

## DYNAMICS OF MODERATISM IN THE KALAM THOUGHT: FROM CLASSICAL TO CONTEMPORARY



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### Article History:

Submission: October 31, 2023  
Revised: November 22, 2023  
Accepted: December 23, 2023  
Published: December 30, 2023

### Keyword:

Moderatism, Classical Kalam,  
Contemporary Kalam

### Kata Kunci:

Moderatisme, Kalam Klasik, Kalam  
Kontemporer

### Abstract

Moderatism is an essential foundation for religious expression among religious people in various fields of life, both in understanding and application. As part of the religious community, *Mutakallimin* from the classical to contemporary eras have provided valuable experiences for other Muslims. This paper aims to explore the experiences of the *Mutakallimin* regarding moderatism in the classical and contemporary eras. The writing method in this study uses literary methods and approaches to classical and contemporary Islamic literature. The results of the study explain that the *Mutakallimin* has demonstrated moderatism experiments marked by the emergence of the Khawarij Ibadiyah sect, Moderate Murjiah, Moderate Shia, the Mu'tazilah conception of rationality, the balance between Jabariyah and Qadariyah which is explored in the face of Asy'ariyah and Maturidiyah, as well as contemporary Kalam reform models which are based on theocentric and anthropocentric Kalam domains.

### Abstrak

Moderatisme merupakan pijakan penting bagi ekspresi keagamaan di kalangan umat beragama dalam berbagai bidang kehidupan, baik itu dalam pemahaman maupun penerapan. Sebagai bagian dari komunitas masyarakat beragama, para Mutakallimin era klasik hingga kontemporer telah memberikan pengalaman berharga bagi umat Islam lainnya. Tujuan penulisan ini adalah untuk meng-eksplorasi pengalaman-pengalaman para Mutakallimin era klasik dan kontemporer tentang moderatisme. Metode penulisan dalam kajian ini menggunakan metode kepustakaan dan pendekatan literatur Islam klasik dan kontemporer. Hasil kajian menjelaskan bahwa para Mutakallimin telah menunjukkan eksperimen moderatisme yang ditandai dengan kemunculan Khawarij sekte Ibadiyah, Murjiah Moderat, Syiah Moderat, konsepsi rasionalitas Mu'tazilah, keseimbangan antara Jabariyah dan Qadariyah yang dieksplorasi dalam wajah Asy'ariyah dan Maturidiyah, serta model reformasi Kalam kontemporer yang berpijak pada domain Kalam teosentris dan antroposentris..

## INTRODUCTION

Religious teachings are grouped into several parts, namely divinity, cosmology, ritual systems, order of life and life (Farid & Syafi'i, 2018). Divinity is the concept of the most absolute matter, the highest truth. In Islamic philosophy, Divinity is the First



Philosophy (*al-ʿila philosophy*) because it relates to the most fundamental truth of the relationship between humans and the Creator. Man is God's creation, and God is his Creator. The concept of cosmology, a branch of metaphysics, is the science of the universe – everything other than God. In contrast to the Western concept, which only mentions physical aspects, Islamic cosmology includes both physical and non – physical (Nurjanah, 2013). Then, the ritual system details the rules for carrying out the rites, both obligatory or essential and additional or conditional. Furthermore, various aspects of living order include spatial planning (especially related to obligations to carry out certain rites), dress code, communication system, the legal system embodied in Jurisprudence, and others.

From this illustration of the grouping of religious teachings, the concept of moderation in Islam can be seen from its basic dimensions and orientation through the four clusters of religious thought, which have become the mainstream of *teaching* in various Islamic boarding schools, religious lectures, religious schools to Islamic religious colleges. The four clusters of religious thought are Aqeedah, Kalam, Jurisprudence and Sufism. So far, this group of thoughts has dramatically influenced the flow of thought of Muslims and has even become *a prototype*, which is the daily menu among students at tertiary institutions, students at Islamic boarding schools, as well as people at various religious lectures.

The emergence of the Science of Kalam, the Science of Interpretation, the Science of Hadith, the Science of Fiqh, the Science of Sufism, Islamic Philosophy and so on in the Islamic world marked the dynamics of Muslim civilization, as well as marked the growth and development of the Islamic religion. It is not easy to appreciate the presence of Islamic culture if these sciences are not born. As stated by Al – Zahabi, the period of 143 Hijriyah was a critical momentum for the history of the Islamic world because one hundred and fifty years after the Prophet Muhammad's death it began to form a building of scientific discipline based on Islamic teachings. (Al – Jabiri, 1984). At the time of the Prophet, there was no science of Interpretation, Hadith Science, or other sciences. These sciences were born from the womb of Islamic history to reflect the need for Muslims to understand the holy book of the Koran and the sunnah of the Prophet. The emergence of these sciences cannot be separated from the dynamics of Islamic scholars in scientific interactions with philosophy and logic as analytical tools for structuring these sciences.

In addition to describing the dynamics of text – based scholarship, the emergence of these sciences also represents the mindset of moderate Muslims, an attitude and outlook between the two extreme poles of thought. An example of moderatism, which is the prototype of Muslims, can be seen in the scientific construction of Kalam. The science of Kalam, which is defined as the study of divinity or Islamic theology (Burhanuddin, 2017). Harun Nasution called it a science that discusses God's form, His attributes, prophecy, nature, and God's relationship with His creatures (Nasution, 1972). The emergence of the Science of Kalam was reported starting from political and social phenomena in society that shifted to the realm of theology.

