

CONCEPT OF *UMMATAN WASAṬAN* IN THE QUR'AN
(COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF *TAFSĪR AL-*
MARĀGHĪ AND *TAFSĪR AL-QUR'ĀN BI AL-IMLĀ'* BY
KH. ZAINI ABDUL MUN'IM)

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Abstract: This study discusses the interpretation of KH. Zaini Mun'im and Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī regarding the ummatan wasatan. This research is based on the problem that the interpretation of KH. Zaini Mun'im has the same method and data presentation, and was written at relatively the same time. Besides that, there is an assumption that KH. Zaini Mun'im has a similarity with the tafsīr al-Marāghī. By using the tafsīr muqāran method and tracing the works of both interpretations, 'Tafsīr bi al-Imlā' and 'Tafsīr al-Marāghī, this article concludes that: first, in terms of data presentation, the interpretation of KH. Zaini Mun'im shares similarities with Tafsīr al-Marāghī, and in some cases KH. Zaini Mun'im took al-Marāghī's opinion. However, the two of them differ in commenting on cases developing in their communities. When interpreting the Koran, KH. Zaini Mun'im always associated with Indonesian traditions and culture, especially the pesantren tradition. Second, when interpreting the wasatan ummatan, both KH. Zaini Mun'im and Ahmad Mustafa al-Marāghī have significant differences. For KH. Zaini, ummatan wasatan is not only a moderate ummah as stated by Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, but these moderate values must be based on al-Qur'an and hadith. This research also confirms that an interpretation, although in some cases taking the opinion of previous scholars, reflects the spirit of the times and traditions.

Keywords: Tafsīr bi al-Imlā' ; Tafsīr al-Marāghī; *Ummatan Wasaṭan*.

Introduction

Al-Qur'an is the book of god which the fundamental teachings of Islam are contained. Everything in the Qur'an is essentially a teaching that Muslims must cling to because it gives pieces of evidence and guidance in life to achieve the happiness of living in the world and the afterlife.¹ The ultimate goal of the Qur'an, among other things, is to be a human footstool in their lives and gain happiness not only in the world but also in the afterlife. For that goal to be embodied in human beings, the Qur'an comes with both global instructions and information that are detailed in the various issues and areas of life.²

The Qur'an is essentially a religious book, but the conversations and content of it are not confined to a purely religious field, it encompasses all aspects of human life. The Qur'an is not a book of philosophy or science, but there is a discussion of the subject. From the foregoing explanation that the Qur'an is a guide in various aspects of life. One of the fundamental problems the Qur'an explains is the problem of the people or related to the Islamic society themselves. It is because the ultimate goal of the Qur'an is to manifest changes in mankind, especially to Muslims, from negative to positive, or in QS. Ibrahim:1

Another basic issues in the study is the understanding of the doctrine of Islam, which is the difference in religion and madhhab. Islam is one but has a diverse way of understanding it. These realities then generate terms or labels in Islam itself, such as radical Islam and liberal Islam.³ Radical groups are those whose aim to transform existing economic, political, social, and cultural systems into systems of Islam. Their understanding that current laws have failed to solve problems for Muslims in Indonesia. Whereas liberals are excessively free Muslims who think too freely, who do not textually understand Islamic teachings, who are excessively tolerant

¹ Ahmad Fawaid, "Kaidah Mutarâdif Al-Alfâz Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 5, no. 1 (2015): 142–57.

² Ali Nurdin, Sayed Mahdi, and Arum Titisari, *Quranic Society: Menelusuri Konsep Masyarakat Ideal Dalam Al-Qur'an* (Erlangga, 2006).

³ Darlis Dawing Amri Aziz and Ahmad Baharuddin, "Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah: Paham Yang Moderat,," in *Konstruksi Islam Moderat: Mengungkap Perinsip Rasionalitas, Humanitas, Dan Universalitas Islam* (Makassar: Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2018).

of non-muslims, who have a very open and broad mindset following the development of The Times. This second wave offers freedom of thinking about Islamic teachings that are in serious opposition to the literary model of understanding.

They are a group of people who insist on a distorted interpretation of the language code that the early *Mufasssir* had agreed to. This harms the unity of Muslims, leading to groups of Muslims. The assortment of terminology behind the word of Islam is the result of orientalist efforts to divide the unity of Muslims.⁴ That said, there also appears to be a middle ground between the two upper branches. This, of course, would require reinforcing that the moderates referred to by researchers are not of the western or moderate in the western view, but the moderates referred to are within the Islamic context, which is the moderate meaning meant about the meaning of *wasafan*.

From that explanation, this article will intrigue by examining several scriptures that explain current issues as the answer to those above. The text that researchers refer to is Q.S. al-Baqarah: 143. In the above verse, it is said that the good people of the Qur'an are recited as *ummatan wasafan*. *Ummatan wasafan* becomes a topic in religious sermons or society organization discusses of recent times to understand how Muslims act and think through the concept of *wasaf*.

