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## Analysis of *Wasatiyyah* Thoughts of Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's on Takfirism in His *Is'af Al Mathali'*

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### Keywords

Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi,  
*Wasatiyyah* Thoughts, Takfirism,  
Balance in Islam

### Abstrack

*Wasatiyyah thinking, or moderation, is an essential principle in Islamic teachings which prioritizes balance and tolerance in religious life. This concept becomes very relevant amidst the challenges of extremism and intolerance modern society faces. Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi, a great Indonesian cleric, made a significant contribution through his work Is'af al-Mathali', which offers a moderate view in dealing with the phenomenon of takfirism, an ideology that disbelieves fellow Muslims. This research aims to explore Wasatiyyah Mahfudh Tarmadzi's thoughts, focusing on its application in overcoming the issue of takfirism. This research uses a text analysis methodology on Is'af al-Mathali's work to understand the application of balance, justice, and tolerance principles in responding to contemporary religious issues, especially takfirism. Mahfudh Tarmadzi strongly criticized the practice of takfirism, emphasizing the importance of solid evidence and a fair process in accusing infidels because takfirism often triggers conflict and violence among Muslims. The main aim of this research is to emphasize the relevance of Wasatiyyah Mahfudh Tarmadzi's thoughts in facing current religious challenges, especially in countering takfirism. This research also aims to examine Mahfudh Tarmadzi's contribution to promoting a more harmonious and peaceful religious life. It is hoped that the research results will provide in-depth insight into the importance of Wasatiyyah in building a tolerant society amidst the threat of extremism and radicalism*

### Kata Kunci

Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi,  
Pemikiran Wasatiyyah,

### Abstrak

*Pemikiran Wasatiyyah, atau moderasi, merupakan prinsip penting dalam ajaran Islam yang mengedepankan*

*keseimbangan dan toleransi dalam kehidupan beragama. Konsep ini menjadi sangat relevan di tengah tantangan ekstremisme dan intoleransi yang dihadapi masyarakat modern. Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi, ulama besar Indonesia, memberikan kontribusi signifikan melalui karyanya Is'af al-Mathali', yang menawarkan pandangan moderat dalam menghadapi fenomena takfirisme, ideologi yang mengkafirkan sesama Muslim. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi pemikiran Wasatiyyah Mahfudh Tarmadzi, dengan fokus pada penerapannya dalam mengatasi isu takfirisme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi analisis teks terhadap karya Is'af al-Mathali' untuk memahami penerapan prinsip keseimbangan, keadilan, dan toleransi dalam merespons isu-isu keagamaan kontemporer, khususnya takfirisme. Mahfudh Tarmadzi mengkritik keras praktik takfirisme, dengan menekankan pentingnya bukti yang kuat dan proses yang adil dalam menuduh kafir, karena takfirisme kerap menjadi pemicu konflik dan kekerasan di kalangan umat Islam. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk menegaskan relevansi pemikiran Wasatiyyah Mahfudh Tarmadzi dalam menghadapi tantangan keagamaan saat ini, terutama dalam menangkali takfirisme. Selain itu, penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji kontribusi Mahfudh Tarmadzi dalam mempromosikan kehidupan beragama yang lebih harmonis dan damai. Hasil penelitian diharapkan memberikan wawasan mendalam mengenai pentingnya Wasatiyyah dalam membangun masyarakat yang toleran di tengah ancaman ekstremisme dan radikalisme*

## Introduction

*Wasatiyyah* thinking, or moderation, is an essential aspect of Islamic teachings emphasizing balance and tolerance in religious life. This concept has become very relevant in modern society, which faces various challenges related to extremism and intolerance. Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi, a great scholar from Indonesia, has significantly contributed to developing *Wasatiyyah* through his works, one of which is the book *Is'af al-Mathali*.<sup>1</sup>

The Book of *Is'af al-Mathali* is one of Mahfudh Tarmadzi's monumental works. It focuses on in-depth explanations of various aspects of Islamic science. In this context, an analysis of Mahfudh Tarmadzi's *Wasatiyyah* thought becomes essential, especially in dealing with the increasingly prominent phenomenon of Takfirism.<sup>2</sup> Takfirism, which is the idea of making other Muslims infidel, is often a source of conflict and division within the Muslim community.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A H Bhat, "Analyzing the Islamist and New-Islamist Discourse on Minorities in an Islamic State," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 23 (2023): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.23.2023.250>

<sup>2</sup> W R W Husain, "The Impact of *Wasatiyyah* /Moderation on Student's Financial Decisions," *Malaysian*

*Journal of Consumer and Family Economics* 26 (2021): 230–50, [https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus\\_id/85115612714](https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85115612714).

<sup>3</sup> M Kear, "*Wasatiyyah* and Hamas's Modulating Positions on the Two-State Solution and Israel: Finding the

Through works such as *Is'af al-Mathali*, Mahfudh Tarmadzi offers a moderate and balanced view that can be an antidote to this extremism.

