THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF KALĀM OF ABŪ MANŞŪR AL-MĀTURIDI

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Abstrak

bahwa pengaruh Abu Hanifah dan Mu’tazilah telah memberikan kekhasan pada metode teologinya terkait dengan kelima subjek itu.

Keywords: kalām, al-Māturīdī, Kitāb al-Tawhīd, abl al-Sunna.

A. Introduction

Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world with 80 per cent of its population is Muslims; most of them are the followers of Abl al-Sunna school of thought or Sunni Muslims. The rest are either the followers of the Ṣiy‘a, or the Tāḥrīrīyya (Liberalists). In the Abl al-Sunna or Sunni school of thought, there are two leading figures. The foremost is Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘īl al-Ash’arī. He was born in Basra in 260 H/873 M. His theological works, for instance, are Maqālat al-Islāmiyyīn, al-Lumā‘ī fi Radd Ahl al-Zaigh wa’l-Bīḍa‘ and al-Ibāna ‘an Usūl al-Dīyāna. In the field of fiqh, he was a follower of Ṣafī‘ite school. The rapid development of al-Ash‘arī theology was due to the support of the incumbent power, i.e. the administrator of Nizām al-Mulk. In its development, the well-known figures, such as al-Baqillānī, al-Juwainī, al-Ghazālī, al-Sanūsī, Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī and al-Shahrastānī, disseminated the theological thought of al-Ash‘arī.

Another one is al-Māturīdī (238-333 H/852-944 M). He lived in Samarkand. In the field of fiqh, he was a follower of Ḥanafīte school. His thoughts were actually rather general but his theological one has been prominent and goes without saying. His master piece book on theology was the Book of Oneness (Kitāb al-Tawhīd). Concerning his prominence in the Sunni theological school of thought, it is often stated that “when it was said Abl al-Sunna wa’l-Jama‘a, it means the followers of al-Ash‘arī and al-Māturīdī.”

Despite the prominence he has achieved in Sunni theological school of thought, al-Māturīdī’s thoughts and ideas are less known by Indonesians and his works are not popular. It is difficult, for instance, to find his Kitāb al-Tawhīd among Indonesians. In addition, it is also because of the legal school of thought he followed that is different from that common in Indonesia.

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However, it is important to encourage Indonesian-Sunny Muslims to do research on al-Māturīdī’s view of Kalām. It is to meet the necessity of proper study on theology, consequently they should not only study al-Ash’arīyya, but also al-Māturīdīyya. This paper tries to realise the necessity of broadening a scientific discourse of theology in academic perspective. The discussion focuses on the thought of al-Māturīdī as part of Sunny theology.

B. Al-Māturīdī: His Life and Works

His complete name is Abū Maṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī al-Anṣārī. His title names are ‘Ālam al-Hudā, Imam al-Hudā, and Imam al-Mutakallimin. These title names reflect his high authority in Islamic sciences. It was said that he was very courageous to defend and keep al-Sunna and ‘aqīda. His learning age was at the third century of Hijra when the Mu’tazila ideology began to withdraw.

In the field of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), al-Māturīdī was the follower of Ḥanafite school. He was curious to know the madhhab because at that time the place where he lived became the arena of debate on different Islamic sciences, such as hadīth, fiqh and kalām, between schools of thought, both fiqh and theology. The debate clustered in the end into two groups: Mu’tazila in the one hand and abl al-kalām in the other. To deal with the scientific problem in Kalām and to argue against Mu’tazila, al-Māturīdī seems to adopt the methods of Ḥanafite school.²

The circumstances encouraged al-Māturīdī to study religious science in great detail, especially Kalām science with which Muslims were concerned at the time. In his being concerned with Islamic studies, he could finally produce his so valuable and monumental works with which he got many degrees such as theologian, jurist, Quran commentator, a founder of doctrinal school of Abl al-Sunna wa’l-Jamā’ā (Orthodox Sunni School in Kalām).³

Concerning his works, al-Māturīdī was rather a generalist than a specialist thinker in the field of theology. The works he wrote show us his broad knowledge in almost any sciences. He is certainly different from other thinkers. However, the book of al-Tawḥīd he wrote proves that theology is the most important theme he interested. Al-Māturīdī was able to explain his theological concept and doctrine. Even he was successful in writing some works that can be used as references for his followers and those who are interested in doing a study on them. From the titles of his books noted by the historians, al-Māturīdī has made his life defend the true ‘aqīdah and refuse the concept of the people who turn away from sunna. He has showed his broad science both in Fiqh, Usūl, Kalām, and Tafsīr.4

Through his works, al-Māturīdī tried to counter Mu’tazila and smash down the concept of al-Khamsa. To refuse the concept of Mu’tazila, he wrote a book entitled Bayān Wāhīm al-Mu’tazila, as well as to refuse Ī’sil al-Khamsa written by Muḥammad al-Bāhili. He also wrote a book entitled al-Radd ‘Alī al-Ī’sil al-Qaramīṭa and Radd Kitāb al-Imāma li Ba’d al-Rawāfīd. In the field of Ī’sil al-Fiqh, he wrote Ma’khadh al-Shara’ and Kitāb al-Jadal.

