

Conference on the Unity of Islamic Discourse under the title of Moderation and Centrism

(Translated)

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On Sunday, February 15, 2026, the first conference of the Ministry of Religious Endowments, entitled “Unity of Islamic Discourse,” commenced at the Damascus Conference Palace. The conference was held under the auspices of the Presidency and the Supreme Fatwa Council, and was attended by official and religious figures, including scholars and preachers from various schools of thought and religious outreach across the Syrian governorates. The conference concluded with a number of principles, which were compiled into a final charter. Media outlets, including the official SANA News Agency, focused on the sixth principle, emphasizing that the conference aimed to unify religious discourse based on moderation and centrism.

The proposal to unify religious discourse on the basis of moderation and centrism is another expression of the idea of renewing religious discourse, which Western countries are attempting to impose on us, in response to what they describe as extremist, radical, and exclusionary discourse.

The sixth principle of the conference charter stipulated that moderation and centrism are an authentic Islamic approach, the standard by which all religious discourse is measured, avoiding both excess and negligence. Allah (swt) Almighty said ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا﴾ **“And thus We have made you a Ummah of Wasat.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 143].

Therefore, the aim is to regulate religious discourse, that is, to regulate legal rulings and fatwas according to this purported principle, which guides any religious discourse, regardless of its nature, in contrast to other interpretations that might lean towards excess or negligence.

However, what is meant by this noble verse? Does it truly indicate a methodology of moderation and centrism, or something else?

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir said in his Tafsir, وقوله تعالى: ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا﴾ يقول تعالى: إنما حولناكم إلى قبلة إبراهيم، عليه السلام، واختارناها لكم لنجعلكم خيار الأمم، لتكونوا يوم القيامة شهداء على الأمم؛ لأن الجميع معترفون لكم بالفضل. والوسط هنا: الخيار والأجود، كما يقال: قريش أوسط العرب نسباً وداراً، أي خيرها. وكان رسول الله ﷺ وسطاً في قومه، أي أشرفهم نسباً، ومنه الصلاة الوسطى التي هي أفضل الصلوات، وهي العصر، كما ثبت في الصحاح وغيرها. ولما جعل الله هذه الأمة وسطاً خصها بأكمل الشرائع وأقوم المناهج وأوضح المذاهب، كما قال تعالى: ﴿وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِثْلَهُ أَيْبُكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ﴾ **“And Allah Almighty says, “And thus We have made you an Ummah of Wasat so that you will be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger will be a witness over you.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 143]. Allah (swt) is saying that We have turned you towards the Qiblah of Ibrahim (as) and chosen it for you so that you may be the best of all nations, so that on the Day of Resurrection you will be witnesses over the nations, because everyone will acknowledge your superiority. The Wasat here means “the most in goodness and the best” as it is said: “Quraysh is the most Wasat of the Arabs in lineage and abode,” meaning the “best of them.” And the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the Wasat of his people, meaning the noblest of them in lineage. From this comes the As-

Salah Al-Wusta, which is the best of prayers, and it is the Asr Salah, as has been established in the authentic hadith collections and elsewhere. And when Allah (swt) made this Ummah an Ummah of Wasat, He singled it out with the most complete laws, the most upright paths, and the clearest doctrines, as He (swt) said, ﴿وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِثْلَ مِثْلَةِ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ﴾ **“Wage Jihad for Allah (swt) in the way He deserves, for it is He Who has chosen you, and laid upon you no hardship in the Deen— the way of your forefather Ibrahim. It is Allah Who named you ‘the ones who submit’ in the earlier Scriptures and in this Quran, so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over humanity.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Hajj: 78]. End of Ibn Kathir’s statement."

So, this is the meaning of Wasat: it is the most favored and the most good, and it also embodies the attribute of justice, which is a condition in the law of testimony. It is also a condition for the Ummah of Muhammad (saw) which will bear witness against other nations on the Day of Judgment, that they received the messages of the Messengers (as).

This idea contradicts the notion of a moderate, centrist discourse that pleases the West, which aims to change Islamic Shariah rulings to conform to the times, and which considers any Islamic discourse that calls for the implementation of Islamic Shariah Law in real life and advocates for a clear distinction between believers and disbelievers as extremist, and contrary to the Wasat that Islam mandates.

The West wants an Islam that is only consulted on matters of menstruation, purity, Salah, Hajj, and individual worship. It does not want an Islam that changes the political, economic, and social face of the world and becomes an alternative system to the capitalist system, which is the cause of humanity’s misery.

Therefore, the West is forcing the current Syrian administration not to adopt Islam in the state and society, and to keep Islam confined within masajid and some Shariah Laws related to personal status, and is forcing them to fight any Islamic orientation or Islamic discourse that makes Dawah for a real Islamic state in Syria that adopts Islam as a comprehensive system of life.

Therefore, it would have been more appropriate for the ulema and sheikhs organizing the conference to dedicate its purpose to demanding that the Syrian administration implement Islamic Shariah Law and end the era of secular rule in the country. Only Islamic Shariah Law can resolve all our problems and narrow the scope of disagreement between Islamic schools of thought and sects; for the **أمر الإمام يرفع الخلاف** “The order of the Imam resolves disputes,” as the ulema of the Usool of Fiqh have stated.

The problem is not the multiplicity of Islamic discourse, but rather the lack of an Imam for the Ummah who takes care of its affairs, according to the Shariah rulings of Islam, unifies its people, supports its oppressed, defends its borders, and restores its pride and dignity after a century of humiliation, disgrace, dispersion, loss, and subservience to the West and the East.