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to present moderate thinking in the Islamic context, especially in facing the increasingly prominent phenomenon of takfirism. Takfirism has become a source of conflict and violence that undermines the unity of Muslims, creating deep divisions among Muslim communities.<sup>4</sup>

In this condition, the *Wasatiyyah* thought of Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi offers a valuable solution.<sup>4</sup> His work, *Is'af al-Mathali*, provides a theological and methodological basis that can be used to overcome extremist and infidel tendencies

Examining Mahfudh Tarmadzi's *Wasatiyyah* thought is very important to understand how the principle of moderation can be applied in various religious and social contexts. In an era of globalization marked by intense intercultural interactions and the increasing threat of radicalism, moderate thinking as promoted by Mahfudh Tarmadzi is very relevant.<sup>5</sup> This is important to prevent radicalization and promote tolerance and harmony in an increasingly diverse society.

The novelty of this research lies in the approach used to explore Mahfudh Tarmadzi's thoughts on takfirism through analysis of the text *Is'af al-Mathali*. Previously, many studies had examined the concepts of *Wasatiyyah* and takfirism separately. Still, very few had connected the two in the context of the work of a great scholar such as Mahfudh Tarmadzi.<sup>6</sup> This research attempts to fill this gap by providing a new

perspective on how the *Wasatiyyah* concept can be implemented to counter takfirism.

This research aims to explore Mahfudh Tarmadzi's *Wasatiyyah* thoughts, focusing on how his views on takfirism are reflected in the work of *Is'af al-Mathali*. This research uses text analysis to explore Mahfudh Tarmadzi's various arguments and interpretations.

## Results and Discussion

### *Wasatiyyah*

*Wasatiyyah* is a concept in Islam that teaches balance, moderation, and the middle way in various aspects of life. The word "*Wasatiyyah*" comes from Arabic, which means "middle" or "balance". This concept emphasizes the importance of taking a fair and balanced middle path, avoiding extremism and exaggeration in everything, both in worship, muamalah (social relations), and interacting with the environment.<sup>7</sup>

*Wasatiyyah* teaches not to be too strict or loose in religion but to live life wisely, somewhat, and in balance. In modern life, *Wasatiyyah* can also be applied in various fields, such as politics, economics, education, and social matters, prioritizing justice, balance, and tolerance.

### Balance in Religion

Sheikh Mahfudh Tarmadzi emphasized the importance of implementing Islamic teachings in a balanced way, not excessively practicing worship, and not being too loose. He taught that religion must be based on a deep understanding and be consistent with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.<sup>8</sup>

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Middle Path," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 76,no.1(2022):57–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2021.1926421>.

<sup>4</sup> M I Helmy, "The Understanding of Islamic Moderation (*Wasatiyyah* Al-Islam) and the Hadiths on Inter-Religious Relations in the Javanese Pesantrens," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 377–401, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.377-401>.

<sup>5</sup> A Azra, "Islamic Studies in Indonesia, from IAIN to UIN: Strengthening the *Wasatiyyah* Islam," *Islam, Education and Radicalism in Indonesia: Instructing Piety*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003269229-12>.

<sup>6</sup> M Ebrahimi, "Socio-Political Islam & Revivalism in Malaysia," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 19, no. 57 (2020): 239–54, [https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus\\_id/85096526151](https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85096526151)

<sup>7</sup> M K I Zolkafly, "Work-Life Balance in Managing Stress, Job Satisfaction and Performance: The *Wasatiyyah* Concept and Neuroscience Perspective," *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* 13, no. 2 (2023): 27–39, [https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus\\_id/85189655569](https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85189655569).

<sup>8</sup> S Batool, "Islamic Principles to Combat Radicalization in Academia: An Exploratory Study in

This principle emphasizes the importance of balance by remaining *istiqamah* (consistent) in carrying out religious commands. A Muslim must carry out his worship with a full sense of responsibility, understanding that worship is not just a ritual but also a form of devotion that must be carried out sincerely and truly. In achieving moderation, a person needs to be aware of the limits of one's abilities, avoiding excessive attitudes that can cause fatigue or boredom.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, moderation in worship maintains a balance between prayer obligations and daily activities and ensures that prayer is carried out with full awareness and sincerity. Thus, moderation in worship helps a Muslim remain consistent and committed and live a religious life more harmoniously and meaningfully.

### Justice in Muamalah

Justice in muamalah is a fundamental principle that requires everyone to be fair and balanced in social relations and interactions with fellow humans. In practice, this justice includes safeguarding the rights of others, respecting agreements, and not committing oppression or injustice in any form.<sup>10</sup> A Muslim must act honestly, transparently, and somewhat in every social interaction, ensuring that all parties receive their rights proportionally. This fair attitude also reflects a moral responsibility to uphold social justice, including treating others with respect and respecting differences.