Nurcholish Madjid studied moderatism and Kalam in the study of Al – Ghazali and the Science of Kalam. He moderates Kalam Al – Ghazali's thoughts regarding the theological views of nature through theological arguments, self – validating power arguments, and arguments based on nature's temporal nature (Madjid, 1985). The study conducted by Syofyan Hadi presenting the theological thoughts of Shaykh Ismail al – Minangkabawi (d. 1840) and Shaykh Said Bonjol (d. 1979) explores the wisdom of the Minangkabau Kalam scholars in responding to the needs of the Islamic community in

the Archipelago which is different from Arab and Middle Eastern societies both geographically and theologically (Hadi, 2015). Then, Muhammad Alif studied Maturidiyah Theology as a Moderation between *Asy'ariyah* and *Mu'tazilah*. This study explores the moderatism of Maturi – Diya, which does not exaggerate the use of reason but still pays attention to revelation as a critical authority in the science of Kalam. The moderationism of Kalam Maturidiyah looks more varied because it gave birth to two significant schools of thought: Samarkand, which approaches *Mutazilah* rationality, and Bukhara, which approaches *Asy'ariyah* traditionalism (Alif, 2019). Furthermore, Achmad Subkhan's study of the moderatism of Shah Waliyullah ad – Dahlawi is shown through his work entitled *al-Inshaf fi Bayan Asbab al-Ikhtilaf*. Shah Ad – Dahlawi mapped the causes of differences of opinion, presented them objectively, and revealed the history of the attitudes of the companions, *tabi'in*, and Imams of the *Madzhab* in dealing with differences of opinion (Subkhan, 2021). The studies above and several other studies explain the moderation of Kalam seen in partial cases. Meanwhile, a thorough study of Kalam moderatism from the perspective of the Kalam schools of thought has not been done much, and this paper attempts to fill this void.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF MODERATION

"Moderation" comes from the Latin *moderatio*, meaning moderation (no excess and no shortage). The word also means self – mastery (from the very attitude of excess and deficiency). The Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) presents two meanings of moderation: reducing violence and avoiding extremes. If it is said, "that person is being moderate," the sentence means that the person is being reasonable, mediocre, and not extreme. In English, the word *moderation* is often used in the sense of *average*, *core*, *standard*, or *non-aligned*. In general, moderate means prioritizing balance in terms of beliefs, morals, and character, both when treating other people as individuals and when dealing with state institutions (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). In Arabic, moderation is known as *wasath* or *wasathiyah*, which has the equivalent meaning of *tawassuth* (middle), *i'tidal* (fair), and *tawazun* (balanced). People who apply the principle of *wasathiyah* can be called *wasith* – which in everyday language is often used to officiate in a match. In Arabic, the word *wasathiyah is found*, which means "the best choice". Whatever word is used, all of them imply the same meaning, namely fairness, which in this context means choosing a middle – ground position between various extreme choices. (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

There are two main principles in moderation, namely balance and justice. The principle of balance can be seen from two contradictory things: paradoxes and mutual attraction. For example, the balance between reason and revelation, physical and spiritual, rights and obligations, individual interests and communal benefit, necessity and voluntarism, between religious texts and the *ijtihad* of religious leaders, ideal ideas and reality, and the balance between the past and the future. Another basic principle is fairness. This principle is based on a perspective, attitude, and commitment to always side with justice, humanity, and equality. The tendency to be balanced does not mean not having an opinion. Those with a balanced attitude mean being firm but not harsh because they are always on the side of justice; it is just that their alignment does not take away other people's rights to the detriment. Balance can be considered a form of perspective to do something in moderation, neither too much nor too little, neither conservative nor liberal. So, moderation requires people of all religions not to confine

themselves, not to be exclusive (closed), but to be inclusive (open), merge, adapt, and mingle with various communities.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to emphasize that the teaching to be moderate does not only belong to one particular religion but exists in the traditions of various religions and even in world civilization. Fairness and balance, as explained previously, are also highly respected by all religious teachings. There is not a single religious teaching that advocates torturing, wrongdoing, or excessive behavior.

## MODERATIONISM AND THE MUTAKALLIMIN EXPERIMENT

Experiments on religious moderation are found in various religious experiences conducted by Islamic scholars, including the experiences of *muhaddisun*, *mufasssirun*, *mutakallimun*, philosophers, jurists, tasawuf experts, and others. In this article, we will explain some of the experiences of religious moderation involving Kalam figures and scholars who are specifically seen based on the emergence of the Kalam sect and its teachings.

### Khawarij: From *Badawah* to *Ibadiyah*

The starting point for the emergence of the Science of Kalam was mentioned by contemporaries based on the momentum of the *tahkim event* or arbitration between Ali bin Abi Thalib and Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan. This event is an essential phenomenon in the Islamic world, which sparked the emergence of theological debates. Even though previously, there had been a discussion of theological issues, such as a dialogue between a thief and Umar bin Khattab. A thief was caught and brought before Umar and asked, "Why did you steal?" He replied: "God ordained that way for me". Hearing that answer, Umar was furious and then said: "Just hit that person thirty times with a camera and after that, cut off his hand!" The people who were there asked, "Why is the punishment heavier?" Umar replied: "Yes, that is right. He must have his hands cut off for stealing and must be beaten for lying in the name of God (Burhanuddin, 2009).