In the dictionary of *al-Munawwir*, the word of *wasafan* means center, and *wasif* means umpire or arbiter. In the Qur'an, the word of *wasaf* is mentioned by god five times, lies in four Surah, and consists of five verses. It's in QS. al-Baqarah: 143 as mentioned above, and QS. al-Baqarah: 238. The other three verses are Qs. Eighty-nine, QS. Al-Adiyat: 5 and QS. al-Qalam: 28. Al-Marāghī thinks *ummatan wasafan* in QS. al-Baqarah: 143 as the elect and medieval people. They were not overbearing opinions and were not unduly restrictive. As for KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im's opinion of *ummatan wasafan* as the people who held up Syariah and guide as-sunnah in the middle ground. This distinction later became a researcher's study by analyzing the methods and theories used by

⁴ Ibid.

KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im and Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, because of both interpretations.

The subject of the study was intrigued and focused more on the text, QS. al-Baqarah: 143. The restriction of this study is essential to the purpose of discussion materials deepening. The choice of that verse with consideration: *first*, adoration is the concept of an ideal society in the view of the Qur'an and can combine both inside and outside aspects, spiritual and material in all aspects of life. *Second*, the study of *ummatan wasaʿatan* is relevant today, because the current developments of much religious discourse are creeping through society and leading to extremes, both to too narrow and rigid thought, and to an understanding that is too liberal.

Every mufassir always has a different method, approach, or theory of interpreting a Qur'an. The different interpretations of one interpretation and another if combined will complement each other in analyzing the meaning of maturation. Against this background, researchers attempted to study and analyze to understand the similarities and interpretations of the Qur'an, between the interpretations of Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī and the interpretation of the Qur'an bi al-impla 'by KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im are both contemporary interpreters.

Terminology of *Ummatan Wasaʿatan* In al-Qur'ān

In the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, the word ummah or *umah* has been translated as adherents, believers, followers of a religion, and also mean human beings.⁵ The singular form of ummah, and the plural form of *umam* are derived from an Arabic root (*amma-yaummu-ammam*), means "to go, to be, to join, and to move." Lexicotically, the word of ummah has several meanings, among them, first of all: a human class, a second: a human class that was addressed to the prophet, such as ummah of the prophet Muḥammad (saw), the prophet Moses as, third: a generation of

⁵ Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2002).

people of the human race who became the one people.⁶ From the same root of the word, born also the word of um which means mother, and imam which means leaders, because mothers and leaders exemplify, a pillar of view, and a hope of the members of the community.⁷

Ibn al-Manzūr in a book of *Lisān al-'Arab* explains that *first*: the ummah have a religious understanding such as the word of god in QS. Al-Baqarah: 213, the word of *ummatah wahīdah* means one religion and QS. āl-Baqarah: 143; The ummah refers to a religion centered. *Second*, ummah in the sense of the generation, as in the sentences of *qad maḍat al-umam*. The sentence means “truly the generation has passed away.”⁸ But mankind’s understanding is not restricted to man only, the people in this matter have a very broad understanding. *First*, *ummah* can in the sense of animals as in QS. al-An’ām: 38 explains a bird flying on both wings. *Second*, ummah in the creature of jinn, in QS. al-A’rāf: 38. *Third*, in the sense of time, in QS. Hūd: 8 and QS. Yūsuf: 45. *Fourth*, in the sense of “imām” for example in QS. al-Naḥl: 120. *Fifth*, meaning religion, as in QS. al-Anbiyā’ : 92, QS. al-Mu’minūn: 52, and QS. al-Baqarah: 213.⁹

So the Qur’an does not expressly limit the meaning of ummah only to the human class. This means that all groups were assembled by something, such as the same religion, time, or place. That means there’s an equation that makes both man and beast living things. That bond has made them an ummah.¹⁰ Though it has a lot of meaning, the conclusion is the assembly. It is so flexible, so broad, it can include a variety of meanings and can thus accommodate all the differences.¹¹

Specifically, the word of *ummah* and *umam* its use in the Qur’an addressed to man and had some understanding. *First*, it means that every human class that a prophet or apostle has sent out to them is

⁶ Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur’an: Kajian Kosakata* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2014).

⁷ M Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Quran: Tafsir Tematik Atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Mizan Pustaka, 2010).

⁸ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān Al-Arab* (Kairo: Dar al-Ma’arif, n.d.).

⁹ Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur’an: Kajian Kosakata*.

¹⁰ Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Quran: Tafsir Tematik Atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat*.

¹¹ Ibid.

one ummah, such as the ummah of the prophet Nūḥ as, the ummah of Ibrāhīm as, the ummah of the prophet Mūsā as, the ummah of the prophet ʿĪsā, and the ummah of Prophet Muḥammad (saw). Some of the apostles were believers and others were faithless. Thus men were divided into several people according to the prophet or apostle who had been sent to them. This meaning, among other things, is expressed in QS. al-An'ām- 42, QS. Yūnus: 47, QS. al-Naḥl: 36 and 63, QS. al-Mu'minūn: 44, and QS. al-Qaṣaṣ: 75.

Second, there is a distinct religious class of people, such as Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It's listed among QS. al-A'rāf: 159 and 181, QS. Hūd: 48, QS. al-Naḥl: 36, and QS. Āli-Imrān: 104 and 110. *Third*, the word ummah or umam may also refer to a composite of people from various social layers bound by certain social bands made them one Class, as in QS. al-Anbiyā': 92, and QS. al-Mu'minūn: 52. *Fourth*, the two words above also mean the entire human race. This understanding, among other things, is found in QS. Yunus: 19, and QS. al-Baqarah: 213.¹²

***Ummatan Wasaṭan* Terminology In The Qur 'ān**

Wasaṭ in Arabic means middle. While *wasat* is also often sounded with moderate terms that are etymology in English, it means Medium demeanor and No exaggeration. For instance, being moderate means moderate person, soft, decent, ethical, couples, and sufficient. In the large dictionary of English, moderate means always avoiding extremes of behavior or expression, a tendency toward a middle ground, and being able to consider the views of others.¹³ In the meantime, moderate Arabic has a distinct meaning, the I 'tidal.