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Pakistani Context,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 2 (2022): 255–70, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.122.18>.

<sup>9</sup> Y Purwanto, “Tasawwuf Moderation in Higher Education: Empirical Study of Al-Ghazālī’s Tasawwuf Contribution to Intellectual Society,” *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no.1(2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2192556>.

<sup>10</sup> M.Y.Y.B. Md Yusoff, “The Concept of Ghuluw in Islam: An Analysis on Its Manifestations and Causes in the Modern World,” *Intellectual Discourse* 28, no. 2 (2021): 433–57, [https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus\\_id/85099071887](https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85099071887).

<sup>11</sup> F Khan, “Religious Responses To Sustainable Development Goals: An Islamic Perspective,” *Journal of*

Justice in muamalah means avoiding all forms of discrimination, fighting for the rights of the oppressed, and trying to create an environment of harmony and mutual respect.<sup>11</sup> By upholding justice in muamalah, individuals and society can build balanced and peaceful relationships, ultimately bringing blessings and prosperity to all.

### Tolerance and Living Together

In dealing with differences in religious opinions and practices, Sheikh Mahfudh Tarmadzi prioritizes tolerance and dialogue. He firmly rejects takfirism<sup>12</sup>, which extremist groups often use to disbelieve other Muslims who have different opinions.

Tolerance and living together encourage everyone to respect differences and establish harmonious relationships with all groups, those of the same faith and those of different religions.<sup>13</sup> This principle emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and understanding in various social interactions. By recognizing and appreciating diversity, each individual can build strong communication bridges and support each other.

Tolerance means accepting differences in views, cultures, and beliefs without judging or imposing one's will. This attitude also includes listening and learning from others and striving to create an inclusive and peaceful environment. Living together in harmony requires active efforts to avoid conflict, promote dialogue, and work together for the common good.<sup>14</sup> By implementing tolerance, we can build a more just,

*Islamic Monetary Economics and Finance*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.21098/jimf.v8i2.1453>.

<sup>12</sup> Hafid Febriyanto And H Fajar Shodiq, “Islamic Education Values in the Pencak Ilat Organization of the Setia Hati Terate Brotherhood in Tempurrejo Widodaren Ngawi Village in 2019” (IAIN Surakarta, 2019)..

<sup>13</sup> S Arbak, “Incorporating Al-Ghazali’s Theory in Understanding Allah’s Name Al-Hakim towards Character Development among Youth,” *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.05.21>.

<sup>14</sup> M K I Zolkcfley, “Work-Life Balance in Managing Stress, Job Satisfaction and Performance: The *Wasatiyyah* Concept and Neuroscience Perspective,” *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* 13, no. 2 (2023): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.7187/GJAT122023-3>.

peaceful, and prosperous society where everyone feels valued and accepted for who they are.

### **Balance in Worldly Life and the Hereafter**

Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi explained that this balance is not just about dividing time between these two aspects but also about ensuring that every worldly action is always accompanied by the intention of getting closer to Allah<sup>15</sup>. Thus, daily activities such as earning a living or social interaction can be worth worshipping if carried out with the right intentions and according to Islamic teachings.<sup>16</sup>

He also reminded Muslims not to get trapped in a life that is too materialistic or too ascetic. Instead, believers must look for a middle ground that allows them to live comfortably in this world while still preparing themselves for life after death.<sup>17</sup> By following this principle of balance, a person is expected to live a balanced life of benefits, achieving happiness in this world and safety in the afterlife.

### **Takfirism in Exploring the Works of Is'af Al Mathali**

Takfirism is a view or ideology that tends to disbelieve or consider apostasy (leaving Islam) towards fellow Muslims who are deemed not to meet specific criteria in their understanding of the faith or practice of Islam. The term "takfir" comes from the Arabic "تكفير" which means "infidel" or "non-believer."<sup>18</sup>

Adherents of takfirism often set strict standards regarding faith and religious practice, and they are quick to pronounce judgments of infidelity against other individuals or groups of Muslims who they believe do not conform to their teachings. This attitude is often accompanied by a rejection of diversity in Islamic understanding and practice and a rejection of dialogue and tolerance.<sup>19</sup>

Takfirism can have significant negative impacts, including divisions within Muslim communities, violence, and extremism. Some extremist groups have used this ideology to justify acts of violence against fellow Muslims and non-Muslims, as they are considered "enemies of Islam" or "apostates." Takfirism is contrary to the principles of moderation and tolerance taught in Islam, which prioritize mercy, compassion, and brotherhood among human beings.<sup>20</sup>

In Is'af al-Mathali', written by Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi, takfirism is discussed as an extreme view that accuses fellow Muslims of disbelief without a solid and transparent basis. Mahfudh Tarmadzi emphasizes that takfirism deviates from the core teachings of Islam, which prioritize mercy, compassion, and brotherhood among humanity.<sup>21</sup>

In Is'af al-Mathali', Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi emphasizes that takfirism—the act of declaring fellow Muslims as disbelievers without a valid foundation—is a severe deviation from the true teachings of Islam. He highlights that Islam

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<sup>15</sup> Hati Terate and Ririn Ambar Wati, "Perspective of Islamic Education in the Implementation of the Five Basic Teachings of Martial Arts Pencak Silat Persaudaraan Setia," n.d..

