

Dynamics of Muktazilah Theological Thought

¹Ahmad Nabil Amir, ²Tasmin Abdul Rahman

¹International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC-IIUM) Malaysia

²Faculty of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Malaysia

nabiller2002@yahoo.co.uk

Article History

Submitted: March 19, 2025

Reviewed: April 18, 2025

Revised: May 18, 2025

Accepted: June 17, 2025

Abstract: This paper examines historical development of Mu'tazilite theological school of thought which arises from speculative method and influences of Greek thought that sparked the discursive tradition of early Islamic intellectual history. This essentially brought forth by the textualist and rationalist school and their classical debate that had formative influence in the rational school developed by Mu'tazilism in the formative period of Islam. The paper studies the history and development of Mu'tazilite theology and their conceptual and doctrinal impact on modern neo-Mu'tazilite works. The study is based on classical works that gives significant textual and interpretive history of Mu'tazilism. It uses qualitative method based on documentary survey and content analysis. The data were collected from related primary and secondary sources and analyzed using descriptive, normative, historical and jurisdictional approaches in order to make accurate and scientific conclusions. The finding shows that the ideology developed by the Mu'tazilite were meant to respond to the foreign influence of deviant sects of the heretics, Magians, Manichaeism, atheism, naturalist and materialist by refuting their philosophical premises. This contributes to the constructive development of kalam or speculative theology thanks to the flowering of Mu'tazilite theology and their rational expression that help to foster higher ethical and religious norms and consciousness and influences contemporary thought that espouses neo-Mu'tazilite outlook in the context of dakwah and the return to reason and their enlightened movement.

Keywords: Mu'tazilite, Theological School, Islamic Creed, Rationality, Liberty.

How to cite: Amir, A. N., & Abdul Rahman, T. (2025). Dynamics of Muktazilah Theological Thought. *Asketik: A Journal of Religion and Social Change*, 9(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.30762/asketik.v9i1.2624>



© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0

International (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)

Introduction

The development of intellectual life in the Islamic world is largely motivated by the legacy of kalam thought which has become an inseparable part of the life of the early generation. These principles and critical views of the academic life influenced the sects that arose from the conflict of understanding between the mutakallimun groups and their dominant philosophical schools. Thus this paper seeks to look at the development of the theological sects that emerged in the early and middle periods of Islam and highlight their widespread impact on the dialectical philosophical consciousness triggered by the Muktaẓilahs.

He looks at the origins of the development of this important school of thought and school, and its influence on Greek philosophy that has shaped his perspective and basic premise on the logical and impressive nature of reasoning that was integral to the politics of the Abbasid caliphate (Fenti Febriani, 2022: 166). In this regard, it intends to study the background of the growth of the Muktaẓilah madhhab which developed since the 3rd century Hijrah/9th and 10th centuries AD (Richard C. Martin, Mark R. Woodward, Dwi S. Atmaja, 1997: 1) and describe the basic concepts developed in his theological thought which is known as *usul al-khamsah*. It forms the basic framework of its movement which is centered on five basic pillars, namely *al-'Adl* (justice), *al-Tawhid* (monotheism), *al-Wa'd wa'l-Wa'id* (promises and threats), *al-Manzilah Bayna al-Manzilatayn* (position between two positions) and *al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (enjoining good and preventing evil). In contrast to this doctrine, it is the madhhab pioneered by Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari, who chose a moderate and intermediate principle between the two extremes of Jabariyah and Qadariyah, by putting forward the *kasb* theory, namely that human behavior does not come entirely from it, but also does not completely come from Allah (Faisol M. Fatawi, 2020: 2). It is Allah Dhat who performs human actions, but man is capable with his ability to make his own actions, where Allah is the Maker of Fa'il for his actions, but man is *kasib*, that is, a creature who works for the existence of the act through his strength and strength (Abu Zahrah, 1996: 149).

