



MUSLIM Institute

Mission of Unity, Stability & Leadership In Muslims

A WEBINAR ON

CONCEPT OF MODERATION IN ISLAM

TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2021

ORGANISED BY

**MUSLIM INSTITUTE &
AZERBAIJAN INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY**

HONOURABLE SPEAKERS



**MAJ. GEN. (R) DR. SHAHID
AHMED HASHMAT**

FORMER PRINCIPAL MUST INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES
CHAIR OF SESSION



PROF. AGIL SHIRINOV
RECTOR OF AZERBAIJAN INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY
OPENING REMARKS



**SAHIBZADA SULTAN
AHMED ALI**

DEWAN (PM) OF JUNAGADH STATE & CHAIRMAN MUSLIM INSTITUTE
WELCOMING REMARKS



DR. AALIA SOHAIL KHAN
FORMER RECTOR OF RAWALPINDI WOMEN UNIVERSITY
GUEST REMARKS



**ASSOC. PROF. ANAR
GAFAROV**

HOD, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, AZERBAIJAN INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY
GUEST REMARKS



**AMB. (R) MS.
NAGHMANA HASHMI**
FORMER AMBASSADOR OF PAKISTAN TO CHINA, EUROPEAN UNION AND IRELAND
GUEST REMARKS



MR. RAVAN HASANOV
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BAKU INTERNATIONAL MULTICULTURALISM CENTRE.
GUEST REMARKS



**ASSOC. PROF. ELNURA
AZIZOVA**
DEAN, FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, AZERBAIJAN INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY
GUEST REMARKS

MUSLIM Institute in collaboration with Azerbaijan Institute of theology organized a webinar “Concept of Moderation in Islam” on 29th June 2021. Maj. Gen. (R) Dr. Shahid Ahmed Hashmat (Former Principal NUST Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies) was the chair of the session. Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali (Dewan (PM) of Junagadh State and Chairman of MUSLIM Institute) gave the welcome remarks and vote of thanks. Assist. Prof. Agil Shirinov (Rector of Azerbaijan Institute of Theology) gave the opening remarks.

Moderation and tolerance are unique qualities of a human being and are the essence of Islam provided that their actual meanings are understood and acted upon in letter and spirit. Perpetual increase in extremism and radicalisation around the globe has made it more important for world community to understand the Islamic concept of moderation. To understand the meaning of Islamic moderation, one needs to understand that Islam is a complete way of life and not just a precept of beliefs and rituals. The Islamic concept of moderation encompasses physical, spiritual, psychological, legal, intellectual, and philosophical aspects of life. It transforms both the individual character and the collective culture thus affecting personal as well as national life of an individual. International aspects of communal life are also covered by the Islamic concept of moderation i.e. social engagements, political encounters, religious doctrines, spiritual realities, civilizational development and nation-building. The Muslim use of the term moderation “al-Wasaṭiyyah” is derived from Holy Quran “And, in the same way, (O Muslims,) We made you the best Umma (Community—fair to all with a tolerant, moderate and balanced outlook)

so that you may bear witness to the people” (Al-Baqarah, 2:143).

The term “Just/balanced community” i.e., the best, most honourable, most perfect, exemplary is interpreted as referring to the first generation of the Islamic community who received training and education directly from the Holy Prophet. This interpretation includes Sufis as well in the ambit of the best and exemplary community because they are immersed in the love of Allah and Prophet (ﷺ) as Divine truths are revealed to their pure hearts. Sufis are ardent lovers of God; they are immersed in the love of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Their hearts have been purified and they are upholders of prophetic light.

Sufis exemplify the best qualities of gentleness, humility, tolerance, patience, forgiveness, magnanimity of spirit and there is no anger. One who loves God, not just tolerates, but necessarily loves and respects His entire creation. Love, respect, and service to humanity is a mark of reverence for Allah, the Creator. Mevlana Rumi says “Come, come whoever you are”. Whether you are a Jew or a Christian, or a Muslim, whether you are praying in a church or in a temple or in a mosque or synagogue, come and join this caravan of love. This is

