



Religious Moderation in the Era of Ali ibn Abi Talib's Leadership

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Abstract

Religious moderation referred to a middle-path principle that upheld balance, justice, and tolerance in religious life. This study aimed to describe the implementation of religious moderation values during the leadership of Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was known as a visionary leader in facing early Islamic social, political, and religious challenges. This research employed a qualitative approach with a library research design and content analysis of relevant primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. The findings revealed that values such as justice, equality, nonviolence, tolerance, life balance, and deliberation were strongly reflected in various aspects of Ali's leadership, including legal practices, governance, social relations, state policy, and scholarly contributions in the field of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). Narratives such as the dispute over war armor with a Christian citizen, the fair resolution of a bread-sharing conflict, and a humanistic leadership approach illustrated Ali's strong commitment to moderation. The implications suggested that Ali ibn Abi Talib's exemplary leadership remained relevant as a character education model, particularly in strengthening religious moderation in contemporary Islamic education. This research provided a deep historical perspective and encouraged the integration of moderate values into contextual and reflective Islamic Religious Education.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation emphasizes a balance between firm belief and tolerance for differences, while rejecting all forms of violence and radicalism (Siswadi et al., 2024). The concept is rooted in the Arabic term *wasathiyah*, which is closely related in meaning to *tawassuth* (moderation), *i'tidal* (justice), and *tawazun* (balance) (Anas et al., 2023; Manca, 2022). In Arabic, *wasathiyah* is also interpreted as "the best choice." Regardless of the term used, they all convey the same essential meaning: justice, which in this context refers to taking a middle path between various extreme positions (Nurdin, 2021).

In this context, the implementation of religious moderation focuses on fostering peace (Rahman, 2024) and harmony amidst diversity (Amtiran & Kriswibowo, 2024), both in interpersonal relationships and within social and political spheres, by prioritizing the principles of justice and mutual respect. When properly applied, the values of religious moderation can strengthen national unity and cohesion (Aryansyah & Fadhli, 2024), reduce the risk of religious conflict (Saumantri, 2023), and nurture a peaceful, just, and harmonious society amid diversity (Kusuma & Maskuri, 2025). To enhance the understanding and application of religious moderation values, it is essential to

examine historical examples that have successfully managed diversity in a harmonious manner.

The implementation of religious moderation during the era of the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn* presents a model of wise (Suryani & Dewi, 2024) and inclusive leadership (Wahyuni et al., 2025). Through the policies they enacted, the values of tolerance, justice, and brotherhood were successfully realized within a pluralistic society. In the context of Indonesia's rich diversity, the valuable lessons from the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn* period are increasingly relevant today.

During the leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib, challenges to religious moderation reached their peak, particularly due to internal conflicts within the Muslim community, such as the Battle of Siffin. Despite facing political turmoil and divisions among the ummah, Ali consistently upheld the principles of justice, consultation (*shūrā*), and the avoidance of excessive violence. He rejected the exploitation of power for personal or group interests and chose instead to prioritize the unity of the Muslim community, even under intense pressure.

The importance of studying the historical implementation of religious moderation during the era of the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*, particularly under the leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib, extends beyond the academic realm and carries significant implications for social life. By understanding the historical roots of moderation in Islam, we can develop a more critical perspective on contemporary religious issues within society. Furthermore, this study can contribute to the development of more inclusive and tolerant public policies.

Religious moderation is becoming increasingly crucial in Indonesia's multicultural society (Rosela et al., 2025). The growing complexity of challenges related to radicalism and intolerance

demands continuous reinforcement of the values of unity and tolerance. By studying the practices of moderation implemented by the Prophet's companions, we can identify relevant solutions to address various religious issues faced by the nation.

In addition, it is important to emphasize the active role of communities in supporting these values. The experience from the era of the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn* teaches us that religious moderation is not solely the responsibility of the government or educational institutions, but also a duty of every individual within society. Therefore, community-based approaches involving interfaith dialogue, inclusive social activities, and collaboration among different groups can strengthen the foundations of tolerance and brotherhood.

Several previous studies have explored the topic of religious moderation in various contexts.. Sulastri (2024) highlights the implementation of religious moderation values within Indonesia's pluralistic society. The primary focus is on the practice of moderation in the daily lives of modern communities, with the aim of fostering peace and interreligious tolerance. While this study presents religious moderation as a practical response to contemporary socio-cultural challenges, it does not address the historical dimensions of the concept.