Muktaẓilah takes the path of independent thought, according to the path of Qadariyah, stipulating that man has free will and choice to act. Based on his rational views, he thoroughly addressed the problems of the human will, as encapsulated in the *usul al-khamsah*, which was responded to in the intense and complex political and sectarian

debates of the time. They believe that people are endowed with freedom in realizing their will and actions, and are held accountable for their own actions. In support of this understanding, the Muktaزيلah cling to the divine revelation contained in surah al-Sajdah verse 17 which reads: "in return for what they have done."

It is interesting to examine in this connection the rational view that it relates to the principles of hurriyah (freedom) and ikhtiyar (the will to choose) and the frame of thought developed by this rationalist group or better known as ahl al-'adl wa'l-tawhid (Imarah, 1971) - a group that defends the justice and oneness of Allah. (Rohidin, 2018: 1)

A review of the freelance literature found a number of related studies that address fundamental issues about the theological and historical aspects of the Muktaزيلahs, which are the largest and oldest school of Islamic theology (Rohidin, 2018: 1). In her article, Eliza (2011: 91) shows the contribution of Muktaزيلah in da'wah efforts and her efforts to repel the enemy's attacks and blasphemies with the vehicle of philosophy and kalam. This is also worked on by Zulhelmi (2014: 1) in his review of the epistemological foundations in the Muktaزيلah school and its impact on the growth of theological thought in Indonesia. He referred to the figure of Harun Nasution as its organizer who emphasized the importance of the restoration of the theology of Muktaزيلah as a prerequisite for the revival of modern Islam. Aaron's hermeneutics differs from other Islamic interpreters, who do not focus on the meaning of the sentences, but rather on the understanding of its general theme and its rational khittah, with its emphasis on the principles of ethics, ethical responsibility, and social justice (Elly Warnisyah Harahap, 2024: 1152).

This is also detailed by Muhyidin and Nasihin (2010: 77) in their paper which highlights the principle of Mu'tazilah's rationality. This understanding has been established since the 2nd century AH and is attributed to its founder, Wasil bin 'Ata', who inspired its five fundamental principles (usul al-khamsah), in which all the principles are systematically arranged, complementary and logically related. The discussion of the role of reason and freedom is further discussed by Analiansyah (2013: 91) in his article which describes the divine philosophy of Muktaزيلah, its basic concepts and differences from Sunni and Shia beliefs. It highlights the factors of its emergence in the formative history of Islam, and the influence of the philosophy and doctrine it developed on emerging theological problems that have attracted profound debates on questions of religion and metaphysics and formed central themes in classical Islamic thought.

The development of Muktaẓilah thought from medieval to modern times is reviewed by Richard C. Martin, Mark R. Woodward, and Dwi S. Atmaja (1997) in their work *Defenders of reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from medieval school to modern symbolism* which highlights rational theology in Islam, and the conflict between the "defenders of God" (Bruce, B. Lawrence, 1989), and the "defenders of reason" and the origins of the controversy. This book is based on a master's thesis written by Dwi Surya Atmaja at Arizona State University, currently Professor of Arabic at the Islamic University (IAIN) Pontianak, Indonesia in collaboration with Richard C. Martin, an expert in Mu'tazilah theology, and M. R. Woodward, an anthropologist specializing in Islam in Indonesia. The purpose of this book is to introduce two main texts and compendiums on Muktaẓilah theology that represent two different eras, namely *Kitab al-usul al-khamsah* by Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar (d. 1024) [10th century AD] and *The Mu'tazilah and Rational Philosophy* by Harun Nasution compiled around the 1970s.

Thus this article attempts to summarize the views expressed on the religious discourse of Muktaẓilah, as an important part of the emerging trends of thought in the history of Islamic theology, and to see its relation to the development of the modern rationalist sect as a continuation of its discourse on the issues of neo-Muktaẓilah thought and the development of its critical academic tradition.