The phenomenon of *tahkim* does not only describe the political dynamics in the Islamic world (Wahid, 2010), However, it also becomes the starting point for the awareness of Muslims in thinking, discussing, and apologizing regarding the truth claims they adhere to. Enmity emerges to the surface, elbowing each other with various phenomena. This political dispute did not only divide Muslims at that time in political and government matters but shifted to the interpretation of religious texts, which gave birth to the schools of thought of Kalam (Miftahur Ridho, 2019). *Tahkim* marked a negotiated power transfer, not to mention a bloodless coup. Tahkim implies that Muslims are divided into three groups, namely the Khawarij, Syi'ah, and Murjiah. The Khawarij were a group that left and separated from Ali bin Abi Talib's front; the Shiites were a group that loyally supported Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib, while the Murji'ah was a group that took a middle ground between the two.

This political turmoil led to various theological schools marked by the birth of the Khawarij ideology, which affirmed theological issues. The Khawarij sect considers itself a group that adheres to the Koran, leaving their homes to migrate from Makkah to Medina following Allah and His Messenger. According to Nicholson, "It has been suggested that the name *khariji* (plural 'khawarij) refers to a passage in the Koran where mention is made of 'those who go forth (*yakhruj*) from their homes as emigrants (*muhajir*) to God and his messenger': so that *Kharijite* means one who leaves his home among the unbelievers for God's sake, and corresponds to the term *muhajir*, which was applied to

*the Meccan converts who accompanied the prophet in his migration to Medina.*" (Nicholson, 1907).

At first, some of Ali's followers, namely the Qurra, suggested *tah kim* because of their boredom during the war and hoped for a solution based on Al-Qur'an law. However, others disagreed with *tahkim* and shouted the motto "*LB Hukma IllB li AllBh.*" According to them, *judgment belongs to God alone*; the decision is only in the hands of Allah (Gibb & Kramers, 1953). From here, the Khawarij argued that *the tah kim* that Ali bin Abi Talib carried out, and Mu'awiyah was considered to have violated Allah's will. Ali bin Abi Talib should have continued the Shiffin war until Mu'awiyah's troops, as dissidents, were defeated and submitted to the legitimate caliph. However, Ali only heard them once the *tahkim event* was still being carried out. The dissenting group broke away from Ali's ranks, went to Harura near Kufa, and installed Abdul Wahab Al-Rosibi as their leader. Then, they transformed into a religious sect known as the Khawarij (Watt, 1973 p.12 – 13).

The theology of the khawarij, seen as extreme, directly implies its political doctrine. This extremism is influenced by the fringe side of culture (*badawah*), the opposite of *hadharah* (Madjid, 2002). It is alleged that the culture of the marginalized who live in the middle of the barren desert has shaped their character and mindset to be brutal, fanatical, free, militant, and independent of others. The brutal and fanatical attitude of the Khawarij was also seen in practicing religion. Such characteristics encourage them to think very *simplistically*, have simple knowledge, see messages based on personal motivation, not based on data and logical consistency, rely more on the source of the message than on the content of the message, rigidly maintain their belief system and distort messages that inconsistent with his belief system. This, in turn, leads them to use violence to channel their aspirations. History records that violence as a prototype of the Khawarij with a textual religious understanding model makes them radicalises and fundamentalists (Abdullah, 2016).

The extreme view of the Khawarij saw the friends who were involved in *tahkim* as infidels, left Islam, or apostates, and therefore it was lawful for their blood to be killed. It did not stop there; they considered people who committed grave sins as infidels and, therefore, had to be killed (Puadi, 2016). Committing adultery is seen as a major sin, so an adulteress has become a disbeliever and left Islam (Nasution, 1972; Watt, 1973). The Khawarij also assigned the attribution of infidels and polytheists to anyone who did not agree with their group; there were even people who agreed but did not want to move to their area. They call it "*Dar al-harb*", so it can be killed. Azyumardi Azra called the action of the cruel Khawarij an action of *isti'rad*, namely religious execution, not a jihad (Azyumardi Azra, 1996). Then, the radicalism of the Khawarij as a rebel has been proven in history. Not only during Ali's time, the Khawarij continued their resistance to official Islamic rule, both during the Umayyad and Abbasid Dynasties (Nasution, 1990 p.124). According to al-Shahrastano, there are several main groups among the Khawarij, namely *Azariqah* (followers of Abu Rashid Nafi 'ibn al-Azraq), *Najadat* (followers of Najdah ibn 'Amir al-Hanafi), *Sufriyyah* (followers of Ziyad ibn al-Asfar), *'Ajaridah*, (followers of 'Abd al-Karim ibn 'Ajrada), and *Ibadiyyah* (followers of 'Abd Allah ibn Ibad). The rest are groups of fractions or branches of these main groups (Al-Syahrastani, 1967 p.107).