Furthermore, Junaidi & Ninoersy (2021) emphasize the importance of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and the principle of *wasathiyah* (balance) as the foundation of moderation practices in Islam. These concepts are positioned as theological and ethical bases for building peaceful and civilized relationships among individuals and religious communities. However, this study remains normative and conceptual in nature, focusing solely on contemporary Muslim life, without exploring the historical practices of classical Islamic figures who exemplified these values.

on the other hand, explores how the principles of moderation can be internalized through Islamic education programs. This study focuses on strategies for implementing moderation within contemporary *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), particularly in shaping students' character to be inclusive and tolerant of differences. While the research highlights the importance of moderate values in Islamic education, it does not address the historical dimension or the exemplary leadership of early Islamic figures in promoting moderation.

Based on these three studies, it is evident that religious moderation has been extensively examined in the context of modern society and contemporary Islamic education. However, there remains a lack of research that explores the values of religious moderation from a historical perspective, particularly during the early development of Islam under the leadership of the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*.

In this context, Ali ibn Abi Talib stands out as a key figure who faced complex political, social, and religious circumstances. His moderate stance in responding to various conflicts and differences within the Muslim community is a subject worthy of deeper examination. Therefore, this study aims to describe the implementation of religious moderation values during the leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the method of library research (Mubarok, 2022). This approach was chosen because the research focuses on examining relevant literature to explore the theme of religious moderation during the leadership of the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*, particularly that of Ali ibn Abi Talib.

This study was conducted in several phases, including preparation, implementation, data collection, analysis,

reporting, and revision, over a period of approximately three months. The researcher did not use field data, but instead gathered and analyzed information from documents and written sources.

The data sources in this study consist of three types: primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. Primary data were obtained from key texts that directly discuss the figures under study, such as *Perjalanan Hidup Empat Khalifah Rasul Yang Agung* by Ibn Kathir, *Tarikh al-Khulafā'* by Al-Suyuthi, and *Biografi Ali Bin Abi Thalib* by Ali Muhammad al-Shallabi. Secondary sources were used to support and enrich the analysis, including books such as Religious Moderation published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, The Medina Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights by Cholil Nafis, and *Islam yang Disalahpahami* by M. Quraish Shihab. Additionally, supporting sources such as articles, journals, and other relevant documents were also utilized.

Data collection was carried out using documentation techniques, namely by reviewing the content of books, articles, and other relevant writings. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis. This analysis was conducted through several stages: (1) defining the research objectives, (2) grouping terms or keywords, (3) prioritizing key components, (4) selecting relevant data, (5) establishing conceptual relationships, (6) determining the sample, and (7) formulating coding categories.

To ensure the validity of the data, source verification techniques were employed, including external criticism (to assess the authenticity of the sources) and internal criticism (to evaluate the credibility of the content). Verification was conducted by comparing multiple sources and performing cross-checks to ensure that the data used were objective and accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The story of Caliph Ali and his armor

One day, Caliph Ali found his suit of armor in the possession of a Christian man. Believing with certainty that it belonged to him and had never been sold or given away, Caliph Ali brought the matter to court before Judge Shurayh. In the courtroom, Caliph Ali clearly presented his claim.

What is particularly noteworthy is the response of the defendant. The Christian man insisted that the suit of armor belonged to him, while adding, "In my view, the Commander of the Faithful is not a liar." Judge Shurayh, upholding the principles of justice, then turned to Caliph Ali and asked, "O Commander of the Faithful, do you have any evidence to support your claim?"

With humility, Caliph Ali smiled and replied, "Shurayh is right, I have no evidence." This marked the pinnacle of justice. Since no proof could be presented, Judge Shurayh ruled that the suit of armor rightfully belonged to the Christian man.