Methodology

This research method is qualitative in the form of literature review and content review. This is the right approach based on an in-depth study of historical materials with the application of Ibn Khaldun's social theory and Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutics. Data are collected from original and secondary materials that have intrinsic social and historical value associated with their research and interpretation. The primary literature used is mainly the book Muhammad Imarah (1931-2020) *Al-Mu'tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyyah al-Insaniyah* and other supporting literature, especially Harun Nasution's thesis, *The Place of Reason in Abduh's Theology: Its Impact on his Theological System and Views*. It is also examined from other related works produced in the form of manuscripts, theses, books, magazines, newspapers and websites and digital materials that provide a detailed overview of the topical theme. By focusing on this specific material and information, the collective relationship is then analyzed, and identified and processed

descriptively, normatively, historically, and juridistically to formulate conclusions and final findings.

Results and Discussion

Philosophical Foundations and Historical Background

The development of intellectual harakat in the Islamic academic tradition is largely driven by religious polemics that arise from disputes between fiqh and kalam thoughts, which have led to conflicts and ideological wars in legal issues of practice and belief (Elpianti, Sahara Pakpahan, 2017: 413). Political questions about the caliphate lead to a theological shift in faith and disbelief, great sins, qada' and qadar, heaven and hell (Rohidin, 2018: 20). The classical debates between rational and textual schools that have protracted on divine problems have given rise to clashes between various sects and streams. This is where the great division arises of the ummah in the question of great sin, the creation of the Qur'an, the interpretation of the mutasyabihat verse, substance, nature, and deeds of Allah.

The theological school's hold on the principle of freedom of will for human beings (hurriyat al-insan) that arose from the dispute over the tahkim process, resulted in the birth of theological schools in Islam (Faisol M. Fatawi, 2020: 2). The history of the emergence of Muktaizilah generally dates back to the 3rd century Hijrah. His theological ideas were adopted from Greek concepts and philosophies that were influential in the intellectual history of Islam (Job, 2021: 80). The introduction of the kalam Muktaizilah madhhab was made possible by the rise of the ruler of Bani 'Abbas and its recognition as the official madhhab of the country in 212 AH by Caliph Makmun. As a result of his carelessness, his influence began to decline so that this school was impeached by Caliph Mutawakkil who canceled its position as a state school in 234 AH (Elpianti 2017: 423; Eliza 2011: 101). The political turmoil and hostility of the majority of Muslims led to the disappearance of the influence of the Muktaizilah which disappeared from the surface into the "spasm theology" (Azra, 1992: 44) replaced by the theology of Asha'irah and the understanding of Ahlu Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah as the dominant group representing the mainstream of Islamic thought.

In the Islamic school of thought, the Muktaizilah appeared to develop theological aspects that were broader and stronger with philosophical dialectics than other kalam

beliefs. Because of this, this sect is also known as Islamic philosophers and rationalists. The Muktaẓilah group established five basic principles known as *usul al-khamsah*, namely *al-'adl* (justice), *al-tawhid* (tauhid), *al-wa'd wa'l-wa'id* (promises and threats), *al-manẓilah bayna al-manẓilatayn* (sitting between two places – the intermediate position), and *al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining good and preventing evil). Historically, the attribution of the name of Muktaẓilah to Wasil bin 'Ata' (80-131/699-749) and his disciples and followers meant reviving the name of Muktaẓilah that had been used since the emergence of political shifts among Muslims (Abdul Aziz Dahlan, 2001: 78; Ahmad, Amin, 1977), which was pioneered by Abu Hasyim Abdullah and al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, two grandsons of the Prophet (saw) who distanced themselves from political disputes and focused on knowledge and worship (which is also called the early Muktaẓilah).

a) The Birth of the Principle of Freedom of Will

In considering the long and complex history of Islam, the influence of *kalam* thought that has been evoked since the 2nd century has had a profound impact on the outlook of the *madhhab* and its *fiqh* as a whole. The classical debate on the principle of freedom pioneered by the Muktaẓilah continues to linger in modern thought in balancing conservative traditional beliefs with the development of modern rationalist sectarian scholarship. The gap between these two extremes has been bridged by the views and attitudes of moderation by the organizers of the middle line or *Islam wasatiyyah* (Revoluna, Zyde Khaidir, 2020) between those who rely on reason, and those who reject revelation-texts. This was featured by Muhammad Imarah (1931-2020) in his book *Al-Mu'tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyyah al-Insaniyah* (Muktaẓilah and the question of human freedom) (Imarah, 2020) which aroused the awareness of thinking in settling the question of the position of reason with revelation, and the position of revelation on reason. The Emirate responded to this problem with historical and methodological descriptions, relying on the arguments of *akliyah* (reason) and *naql* (tradition), in discussing this intense theological problem. It shows the clash that is rooted between the textualist *salafiyah* group (*al-salafiyah al-nususiyah*) which refutes and denies reason and rationality (*al-'aqlaniyah*) and even the historical reality of the *salaf* itself which pays great attention to human experimentation (*al-tajribah al-basyariyah*) and *ijtihad* (*al-ijtihadat al-insaniyah*)

