawassuṭ fī ad-dīn (balance in religion), which means a position that is between two extremes, that is, neither leaning towards excess like the Christians in religion, nor too negligent like the Jews. This interpretation illustrates how Muslims are taught to be in a balanced middle position in practicing religion, without falling into extremism or negligence (Muḥammad bin Ḥarir, n.d.-a).

In this period, the mufasssirs interpreted the word wasaṭ based on their understanding, which was certainly influenced by their respective educational backgrounds. Apart from using naqli arguments as in the previous century, they also integrated other knowledge and perspectives. One example of the interpretation of Allah's word in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 143:

“وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا”

“And likewise We have made you (Muslims) a middle nation.”

Ar-Razi argues that in this verse, the word wasaṭ means justice or a just people, who are in the middle and far from the two extremes. (Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad Al-Razi, n.d.) A similar view is also expressed by Al-Qurṭubi in his tafsir, who states that wasaṭ means justice, and this is based on the ibrah which states that “Verily the most praiseworthy thing about something is its middle (Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad bin Aḥmad al-Qurṭubi, n.d.).

Meanwhile, Az-Zamakhshari gives a different interpretation, saying that wasatan in this verse means khiyāran (choice), which is the trait that mediates in all matters. Thus, wasaṭ includes everything that can unite both singular and jama', as well as masculine and feminine (Abū Al-Qāsim Maḥmud Al-Zamakhsharī, n.d.).

### 3) MODERN - CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

Tafsir in this modern-contemporary period develops in accordance with the situation and conditions of the times, where the mufasssirs try to reconstruct classical interpretations that are no longer relevant or unable to answer the challenges of modern times. Although basically the meaning of the word *wasat* in this period is not much different from the previous period, there are still differences which, although not significant, still reflect the dynamics of the development of interpretation (Eko Zulfikar, 2018).

Muhammad Rasyīd Riḍā explains that the word *wasat* paired with the word *ummaḥ* in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 143 means a chosen and just people, similar to what is described in QS. This shows that Muslims are a people who are in the middle, not extreme in religion, whether it is in terms of belief, morals, or actions. (Soleh et al., 2022) Sayyid Qutūb added that the Muslims in question are not only focused on the spiritual aspect or materialism, but are people who can balance the two, namely the fulfillment of spiritual and physical needs (Muḥammad Rasyīd bin 'Alī Riḍā Al-Husaini, n.d.).

Al-Taṅṭāwi has a similar view of *ummatan wasaṭan* as a chosen and just community among other communities. However, he places more emphasis on the context of moving the Qibla direction during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, which illustrates that the Prophet Muhammad's people were chosen to realize their relationship with the Qibla which became the direction of prayer (Muḥammad Sayyid Taṅṭāwi, n.d.).

In contrast to the previous opinions, Ash-Shafi'rawi argues that *ummatan wasaṭan* in this verse refers to creed and faith. He emphasizes that Muslims do not belong to the two wrong groups, namely the group that denies the true God or the group that believes in the existence of more than one God, but the people who testify that there is no God but Allah SWT, with no partner for Him (Muḥammad Mutawalli Al-Sya'rawi, n.d.).

Buya Hamka, in his tafsir, explains that *ummatan wasaṭan* is a people who take the middle path in life. They accept the reality of life, maintain a balance between spiritual and physical health, pay attention to the intelligence of the mind, and strengthen worship to soothe feelings. Buya Hamka emphasized that as long as this *ummaḥ* remains on the straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*), then they will remain a people who are in the middle (Hamka, n.d.).

## Weltanschauung

The last analysis proposed by Toshihiko in his semantic theory is *weltanschauung*, or worldview. This analysis is the main step in understanding his semantics. To obtain the *weltanschauung* meaning of a word, Toshihiko analyzes two historical meanings, namely in the pre-Qur'anic and Qur'anic periods, and he does not include the post-Qur'anic period because many concepts have developed and were born in that period (Sholahuddin Hudlor, 2019).

In the pre-Qur'anic period, the word *wasat* contains a meaning that indicates position or place, namely the center, according to the basic meaning of the word. While in the Qur'anic period, (Hikmah et al., 2024) the word *wasat* underwent development so that its meaning, which was originally limited to position or place, developed more broadly, depending on the context of the sentence, but still had a positive connotation. Nevertheless, this change in meaning is not too significant, and is still closely related to its basic meaning.

From this explanation, it can be concluded that the *weltanschauung* or worldview of the word *wasat* is something that is in the middle and is always positive. This is because in the middle of the position there is no tendency or leaning on one side (pole) which can cause imbalance or injustice.

## Conclusion

The word *wasat* and its various forms are mentioned five times in four suras, namely QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 143 and 238; QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 89; QS. Al-Qalam [68]: 28; and QS. Al-Azīyat [100]: 5. Based on various language literature (dictionaries), it can be concluded that the basic meaning of the word derived from the hijaiyah letters *و-س-ط* is "middle".

Its relational meanings, based on syntagmatic analysis, include fair, choice, foremost, best, dominant, as well as the best and fairest person, and also refer to the middle position. Meanwhile, from the paradigmatic analysis, this word is similar in meaning to the words *Jānibun* and *Qalbun*, and opposite to the words *Ḥaddun*, *Shafā*, *Ṭarafun*, *Aṭrafun*, *'Azīmun*, and *Karīmun*.

The historical meaning of the word *wasat* falls into three periods. In the pre-Qur'anic period, the word means

“middle”, which identifies a position or place. In the Qur'anic period, the word *wasat* still means “middle”, but it does not only refer to a position or place, but has a broader meaning. In the post-Qur'anic period, the word *wasat* experienced a development of meaning that was adapted to the context of the situation and conditions of that time, although the difference with the previous period was not too significant.

From these various analyses, it can be concluded that the weltanschauung or worldview of the word *wasat* is something that is in the middle and is always positive, because in this position there is no tendency to one side (pole) which can cause imbalance and injustice.

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