This decision may have been surprising, given Caliph Ali's position as a leader. However, an unexpected turn of events followed. After taking the suit of armor and walking a few steps away, the Christian man returned. Filled with awe, he exclaimed, "I bear witness that this is the law of the prophets! The Commander of the Faithful himself brought me before the judge, and the judge ruled against him. I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

He then revealed the truth, saying, "By Allah, this suit of armor is yours, O Commander of the Faithful. I saw it fall from your gray camel as you were on your way to the Battle of Siffin" (Katsir, 2014). This story serves as a powerful reminder that, in the eyes of the law, all individuals are equal. Even a leader must submit to legal procedures and cannot impose his will without valid evidence. It is a legacy of justice worthy of emulation, a principle that remains relevant to this day. The values of moderation reflected in this story include:

Table 1. The Value of Moderation in the Story of Caliph Ali and His Armor

No	Values of Religious Moderation	Explanation
1	Keadilan	Caliph Ali, although a leader and the rightful owner of the armor, submitted to the legal process and accepted the judge's fair decision, even when the ruling was not in his favor. This demonstrates that justice must be upheld for everyone, regardless of status or position.
2	Equality of Rights and Obligations	This story clearly shows that in the eyes of the law, the rights and obligations of a leader are the same as those of ordinary citizens. Caliph Ali did not abuse his power to impose his will but instead followed legal procedures that apply to all.
3	Tolerance	Caliph Ali brought his case to court against a Christian opponent. He did not use religious differences as a reason to act unjustly or to impose his will. On the contrary, he showed that the rights of non-Muslims must also be respected and protected under the legal system.
4	Nonviolence	When he lost his armor, Caliph Ali did not resort to violence or intimidation. He chose the peaceful legal route to resolve the dispute, demonstrating that problems should always be resolved through civilized and nonviolent means.
5	Public Benefit (<i>Maslahah</i>)	The fair judge's decision, although not in favor of Caliph Ali, ultimately brought about greater benefit. It not only restored justice for the individual but also fostered trust in the legal

system and even led the Christian man to acknowledge the truth of Islam after witnessing real justice.

Pearls of Wisdom from Caliph Ali

Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib, a prominent figure in Islamic history, once delivered a series of timeless pieces of advice that continue to serve as valuable guidance for all. He emphasized that knowledge must be pursued and applied, not merely retained as information in the mind. For through practice, knowledge is truly mastered, and one becomes recognized as an expert. This counsel becomes even more relevant in light of his warning about the coming of a time when much of the truth would be denied.

Amid such challenges, only those who remain vigilant against falsehood and have the courage to correct it, described as the “lanterns of knowledge”, will be saved. They are individuals who stand firmly for the truth, serving as guides in times of darkness, far from carelessness or the neglect of their own potential.

Furthermore, Caliph Ali directs our attention to the true nature of the worldly life and the hereafter. He affirmed that this world is temporary and will eventually pass, while the hereafter is the eternal destination that awaits. Therefore, we are encouraged to become “children of the hereafter”, individuals who prioritize preparation for eternal life, rather than being fixated on the fleeting pleasures of this world.

The attitude of *zuhd*, or detachment from worldly luxuries, is key. This does not mean possessing nothing, but rather that the heart is not enslaved by wealth. A person who longs for the hereafter will be able to restrain themselves from the temptations of desire, while fear of hell will keep them away from forbidden acts. Conversely, the hope for paradise will motivate them to hasten in performing good deeds. Even calamities will feel light for those whose hearts are not attached to the world.

Caliph Ali also portrayed a vivid image of Allah’s devout servants. These are individuals with unwavering belief in the afterlife, as if they had seen paradise and hell with their own eyes. At night, they stand in prayer with deep reverence, their tears flowing as they plead for forgiveness and deliverance from the fire of hell. During the day, they are gentle scholars, righteous individuals, and God-fearing role models for others. Even when their sincerity is misunderstood or perceived as odd by others, they remain steadfast on the path of truth.

In his sermon, Caliph Ali once again reminded that life in this world is merely a “starting point,” and the “finish” lies in the hereafter. This world is only a temporary stopover, a place where pleasures can be enjoyed by both the righteous and the wicked. However, the hereafter is a certain promise, where the supreme law of Allah will be fully upheld. He also warned against the deception of Satan, who instills fear of poverty to drive people toward wickedness, while in truth, Allah promises boundless forgiveness and mercy.