and the Western-based movement (al-mutagharribun) which wants to westernize all the thoughts and behaviors of the ummah towards progress (Khaidir Piet Hezbollah, 2020).

As a solution, the Emirate introduced Islamic rationality (al-'aqlaniyah al-Islamiyah) which has two legs and wings, reason (al-'aql) and revelation (al-naql) as a harmonious complement to human thought. He provides a balance by combining Islamic freedom (al-hurriyah al-Islamiyah) with human freedom (al-hurriyah al-insaniyah) where his freedom as an individual, a people, a member of society, even in a large family of humanity is determined by the dignity, values and norms of religion - something that reflects the Islamic view of the essence of his freedom as the caliph of Allah SWT on earth who must submit and commit to the heavenly sharia and values in creating benefits and justice.

It also places it separately from the understanding of jabr and jabariyyah (where humans have no freedom of choice because everything lies in the will of Allah) or from the entity that is fana' fi Allah (melted in God) which is null without the power of will according to the madhhab of spirituality and mysticism (Imarah, 1988). The importance of this debate is evident in evoking the spirit of freedom and responsibility from slavery and tyranny, refuting the notion of westernization and orientalism and colonialism, it brings together the characteristics of aql and naql in its understanding of religion and its reforms, including an understanding of waqi' and its future development – an original discourse on turath of impressive freedom in embodying the nahdah that is the backbone of the project of civilization that he dreams of based on the nature of 'aqlani (rational). It seeks to cultivate a spirit of openness and criticism of all cultures and civilizations, rejecting surprise, secrecy and dependence on others.

This book (Al-Mu'tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyyah al-Insaniyah) basically elaborates on the philosophical foundations that underlie the understanding of al-hurriyyah (freedom) and al-ikhtiyar (free will) upheld by the Muktaizilah or known as Ahl al-'Adl wa al-Tawhid. It stems from a thesis written by the Emirate which summarizes the interesting growth of the rational outlook and philosophy of the Muktaizilah and the expansion of its influence that reached the realm of Greek thought and the tradition of Islamic creeds in the Middle Period. His work discusses the values and strength of ethics and philosophy

inspired by its rational essence, which is based on five basic essences (usul al-khamsah), namely, al-'Adl (justice), al-Tawhid (monotheism), al-Wa'd wa'l-Wa'id (promises and threats), al-Manzilah Bayna al-Manzilatayn (position between two positions) and al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar (enjoining good and preventing evil).

This work also elaborates on the evidence formulated from the philosophical and metaphysical theories of Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn Rushd, in settling on this important question and problematic kalam and exploring the detailed questions inspired by the theological differences between the Muktaẓilah and Asha'irah. His review also links the historical background that triggered the understanding of Muktaẓilah from the initial clash that erupted in the 2nd century, from the principles of logic held by 'Amru bin 'Ubaid and Abu Hudhayfah Wāsil b. 'Atā' (80-131 H/699-749 AD) which gave rise to the thought of I'tizal (Abu Zahrah, 1996: 149). His views were developed from the philosophy of Aristotle who was "dressed in Arabic clothes and colored with Islamic i'tikad" (Dik Hartoko, 1986: 63). His dialectical approach was instrumental in the growth of the theological school that later emerged in the 3rd century A.D. at the hands of its pioneers such as Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/931) and Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303/915-16). This understanding connects the rational principles in observing and interpreting the nature and deeds of God, freedom (hurriyyah) and free will (ikhtiyar) of man, ru'yah of Allah (seeing God), prophethood and revelation and the premise of tauhid.

