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The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah (Religion and Global Politics)

By Mohammad Hashim Kamali



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The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah (Religion and Global Politics) By Mohammad Hashim Kamali

Winner of the I.R. Iran World Award for Book of the Year

In *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam*, leading Islamic law expert Mohammad Hashim Kamali examines the concept of *wasatiyyah*, or moderation, arguing that scholars, religious communities, and policy circles alike must have access to this governing principle that drives the silent majority of Muslims, rather than focusing on the extremist fringe. Kamali explores *wasatiyyah* in both historical/conceptual terms and in contemporary/practical terms. Tracing the definition and scope of the concept from the foundational sources of Islam, the Qu'ran and Hadith, he demonstrates that *wasatiyyah* has a long and well-developed history in Islamic law and applies the concept to contemporary issues of global policy, such as justice, women's rights, environmental and financial balance, and globalization.

Framing his work as an open dialogue against a now-decades long formulation of the arguably destructive Huntingtonian "clash of civilizations" thesis as well as the public rhetoric of fear of Muslim extremism since the attacks of September 11, 2001, Kamali connects historical conceptions of *wasatiyyah* to the themes of state and international law, governance, and cultural maladies in the Muslim world and beyond. Both a descriptive and prescriptive meditation on a key but often neglected principle of Islam, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam* provides insight into an idea that is in the strategic interest of the West both to show and practice for themselves and to recognize in Muslim countries.



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Editorial Review

Review

"This scholarly book is a major addition to works that deal with 'moderate' Islam, still the Islam of the majority of Muslims, which is also traditional Islam. Drawing from a wide range of sources and many notable voices, Kamali presents an extensive range of issues from social justice to the environmental crisis, from spirituality to relation with other religions, all seen from the perspective of moderation or wasaṭiyyah, which is the authentic Islamic perspective. Kamali is to be congratulated for writing a much needed work on normative and genuine Islam at a time when so many strident forces and voices, both the non-Islamic and nominally Islamic, are seeking to eclipse in the eyes of many the authentic image of the Islamic religion." -- Seyyed Hossein Nasr, University Professor of Islamic Studies, The George Washington University

"Extremely timely, bridge-building and opening new insights on the true content of Islam. An absolute must for all those fighting for a better understanding between Christianity and Islam. On the basis of neglected sources of Islam the author deals with salient issues such as jihad, women's rights, and interreligious intolerance, demonstrating that the true Islam advocates for moderation as a cornerstone for religious pluralism." --Professor Dr. Rüdiger Wolfrum, Managing Director of the Max-Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law, Heidelberg, Germany

"For years Mohammad Hashim Kamali has been one of the leading scholars in the world articulating an understanding of Islamic law that is equally grounded in the tradition of Islamic jurisprudence and also responsive to the needs and sensibilities of modern Muslims. This book is at once the culmination of decades of thinking about justice, authority and knowledge in Islam and a major new statement about how Islamic principles of moderation can cohere into a comprehensive vision of religious morality. It will undoubtedly take its place as the major point of reference for this vision, and be studied closely across the globe." -- Andrew F. March, Associate Professor of Political Science, Yale University

"Another accessible and learned work from one of the scholars who has done the most to bring Islamic law to a global audience and discussions of comparative law. And very timely." --Jonathan Brown, Associate Professor, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and Associate Director of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University

"With this book, Kamali (founding CEO, International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies [IAIS], Malaysia) adds to a long list of invaluable corrective studies on Islam targeting both scholarly and general readers... Kamali offers a convincing, sensitive reading of practices of religious pluralism among Muslims. A culmination of his decades of scholarship on Islamic law and jurisprudence, this book should serve as an important reference for years to come... Highly recommended." --*CHOICE*

"What I find particularly attractive about this book is that it is written in a style that both scholars and the general public will find accessible and yet without losing its academic rigour... Going beyond the pure theory of Wasatiyyah in this applied part of the book, Prof Kamali engages in a crucial set of meditations about how our Islamic traditions, when guided by the middle way, go beyond just dealing tolerantly with other religions." --*His Royal Highness, Sultan Dr Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, Sultan of Perak*

About the Author

Mohammad Hashim Kamali was Dean and Professor at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and the International Islamic University in Malaysia. He currently heads the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia.

Tariq Ramadan is Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies at Oxford University (Oriental Institute, St. Antony's College).

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