Therefore, Caliph Ali urged that every second of life be used to do good deeds in preparation for the eternal future in paradise. He also gave a stern reminder of the severity of hell as a consequence for those who disobey Allah. The two things he feared most for his people were following base desires and having long, unrealistic hopes, as both can hinder one from the truth and cause neglect of the ultimate goal, the hereafter (Katsir, 2014).

The counsel of Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib serves as a comprehensive moral compass, guiding us to navigate life with wisdom. He not only emphasized the importance of applied knowledge as a provision for facing the challenges of the times, but also instilled a deep awareness of the transient nature of the worldly life

and the hereafter as the ultimate destination.

Through his portrayal of Allah's devout servants and his stern warnings about base desires and unrealistic ambitions, Caliph Ali urges us to constantly maintain balance, prioritize

preparation for the hereafter, and use every moment of life for goodness. His teachings remain timelessly relevant for those seeking a meaningful life. The values of moderation reflected in this narrative include:

Table 2. The Values of Moderation in the Pearls of Wisdom from Caliph Ali

No	Values of Religious Moderation	Explanation
1	Balance (Proportionality)	Caliph Ali's advice clearly emphasizes the importance of balancing worldly life and the hereafter. He urges us to be "children of the hereafter" without entirely neglecting the world, instead using it as preparation for the afterlife. This is evident in his call to do good throughout life and in the patience of Allah's servants who "endure a few remaining days to attain eternal peace in the hereafter."
2	Comprehensive Understanding of Islam	Caliph Ali encouraged the pursuit and practice of knowledge to become truly knowledgeable, not just superficially informed. This reflects a holistic understanding that religious teachings are not merely theoretical, but must be realized in action. He also warned of a time when truth would be denied, implying the need for deep understanding to avoid misguidance.
3	Public Benefit (<i>Maslahah</i>)	His advice to perform good deeds in pursuit of paradise and to avoid the forbidden out of fear of hell is essentially oriented toward goodness and benefit, both for oneself and for others. When someone lives in obedience to God, it brings well-being not only to the individual but also to the surrounding community.
4	Relevance to the Times	Caliph Ali's warning about "an era in which ninety percent of the truth will be denied" shows that religious teachings must remain adaptable and relevant in the face of contemporary challenges. He did not advocate isolation but called for being a "lamp of knowledge" that cures the ills of society.

Caliph Ali Bin Abi Thalib's Solution to the Dispute Between Two Bakery Owners

According to a narration by Zarr bin Habisy, two men once shared a lunch consisting of eight loaves of bread—five brought by one man and three by the other. As they ate, a traveling stranger joined them, and the eight loaves were equally divided among the three of them. Afterward, the traveler gave them eight dirhams as compensation. A dispute arose when the man who had contributed five loaves claimed five dirhams and the one who had brought three loaves asked for three, while a third party demanded that the amount be divided equally.

When the case was brought before Caliph Ali, he initially offered three

dirhams to the man who owned three loaves of bread. However, after a request for a "just and truthful" division, Caliph Ali explained that if the eight loaves were broken down into 24 one-third portions, each of the three individuals would have consumed $\frac{8}{3}$ portions. The owner of three loaves, who originally held $\frac{9}{3}$ portions, would have contributed only one portion to the traveler, while the owner of five loaves, originally holding $\frac{15}{3}$ portions, would have contributed seven. Therefore, Caliph Ali ruled that the man with three loaves was entitled to one dirham, while the man with five loaves was entitled to seven dirhams—a decision that was ultimately accepted (As-Suyuthi, 2015).

The story of the loaves and dirhams decided by Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib powerfully illustrates the pinnacle of

wisdom and the integrity of justice. The values of moderation reflected in this story include:

Table 3. The Values of Moderation in the Story of the Dispute Between Two Bread Owners

No	Values of Religious Moderation	Explanation
1	Justice	Caliph Ali firmly rejected any division that was not based on actual contribution, whether it was an equal split proposed by the owner of three loaves, or a division based solely on original ownership as suggested by the owner of five loaves. He upheld substantive justice through precise calculation, ensuring that each party received their due in proportion to their real contribution, not through baseless compromise. This reflects the principle that justice must be upheld objectively and rationally.
2	Comprehensive Understanding of Islam	Caliph Ali did not view the issue superficially; instead, he applied deep logical and mathematical reasoning to reach a fair resolution. This reflects the understanding that Islamic teachings, especially regarding justice, are not grounded in emotion or assumption, but require clear and comprehensive reasoning based on facts.