These akliyah and rationalist teachings (and their connection with the jabariyah, jahmiyah and qadariyah (otherwise known as al-ikhtiyariyah) are detailed in the classical books produced by al-Sāhib b. 'Ubad, Al-Ibanah 'an Madhhab Ahl al-'Adl and Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar b. Ahmad al-Hamadhani (d. 415 AH), Al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawhīd wa al-'Adl, which defended the principles and beliefs of Ahl al-'Adl wa al-Tawhid and expressed the growth and influence of the 'aqlaniyyah school that was widespread in the Middle Ages. It reflects the philosophical awareness and pioneering of madhhab al-'aqlaniyyah al-Islamiyyah in articulating the principles of Muktaẓili and defending its philosophical beliefs and theological strength that inspired the tradition of renewal and enlightenment in its intellectual history.

In refining the rational understanding developed by the Mukta zilahs, Hamka once formulated his idealism and interesting intellectual effects: "We are amazed by the Mu'tazilahs, as described by Dr. Ahmad Amin (1886-1954) in his book *Dhuhul Islam*, that the Mu'tazilahs are very religious people and generally live a simple life, dressed in typical clothes and not luxurious. For they themselves realize that the firmness of a stance to the point of becoming the conviction of life that is carried to death, is when what is said must be in accordance with what is practiced." (Hamka, 2018: 241)

The rational understanding espoused by the Mukta zili in the formative and middle ages is important in encouraging the development of dynamic philosophical and legal thought in the modern context, which requires the mantic ability to solve the problems of kalam and its fundamental problems, as formulated by Hamka: "It is at such a time that arguments according to reason and mantiq are urgently needed. Presenting reason solely by not having to use verses or hadiths. No one else is able to do this except the Mu'tazilah. They are very happy to be invited to such an exchange of thoughts because amar makruf and nahi munkar are the fifth pillar in their lives. They are ready to face wherever there is an exchange of ideas on the matter. They are able to establish the argument with common sense and orderly logic that the Messenger is necessary in upholding religion." (Hamka, 2018: 239)

According to Hamka, the rational view in responding to the divinity, philosophy and metaphysics is invaluable in the development of modern times which demands an empirical elaboration of the intellect to decipher the themes of its transcendent discussion. This rational belief was restored by the Mukta zili who manifested the breadth of thought and influence in the modern context and the possibilities brought about by the development of these fundamental ideas of rationalism, as Hamka imagined: "The progress of the use of machines and industry has led to the growth of people who can do amar makruf nahi munkar using the Mu'tazilah system, able to deal with the intelligence of reason with the intelligence of reason as well. Able to think logically, even dialectically." (Hamka, 2018: 240)

The willingness of the Mukta zilah to make use of the deep philosophical considerations of ratio and dialectic in debating these transcendent metaphysical

possibilities is what the Emirate examines in his work which elaborates on the essence and main points of his beliefs concerning ethical values and freedom (al-hurriyah) outlined from his distinctive theological framework which implies the possibility of the establishment of this advanced and progressive school of 'aqlaniyyah in modern times.

b) The Formation of Rational Theology

This rationalist principle is related to theological problems in the kalam stream, in relation to the metaphysical concepts of divinity in philosophical discourse. Basically, rationalism is a philosophical approach that focuses on reason (ratio) as the main source of knowledge that is free from sensory observation (Zulhelmi, 2014: 1). In his analysis of the history of the growth of madhhab, ahl al-sunnah theology and kalam thought, Sirajuddin Abbas described Muktaẓilah as: "the people who made the Islamic world excited during the three hundred years of the early centuries of Islam used a lot of reason and prioritized reason over the Qur'an and hadith" (Eliza, 2011: 101).