<sup>16</sup> A Stenersen, "Jihadism after the 'Caliphate': Towards a New Typology," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 5 (2020): 774–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2018.155211>

<sup>17</sup> F Merone, "Between Social Contention and Takfirism: The Evolution of the Salafi-Jihadi Movement in Tunisia," *Mediterranean Politics* 22, no. 1 (2017): 71–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2016.1230949>.

<sup>18</sup> H Atalay, "Arbitration (Tahkīm) – Takfir Relationship in the First Kharijites (Al-Muhakkima Al-

Ūlā)," *Hitit Theology Journal* 21, no. 2 (2022): 947–74, <https://doi.org/10.14395/hid.1145850>.

<sup>19</sup> Y Shokay, "Analysis of Causes and Factors of the Spread of Takfirism in Kazakhstan," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 105, no. 3 (2024): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.34>

<sup>20</sup> N Ghobadzadeh, "Wasatiyya Discourse in Shi'i Islam: Ayatollah Montazeri and Human Rights Jurisprudence," *Religions* 13, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13020126>.

<sup>21</sup> R Islam, "Time Management for Better Job Performance: An Analysis from Al-Wasatiyyah Perspective," *Asian Academy of Management Journal* 26, no. 1 (2021): 171–96, <https://doi.org/10.21315/aamj2021.26.1.7>.

inherently promotes mercy, compassion, and solidarity, and any action that disturbs this balance, such as takfir, contradicts the religion's core values. As he states, "*Takfir without clear evidence is a path towards extremism, which disturbs the brotherhood and unity of the Muslim ummah*".<sup>22</sup>

Mahfudh Tarmadzi strongly criticized the practice of takfirism, reminding that making someone disbelieve is not a light matter and has severe implications. He emphasized that converting a Muslim without valid reasons and unmistakable evidence is contrary to the principles of justice and prudence taught by Islam. In his view, accusations of infidelity can only be given in apparent situations. They must go through a fair and careful process, not based on mere conjecture or differences of opinion.<sup>23</sup> Is'af al-Mathali also highlighted the negative impacts of takfirism, including divisions among Muslims, violence, and radicalism.

### Scientific and Moderate Approach

Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi, in his work "Is'af al-Mathali," emphasized the importance of a deep scientific approach to understanding and applying Islamic teachings. Through careful and methodological analysis, Tarmadzi shows that knowledge and religion are not two contradictory things but can go hand in hand in harmony. This view underlines his belief that Islam is a religion that prioritizes intellect and rationality in achieving a correct and comprehensive understanding.<sup>24</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh's scientific approach in "Is'af al-Mathali" reflects his commitment to presenting Islamic teachings in a relevant and applicable context. He invited Muslims to distance themselves from extremism and excessive attitudes that are not in line with the principles of *Wasatiyyah* or moderation. Extremism, in Tarmadzi's view, not only damages the image of Islam but also causes division and conflict among the Ummah. Through his works, Tarmadzi emphasizes that Islam is a religion that prioritizes balance, justice and tolerance.<sup>25</sup>

Tarmadzi's moderate approach becomes very relevant in the context of fighting takfirism. Takfirism, or the practice of Calling other Muslims as unbelievers, is often used by extremist groups to justify acts of violence and intolerance. Sheikh Mahfudh firmly rejects takfirism and teaches that judging fellow Muslims without a firm basis is an action that is contrary to the essence of Islam. He emphasized that differences of opinion must be responded to with wisdom and compassion, not with an exclusive and punitive attitude.<sup>26</sup>

Tarmadzi's scientific and moderate approach received support from many contemporary Muslim scholars. For example, in his book "Islam: Moderation and Balance," Yusuf Al-Qaradawi emphasizes the importance of understanding Islam and rejecting all forms of extremism.<sup>27</sup> In addition, this approach aligns with the principles taught by Al-Ghazali, a great scholar in Islamic history who emphasized the

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<sup>22</sup> Miatul Qudsiya, *Indonesian Mufasir: A Biography of Sheikh Mahfudz At Tarmasi*, 2020, <https://tafsiralquran.id/mufasir-indonesia-biografi-syekh-mahfudz-at-tarmasi/>.

<sup>23</sup> T R Fitra, "Moderate Islamic Jurisprudence: Study of Muhammadiyah's Decision on Changes in Criteria for Fajr Prayer Time," *Mazahib Journal of Islamic Legal Thought* 20, no. 1 (2021): 43–76, <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v20i1.3150>

<sup>24</sup> M A bin Norasid, "Abdul Hadi Awang's Moderation of Thought (*Wasatiyyah*) on Nationhood Discourse through the Interpretation of the Quran," *AlBayan* 20, no. 2 (2022): 267–90, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22321969-12340116>.