Ali bin Abi Thalib's Leadership Managerial Principles

As a leader, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib demonstrated exceptional managerial qualities, emphasizing justice, empathy, competence, and participation. His letters and directives to his officials reflect a profound philosophy of leadership, one that centers on the welfare of the people and the integrity of governance.

One of the core principles emphasized by Ali ibn Abi Talib was the importance of maintaining a balance between firmness and compassion in dealing with the people. He once admonished an official who had been criticized for cruelty and harsh treatment, advising him to "wear the garment of gentleness, seasoned with a touch of firmness." This illustrates that a leader must be flexible, capable of drawing near and pulling back, tightening and loosening, according to the needs of the situation, in order to foster harmony and build trust.

In addition, Ali ibn Abi Talib held knowledge and expertise in the highest regard for anyone entrusted with responsibility. He asserted that a leader

who possesses both qualities is entitled to obedience; however, without them, obedience is not obligatory. This underscores the importance of competence as a fundamental basis for legitimate leadership.

In implementing decisions and interacting with subordinates, Ali ibn Abi Talib emphasized that leadership is not merely a matter of formality. A leader must be able to create a calm and open atmosphere in which subordinates feel safe to express their concerns. He even advised leaders to set aside specific times, removing guards and officials, so that the people could speak freely. His letter to Qathsam ibn al-'Abbas, stating, "Do not place any barrier between yourself and your people except through your words; let there be no separation except through your face," further reinforces the idea of direct, unbureaucratic engagement between a leader and the people. This highlights that face-to-face communication is essential for understanding public needs and grievances.

In matters of official appointments, Amir al-Mu'minin gave firm instructions to the governor of Egypt to carefully examine

and evaluate candidates, ensuring that appointments were based on merit rather than personal relationships or influence. This highlights his strong commitment to meritocracy and integrity within the system of governance.

Finally, Ali ibn Abi Talib strongly advocated for shura (consultation) in all matters, without imposing restrictions on its form or procedure. He emphasized that there is no affair that does not require consultation, underscoring its importance in all aspects of human endeavor. Involving various parties, including experts and specialists, in decision-

making across sectors, such as military, finance, and field operations, is believed to minimize errors and bring decisions closer to the truth. Decisions that result from collective discussion and deliberation tend to be of higher quality and greater accuracy (Ash-Shallabi, 2022).

Ali ibn Abi Talib's managerial principles reflect a people-centered leadership model, aimed at achieving effective and harmonious governance. The values of moderation reflected in the leadership style of Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib include:

Table 4. The Values of Moderation in the Managerial Principles of Ali ibn Abi Talib

No	Values of Religious Moderation	Explanation
1	Balance	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib emphasized the importance of balancing firmness and compassion in interacting with the people.
2	Justice	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib explicitly stressed justice in the appointment of officials, insisting that selection must not be based on personal relationships or influence, but only after assessing a candidate's merit. This reflects the principle of placing things in their proper place and giving rights to those who are truly entitled.
3	Nonviolence	Although the term "nonviolence" is not stated explicitly, Ali Ibn Abi Thalib emphasis on gentleness, direct dialogue with the people, and creating a calm environment in which subordinates can express concerns without fear implicitly indicates a rejection of violence or intimidation in governance.
4	Unity and Solidarity	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib directive to involve various parties in decision-making through consultation (shura), including experts from different fields, aimed to minimize errors and approach the truth. Such collective decision-making fosters solidarity and togetherness, which are foundational to unity.
5	Equality of Rights and Obligations	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib insistence that leaders listen directly to the people's grievances without barriers or gatekeeping from soldiers or aides, and that everyone should be able to speak without fear, reflects a commitment to equal rights in expressing views and complaints, regardless of background.

The Generous Soul of Ali bin Abi Thalib

Ali ibn Abi Talib was a figure deeply influenced by the teachings of the Qur'an and the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is reflected in his noble character and generosity, which were inseparable aspects of his personality.

A story narrated by Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir illustrates how highly Ali valued the dignity of those who sought help. On one

occasion, a man came to Ali ibn Abi Talib in need. The man had prayed to Allah before approaching him, promising to praise Allah and thank Ali if his request was fulfilled, and to praise only Allah and apologize to Ali if it was not.