The consequence of this rational understanding of the Muktaẓilah is important in terms of its emphasis on the role of reason and rejection of the idolatry of the text. This impression was echoed by Harun Nasution (1919-1998) in his book *Reform in Islam: The History of Thought and Movement* (Nasution, 1991) where according to him, it was in Islam that religion and reason first came together. Impressed by the ideas of Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), in his book *Islamic Theology: Flows, History, Analysis, Comparison* (1986) Harun stated that the unity of Abduh's thought and the concept of Muktaẓilah was able to bring society away from chaos, even without revelation (Nasution, 1978: 47). This is also explained by Muhammad Asad (1980) in his definitive commentary, *The Message of the Qur'an* on surah al-Ahzab (33) verse 72: "Indeed, We have entrusted this trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but all of them are not able to bear the mandate and they are afraid to betray it, but people accept it, because they are unjust and ignorant", that the meaning that perhaps most closely explains the meaning of the trust – is that it is in the form of 'intellect' or 'intellect' and 'the ability or ability to make a difference'.

This rational theory believes in the order of natural law, where, according to Muktaẓilah, the universe created by God must run according to rational laws,

in accordance with the function of its occurrence in the Divine sun. This tradition has been pioneered since the earliest era in the periodization of the Islamic caliphate in Baghdad (the 'Abbasid era under the caliphate of Makmun, Mu'tasim and Wathiq), with scientific survey and investigation efforts that were ahead of its time in all fields and culminated in the establishment of Baitul Hikmah (Supriyanto, 2023: 1) whose treasures became an important reference for the flow of knowledge in the East and West.

The tradition of rational philosophy pioneered by Muktazilah in this age of his power and glory, with his acceptance of reason and logic as a complement to revelation, has given reason and intellect its rightful place in unravelling complex scientific problems, and contributed to the dissemination of Islam through its philosophical dialogy and its rejection of the enemy with logical arguments (A. Hanafi, 2010: 99). According to Shaykh Mustafa al-Ghurabi, if it were not for God destined the Muktazilah to rise up to open Islam, there would be no kalam knowledge with its great wealth and we would not be able to defend Islam from external attacks" (Eliza, 2011: 91) who rejects the teachings of mujassimah, rafidah, zindiq, and other groups (Abu Zahrah, 1996: 157) with philosophical weapons.

The Muktazilah were the first to use the weapons used by the opponents of Islam at the beginning of the Abbasid rule (Ahmad Amin, 1977: 1), and their disappearance was a catastrophe for Muslims (Abdul Aziz Dahlan, 2001: 75). In fact, it was the famous Muktazilah figures such as al-Nazzam and Abu al-Huzail al-Allaf who succeeded in breaking the arguments of the Magi, Manichaeists, atheists and naturalists causing more than three thousand leaders from various religious and philosophical schools to convert to Islam (Abdul Aziz Dahlan, 2001: 87).

c) Historical Straightening

According to Muhammad Abu Zahrah, if the understanding of Muktazilah had been propagated from the beginning scientifically, without coercion, it would have been more widely accepted than it is now, because it turned out that after the passage of the controversy over the existence of the Qur'an, many scholars revisited their opinions, and agreed with Muktazilah. The

abundance of opinions does not arise from coercion, but is born from the discussions and exchanges of ideas of scholars and from the scientific works disseminated by Muktaẓilah (Abu Zahrah, 1996: 186). The confusion of the Muktaẓilah is that they over-politicize the caliph's orders, when the orders are not meant for coercion.

In their struggle, they have been forced to take action for systematic Islamic thought, but in Muslim circles, they have gone too far beyond the bounds that traditionalist Islam can legitimately recognize. After the external dangers were eliminated, thus their struggle among Muslims showed a rigid and intolerant attitude, and finally met with failure due to their own weapons (Fazlur Rahman, 1992: 139; Eliza, 2011: 101).

d) Social Relevance

This Muktaẓilah thought turns out to be closely related and relevant to the conditions and life of modern society. The doctrine of liberty that he developed was in harmony with the principles and essence of the law that maintained the value of liberty and the supremacy of reason. The aspects of reasoning and ijtihad developed by Muktaẓilah in the understanding of the text are in line with the current appeal against the idea of its interpretation which emphasizes its context and history.