Among the Khawarij groups, there is a group that, according to historians, is seen as a moderate group, namely *the Ibbdiyah*. This group is considered to have a position

that is relatively close to Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. In general, the mention of *Ibadiyah* is attributed to 'Abd Allāh ibn Ibbid al-Tamomo, even though previously, there were people who had a significant role in the development of this school. The historians of Kalam refer to *the Ibadiyah* as the most moderate of the Khawarij sect. This sect argues about the importance of being tolerant of other groups with different views, prohibiting its followers from committing acts of murder, and accepting testimonies from Muslims outside their group (Rofiq, 2012). They also argued that the caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar bin Khattab was acceptable, but the second half of the caliphate of 'Usman bin 'Affan and 'Ali bin Abi Talib after *tahkim* was unacceptable (Al-Isfarayni, 1988 p. 52). These opinions differ from other Khawarij schools and do not even accept the priority of the great companions. Even for the Khawarij, the caliphs 'Usman bin 'Affan and Ali bin Abi Talib were judged to have committed a grave sin (Rippin & Knappert, 1986 p. 16). Then, there is another moderate opinion from the Ibadiyah sect that the perpetrators of major sins will remain in hell forever unless they repent before they die (Al-Sallabi, 2007 Vol.I, p. 435). From the explanation above, a proportional assessment of the khawarij can be made by not making generalizations between radical and moderate khawarij. Radical khawarij tends to cause destruction, while moderate khawarij is allegedly still able to maintain its existence.

### **Moderate Murjiah: Between Faith and Disbelief**

In general, the appearance of the Murji'ah was a response to the attitudes and views of the Khawarij. The Murjiah's response was shown by their silence regarding the issues of faith and kufr, which were debated by the Khawarij (Yusuf et al., 2021). They are neutral, do not comment on the practice of disbelief for opposing groups, and suspend judgment on those involved in the *tahkim event* because God is the one who knows the state of a person's faith. Likewise, a believer who commits a major sin is considered a believer because a believer who commits a major sin is considered to admit still that there is no God but Allah, and the Prophet Muhammad is His messenger. So, immoral acts do not impact a person if he has faith. Adagium, which is very well known among them, namely "*La tadhurru ma'a al-imān al-Ma'shiyah, kamā la tanfa'u ma'a al-kufri thb'ah*" (disobedience does not damage one's faith as obedience does not benefit for unbelievers ((Al-Syahrastani, 1967).

Some scholars argue regarding the Murji'ah sects. On the other hand, Asy-Syahrastani mentions five sects, Muhammad Emarah mentions 12 sects, while Harun Nasution classifies Murji'ah into two sects, namely extreme and moderate groups. The Extreme Murji'ah group, among others, is represented by the Jahmiyah sect, which believes that people who believe in God and say their disbelief verbally are not disbelievers because of faith and kufr is in the heart. Then Murjiah Shalhiyah argues that faith is knowing God, and kufr is not knowing God. The next group, Yunusiyah, and Ubaidiyah, said that the deed of evil does not destroy a person's faith. Then the Hasaniyah sect says that if someone says, "I know God made it obligatory to go on Hajj to the Kaaba, but I do not know if the Kaaba is in India or somewhere else," those people are still believers.

Meanwhile, moderate Murjiah understands faith as acknowledging God and His Messenger and everything that comes from God and His Messenger. From this, they argue that faith does not increase or decrease, and there is no difference between humans in terms of faith. The logical consequence of this understanding is that everyone's faith is the same, both big sinners and small sinners. This leads to the idea that works are unimportant or do not affect faith. So if someone confesses, he is still said

to be a believer even though he commits a big sin. The big sin he committed would not make him leave Islam, and later, he would enter heaven. Among the names belonging to the moderate Murjiah group include Hasan bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Abi Talib, Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf, Said bin Zubair, and Hammad bin Ali Sulaiman (Nasution, 1972).

### Extreme and Moderate Shia

The emergence of the Shia school of thought in the Islamic world allegedly coincided with the emergence of the Khawarij, both of whom responded to the Tajkim incident. *However, some opinions launched* the emergence of Shiite seeds at the moment of the Saqifah incident. After tahkim, the Khawarij left the ranks of Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib. At the same time, Shia remained a religious sect that relied on the opinions of Ali bin Abi Talib and his descendants. Thus, Shia became a theological sect in Islam, which was at the forefront of the defenders of Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib. In its development, Shia became dozens of sects because of differences in understanding regarding the issue of appointed imams.

According to Al-Bagdadi (w 429 H), Shia is divided into four major sects: Zaidiyah, Ismailiyah, Isna 'Asyariyah, and Ghulat (extremists). The divisions within the Shiite body occurred due to differences in principles regarding the replacement of Imams, namely after Imam al-Husein as the third Imam, Ali Zaenal Abidin as the fourth Imam, and after Ja'far Sadiq as the sixth Imam (Shihab, 2007 p. 66). The first Shia split occurred after the leadership of Imam Husein, where some followers claimed that the right to occupy the position of imam was Ali's son, who was born not from Fatimah's womb, namely Muhammad Ibn Hanifah. This sect is known as Kaisaniyah. At the same time, others consider Ali Zaenal Abidin bin Husain to be a substitute for Imam Husein. This group was allegedly the forerunner of the Zaidiyah group. After the death of Ali Zaenal Abidin, the Zaidiyah sect was formed and appointed Zaid bin Ali Zainal Abidin bin Al-Husein bin Ali bin Abi Talib as the fifth imam (Hamzah, 2001 p. 168). Imam Zaid is a prominent scholar and teacher of Imam Abu Hanifah and is a descendant of Ali bin Abi Talib from the sanad Ali Zaenal Abidin bin Husain.