Upon hearing this, Ali said, "Write down your need on the ground. I do not want to see the expression of humiliation on the face of a supplicant." The man then wrote, "Indeed, I am a person in need. I

require clothing.” Immediately afterward, a garment was given to him, and he wore it.

Ali then stated that he also had an obligation to pay some dinars. Immediately, 100 dinars were brought, and that amount was used to settle the man’s debt. When Al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah asked why Ali had given a garment and 100 dinars, Ali replied, “I once heard the Messenger of Allah say, ‘Put people in their rightful places.’ This is the rightful place for this man beside me.” This story illustrates how deeply Ali valued the dignity of others and sought to fulfill their needs in the most honorable manner.

Ali ibn Abi Talib was also known for his great respect for guests and honoring

his friends. He always felt joy whenever his home was visited by guests. It is even narrated that Ali said, “If for seven days no guest visits me, I fear that Allah may have humiliated me.” This demonstrates how important hospitality and social bonds were to him.

Ali’s love for friendship is also reflected in his statement that giving twenty dirhams to a friend for the sake of Allah is more beloved than giving one hundred dirhams in charity to the poor (Ash-Shallabi, 2022). This highlights the high value he placed on friendships founded on sincerity for Allah. The values of religious moderation derived from the above exposition include:

Table 5. The Values of Moderation in the Generous Soul of Ali Ibn Abi Thalib

No	Values of Religious Moderation	Explanation
1	Public Benefit (<i>Maslahah</i>)	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib actions fulfilled the needs of a supplicant while preserving their dignity. He did not merely give but ensured that the giving was done in a way that honored the recipient.
2	Unity and Solidarity	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib statement that he preferred to give twenty dirhams to a friend for the sake of Allah rather than a hundred dirhams to a poor person reflects a high value on friendship and social bonds. This is foundational for building solidarity and togetherness, which lie at the core of cross-group unity. His joy when guests visited his home also reflects efforts to strengthen social ties.

Security, Defense and State Relations during the Era of Caliph Ali bin Abi Thalib

Amir al-Mu’minin Ali ibn Abi Talib appointed several police officers, including Abu Al-Hayyaz Al-Asadi, Qais bin Sad bin Ubadah, Maqil bin Qais Ar-Rayyahi, Malik bin Khabib Al-Yarbu’i, Al-Ashbagh bin Nubatah, and Said bin Sariyah bin Murrah Al-Khuza’i. Among the social roles assigned to the police at that time were assisting those in need, guiding the lost, feeding the poor, showing compassion, and performing other humanitarian duties aimed at seeking the pleasure of Allah.

From this, it is clear that security during the rule of the *Khulafā’ al-Rāshidīn*

was already an integral part of modern civilization’s concept of public service to society. The role of the police institution was not limited merely to ensuring public safety, although that was indeed its primary duty (Ash-Shallabi, 2022). His reflects a forward-looking leadership vision, in which security personnel functioned not only as enforcers but also as servants of the community, grounded in values of compassion and mutual assistance.

Furthermore, Ali ibn Abi Talib emphasized the importance of forming and equipping a strong armed force to protect the territory. He advised Malik An-Nakhai that military leaders must stay close to their troops, be just in supporting

them, and ensure that the needs of the soldiers and their families are met. In doing so, the soldiers can fully concentrate on fighting the enemy without worrying about their livelihood. The kindness of the leader toward them will secure their loyalty. In other words, the responsibility for forming and funding the military lies with the head of state or governor, who must also appoint competent military commanders and provide full support to enable them to carry out their primary duties (Ash-Shallabi, 2022).

Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib subsequently provided important guidance for the state in handling foreign relations, both in times of peace and war. He advised his governor, Malik Al-Ashtar, not to reject peace offers from the enemy if they bring benefits, as this can provide tranquility for the troops and security for the state. However, he also cautioned to remain vigilant after peace is established, since the enemy might seek opportunities during moments of complacency.

Once a treaty is made, Ali emphasized the importance of fulfilling promises honestly, as this is a duty before Allah and a means to unite the people. He strictly forbade deceiving the enemy or making agreements that could cause misunderstandings, reminding that enduring hardship to keep a promise is better than breaking it, which could lead to dire consequences in this world and the hereafter (Ash-Shallabi, 2022).