In Lisān 'al-Arab, *wasat* means a state and does not mean a name. As is the sentence *jalastu wasṭ al-qaum*. It means "I sit among the people" among them. Etymology suggests that the word *wasatān* means fair, choice, best, middle, and balanced. A just person will be in the middle and maintain balance when faced with two different circumstances. The middle of the two ends of something in Arabic

¹² Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur'an: Kajian Kosakata*.

¹³ Nasional, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*.

is called *wasath*, as in a hadith, “let all business go with *ausatubā* (the middle one).”

From terminology aspect, the word of *wasaf* means the middle position between the two opposing positions. It can also be understood as all that is good and according to its object. Like, courage is the mildness between carelessness and fear, the quality of philanthropy is the middle position between wasteful and stingy.¹⁴ Regarding the study above, the similarities in meaning between the words *wasaf* and moderate, as in the modern Islamic construction book, explains that the moderate in Arabic is known as *al-wasafiyah*. The moderate sense in the book is not too extreme to the right, and neither too extreme to the left. Moderates always project a balance between text and context, between revelation and reason. Because both are truths emanating from god almighty. To disregard one of them would mean to forsake some of god’s righteousness.¹⁵

As Toto Suharto’s view in his article on “Indonesianisasi Islam: Penguatan Islam Moderat Dalam Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia” explains that in modern Arabic, the equivalent of the word for moderates is “wasat or wasatiyyah, which means both middles, and good, and fair, and balanced.” Mukhis Jamil explains that moderate Islam in modern Arabic is called *al-islam al-wasat*, while Islamic moderations are expressed by the phrase *wasatiyyah al-islam*. The term moderate Islam is part of the overall teaching of Islam. Moderate Islam has its equivalent to the Arabic term *ummatan wasatan*.¹⁶

However, these moderates are also a debate for Muslims on a particular reason and basis. One is because the moderate word comes from the west which must be rejected. After all, the moderate in the west has a special wearer, also has a special characteristic for a person to be worthy of being called a moderate Muslim. The trigger for the rejection is that almost everyone who calls himself a

¹⁴ Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Ensiklopedia Al-Qur'an: Kajian Kosakata*.

¹⁵ Ahmad Fawaid and Thoriqotul Faizah, “A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Sword Verses,” *Al Quds Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 5 (2021): 119–40, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v5i1.2315>.

¹⁶ Toto Suharto, “Indonesianisasi Islam: Penguatan Islam Moderat Dalam Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia,” *Al-Tabrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 17, no. 1 (2017): 155–78.

moderate Muslim is either a pro or a shield against western projects in most Muslim countries.¹⁷ At the beginning of the 15th century H, was the age of Islamic revival. This matter provokes the west to implement it, and they set up strategic studies to withstand the rise of Islam. As for the strategy, it is to build moderate Islam in the face of the Islamic movement to further rise, to the point of dividing the unity of Muslims.¹⁸

According to the explanations above, moderates have two meanings by looking at two perceptions, which are moderate in the western sense and moderate in the Islamic sense. This, of course, would require reinforcing that the moderate in reference is not to the western or moderate in the western view, but rather to the moderate in the Islamic context, which is the moderate meaning about the sense of *wasātan*. Since the main title of this study is about *ummatan wasātan*, then a term that researchers use in this study is a term for *wasātan*, as for a reference to a researcher using a moderate-term, the researcher replacing it with the word of *wasātan*.

Based on a description of the terms of *ummatan* and *wasātan* above, it can be concluded that *ummatan wasātan* is a Muslim chosen as a people in the middle and fair in handling things to be the best and most perfect. In the hadith, “as good as problems are in the middle”. That is, in looking at and resolving a matter, *ummatan wasātan* tries a compromise approach and stands in the middle. Similarly, in dealing with differences both religious and madhhab, *ummatan wasātan* always adherences to tolerance, mutual respect, and maintaining a sincere belief in the truth of each madhhab based on *naqlī* and *‘aqlī*. So that all could accept the decision coolly, without blaming one another for engaging in anarchical action.¹⁹

¹⁷ Abdul Fatah, “RELASI JIHĀD DAN SABAR PERSPEKTIF MUHAMMAD HUSEIN T}ABA}T} ABĀI DALAM TAFSIR AL-MIZĀN Abdul Fatah UIN Sunan Kalijaga , Yogyakarta .” 1 (n.d.): 76–108.

¹⁸ Diana Khotibi, “Tentang Kebebasan Perempuan,” *Jurnal Tafsir Berwawasan Keindonesiaan Volume* 1, no. 2 (2020): 109–44.

¹⁹ Miftahatul Qalby, “Pandangan Al-Zamakhsharī Tentang Nikah Mut’ah: Analisis Ideologis Dalam Kitab Tafsir Al-Kashshāf,” *MUṢḤAF: Jurnal Tafsir Berwawasan Keindonesiaan* 1, no. 1 (2020): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.33650/mushaf.v1i1.1319>.