In several books, it is stated that before taking allegiance to Imam Zaid as a leader, the people of Kufa asked Imam Zaid about the qualities of the caliphs Abu Bakr and Umar bin Khatab. Imam Zaid replied that according to his ancestors and himself, the caliphs Abu Bakr and Umar bin Khatab were good people. Hearing this answer, several residents of Kufa defected and refused to take verses. After that, Imam Zaid said, "*Rafadtumyno, rofadtumyno, you have left me, you have left me*" (Al-Asy'ari, n.d. Vol I, p. 137). It is from the term *rafadtumyno* that the term Rafidhah emerges. It is just that later, the term Rafidhah is not attributed to "people who have left" but is identified with the Shiites who like to insult Abu Bakr and Umar bin Khatab. So, the Shiites who like to criticize and insult the two great friends are called Shia Rafidhah (Kurniawan, 2020).

The reluctance to criticize and insult Abu Bakr and Umar made Shia Zaidiyah the most moderate Shia school of thought compared to other sects and the closest to the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah religious understanding (Hasim, 2012; Shihab, 2007). Another feature of the Zaidiyah Shia compared to other Shiites is the courage to confront the rulers who are considered unjust. At the time of the Muawiyah dynasty's atrocities against the Shiites, the Zaidiyah Shiites chose confrontational preaching rather than *taqiyah*, namely lying to save their faith (Hazm, n.d. Vol I, p. 248–249). In addition, the moderation of the Zaidiyah Shiites is seen from their views regarding *the imamate*, which can be given to anyone who has a lineage up to Fatima, the daughter of

the Prophet, both from the son of Hasan bin Ali and Husin, as long as the person concerned has scientific ability, is fair, and dares to confront tyranny. Even the Zaidiyah group justifies the existence of two or three imams in two or three far – flung areas to weaken the unjust ruling group (Hasim, 2012).

The following sects, Ismailiyah and Isna 'Asyariyah, can be classified as Shia Imamiyah. Both of these sects admit that the replacement for Ali Zaenal Abidin (fourth imam) is Abu Ja'far Mu hammad Al – Baqir (fifth imam). In this regard, the Shia Imamiyah split into Ismailiyah and Isna 'Asyariyah, which occurred after Abu Abdullah Ja'far Sadiq (the sixth priest) death in 148 H. The Ismaili sect believes that Ismail, the son of Imam Ja'far ash – Sadiq, is the Imam who succeeded his father as the seventh priest. Ja'far Sadiq had appointed Ismail himself, but Ismail died before his father. It is just that even though Ismail had died, his group and followers still considered him the seventh Imam, and because of this, Shia was also called Shia Sab'iyah. Another name for the Ismaili Shiites is al – Bathiniyah, due to their belief that the Qur'an and al – Sunnah have an outward and an inner meaning (Shihab, 2007). In its journey, the Ismaili Shia gave birth to several branches, namely Qaramithah, Fathimiah, Hasya – syin, and Druz (Nasution, 1972). Although small in number, they are spread across about twenty countries, including Afghanistan, India, Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Lebanon, Greece, Britain, North America, China, and the Soviet Union (Rahadiani & Kemalasari, 2022). Imam Ubaidillah al – Mahdi, who became the eighth descendant, succeeded in establishing the Fathimiyah dynasty in North Africa (909 AD), and then by his descendants, the dynasty was transferred to Egypt in 973 AD (Fazlurrahman, 1984 p. 259 – 260).

Another group, the Shia Imamiyah, is known as the Shia Itsnb' Asyaroyah or the Twelve Shia group. This group relies on the leadership of the Twelve Imams based on the following hadith: "Muhammad bin al – Mutsanna has told me; Ghundar has told us; has told us Syu'bah; from Abdul Malik; I heard Jabir bin Samurah say: I heard the Prophet. said, "Twelve leaders will appear." Then he said a sentence that we could not hear, so my father said, he said: "All of them are from Quraysh." This hadith and similar ones are published in Sahih Bukhari chapter *al-Ahkam al-Istikhraf* as much as one history; Sahih Muslim in the book of *Al-Imamah* as many as six narrations; Sunan Abu Daud in the book *Al-Mahdi* as many as three narrations, Sunan Tirmidhi in the book *Al-Fitan* as much as one narration; and Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal as many as 32 narrations (Zaki, 2017). The Twelve Shiites believe that the successor to Ja'far Sadiq will be Musa Al – Kadzim as the seventh imam, not Ismail, his brother. For the Twelve Shi'ites, the cult priests are Ali bin Abi Thalib, Husein bin Ali, Ali Zenal Abidin, Mu h ammad Al – Baqir, Abdullah bin Ja'far as – Sadiq, Musa Al – Kadzim, Ali al – Ridha , Mu h ammad al – Jawwad, Ali al – Hbdi, Hasan al – Askari and Muhammad Al – Mahdi (Abu Zahrah, n.d.). The Twelve Shia group is allegedly the Shia group with the most significant number (majority) of the Shia groups that have existed until now. Twelve Shia teachings cover five central teachings, namely Tawhid, Justice, Nubuawah, Ma'ad, and Imamah. In addition, there are other teachings related to faith, worship, mu'amalah, *ishmah* , washiat, raj'ah, bada', and others (Izzati, 1981 p. 133). Some of his extreme views, among others, considered that Abu Bakr had usurped Ali bin Abi Talib's right to office, gave Ali a higher level position in humans who had divine characteristics, believed that imams were free from sin, justified mut'ah marriage and did not acknowledge Ijma' (Hasim, 2012).