<sup>25</sup> Y K Shokhayev, "'Literalism' as a Characteristic Feature of The Takfirism Idea," *Man in India* 97, no. 7 (2017):233–37, [https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus\\_id/85020544081](https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85020544081)

<sup>26</sup> S Kumar H M, "Islam and the Question of Confessional Religious Identity: The Islamic State, Apostasy, and the Making of a Theology of Violence," *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 5, no. 4 (2018): 327–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347798918806415>.

<sup>27</sup> Yusuf. Al-Qaradawi, "Islam: Moderation and Balance," Mizan Publishers, 2010.

importance of balance and moderation in religious practices.<sup>28</sup>

### Rejection of Takfirism

Although Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's "Is'af al-Mathali" does not explicitly discuss the issue of takfirism, the moderate principles promoted by him clearly show his rejection of acts of infidelity against other Muslims without a firm basis. Sheikh Mahfudh stressed that this quick and unfounded judgment goes against the true essence of Islamic teachings. He encouraged the importance of deep understanding and open dialogue as the foundation for dealing with differences of opinion among Muslims.<sup>29</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh's moderate approach is reflected in the scientific method he applied in "Is'af al-Mathali". He emphasizes the need for careful and comprehensive analysis in understanding Islamic teachings, avoiding hasty and unfounded conclusions. This view is relevant in the context of takfirism, where extremist groups often take quick steps to convert fellow Muslims without considering the broader and deeper aspects of Islamic teachings. Sheikh Mahfudh's approach prioritizes dialogue and deep understanding and aligns with Islamic teachings about justice and compassion.<sup>30</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh also emphasizes the importance of respecting differences of opinion in Islam. He taught that differences in interpretation and practice are typical and must be addressed with wisdom and tolerance. This inclusive approach strengthens unity and solidarity among Muslims, avoiding the divisions often caused by exclusive

attitudes and quick judgment. In this context, Sheikh Mahfudh's rejection of takfirism becomes very clear, considering that takfirism creates destructive divisions and conflicts.<sup>31</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh's view has received support from many Muslim scholars. For example, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, in his book "Islam: Moderation and Balance," emphasizes that Islam is a religion that teaches balance and rejects all forms of extremism.<sup>32</sup> This approach is also in line with the teachings of Al-Ghazali, who, in "Ihya' Ulum al-Din," emphasized the importance of balance and moderation in carrying out religious teachings.<sup>33</sup>

### Balance in Religion

The work "Is'af al-Mathali" by Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi emphasizes the importance of balance in carrying out the teachings of the Islamic religion. Sheikh Mahfudh points out that healthy religious practice must be based on a deep and consistent understanding of Islamic teachings. This moderate attitude is crucial in avoiding extremism, often the basis for takfirism. Through this work, Sheikh Mahfudh emphasizes that Islam is a religion that emphasizes balance, not fanaticism or extremism.<sup>34</sup> The moderate approach taken by Sheikh Mahfudh in "Is'af al-Mathali" reflects his belief that a deep understanding of Islamic teachings is the key to avoiding misunderstandings and extreme attitudes. He emphasized the importance of studying religious teachings and using scientific methods and critical analysis to achieve a correct and balanced understanding. This is especially

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<sup>28</sup> Abu Hamid. Al-Ghazali, "Ihya' Ulum Al-Din", *Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah.*, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> E Poljarevic, "Theology of Violence-Oriented Takfirism as a Political Theory: The Case of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)," *Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion*, 2021, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004435544\\_026](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004435544_026)

<sup>30</sup> H Swinhoe, "They Are Not Muslims. They Are Monsters: The Accidental Takfirism of British Political Elites," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 14, no. 2 (2021): 157–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2021.1902614>

<sup>31</sup> M R Wahab, "Dabiq Magazine As Medium Of Propagation For Thought Of Tawhid By Islamic State Of Iraq And Sham (ISIS)," *Afkar* 23, no. 2 (2022): 339–404, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol23no2.10>

<sup>32</sup> Al-Qaradawi, "Islam: Moderation and Balance."

<sup>33</sup> Al-Ghazali, "Ihya' Ulum Al-Din."