Before the descent of verse 143, the first verse descends is verse 144, as in the history of *rimāyah*, Muhammad bin Ishaq narrated from al-Bara' that the prophet saw when *ṣalāt* was still facing the Bait al-Maqdis he often turned his gaze to the heavens awaiting a command of God. Then god almighty. Lowering the letter of al-Baqarah, verse: 144; Al-Bara' continues his word:" So hey the Muslims, said!: "We want information on people (Muslims) who died before we faced the Kaaba. Then how will we pray to the Bait al-Maqdis?". Then god almighty. Lower the surah al-Baqarah, verse: 142-143.

From another history explains, Imām al-Bukhārī narrated from al-Bara' ibn Azīb that the prophet saw shalat appeared in front of Baitul Maqdis for 16 or 17 months. He wants to face Baitullah (Ka'bah). His first prayer before the Ka'bah was that of 'Aṣr. Then one of the friends who prayed with the prophet went out and passed by a group of friends in the middle mosque, 'he said: "I testify in the name of God, I have prayed with the prophet to face Makkah (the Kaaba)," so turn them around as those who prayed with the prophet to face Baitullah. And the people who died before the direction of the Qiblah shifted towards Makkah, the people who had been killed, we do not know what we said about them. Then god brought down.²⁰

The explanation above, that verses 144, 143, and 142 explain the question of the transfer of the direction of the Qiblah from facing Baitul Maqdis changed direction to Masjidil Aqsha and then to the Kaaba when the prophet was in Medina. The *Kiblat* removal caused many people to wonder. The people who then raised an insulting cry and did not accept it. It explains that they were foolish ones, Jews. That is why verse 143 describes the position of Muhammad's people as *ummatan wasaṭan*, they are the chosen and fair. This is a comparison to another ummah, who in history were the dissidents and blasphemers of Islam made up of *Quraisyh*, hypocrites, and Jews. The prophet Muḥammad's people were the best because they accepted the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and they had dealt justly with the teachings of Allah swt.

²⁰ Abu Nizhan, *Buku Pintar Al-Quran* (Qultum Media, 2008).

In the aspect of verses *munāsabah* (connection), before verse 143 surah al-Baqarah, explains the removal of the qiblat direction from Baitul Maqdis towards the Kaaba of Makkah. The removal towards the Kaaba was aimed at the goal of the Muslims to face to one and clear qiblah. This verse 143, correlated with the preceding verse (verse 142), because this verse explains the *ummatan wasatan* (middle), in the sense that the middle position here is meant to not deny the commandment of god SWT, to follow the direction of the qiblah that was commanded to face the Ka'bah.

As was explained in the *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* above, that the foolish ones among the people, the pagans, hypocrites, about their opposition to the change of direction of the qiblah in verse 142, so in verse 143, God made Islam his chosen and medieval people. It is the affirmation of Muslims as the best and elects.²¹

From verses 142-145 in surah al-Baqarah, can also be understood that God gives a test to believers, who are among those who truly believe, and who are still in doubt of Islam. For those who understand and know about the lesson of the qiblat movement, it is obvious that their faith will be even more embedded. But for those who feel doubts and tossed about by indecision, or who merely engage in religion, with no knowledge and imagination, surely their faith will be more faded.

Tafsīr al-Marāghī and Tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Imlā' **Intellectual Profile of Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī**

Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī was born in Marāgah city, a city which is located at the side of the Nile river, with about 70 Km in the south direction of Kairo city in the year 1300 H/1883 M. He was better known as al-Marāghī because of his hometown.²² When Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī was born, the political, social, and intellectual situation in Egypt was changing nationalism, for at the time "Egypt for the Egyptians" was attempting to break free from the difficulties of both Usmaniyyah and the British occupation. When Aḥmad

²¹ M Quraish Shihab, *Tafsīr Al-Misbah*, Jakarta: Lentera Hati, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002). 872

²² Saiful Amin Ghofur, "Profil Para Mufasir Al-Qur'an," *Yogyakarta: Pustaka Insan Madani*, 2008.

Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī entered school, he was taken by his parents to madrasah in his village to learn the Qur'an. By the age of 13th, he had memorized the Qur'an, and he had also studied tajwid science and the sharī'ah basis at madrasah until he finished his secondary education

After he finished high school in his hometown, his parents told him to move to Cairo to study at al-Azhār University in the year 1314 H / 1895 M.²³ While studying in al-Azhar he pursued Arabic, tafsīr, hadīth, balāghah, fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh, akhlaq, Qur'ān and falak as compared to others. On the other hand, he has been enrolled in the Cairo faculty. He was able to complete his studies at both colleges in 1909 M. This may have caused him to become one of the brightest students in his studies that he was eventually chosen as the finest alumnus in 1904 c.e. after Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī claimed his studies at al-Azhar and Dār al-'Ulūm, he began his career teaching in several secondary schools. He was then appointed head of the Madrasah Mu'allimīn in Fuyūn (a municipality some 300 km, 200 km southwest of Cairo). In 1916, he was appointed as an envoy to the al-Azhār University to teach Sharī'ah studies in Sudan. Not only he was busy teaching, but also al-Marāghī was busy writing scientific books.