Furthermore, Shia Ghulat (Heretic Shiites) are an extreme group or are seen as having departed from Islamic teachings so that the majority of Muslims reject their



existence among the Shiite Ghulat groups, namely *As-Sabaiyah*, namely followers of Abdullah bin Saba', *Al-Khaththbiyah*, followers of Abu al-Khaththbi al-Asadi. The Al-Khaththbiyah group stated that Imam Ja'far ash-Shadiq and his ancestors were God, even though Imam Ja'far refused to be considered God (Abu Zahrah, n.d.). This group experienced division into small groups and held the view that this world is eternal, heaven is the enjoyment of the world, prayer is not obligatory, and alcohol is permitted. Another Ghulat Shi'a group is *Al-Ghurbiyah*, who argue that the Angel Gabriel went to the wrong address in conveying the revelation. The revelation should have been given to Ali, but instead, it fell to the Prophet Muhammad (Momen 1985 p. 55). Including Al-Qarbmithah, who believes that Ali bin Abi Talib is God (Hasim, 2012).

From the explanation about the Shia school of thought above, the main concern for Shiites is the existence and respect for the three great friends, Abu Bakr, Umar bin Khattab, and Usman bin Affan. In general, the Shia school of thought denied the three companions and considered that Ali bin Abi Talib had taken the position of caliphate that he should have held. Judging from the context of Sharia and theology, in general, the Shia school of thought is still seen as brotherhood to other Muslims because the issue of denouncing friends has not yet entered the realm of disbelief (*Interview with Grand Syeikh Al-Azhar Syaikh Ahmad Thayyib, Mataram 17 November 2018*, n.d.) They still believe in Allah Azza wa Jalla, the prophethood of Muhammad SAW., and hold on to the same holy book and qiblah as the Sunnis, except for Shia Ghulat, who are extreme and whose existence has become extinct.

### **Mu'tazilah Moderation**

Something is interesting about the concept of moderation offered by the Mu'tazilah, namely the concept of *Manzilah baina al-Manzilatain* (between two positions) and the concept of *al-Wad wa al-Wa'id* (threats and promises). The first mentioned was the idea of Wasil bin 'Atha (700–748 AD), who responded to the theological crisis between the Khawarij and Murjiah. Khawarij mentions that people who commit major sins are unbelievers (read: non-believers). Meanwhile, Murjiah considers that a person who has committed a significant sin is still seen as a believer as long as he still has faith, and the issue of faith itself cannot be known because the position of faith is in the heart. According to the Mu'tazilites, the concept of *Manzilah baina manzilatain* ratifies a position between the two positions, not being said to be an infidel and not a mu'min, and a person who commits a grave sin is between the two positions (Mighfaza & Muhlas, 2021).

The term proposed by Wasil bin Atha to refer to it is *fasiq*, a term mentioned in the Al-Quran. *Fasiq* people or believers who commit major sins will not become *disbelievers* even though their sins are very many because the perpetrators of major sins are called *fasiq*, so they are different. They cannot be given the same punishment as disbelievers (Qadhi, 1965 p. 800). In addition to the *fasiq* terminology arguments mentioned in the Koran, the Mu'tazilites were inspired by the concept of Surat al-A'raf about the inhabitants of al-A'raf being able to see the inhabitants of heaven and hell. God provided al-A'raf, a place *between* heaven and hell. "*And between the two (the inhabitants of heaven and hell) there is a limit, and above A'raf there are people who know each of the two groups with their signs. Moreover, they call the inhabitants of heaven: "Salaamun `alaikum." They haven't entered it yet, while they want to (enter it) soon*" QS. Al-A'raf [6]: 46.

In the Al-Quran, the term *Ashabul A'raf* (resident of A'raf) is mentioned twice, namely in sura al-A'raf verses 46 and 48, and the characteristics of *Ashabul A'raf* are mentioned four times in that letter. Unlike the scattered inhabitants of Heaven and Hell mentioned in various letters in the Al-Quran, the term and character of al-A'raf become a theological concept that must be known. At this point, the Mu'tazilah ratified it as a theological concept to bridge the confrontation that was rolled out by the Khawarij and Murjiah above. This thought is quite interesting because it offers an understanding of moderation when people conflict in black and white about the justification of being an infidel who will become a resident of hell or the justification of a believer who will inhabit hell. Methodologically, the concept of *Manzilah baina Manzilatain* suggests a *triple logic character*, a logical concept offered by Ibn Sina when he talks about reality (*mawjudat*) into three parts: *wajib bidzbtih*, *wajib bi ghairihi*, and *mumkin bidzbtih* (Al-Jabiri, 1993 p. 84–85).

Another interesting thought of the Mu'tazilah is the concept of *Al-Wad' wa al-Wa'id* (threats and promises). This concept is based on the rational view that Allah is obliged to reward those who do good and punish those who do evil. Allah Azza wa Jalla does justice and keeps his promise as mentioned in His words, "*Innallaha Lb Yukhlif al-Mo'ad*" QS. Al-Ra'd [13]: 31. This view wants human freedom, which has implications for his will to do good and bad, and all of these actions will receive a perfect reward from Allah Azza wa Jalla. Rationally, this thought provides definitive certainty as explained in His words, "*Mbliki Yaum al-Don*" (QS. 1[3]). This definitive certainty is seen as rational, which is different from the Ash'ariyah view, which could include people who commit immoral acts into heaven because of His mercy. Here, the Mu'tazilah shows a theological commitment based on rational standards.