C. Al-Māturīdī’s Methodology and Thought on Kalām

Al-Māturīdī is different from al-Ashʿarī in many ways of thinking. There are at least to be about 30 issues of which they are different. Taqdir (human destiny/fate) is one of the most debated themes between theologians and mutakallimun. In contrast to al-Ashʿarī which is close to Jabariyya, al-Māturīdī’s view on human destiny is similar to that of Qadāriyya. In spite of these differences, they uninterruptedly share the same ideas on rejecting Mu’tazila’s way of thinking on this belief. They disagree with Mu’tazila’s views on destiny and defend the belief of Sunni instead.

In addition, al-Māturīdī’s view on ma’rīfa (the highest level of knowledge to know of Allah) is based on the human thought and reason. It can be understood either that ma’rīfa can be obtained by the use of merely human reasoning and also that human reasoning is capable

4 al-Māturīdī, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, p. vi.
of obtaining *ma'rifah*. It is reasonable then that al-Māturīdī comes to the opinion that everything is has its own character of good and bad. On the contrary, al-Ash'arī views that *ma'rifah* is based on God’s provision and guide. Consequently, good and bad are also decided by *ṣyārī*'. Compared to that of al-Ash'arī, it is understandable that al-Māturīdī’s views on human thought and reasoning seem to fit with Mu'tazila’s way of thinking. That does not say that al-Māturīdī is a Mu'tazily, however. Despite of al-Māturīdī’s acceptance of human thought and reasoning that makes him to some extent close to Mu'tazila’s way of thinking, he is still different from Mu'tazila and in a great detail he is not a part of Mu'tazila. It is in this sense, actually that Syekh Muhammad Abū Zahrah shares his opinion and states that:

“…such is close to the opinion of Muʿtazila. However, Muʿtazila followers think that *ma'rifatullāḥ* is obliged in mind. The followers of al-Māturīdiyya do not decide such thought, but they think that the obligation of *ma'rifatullāḥ* may be found through the fact of mind. This obligation never brings into reality, except Allah, the Supreme substance.”

Al-Māturīdī’s theological thought is mainly reflected in his *Kitab Al-Tauhid*. In accordance with this theological thinking, what follows is to discuss some example issues as *ṣifātullāḥ*, *kalāmullāḥ*, *ru'yatullāḥ*, *murtakib al-Kabira*, and *afāl al-'ibād*.

1. *Ṣifātullāḥ* (*the Attributes of Allah*)

According to al-Māturīdī, Allah is immaterial though there are some verses of Qur’an describing as if Allah were material, such as:

1) “The Hand of Allah is over their hands” (al-Fath}: 10);
2) “But will abide (for ever) The Face of thy Lord, Full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour” (ar-Rahmān: 27);
3) “But construct an Ark under Our Eyes and our Inspiration, and address Me No (further) on behalf of those who are in sin: For they are about to be overwhelmed (in the flood) (Hūd: 37).

The verses are the *nas* (authoritative quotation from the Qur’ān) of *mutashābihāt* that must be understood through the figure of speech.

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The words such as *al-yad* (hand), *al-wajh* (face), and *al-‘ain* (eye), related to Allah which mean the *power*, *mercy*, and *authority* of Allah upon His creatures. Allah does not have body that constitutes substance and accidence. He is completely different from the creatures like men who depend on their parts of body. Without the parts of the body, Allah is still powerful, whereas human beings are not.