In the next time, al-Marāghī was more settled, both as a bureaucrat and as an intellectual Muslim. He served as Qaḍī in Sudān until 1919 c.e., then being appointed the headmaster of the Sharī'ah in Dār al-'Ulūm in 1920 c.e. until 1940 c.e. and was appointed in 1928 to be the rector of the al-Azhār university for the second period in May 1928 and April 1935.²⁴ As he led al-Azhār, he attempted to continue his teacher's efforts to renew primarily in changing the mindset of Muslims who were then the best and were open to education. But what was planned as a very powerful

²³ Abdullah Mustafa Al-Maraghi, *Al-Fath Al-Mubin Fi Tabaqat Al-Usuliyyin* (Beirūt: Muhammad Amin, 1934). 72

²⁴ Fithrotin Fithrotin, "Metodologi Dan Karakteristik Penafsiran Ahmad Mustafa Al Maraghi Dalam Kitab Tafsir Al Maraghi," *Al Furqan: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Tafsir* 1, no. 2 (2018): 107–20.

challenge especially with traditional clergy? He finally put down the position²⁵

Meanwhile, Ahmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī became a professor of balāghah science and history of Islamic culture in the faculty of culture at al-Azhār University. During his lecture at al-Azhār and Dār al-'Ulūm, he lived in the Hilwan area and stayed there until his death, so that the city had a street named al-Maraghi. In addition, he also taught at the Ma'had Tarbiyah School for mu'allimīn for several years until he got his certificate of praise from the Egyptian king in 1361 H for his services. In 1370 H/1951 M, A year before his death, he was still teaching and was even believed to be the rector of the Madrasah Uthmān Māhir Bashā in Cairo until his dying day. Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī passed away on July 9, 1952 M/1371 H, in his residence, at 37 Hilwan Zul Fikar Bashā street, and was buried in his family's funeral in Hilwan, about 25 km from Cairo. The teachers of Ahmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī are Shaikh Muḥammad 'Abduh, Shaikh Muhammad Hasan al-'Adawi, Shaikh Bahis al-Mut'i, and Shaikh Rifa'i al-Fayuni.²⁶

Tafsir Al-Marāghī And The Political Situation

Knowing the figure of Ahmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī cannot escape our attention to the book of Tafsir al-Marāghī as his greatest work on interpretation. Ahmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī is one of many scholars who wrote in various scientific disciplines such as tafsir, fiqh, balāghah, and so on. As for what became the background of the study of the book of tafsir, it could be viewed impartially in the Muqaddimah interpretation that this study of the book of tafsir is affected by two factors

He received many questions from communities that were centered on matters of interpretation, things that are the most understandable and helpful to his readers and can be learned in a

²⁵ Ahmad Fawaid, "Filologi Naskah Tafsir Bi Al-Imlā' Surat Al-Baqarah Karya Kyai Zaini Mun'im," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 20, no. 2 (2019): 143, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2019.2002-02>.

²⁶ Sherly Dwi Agustin et al., "WACANA MISOGINIS DALAM DISKURSUS TAFSIR AKADEMIS: KAJIAN EPISTEMOLOGIS ATAS JURNAL TAHUN 2010-2019 Sherly Dwi Agustin UIN Sunan Kalijaga , Yogyakarta" 1 (2020): 25–52.

short period. Hearing the question, he found it rather difficult to answer that question. For revealing religious matters and incomprehensible difficulties, but most of the book of interpretation has been heavily spiced with terms of other sciences, such as *balāghah*, *naḥw*, *ṣarf*, *fiqh*, *tauḥīd*, and other sciences. All of that is an obstacle to understanding the Qur'an correctly for its readers.²⁷

In addition to this, the book of interpretation at the time was already complete with interpretations or already using scientific analyses as they were not needed at the time, according to him, the Qur'an did not need to be interpreted by scientific analysis because the scientific analysis was only valid for an instant (relative), because, with the passage of time or time, it was certainly the situation that would change, whereas the Qur'an was in force throughout the times.

This factor came from Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī himself, who had set out to be the torch for Islamic knowledge especially in the field of Interpretation studies, and therefore he felt obliged to develop the science he already had. As a result of that fact, it was that al-Maraghi, who had been dabbled in Arabic for more than half a century, both learning and teaching, felt called upon to compose a book of interpretation using a systematic and effective, simple language easy to understand. The book of interpretation is named "Tafsīr al-Marāghī".

Tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Imlā'

Intellectual Profile of KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im

KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im was born in the village of Galis district, about 9 km east of the town of Eastern Java, in 1906 from the couple. Abdul Mun'im and Nyai Hamidah. KH. Abdul Mun'im was the son of Kiai Mudarik, founder of a Panggung Galis Islamic Boarding House. This falling of genealogy came to Bendoro Saud, or more commonly known as Tumenggung Tirtonegoro, a Regent of Sumenep who was also a descendant of prince Ketandus or a grandson of Sunan Kudus. As for the mother of KH. Zaini Abdul

²⁷ Rifa Roifa, Rosihon Anwar, and Dadang Darmawan, "Perkembangan Tafsir Di Indonesia (Pra Kemerdekaan 1900-1945)," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (2017): 21–36.