### **Moderatism of Asy'ariyah and Maturidiyah**

Among adherents of classical Islamic theology, the scholars generally emphasized the theological understanding of Imam Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari (260–324 H) and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (333 H/944M). The concept of the Asy'idah aqidah was initiated by Imam Abul Hasan al-Asy'ari, born in Basrah around 260 H/873M and died in Baghdad 324 H/935M. The Asy'ariyah Aqidah is the middle way of the Jabariyah and Qadariyah groups and was developed by the Mu'tazilah sect. The group's opposition can be seen from opinions about human actions. The Jabariyah group thinks that God creates all human actions, and humans do not have the slightest contribution. At the same time, Qadariyah argues that all human actions are created by humans, apart from God. The Jabariyah saw God's power as absolute, while the Qadariyah saw God as limited. Asy'ariyah has the attitude of taking the middle way (*tawassut*) with the concept of effort (*al-kasb*).

According to Imam al-Asy'ari, God created human actions, but humans have a role in their actions with the theory of "*kasb*" (*effort*). Kasb Asy'ariyah theory rests on the view of moderation between God's Actions and human actions, that it is Alla Azza wa Jalla who manifests human actions (*af'al ibbd*); however, humans are given the power and choice to act according to God's will (Al-Asy'ari, n.d.). This means that humans are not *fail* (workers) but *kbsib* (those who make efforts) about an action. The meaning of this *kasb* is then clarified by Al-Syahrastani, who states that the birth of human actions is manifested through the way Allah treats His sunnah through new powers created together with the occurrence of an action (Al-Syahrastani, 1967).

From here, the concept of *al-iktisab was born*; that is, an act takes place through the mediation of power and effort that is created so that it becomes *kasb* for the person with whose power the act is born. So, *kasb* arises from *al-Muktasib* (who obtains) through the intercession of the power created. The foundation of this theory is the Word of God itself, "And God created you and what you do" QS. Al-Saffat [37]: 96. For Imam al-Asy'ari, the meaning of this verse explains that what determines the realization of human action is Allah, while humans carry out *the kasb* or efforts based on the sunnatullah laws imposed by Allah Azza wa Jalla (Muttaqin, 2015). Thus, Imam Al-Asy'ari has resolved the theological polemic between the Jabariyah and the Qadariyah. From here, the concept of *al-iktisab* was born, that is, an act takes place through the mediation of power and effort that is created so that it becomes *kasb* for the person with whose power the act is born. So, *kasb* arises from *al-Muktasib* (who obtains) through the intercession of the power created. The foundation of this theory is the Word of God itself, "And God created you and what you do" QS. Al-Saffat [37]: 96. For Imam al-Asy'ari, the meaning of this verse explains that what determines the realization of human action is Allah, while humans carry out *the kasb* or efforts based on the sunnatullah laws imposed by Allah Azza wa Jalla Qadariyah regarding human actions, as well as countering the Mu'tazilah views which repositioned the idea of *free action* promoted by the Qadariyah.

Meanwhile, the theological concept of Maturidiyah—founded by Imam Abu Manshur al-Maturidi, born in Maturid, Samarkand (d. 333H) offers a middle way (*tawasuf*), namely harmonization between text and reason. Maturidiyah believes it is a mistake to stop doing something when there is no *text*. Also, on the contrary, it is considered wrong if it dissolves and is not controlled by reason. Here, the position of text and reason is equally important in understanding various problems of life and society. The Maturidiyah school, as an exponent of the adherents of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, which is more rational, allegedly prioritizes reason over religion. Another. According to Maturidiyah, the mind can reach knowledge about God, the obligation to be grateful and grateful to God, and know the good and bad of something. The obligation to do good and avoid the bad is based on the Shari'a established by God (Abu Zahrah, n.d.). This means that even though reason can know the good and bad of something, the mind cannot reach *taklif knowledge* religion independently without the help of revelation. This is the Maturidiyah model of moderation between traditionalism and rationalism.

The rationality of Maturidiyah and appreciation of revelation in a balanced way is shown by an analysis of the exploration of the mind, which can potentially lead to error and mistakes, like a double-edged sword that emerges from reason. However, this is not an obstacle to reasoning. The reason is that if someone tries to reject rational reasoning, he will not be able to present an argument except by reasoning itself (Alif, 2019). Therefore, reasoning becomes very significant, especially because reasoning is a source of knowledge.

Maturidiyah also takes a moderate attitude about the problem of anthropomorphic verses of the Koran (*tajsim*). In understanding the expressions, verses, and attributes of God, which are usually anthropomorphic, the Mu'tazilah tries to maintain transcendence and states that the attributes of Allah must be understood metaphorically to cancel the lexicographical meaning of the terms they use. The Mu'tazilah's efforts caused anxiety among the Muslims because any validation of metaphorical interpretations would reduce the value of the words of the Al-Quran and their lexicographical meanings as

they are. Likewise, when the lexicographical meanings of these words are used, there will be nothing left to serve as a foundation for the meanings of these words and prevent them from being carried away arbitrarily. At this point, the Maturidiah school rejects the Mu'tazilah concept of *ta'tol* (neutralization of God's attributes) by establishing the attributes of God and stating that these attributes are not something outside of His Essence and are not separate from Him, that these properties do not have an independent existence from the Essence, so it cannot be said that the number of these properties will lead to many *qadim* (Al-Maturidi, n.d.).