<sup>34</sup> E Alshech, "The Doctrinal Crisis within the Salafi-Jihadi Ranks and the Emergence of Neo-Takfirism: A Historical and Doctrinal Analysis," *Islamic Law and Society* 21, no. 4 (2014): 419–52, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-00214.p.04>

important in fighting takfirism, where quick and superficial judgments often lead to destructive and harmful actions.<sup>35</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh also emphasizes that balance in religious practice means avoiding excessive extreme attitudes. He points out that Islam teaches the middle way, avoiding excesses and seeking balance in all life aspects. This principle is relevant in takfirism, often driven by narrow and extreme interpretations of religious teachings. Sheikh Mahfudh invites Muslims to avoid extreme attitudes and promote tolerance and harmony by teaching the importance of balance.<sup>36</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh's view regarding balance aligns with the teachings of other leading scholars. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, for example, in his book "Islam : Moderation and Balance," emphasizes that Islam is a religion that teaches moderation and balance and rejects all forms of extremism and fanaticism.<sup>37</sup> This teaching is also in line with the principles taught by Al-Ghazali in "Ihya' Ulum al-Din," which emphasizes the importance of balance and moderation in carrying out religious teachings.<sup>38</sup> In his book *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, Fazlur Rahman also emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to interpreting Islamic teachings in the modern era.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, in the Indonesian context, the moderate and balanced approach taught by Sheikh Mahfudh is in line with the views of Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, the two most prominent Islamic organizations in Indonesia. These organizations also emphasize

the importance of moderation and rejection of extremism.<sup>40</sup>

This inclusive and moderate approach is also supported by academics such as Azyumardi Azra, whose various writings show that Islam in Indonesia has historically always prioritized moderation and tolerance. In her book "Islam: A Short History," Karen Armstrong also states that one of Islam's strengths is its ability to adapt and balance tradition and modernity.<sup>41</sup> Sheikh Mahfudh Tarmadzi's "Is'af al-Mathali" promotes balance in religious practice. By prioritizing deep understanding, consistency, and moderation, Sheikh Mahfudh shows Islam is a peaceful and inclusive religion. This approach is an effective antidote to takfirism, often driven by extreme attitudes and quick judgment. Thus, this work provides a solid basis for Muslims to carry out religious teachings with total balance and tolerance.<sup>42</sup>

### Respect for Diversity of Opinion

Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi, in his work "Is'af al-Mathali," shows a solid commitment to tolerance and dialogue in dealing with differences of opinion and religious practice among Muslims. He appreciates plurality of thought and teaches that differences in the interpretation and application of Islamic teachings are typical and must be addressed wisely. This approach is in sharp contrast to the takfiri attitude, which tends to be exclusive and intolerant, where extremist groups often disbelieve other people just because of differences in views.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> S Pandya, "Shunned and Purged: Turkey's Crackdown on the Hizmet (Gülen) Movement," *Philosophy and Politics - Critical Explorations*, 2021, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57476-5\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57476-5_10).

<sup>36</sup> D Lounnas, "The Shifts in the Jihadi-Salafi Paradigms: From the Peshawar and Jalalabad Paradigms to Those of Idleb and Raqqa," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 33, no. 3 (2021): 441-65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1544557>

<sup>37</sup> Al-Qaradawi, "Islam: Moderation and Balance."

<sup>38</sup> Al-Ghazali, "Ihya' Ulum Al-Din".

<sup>39</sup> Fazlur Rahman, "Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition," *University of Chicago Press*, 2023

<sup>40</sup> Haedar Nashir, "Muhammadiyah Movement of Renewal," *Muhammadiyah Voice*, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Karen. Armstrong, "Islam: A Short History.," *Modern Library.*, 2002

<sup>42</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid, *My Islam, Your Islam, Our Islam: Religion Society State Democracy.*, (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute., 2006)

<sup>43</sup> H A Zaki Mubarak, *The Great Mosque Of Tasikmalaya: History, Architecture, Figures And Islamic Movements In The City Of Santri* (zakimu. com, 2021).



Sheikh Mahfudh emphasizes that dialogue and deep understanding are the keys to overcoming differences and conflicts. He invited Muslims to engage in constructive and open discussions and learn from each other. In "Is'af al-Mathali," Sheikh Mahfudh shows how Islamic principles of sanitizing compassion and justice can be applied in everyday life, including interacting with those with different views. This approach not only strengthens the unity of Muslims but also prevents the emergence of extreme and radical attitudes.<sup>44</sup>

In the context of rejection of takfirism, Sheikh Mahfudh's approach is very relevant. Takfirism, which disbelieves other Muslims without solid grounds, is often driven by narrow and radical interpretations of religion. Through moderate and inclusive teachings, Sheikh Mahfudh shows that Islam is a religion that respects differences and promotes dialogue. This is reflected in his approach, which prioritizes a comprehensive and balanced understanding of religious teachings and avoids quick and superficial judgments.