Mun'im -Nyai Hamidah-descended from the Kings of Pamekasan through the KH. Bujuk Azhari (Raton Sidabulangan), the master of the Pamekasan palace.²⁸

At birth, his father named him Abdul Mughni, who after performing the pilgrim he is called Zaini. As customary in the house of Islamic boarding, KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im became the family's hope of becoming a believer and was able to replace his father as the school's caretaker. Therefore, at an early age, KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im had been taught the Qur'an by his mother, which was later followed by learning the Qur'an to his father, KH. Abdul Mun'im and KH. Shanhaji who was known as Kiai Anom, a cousin of Kiai Abdul Mun'im, who in daily activities helped Kiai Abdul Mun'im.²⁹

In 1917, at just the age of 11th, KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im attended Volk School (People's School) during the Dutch occupation. In this school, KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im received a Dutch education for four years and ended in 1921. After quitting community school, education is continued at nonformal educational institutions or Islamic boarding schools. Some of the messages he had stopped were the Pademangan Bangkalan Islamic boarding house at Madura under KH. Moh. Kholil and KH. Muntaha, for one year.³⁰ Banyuanyar Islamic Boarding House under the KH. Abdul Hamid and KH. Abdul Madjid since 1922. Sidogiri Pasuruan Islamic Boarding House under the KH. Nawawi since 1925. Tebuiyeng Jombang Islamic Boarding House under KH. Hasyim Asy'ari.³¹

His business as a mentor of the Islamic boarding house and as the manager of NU east regional Java did not cause his creativity to be encouraged. He has written several works: Nadzam Safinah

²⁸ Fawaid, "Filologi Naskah Tafsir Bi Al-Imlâ' Surat Al-Baqarah Karya Kyai Zaini Mun'im."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Mursyid Mursyid, "Pilihan Rasional Kiai Dan Desain Pendidikan Toleransi Di Pondok Pesantren Tebuiyeng Dan Nurul Jadid," *ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2016.11.1.27-55>.

³¹ Khoirul Anas, "QAŞAŞ QUR'ĀNI DALAM TAFSIR AL-BAQARAH KH ZAINI MUN'IM: TELAAH KISAH PENCIPTAAN NABI ADAM SEBAGAI KHALĪFAH," *MUŞĤAF: Jurnal Tafsir Berwawasan Keindonesiaan* 1, no. 1 (2020): 179–201.

Al-Najah in 1957, Nadzam Syu'bi al Iman in 1967, some Islamic Preaching problematic in 1971, Tafsir surah al-Fatihah bil Imla' in 1973, Tafsir surah al-Baqarah -- verse 124 in 1973.

The Interpretation of *Ummatan Wasa'atan* in Tafsir al-Marāghī and Tafsir al-Qur'ān bi al-Imlā'

Tafsir al-Marāghī

The prophet Muhammad's sending to the world aside for the Preaching Islam to every corner at once carried doctrine toward *ummatan wasa'atan*, a people who followed the middle way. Trust in the afterlife, then charity in this world. Seeking riches in defense of justice, putting spiritual and physical health first, for one is related to the other. Advance mind intelligence but by strengthening worship to sublimate feelings. As long as these people continue to walk *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, the upright way, and so long as they remain worshipers of the middle road. The holding out of the sentence *ummatan wasa'atan* going hand in the Qur'an is only once that it appears in QS. Al-Baqarah: 143.

كَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ
الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

“And so (also) we have made you (Muslims), a just and chosen people that be witnesses of (deeds) of people and that apostles (Muhammad) be witnesses of your (deeds)”³²

In the Dictionary of Qur'an sciences, the terms of *ummatan wasa'atan* mean a chosen people and fair, and it also means a middle people, meaning a middle people, who are oppressed in all their beliefs, not going beyond and too far in embracing them, as well as their morals and their atrocities, everything in the middle encompassing the question of the world and the next. The term *al-wasa'at* in Arabic is an *isim* (noun) that can be used for *mudhakkak* and *muannath*, *mufrad* and *jama'*.³³ Therefore, if the word *wasat* is

³² Department of Religion RI. *Al-Quran Indonesian Translation*. (Jakarta: PT. Sari Agung, 2002), p. 39.

³³ Ahsin W. Al-Hafidz, *Kamus Ilmu Al-Quran* (Jakarta: Amzah, 2005).

connected to the word *umat* it means; balanced, middle, or best people.

It is of great interest to note that this word *wasāʿatan* (middle, secondary, medieval) is found in the 43rd verse surah al-Baqarah, where all the verses are 286. That means that in terms of their placement, the word of *wasāʿatan* is right in the middle of the surah of al-Baqarah (286 divided by two is 143). Verse 143 is the one in the middle of surah al-Baqarah. It is stated meanings that we find most often in the interpretation of the ulama' of the word of *wasāʿatan*, with the interpretation of al-Maraghi in its interpretation book.

As the last celestial religion that God passed down through the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), Islam was interpreted to contain moderate teachings in it. In one verse the Qur'an of Muslims is called the *ummatan wasaʿatan*, which is moderate people neither extreme right nor left.³⁴ In its teaching structure, Islam always combines the two opposing extremes. For example, the teaching of Islam not only contains the issue of deity in esoteric (*aqidah*), but also of other matters involving humanity with its various implications in everyday life. In more detail, the Islamic component includes the three dimensions of doctrine, which are *al-Abkām al-ʿItiqādiyyah* (tauhid doctrine), *al-Abkām al-Khuluqīyyah* (ethics and morality), and *al-Abkām al-ʿAmaliyyah* (practical rules of daily life),³⁵ As universal teaching that knows no forms of inclusion, Islam can certainly reflect the virtues of freedom as long as it comes with responsibility both morally and legally. In other terms, Islam teaches the balance of freedom and responsibility in every command and deed. The variety and diversity of freedoms in Islam may include freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of thought (QS. al-Qaṣaṣ: 77).