Ali ibn Abi Talib's leadership encompassed a comprehensive vision: he established a humane police force that serves and aids the community, formed a strong military with attention to the welfare of soldiers, and prioritized honesty and caution in diplomacy to uphold international agreements, demonstrating a holistic leadership model grounded in morality. The values of moderation reflected in the above policies include:

Table 6. The Values of Moderation in Security, Defense, and State Relations

No	Values of Religious Moderation	Explanation
1	Public Benefit (Maslahah)	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib prioritized public service oriented toward broad benefits for society through the role of the police, who not only maintain security but also assist those in need, provide guidance, feed the poor, and show compassion. Furthermore, his guidance to accept peace offers if they bring benefit to the army and the state also demonstrates a focus on the common good.
2	Nonviolence	Ali's vision of a humane and compassionate police force, not merely punitive, implicitly rejects the use of violence or intimidation. In foreign relations, his emphasis on honesty in treaties and prohibition of deceit reflects a rejection of aggressive or cunning actions that could provoke conflict.
3	Unity and Solidarity	Ali's orders to military leaders to attend to the welfare of soldiers and their families aimed to foster loyalty and win their hearts, which is crucial for the cohesion and unity of the armed forces. In foreign politics, his insistence on fulfilling promises as a means to unify the people shows that adherence to agreements is foundational to unity, both internally and externally.
4	Patriotism (Defending the Nation)	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib emphasis on building a strong military to protect and defend the territory is a concrete manifestation of the value of patriotism. The responsibility of the head of state or governor to prepare, organize, and fund the military, and to ensure the troops focus on fighting the enemy, directly correlates with active participation in maintaining the nation's stability and integrity.

The Scientific Role of Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Thalib in the Field of Fiqh

Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib, widely recognized for his extensive knowledge and profound understanding of religion, paid special attention to explaining legal rulings and worship obligations (Ash-Shallabi, 2022). He was not only well-versed in the theoretical intricacies of Sharia but also actively involved in ensuring that the community comprehended and properly implemented Islamic teachings in daily life. His commitment went beyond mere transmission of information; it represented a genuine effort to preserve the purity of religious doctrine and to ensure that every act of worship and matter of Islamic law was practiced accurately and in accordance with divine guidance.

Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib made a significant contribution to the establishment and strengthening of legal institutions during his rule. His role extended beyond that of a head of state, he also served as a foundational pillar of the Islamic judicial system. His *ijtihad*, the process of interpreting and deriving legal rulings based on Islamic sources, was

particularly prominent across various domains, especially in handling cases related to *qisas* (retaliatory justice), *hudud* (fixed punishments prescribed by Sharia), criminal law, and *ta'zir* (discretionary punishments determined by a judge) (Ash-Shallabi, 2022).

Ali ibn Abi Talib also made an extraordinary contribution to the development of Islamic jurisprudential scholarship (*madrasah fiqhiyyah*). He was not merely an enforcer of the law but also a visionary legal thinker. His far-sighted *ijtihad* was grounded in deep scholarship, a comprehensive understanding of *fiqh*, and a strong grasp of *maqasid al-shariah*, the higher objectives behind Islamic law. This positioned Ali ibn Abi Talib as a central figure who enriched the Islamic legal tradition, providing a rational and contextually relevant framework for future generations to continue exploring and applying Islamic law in accordance with the demands of the time. His contributions ensured that the legal system he helped build stood not only upon textual foundations but also aligned with the spirit and overarching purposes of the Sharia. The values of religious moderation found in the above contributions include:

Table 7. The Values of Moderation in the Scientific Role of Ali Ibn Abi Thalib in the Field of Fiqh