Sheikh Mahfudh's views on tolerance and dialogue align with the teachings of many other Muslim scholars. In his book "Islam: Moderation and Balance," Yusuf Al-Qaradawi emphasizes the importance of tolerance and dialogue in Islam and rejects all forms of extremism and takfirism.<sup>45</sup> Fazlur Rahman, in "Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition," also underlines the importance of a balanced

and dialogical approach to facing modernity's challenges.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, this tolerant and dialogical approach is also supported by Islamic traditions in Indonesia, as taught by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. These two organizations emphasize the importance of moderation and tolerance in religious life and reject exclusive and intolerant attitudes that can damage religious harmony.<sup>47</sup>

Through his work "Is'af al-Mathali," Sheikh Mahfudh Tarmadzi promoted tolerance and dialogue in Islam. His approach shows that Islam is an inclusive and peaceful religion that respects differences and prioritizes dialogue to resolve conflict. In this way, Sheikh Mahfudh's teachings are an effective antidote to takfirism, often driven by extreme and intolerant attitudes. Sheikh Mahfudh invites Muslims to build a more harmonious and peaceful society through a moderate and dialogical approach.<sup>48</sup>

### Relevance in Contemporary Context

Sheikh Mahfudh's moderate thinking is very relevant in the contemporary context, where takfirism still poses a severe threat to Muslims' unity and harmony. Is'af al-Mathali provides an example of how *Wasatiyyah* thinking can be used to confront extremism. An investigation of Is'af al-Mathali's work shows that Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's *Wasatiyyah* thought offers a balanced and inclusive approach to takfirism. Sheikh Mahfudh significantly contributes to promoting a more harmonious and peaceful

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<sup>44</sup> J Zenn, "Debates and Controversies over the Legitimacy of 'Internet Sources' in Scholarship on Jihadism: The Online Dimension in the Persistence of the 'Al-Qaeda Narrative' in Boko Haram Studies," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1999799>

<sup>45</sup> M Masruri, "Asbab Al-Wurud as an Approach to Understanding the Purpose of Hadith (Maqasid Al-Sunnah) in a *Wasatiyyah* and Balanced Way That Is Practiced In Contemporary Society," *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental* 18, no. 9 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n9-083>

<sup>46</sup> Md. Asham Ahmad, "Moderation In Islam: A Conceptual Analysis Of *Wasatiyyah*," *TAFHIM: IKIM*

*Journal of Islam and the Contemporary World* 4, no. SE-Articles (September 29, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.56389/tafhim.vol4no1.2>

<sup>47</sup> S Ma'arif, "Islamic Moderation in Education and the Phenomenon of Cyberterrorism: A Systematic Literature Review," *Indonesian Journal of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science* 31, no. 3 (2023): 1523–33, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijeecs.v31.i3.pp1523-1533>.

<sup>48</sup> Muqowim, "Developing Religious Moderation in Indonesian Islamic Schools Through the Implementation of the Values of Islām Wasatiyyah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 19, no. 2 (2022): 207–22, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2022.192-03>

religious life by emphasizing the importance of balance, tolerance, and dialogue.<sup>49</sup> This research aims to provide deeper insight into the importance of *Wasatiyyah* in facing various contemporary religious challenges, especially in overcoming takfirism.

Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's moderate thoughts are very relevant in the contemporary context, where takfirism still poses a serious threat to Muslims' unity and harmony. In his work "Is'af al-Mathali," Sheikh Mahfudh provides a concrete example of how *Wasatiyyah*, or moderation thinking, can be used to deal with extremism. This moderate approach is relevant and crucial in overcoming the various religious challenges facing Muslims today.

An investigation into the work of "Is'af al-Mathali" shows that Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's *Wasatiyyah* thought offers a balanced and inclusive approach to takfirism. Sheikh Mahfudh emphasized the importance of balance in carrying out religious teachings and avoiding extreme attitudes, which often become the basis for takfirism. He encouraged Muslims to prioritize tolerance and dialogue in dealing with differences in religious opinions and practices. This approach not only prevents division but also promotes harmony among Muslims.<sup>50</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh's work, especially in "Is'af al-Mathali," significantly promote a more harmonious and peaceful religious life. He point out that Islam is a religion that respects differences and prioritizes dialogue as a way to resolve conflicts. By emphasizing the importance of deep understanding, balance, and tolerance, Sheikh Mahfudh provide clear and practical guidance for Muslims in dealing with takfirism and extremism.

Hopefully, this research will provide deeper insight into the importance of *Wasatiyyah* in facing various contemporary religious challenges, especially in overcoming takfirism. With a balanced and inclusive approach, Sheikh Mahfudh Tarmadzi has made a valuable contribution to shaping a more moderate and tolerant understanding of Islam. This approach is an important basis for efforts to build a harmonious and peaceful society and strengthen the unity of Muslims in facing the challenges of extremism and radicalism.<sup>51</sup>

Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's moderate thinking has become very relevant in the contemporary context, especially when facing the severe threat of takfirism to the unity and harmony of the Muslim Ummah. In his work "Is'af al-Mathali," Sheikh Mahfudh shows how the concept of *Wasatiyyah* or moderation can be applied to fight extremism. This approach is relevant and crucial in overcoming the various religious challenges facing Muslims today. Examining the work "Is'af al-Mathali" shows that Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's *Wasatiyyah* thought offers a balanced and inclusive approach to takfirism.<sup>52</sup>

Sheikh Mahfudh significantly contributes to promoting a more harmonious and peaceful religious life by emphasizing the importance of balance, tolerance, and dialogue. The following table summarizes the main points of Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's moderate thoughts and support from various relevant references.