### Debate about *Firqah al-Najiyah*

The issue of moderatism in the Kalam, which still resonates today, is related to the statement in the hadith, which mentions *firqah al-Najiyah*. Rasulullah SAW stated that one day, his people would be divided into 73 groups—all of which would go to hell, except for one group that survived (*firqah al-najiyah*), namely those who adhered to the traditions of the Prophet and his companions (Ma'rufah, 2014). Shaykh Salman al-Audah's book *Firqatun Najiyah Thairah Manshurah wal Ghuraba* collected 15 hadiths of the Prophet that spoke about *firqah an-Najiah*. Among them are the hadiths of al-Hakim and Ibn Asakir from Abdullah bin Amr bin al-'Ash as follows, "It will happen to my people like what happened to the Children of Israel, example after example, step by step, until if among them (the Children of Israel) there are those who have intercourse with their mothers openly, then among my people there will be something like that. Indeed, the Children of Israel will be divided into 72 factions, and my people will be divided into 73 factions. All of them go to hell except for one group only. Asked the Prophet, "Who is that one group?" Then he replied, "He is a group that follows me and my companions." (At-Tirmidzi, 1987 Vol. V, p.26).

Other hadiths with almost the same editorial mention about *al-fiqh al-Najiah* found in several sanad routes, namely through Anas bin Malik, Abu Hurairah, Abu Darda, Jabir, Abu Said al-Khudri, Ubay bin Ka'ab, Abdullah bin Amr bin Ash, Abu Umamah, Wa'ilah bin Al-Asqa, and others (Waskito, 2012). The mention of these sanads illustrates that the hadiths about *al-Fiqah al-Najiah* exist, are valid, and are not illusions or hoaxes. Of the fifteen hadiths, the various expressions of *al-firqah an-Najiah* are called by several editors, namely "*Ma'ana alaihi wa ashhabo*" and "*Ma'ana alaihil yauma wa Ashabi*" (both in the history of al-Tabarani), "*al-Jamaah*" (in the history of Ibn Majah, Ath-Tabarani, Ibn Abi 'Ashim, authenticated by Al-Albani), as well as in the expression "*As-Sawbd al-A'zham*", the large community (mentioned in the history of At-Tabarani, Abu Umamah, Abu Ya'la from Anas bin Malik).

### Contemporary Kalam Moderatism

Furthermore, understanding the concept of moderatism in the modern era can be seen from the refreshing of theological concepts that are not solely based on *theocentric concepts* (all-God) but penetrate a more accurate context and are in touch with humanity (*anthropocentrism*). The issue of Kalam Hari no longer speaks at the level of divinity *and self* but penetrates humanism by unraveling the various problems of human life. Of course, such a view gives an appreciation of the theological balance between divinity and the alleviation of human problems.

There are floating problems when Muslims place various life issues in the divine dimension alone without studying these issues in their specific dimension, namely the world of humanity itself. For example, the problem of poverty is not only studied from

the concept of destiny alone but from the root of the problem that causes poverty to occur. There is a pile of psychological problems that cause a person to dwell in poverty so that the mentality of poverty never goes away. This mindset of life needs to be changed as Allah decreed in His word, *"Indeed, Allah will not change a nation until they change the condition that is in themselves"* QS. Al-Ra'ad [13]:11.

The issue of Kalam, which is understood from two sides, namely divinity, and humanity, is a form of moderation in bridging life's problems between theological demands and the reality of humanity itself. In other words, divine Kalam conducts discussions, studies, and defends God by parsing God's Names, Attributes, Deeds, Will, and so on. Meanwhile, the Anthropocentric Kalam emphasizes alignment with humanitarian issues, starting from poverty, backwardness, the synergy of reason and revelation in developing humans and nature, and the problem of human liberation, including actualizing human identity as God's representative on earth (Burhanuddin, 2017).

Contemporary Kalam studies that open up the space for the effectiveness of faith and charity in building world civilization become the basis for movements and revolutions, which, at the same time, bind all socio-political-economic activities and human civilization. The space of science is also inseparable from the ties of the foundations of monotheism so that science and technology are packaged on theological grounds. This Kalam study also avoids a misogynistic view of women as a society that is often mistreated by men, thus eliminating women's marginalization in the realm of civilization and modernity.

## CONCLUSION

The mainstreaming of Islamic moderation in its various dimensions is the main foundation for Muslims in building religious moderation. This is because religious moderation in today's context is a common need, be it the state, individuals, communities, religious leaders, cultural figures, academics, millennials, social media, and electronic media. Everyone must unite and propagate religious moderation for the sake of national and state life. Religious moderation directly has implications for strengthening society in maintaining harmony and a peaceful and tolerant religious life.

Of course, religious moderation is not enough to be pursued structurally through state policy, but what is also very important and undoubtedly rooted is to make it a cultural movement in society. The proper scientific basis must support this cultural movement, as it appears in various Islamic scientific disciplines. The explanation of the concept and experience of religious moderation from the perspective of Kalam Science above is an integral part of building Muslim understanding that moderation experiments have been formed in Kalam scholarship as seen in the variety of opinions, dialogues, criticisms, and accommodationism models of the Kalam scholars regarding the concepts. The exposition of religious moderation experiments among mutakallimin will then be complemented by experiments by Muslim philosophers, Sufis, and jurists.

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### **Interview**

*Interview with Grand Syeikh Al-Azhar Syaikh Ahmad Thayyib, Mataram 17 November 2018.*