Other characteristics inherent to Islam are *al-wasatiyyah* or *at-tawāzūn* (moderate), the middle road between opposing poles. Such as the center between spiritualism (*ruḥāniyyah*) and materialism (*maddīyah*)³⁶. If it is Viewed in the interpretations of the Qur'an, *din al-wasaʿat* (the middle religion) or *ummatan wasaʿatan* (the middle people),

³⁴ Abu Yazid, *Islam Moderat* (Jakarta: PENERBIT ERLANGGA, 2014). 7

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

was used to declare the religion in the middle of Christianity and the Jews.

What al-Maraghi expounded in his interpretation describes *ummatan wasa'atan*, that God has made Muslims as a chosen and middle people. These were not people who were overly critical of their opinions and were not unduly inhibited. Before the birth of Islam, mankind was divided into two groups. *First*, some people are always inclined toward the interests of the world and the needs of *jasmaniyah*, such as the Jews and *mushrikain*. *Second*, some bridle or clothe themselves with total spiritual customs and interests, there totally leaving behind worldliness, including their need for *jasmaniah*. Among them were the Christians and the *Sabi'in*. Then there are some adherents of the Hindu religious sect who are idolaters.³⁷

Tafsir al-Qur'an bi al-Imla'

The tolerant and accommodating character of *aswaja* resonates in *tawasuth* or *wasatiyyah* attitude, which is often translated into English as moderation. According to KH. Afifuddin Muhajir, *wasatiyyah* had another meaning, namely *al-waqi'iyah* (realistic). It's not acceptance and surrender to circumstance, but taking into account the reality and not being absolute, but while still trying to achieve an ideal³⁸

KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im argues in his interpretation that the meaning of *ummatan wasa'atan* is God's making of Muslims a people who implement *syari'ah* and guidelines on *as-sunnah* that are in the way of God in the religion and the limits which God has set and is in a middle way. So as not to become excesses in religion and make judges of their real intellect weak inability. And the Muslims are the chosen people and in the middle between the Jews and Christianity.³⁹

As it is known, before the birth of Islam, mankind was divided into two classes. Then came Islam, which attempts to smother between these two needs, the spiritual and secular (*jasmaniyah*), as well as the humane rights, where Islam views people as spiritual and physical. Or if you like, let's say that humans are

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Abdurrahman Wahid, and friends. *Islam Nusantara*, (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2015), p. 23.

³⁹ KH. Zaini Mun'im, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Bi Al-Imla'*. (T.p: T.tp, n.d.).

composed of angels and animals. So for a person to become a perfect human being, it must meet both of these needs in a balanced and united.⁴⁰

Muslims are a people given by syari'ah in deed and word towards the *haq* to stay away from mistakes. It was also the apostle who was created as a witness of the Muslims. And following the guidelines and principles and guidelines of God's teaching are a self-model in distinguishing right from wrong, so the person is an obedient servant of God and uses his learning to approach prayerfully worship of God. And an honest person can distinguish from error and turn away from God's religion⁴¹.

From the interpretation of KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im is discernible to *Nabdhijyah* character with heavy. The framework of mindfulness with NU characters based on *Ablu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, that is moderate thought patterns (*tawassuth* or *I'tidal*), balanced thought patterns, not to go too far in understanding textual religious teachings, nor to go too far in understanding of textual religious teachings, also do not tend to overdo the idea of civic duty (*tawaḥḥun*) with tolerant thought patterns, can live peacefully with other groups although have a difference *aqidah*, the way of thinking and culture (*tasāmub*), the reformative thought pattern, Pursuing improvements in a better direction (*ishlābiyyah*), a constructive mind-set, constantly contextual in response to problems (*taṭawwur*), and a methodological mindset, using a framework of thought referred to by *Nabdlatul Ulama* (*manhajiyah*).

His *nabdhijyah* character is evident when mentioning that a group of people will be said to be *ummatan wasaṭan* when it has followed the things God has outlined. Not only carry out the Syariah but it still has to adhere to the Qur'an and the sunnah by bringing it up through the middle ground, not exaggerating or being too withdrawn.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Significance of *Ummatan Wasatan* On the Indonesian Context.

There came a verse describing the *ummatan wasatan* by warning Muhammad's people that they were a people in the middle, going straight, not glued to the world so they will be enslaved by things and matters, even though it would feed on the blood of their fellowmen. Neither was it merely a matter of spirituality, So it can't be run because the body was alive. Islam came to reunite between those two pathways of life. In the prayer began to clear the meeting between the two, prayer was done with the body, did stand, *ruku'* and did obeisance, but all of it must be done peacefully.