The priority of ijtihad and reason driven by Muktaẓilah is in line with the usul of ijtihad outlined in the tradition of fiqh and kalam which brings height in civilization. As a result, the traditional principles and teachings of the Muktaẓilah must be raised in the current legal and theological discourse in order to understand the context of his interpretation and reasoning on revelation and prophethood and the uniqueness of his classical debate and articulation of thought that demands extensive hermeneutic and ijtihad power in the context of his akliyah and rational analysis.

Conclusion

- 1) Theological Change: The understanding of freedom brought by Muktaẓilah functions in expressing the power of akliyah and building a broad and critical force of ijtihad that expresses the tendencies of thought and idealism it brings.

- 2) Opportunities and Challenges: The presence of the Muktaẓilah brings a free and critical Islamic identity even though this poses a great challenge to the academic and social life of the traditional Muslim society which is thick with Ash'ari and Maturidi beliefs.
- 3) The Importance of Kalam Awareness: Muslims need to be equipped with knowledge of kalam theology and tradition, especially from classical works, to be utilized in assessing the development of fikrah and philosophical schools and developing their coherent theological and dialectic values.
- 4) Role in Social Change: The importance of appreciating the nuances of life that have developed since the Middle Ages and the progress of thought and its intellectual development which is thick with the philosophical awareness driven by Muktaẓilah in creating constructive dialogue and encouraging the proliferation of critical metaphysical ideas in society.

Basically, the context of the times that Muktaẓilah took seemed to provide its own challenges and challenges. This is triggered by the divine narrative that he tries to adopt which shapes his rational and argumentative theology in responding to the deviation of the zindik race based on the strength of mantik and philosophy, which in principle expresses the traditional understanding of pluralism and religious rationalism. His theological teachings occupy an important discourse of thought in the intellectual heritage of Islam, which colored the theological views that developed in the Middle Ages and in the modern century with his canonical works produced since the 9th and 10th centuries that demonstrate the sharpness of ratio and logic and the ability of his takwil and his broad awareness of ijtihad. His aspirations were manifested in the enlightenment movement brought by modernists such as Jamal al-din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Ahmad Amin, Abu Zahrah, Ahmad Subhi, Harun Nasution and others which presented a more objective and systemic picture of the ethical and divine views of the Muktaẓilah and the reform interpreted by its teachings on the symbolism of revelation and apostolic postulates and metaphysical principles. In looking at this question, the critical spirit it left behind has raised the height of its ideas and impact in history. His influence was instrumental in producing thinkers and successors of his dialectical ideas in the context and reality of the present in rediscovering the originality of his classical Islamic ideology and understanding of the principles of al-'adl wa'l-tawhid and its critical importance in the complex interpretation of law, scholastic philosophy and kalam doctrine.