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<sup>49</sup> M E Badar, "Killing in the Name of Islam? Assessing the Tunisian Approach to Criminalising Takfir and Incitement to Religious Hatred against International and Regional Human Rights Instruments," *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 39, no. 4 (2021): 481–507, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18918131.2021.2021665>

<sup>50</sup> M Badar, "The Radical Application of the Islamist Concept of Takfir," *Arab Law Quarterly*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15730255-31020044>

<sup>51</sup> A V Krylov, "Terrorist Islamist Groups on the Sinai Peninsula," *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations* 20, no. 4 (2020): 763–80, <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2020-20-4-763-780>.

<sup>52</sup> A V Krylov, "Middle East in the Face of Old Problems and New Challenges," *World Economy and International Relations* 66, no. 3 (2022): 33–43, <https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2022-66-3-33-43>

Aspect	Sheikh Mahfudh Tarmadzi's thoughts
<i>Wasatiyyah</i>	It teaches balance, moderation, and the middle way in various aspects of life, avoiding extremism and excess.
<i>Balance in Religion</i>	Emphasizing the importance of implementing Islamic teachings in a balanced way, not excessively practicing worship, and not being too loose.
<i>Justice in Muamalah</i>	Encourage a fair and balanced attitude in social relations and interactions with fellow humans, avoiding discrimination and injustice.
<i>Tolerance and Living Together</i>	We prioritize attitudes of tolerance and dialogue when dealing with differences of opinion and religious practices, rejecting exclusive and intolerant takfirism.
<i>Balance in Worldly Life and the Hereafter</i>	It emphasizes the importance of balancing worldly life and the afterlife, ensuring that every worldly action is accompanied by the intention of getting closer to Allah.
<i>Scientific and Moderate Approach</i>	It emphasizes the importance of a deep scientific approach to understanding and applying Islamic teachings, avoiding extremism and excessive attitudes.
<i>Rejection of Takfirism</i>	Reject takfirism, which disbelieves other Muslims without a firm basis, encouraging deep understanding and open dialogue in dealing with differences of opinion.
<i>Respect for Diversity of Opinion</i>	Respects plurality of thought and teaches that differences in the interpretation and application of Islamic teachings are typical and must be addressed wisely.
<i>Relevance in Contemporary Context</i>	Wasatiyyah 's thinking is very relevant in dealing with takfirism, which is a severe threat to the unity and harmony of Muslims, providing a concrete example of how moderation can be used to deal with extremism.
<i>Contribution to Religious Life</i>	Emphasizes the importance of deep understanding, balance, and tolerance in carrying out religious teachings, providing clear and practical guidance for Muslims in dealing with takfirism and extremism.

## Conclusion

Sheikh Muhammad Mahfudh Tarmadzi's moderate thinking, outlined in his work "Is'af al-Mathali'," shows significant relevance in facing the challenges of takfirism in the contemporary era. The concept of *Wasatiyyah*, which emphasizes balance, moderation, and the middle way, is at the heart of his teachings and is an effective antidote to extremism. Sheikh Mahfudh stresses the

importance of implementing Islamic teachings in a balanced way, both in worship, muamalah, and social interactions.

He emphasized that religion must be based on a deep understanding and be consistent with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, avoiding excessive attitudes that can cause fatigue or boredom. Apart from that, justice in muamalah is a fundamental principle that demands a fair and

balanced attitude in social relations, safeguarding the rights of others and creating an environment of harmony and mutual respect.

In dealing with differences in religious opinions and practices, Sheikh Mahfudh prioritizes an attitude of tolerance and dialogue, firmly rejecting takfirism, which extremist groups often use to disbelieve other Muslims. Tolerance and living together encourage everyone to respect differences and establish harmonious relationships with all groups.

Sheikh Mahfudh also explained the importance of balance between worldly life and the afterlife, ensuring that every worldly action is accompanied by the intention to get closer to Allah. The scientific and moderate approach that he applied shows that knowledge and religion can go hand in hand in harmony.

Sheikh Mahfudh's rejection of takfirism is visible in his work, where he strongly criticizes the practice of calling fellow Muslims infidels without a robust and transparent basis. He emphasized that accusations of infidelity can only be given in apparent situations and must go through a fair and careful process.

Sheikh Mahfudh's thoughts in "Is'af al-Mathali" significantly promote a more harmonious and peaceful religious life. Sheikh Mahfudh offers a balanced and inclusive approach to takfirism by emphasizing the importance of balanced tolerance and dialogue. It is hoped that this approach can provide deeper insight into the significance of *Wasatiyyah* in facing various contemporary religious challenges, especially in overcoming takfirism and building a more harmonious and peaceful society.

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