It also appears on Friday's rules. That day from morning may work hard in his search for sustenance, commerce, and farming, and so forth, but upon coming the Friday prayer call let immediately set out to carry out the prayer, to call and remember god. And after prayer, immediately leave the mosque to go to work and work again. This pointed to the middle between the three rival religions of Jews, Christianity, and Islam. From the two interpretations that the researchers learned, though at one time it seems to be the same but there is a difference. KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im is more critical to interpret *ummatan wasatan*. And al-Maraghi tends to be more universal in his interpretations of the theme subject of the study.

Both al-Maraghi and KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im mean *wasat* with a fair and the middle characters. More than that is overacting. If less is called *taqsir*, too restrictive or narrow. Both of these final qualities are highly regarded. Among the three qualities, the most sublime is *wasat* (middle). That is, no exaggeration, no excess, and no restraint. It is as the poet once said. The different interpretations of al-Maraghi and KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im was al-Maraghi interpreting *ummatan wasatan* curtly and directly to the point. Al-Maraghi mentions interpretations of *ummatan wasatan* with the chosen and the middle. These are not people who were overly critical of their opinions and were not unduly inhibited. And it ended up there by not explaining more fully the immense claims of *ummatan wasatan* based on al-Maraghi.

Whereas KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im interprets it in more detail and specifics. That the *ummatan wasatan* in his interpretation is that the people who held the syari'ah and guided on as-sunnah which

were in the way of God in the religion and the limits God had set and was in a middle way. So as not to become excesses in religion and make judges of their real intellect weak inability.

Further, KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im also said that Allah SWT mentions to the people of Muhammad saw as *ummatan wasaʿatan* nothing more than their notion of balance in religion, which they are not like the ones of Christian's excessive life in the priesthood (*tarabḥhub*), and excessive in honoring the prophet Isa as, they are not like the Jews who had so despised the religion of his God, by changing the verses that had been handed down, Lying and killing his apostles.

But the people of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) are between the two factions above. Therefore, Allah SWT addressed them with *wasatan*, since basically, the business that God favored was the middle one. Thus, the combination concept of researchers into the notion of *ummatan wasaʿatan* by examining the two interpretations is a balanced society, a quality at the center of two extreme poles, that is a tendency toward the interests of the world and the physical needs of the Jews, and a total tendency toward self-restraint from the mundane. Or in other words, *ummatan wasaʿatan* is a balanced society because of their middle position and can select and select the best of all opposites.

In the concept of *ummatan wasaʿatan* there is also an attitude of appreciation or respect among religious believers, as in QS.as-Syura: 15. With the same intent but with a different explanation, M. Quraish Shihab said that the concept of *ummatan wasaʿatan* is a moderate society of not drowning in a life of materialism, nor rising high in the life of spiritualism. When the eye is faced in heaven, the foot must stand on the earth. Islam teaches the people to reach for temporal material, but with celestial values.⁴²

The result of *ummatan wasaʿatan* is the growing unity and united among human beings from the external side, that is outside of Islam and its internal side, that is inside Islam itself. It means that there is a good relationship between fellow living creatures, as well as a good relationship with God almighty., so what God promises of

⁴² Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*.

happiness and salvation both in this world and in the next can be achieved.

To achieve this, Muslims must uphold the values of justice, freedom, and equality in the wake of prosperity, which is the mercy of life. This is a steady vision of Islam amid life. In addition to the word of *ummatan wasaṭan*, the Qur'an also mentions a term for a group of people that has roughly the same meaning: *ummatan muqtaṣṣidah*. The term is found in QS. Al-Maidah (5); 66

According to Ahmad Muṣṭafa al-Marāghī, it appears that the meaning of *ummatan muqtaṣṣidah* is almost identical to *ummatan wasaṭan*, because it contains the same meaning of moderate and unstuck at the extreme. They also serve to maintain consistent application of key values amid distorted communities around them. The difference is that the coverage of *ummah muqtaṣṣidah* is a sub-religious community (Jewish or Christian), that acts in their religious teaching, and it is the middle group that quickly accepts the truth and responds to reform efforts. Whereas *ummatan wasaṭan* was one of the same religious communities, that is Islam which is located between Jewish and Christian communities.⁴³ That is the discussion of the *ummatan wasaṭan* and its concepts in the perspective of Tafsīr Aḥmad Muṣṭhafā al-Marāghī and the interpretation of Tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Imlā' by KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im

Conclusion

From the discussion of *ummatan wasaṭan*, it could be concluded that Aḥmad Muṣṭhafā al-Marāghī and KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im takes a different view of the meanings used in interpreting *ummatan wasaṭan* as follows: *ummatan wasaṭan* according to al-Marāghī is a chosen people and the middle. These are not people who were overly critical of their opinions and were not unduly inhibited. KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im argues about *ummatan wasaṭan* as a people who held shari'ah and guide on as-Sunnah through the middle way to avoid becoming an inflated religious person and make a judge of their intellect which are weak inability. Relevance of the interpretation of *ummatan wasaṭan* according to Aḥmad Muṣṭhafā al-Marāghī and

⁴³ Musthafa al-Maraghi, *Tafsir Al-Maraghi Juz 1* (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2010). 516.

KH. Zaini Abdul Mun'im is a balanced society, with qualities at the center of two extreme poles, a tendency toward the interests of the world and the physical needs of the Jews, and a total tendency to be independent of the mundane. Or in other words, *ummatan wasatan* is a balanced society that lives in the balance because of its position in the middle and can select and select the best of all opposites

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