Bibliography

- A. Hanafi. (1983). *Introduction to Islamic Theology*. Jakarta: Pustaka al-Husna.
- Abdul Aziz, Dahlan. (2001). *Theology and Faith in Islam*. Padang: IAIN Imam Bonjol.
- Abu Zahrah, Muhammad. (1996). *Political Trends and Aqidah in Islam*. Jakarta: Logos.
- Ahmad, Amen. (1977). *Dua al-Islam*, cet. 9. Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Misriyah.
- Ahmad, Subhi. (1969). *Al-Falsafah al-Akhlaqiyah fi'l-Fikr al-Islamiy*. Cairo: Daarul Maarif.
- Akyol, Mustafa. (2021). *Reopening Muslim Minds: A Return to Reason, Freedom and Tolerance*. New York: St. Martin's Essentials.
- Amir, Ahmad Nabil. (2020). The Influence of Abduh's Rationalism in Harun Nasution's Thought. *Tafaqquh: Journal of Islamic Research and Studies*, 8 (1), 52-71.
- Analiansyah. (2013). The Role of Reason and Freedom of Action in the Philosophy of the Divine Mu'tazilah. *Journal of Substantia*, 15(1), 91-103.
- Asad, Muhammad. (1980). *The Message of the Qur'an*. Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus.
- Ash-Shiddieqy, Muhammad Hasbi. (1999). *History and Introduction to the Science of Tauhid/Kalam*. Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra.
- Ayub. (2021). Mu'tazila in Western Scholarship: Their Origin, Originality and Legacy. *Taqaddumi: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, 1 (2), 80-103.
- Azra, Azyumardi. (1992). *The Context of Theology in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Bruce, B. Lawrence. (1989). *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Dik, Hartoko. (1986). *Orientation in Philosophy*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Elly Warnisyah Harahap, et al. (2024). The Epistemology of Mu'tazilah Thought and Its Influence on the Development of Islamic Thought in Indonesia. *Campus Pulpit: Journal of Islamic Education and Religion*, 23 (2), 1152–1164. <https://doi.org/10.17467/mk.v.23i2.3725>.
- Eliza. (2011). The Contribution of Muktaẓilah in the Spread of Islamic Da'wah. *Al-Hikmah*, 3, 91-101.
- Elpianti, S. Pakpahan. (2017). Mu'tazilah's Thoughts. *Al-Hadi*, 2 (2), 413-423.
- Faisol, M. Fatawi. (2020). Foreword. *Al-Mu'tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyah al-Insaniyah*, Malay edition. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Renaissance Front.
- Fenti Febriani. (2022). The Reception of Muktaẓilah in the Abbasid Dynasty. *Medina-Te: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 18 (2), 166-172.
- Hamka. (2018). *The Principles and Wisdom of Islamic Da'wah* cet. 1. Jakarta: Gema Insani.

- Imarah, Muhammad. (1988). *Al-Mu'tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyyah al-Insaniyyah*, cet. 2. Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk.
- Imarah, Muhammad, ed. (1971). *Ahl al-'Adl wa'l-Tauhid*. T.t.p.: Dar al-Hilal.
- Imarah, Muhammad. (2020). *Muktazilah and the Question of Human Freedom*. Terj. Ahmad Nabil Amir. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Renaissance Front.
- Khaidir, Piet Hezbollah. (2020). *Rangsang Sari. Al-Mu'tazilah wa Mushkilah al-Hurriyyah al-Insaniyyah*, Malay edition. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Renaissance Front.
- M., Baharudin. (2010). Understanding the Rational Theology of Mu'tazilah in Indonesia. *Al-Adyan*, V (1), 99–104.
- Muhyidin, Nasihin. (2010). The Rationality of Mu'tazilah Theology. *Ummul Qura Journal of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School Institute*, 15 (1), 77–85.
- Nasution, Harun. (1968). *The Place of Reason in Abduh's Theology: Its Impact on his Theological System and Views*. Tesis Ph.D., Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal.
- Nasution, Aaron. (1978, 1986). *Islamic Theology: Trends, History, Analysis, Comparison*. Jakarta: University of Indonesia Publishing Foundation; Jakarta: UI Press.
- Nasution, Aaron. (1979). *The Mu'tazilah and Their Rational Views*. Jakarta: Threedharma Utama Foundation.
- Nasution, Aaron. (1991). *Reform in Islam: A History of Thought and Movement*. Jakarta: PT Bulan Bintang.
- Rahman, Fazlur. (1992). *Islam*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Revoluna, Zyde Khaidir. (2020). "Muhammad Imarah and Islam Wasatiyah." *Ibtimes.id*, <http://www.ibtimes.id/muhammad-imarrah-dan-islam-wasatiyah>, accessed June 02, 2020
- Richard C. Martin, Mark R. Woodward, Dwi S. Atmaja. (1997). *Defenders of Reason in Islam, Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
- Rohidin. (2018). *Mu'tazilah; History and Development*. *El-Afkar*, 7 (II), 1-10.
- Supriyanto. (2023). Periodisation of the Philosophy of Islamic Rationalism in the Perspective of Zaki Naguib Mahmud. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 79 (1), 1-7.
- Zulhelmi. (2014). The Epistemology of Mu'tazilah Thought: Its Influence on the Development of Islamic Thought in Indonesia. *Intizar*, 20 (1), 1-16.



© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)