No	Values of Religious Moderation	Explanation
1	Comprehensive Understanding of Islam	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib not only had a broad understanding of legal rulings and worship, but also actively ensured that the Muslim community understood and applied Islamic teachings correctly. His <i>ijtihad</i> (independent legal reasoning), based on deep knowledge, a comprehensive grasp of <i>fiqh</i> , and mastery of <i>maqasid al-shariah</i> (objectives of Islamic law), reflects a holistic approach to religion, one that considers various sources and contexts, rather than fragmentary interpretations.
2	Justice	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib played a prominent role in establishing and strengthening legal institutions. His <i>ijtihad</i> in matters of <i>qisas</i> (retaliation), <i>hudud</i> (fixed punishments), criminal law, and <i>ta'zir</i> (discretionary punishment) demonstrates his commitment to upholding justice. He ensured that sharia law was implemented accurately and consistently, placing everything in its rightful place and giving each their due.
3	Relevance to the Times	Ali Ibn Abi Thalib contributions to the development of Islamic jurisprudence schools through his forward-looking <i>ijtihad</i> and mastery of <i>maqasid al-shariah</i> demonstrate his ability to connect

religious values with contemporary realities and needs. He provided a rational and relevant framework, ensuring that the legal system remained aligned with the spirit and higher objectives of Islamic law. pemikiran yang rasional dan relevan, memastikan sistem hukum selaras dengan semangat dan tujuan utama syariat

Based on the findings of this study on religious moderation in the leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib, it is evident that the Islamic values he upheld reflect principles of moderation that are highly relevant in the modern context. Through the case of the coat of armor and the court trial involving a Christian man, Ali demonstrated justice, tolerance, and respect for equality before the law. Despite holding the position of head of state, he did not abuse his authority but instead chose a legal path that was legitimate and transparent. This illustrates that leadership grounded in the principles of moderation can serve as a model and foster interfaith trust.

In the moral and spiritual dimension, Ali's counsel reflects a balanced approach between worldly life and the hereafter, as well as the importance of applied knowledge. He emphasized the urgency of critical thinking, maintaining personal piety, and developing a comprehensive understanding of religion as a means to face the challenges of the times. The concept of *zuhud* (asceticism) that he taught also illustrates a form of moderation in worldly engagement, not abandoning the world, but not making it the ultimate goal. This value serves as a vital counterbalance in an era of materialism that can easily lead the ummah astray.

Ali's leadership was also characterized by moderate and inclusive managerial principles. He upheld meritocracy, listened to the aspirations of the people without bureaucratic barriers, and encouraged consultation (*shura*) in every decision-making process. This reflects a model of good governance that is not only efficient but also just. Even in

matters of security and defense, Ali emphasized the humanitarian role of law enforcement and prioritized diplomacy and honesty in foreign relations, demonstrating a commitment to nonviolence and public welfare in state administration.

Finally, in the field of Islamic scholarship, Ali's contributions to the development of *fiqh* through the *maqasid al-shariah* approach serve as evidence that a comprehensive understanding of Islam must be adaptive to the needs of the time. His *ijtihad* not only preserved the authority of Islamic law but also made it relevant and progressive. This demonstrates that religious moderation is not a compromise of core teachings, but rather an effort to make religion functional and solution-oriented in responding to the dynamics of society.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the values of religious moderation during the caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Talib were evident across various aspects of life, from legal resolution and leadership to social and state policy. The stories of the dispute over the coat of armor and the bread-sharing conflict highlight Ali's commitment to justice, equality, and peaceful resolution, even when such outcomes were personally disadvantageous to him as a leader. His leadership style reflected humanistic principles, combining compassion, competence, and consultation for the greater good of the community.

On the other hand, Ali's scholarly contributions reflect a comprehensive and contextual understanding of Islam. He

emphasized the importance of applied knowledge and *ijtihad* grounded in *maqasid al-shariah*, while also strengthening the legal system to achieve substantive justice. Principles such as the balance between worldly and spiritual life, tolerance, nonviolence, and contextual relevance make Ali's leadership a model of religious moderation that remains practical and applicable to contemporary social, political, and spiritual life.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) actively integrate the exemplary character of Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib into the curriculum, particularly in fostering students' religious moderation. This can be achieved by reinforcing values such as justice, tolerance, nonviolence, balanced living, and consultation (*shura*). PAI should be designed not merely as a transfer of knowledge but as a process of internalizing values through contextual and reflective approaches, enabling students to apply the principles of moderation in a pluralistic social environment.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study on the implementation of religious moderation values during the leadership of other *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*. Such studies would enrich the historical perspective and strengthen the relevance of moderation values within contemporary Islamic education.

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