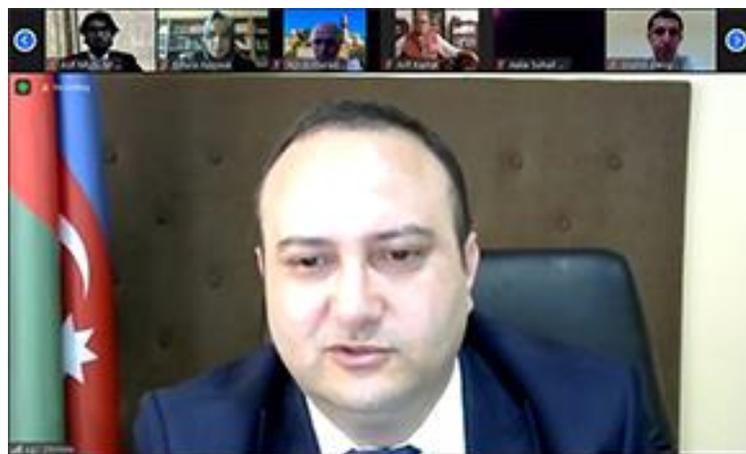
demonstrated in Sufi shrines across the world especially in South Asia that are visited by people from all religions and where food is indiscriminately served to all. This food is made of lentils because lentils are eaten alike by Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and Muslims.



In context of Sufis, Haqrat Sultan Bahoo taught the lesson of moderation and facing abuse from people with patience.

If someone abuses or shouts at you, be polite to him – Hoo,
Tolerate noise, taunts, insult and humiliations for the sake of Friend – Hoo.

Sufis invite people towards Allah and promote the harmonious co-existence as per tradition of Medina Charter. According to them, in the unifying vision of the oneness of Allah, all the differences are resolved. A Sufi always unites the individuals rather than separating them. In Sufi literature, Sufis give the message of peace and tolerance without discrimination of any race, colour, and creed. Sufis always practice Wahdat (Oneness) theory while minimizing the differences and maintain a moderate environment.



Western concept of Islamic moderation arose in 1979 against the backdrop of the Iranian Revolution. This concept is limited, oversimplified and has reductive scope. Whereas the Muslim concept of moderation is much wider and it is multi-dimensional. It comes into very deep contrast with how the West looks at moderation. For the West, it is not a religious concept, it is more like two divergent views of radical and moderate Islam trying to compromise. West particularly thinks radical Islam and compares it to moderate societies in the West. Unfortunately, this was also the same time that we had the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the events of 9/11 in the US aggravated this debate further.

Moderation teaches us to accommodate diversity in terms of race, culture, religion and ideologies. In contemporary world, results in the wake of migration tell us the practice of moderation in our societies. With the advent of globalization, migration has become easy. However, migration can create issues of multiculturalism in various societies. In the West, there are growing trends of Islamophobia as numerous cases of hate speech and violence against Muslims are reported in recent years.

South Asia has witnessed the worst form of religious-based violence at the hands of RSS, an extremist Indian organization that has complete control over the present Modi led BJP government. Although India is one of the big exporters of cow meat but Muslims are not allowed to slaughter a cow and not allowed to practice their religion freely. Due to the new law of NRC a big number of Muslims have been deprived of their citizenship. Muslim's heritage sites are being demolished. Meanwhile, there are radical elements in the Islamic world that do not accept sectarianism due to weak Islamic knowledge. Lack of knowledge is the major reason behind sectarian violence in the Muslim world.

Pakistan has faced extremism and terrorism in previous decades. However, by dint of our cultural resilience and Sufi values, the people of Pakistan have successfully defeated extremism. Similarly, the state's narrative against terrorism known as Paigham-e-Pakistan is the first of its kind in the world. It is endorsed by people of Pakistan, religious leaders, and the state of Pakistan. In the form of a religious verdict, it has categorically rejected the views and narratives of extremists who were trying to use the name of religion to justify terrorism. Pakistan and Azerbaijan both have roots of Sufism in their nature and give the message of peace and tolerance.



We can understand the true concept of Islam only when we study the actual values and identities of Islam and it is possible when Islam is a part of our academia in every field. Misuse of religious resources is not the only reason for radicalization, extremism, and intolerance. It is necessary to consider different aspects such as political, social, cultural, and economic. However, through these aspects, one can find a permanent solution.

The literature, newspapers, magazine, and books in our markets are flooded by the narrative against moderate Islam in the West. We have unfortunately not been able to file a counter-narrative. We should try to educate our youth with real teachings and understanding of the spirit of Islam.



Interactive Session

Brief summary of the remarks in interactive session is as follows:

We listen Muslims are extremists and radicals, just because of our own poor knowledge of Islam. On the flip side, religion is also used as political interests and political gain, it will actually destroy everything. Religion is an identity and it can easily be provoked when you don't know the real and in-depth meaning. To overcome these issues, we need to incorporate the spirit of Islam in our curriculum, and to be practical on Quran and life of our Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Parents and teachers should focus not only on memorizing the Holy verses but also on translation and interpretations.



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