Abū Zahra states that according to al-Māturīdī, the reality of Allah can be understood with the proposition of universe existence and human logical argumentation. In this belief, the existence of universe is because of the ultimate cause, the Creator of the universe itself. This is the furthest cause that has existed before the others. In this sense, al-Māturīdī interprets that Allah is in ‘*Arsy*. It does not mean that Allah occupies a certain place as mentioned in the following verses:

1) “for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein” (Qāf:16)
2) “There is not a secret consultation between three, but He makes the fourth among them,” (al-Muja’dila:7)

The verses cannot be understood literally or textually. They must be in the metaphorical meanings or *majāzī* (the figure of speech) because they belong to those of *mutashabbihāt*. The words indicating the “places” in the above verses do not mean to glorify them, but they become glorious because Allah has selected them as the special places for the selected creatures. For this reason, Allah is not in the certain place. From this, the expression that Allah is together with him in His ‘*Arsy*, for example, indicates the meaning of ‘*ulūw* (Gloriousness) and *jalāl* (the Greatness) which cannot be attributed to the creatures. The closeness of Allah means that His closeness is in the position as the Giver of protection (not from the place point of view) as well as the Giver of love, affection, direction, and guidance. These attributes are the characteristic of *Dhārī* indicating that Allah always compassionates His lovers and other creatures.

According to al-Māturīdī, the attribute of Allah is nothing, but *dhāt* of Allah. This opinion seems to be in line with that of al-Ash’ārī who also determines the attribute of Allah though both of them have different point of views. The first states that the attribute of Allah does not stand with His *dhāt* and is also not separated from His *dhāt*. It does not have a shape or *kainūna* (essence) that is free from the *dhāt*. 
So, it can be said that the regarded attribute can be understood as the regarded qadūm or ta‘addud al-qudamā’. On the contrary, the latter states that the attribute is a part from the ḍhāṭ because Allah has the attributes of ṣudda (powerful), irādah (wishful), ‘ilm, ḫāya, sam‘, baṣar, and kalām.

The opinions of the two scholars determine that Allah has the attribute though they are in a little different nuance of explaining the attributes. From this point of view, they reject the opinion of Mu‘tazila that denies the attribute of Allah and states that the attribute adheres to the ḍhāṭ (essence). In addition, they think that the opinion of Mu‘tazila can lead to the concept of ta‘addud al-qudamā’. For this, al-Māturīdī explains the attribute differently from al-Ashʿarī and Mu‘tazila.

However, the nuance is closer to Mu‘tazila. Even it can be synchronized. For this, there are really no differences among Muslims about the concept that Allah is ‘ālim, qādir, sāmi‘, bāṣir, and muriḍ. The difference is only on the question of whether the attributes of Allah are something out of the ḍhāṭ and have the shape apart from the ḍhāṭ or not. It is clear that according to al-Māturīdī the attribute is nothing different from the ḍhāṭ. So, it is close to the opinion of Mu‘tazila that the attribute exists, only the asmā’ (names) of amr i’tibā‘ī.6

As a result, the attribute is the name that can indicate a part of the ḍhāṭ’s condition such as long, short, intellectual, and others. The question is now whether the attribute is the only name with majāzī (metaphorical meaning) or it has the real meaning. This is really the beginning of the different standpoint of the attribute of Allah.

A group of Asha‘riyya, as stated by al-Ba‘qillānī, defines the attribute as something on the characterised (al-maṣūf). For this reason, it has the real meaning. On the contrary, Mu‘tazila defines it as the pure characterisation of the characteriser (waṣif). In this term, al-Māturīdī rejects Mu‘tazila that if the attribute is the characteristic of the characteriser, it withdraws the opinion that the creature is a‘yān (essences) and attribute. According to al-Māturīdī, the attribute is not the characterisation. In this sense, he rejects the comment of al-Ka‘bī, a figure of Mu‘tazila. He states that the attribute of Allah defined as the pure designation (qa‘ul) is not true because qa‘ul is new (hadīt). Allah is not attributed with the new.

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6 Ibid., p. 206.
2. Kalāmullāh (the Words of Allah)

Still in relation with the attributes of Allah, al-Māturīdī explains that Kalāmullāh has meanings on the dhāt of Allah and does not constitute the alphabets or sentences and also the sounds. The sounds of Kalāmullāh themselves cannot be heard. For this, they are qadīm (the Earliest) and not created. They are eternal; they are one and cannot be divided. They are not Arabic or Syrian, but pronounced by the people in different expression. In discussing Kalāmullāh, Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafi, the prominent scholar supporting al-Māturīdī madzab, states in his Tahsinat al-Adilla that:

“The people think differently about the Kalāmullāh questions of whether they are qadīm (the earliest) or ḥadīth (the newest). The truth expert says that Kalāmullāh are really Azāli in which they do not have any kinds, alphabets, and sounds. They are the attributes on the dhāt of Allah. Allah says with the attribute…” 7

From the above point, it is clear that Kalāmullāh are not the same as human beings’ sayings which constitute the alphabets and sounds. Kalāmullāh that were mentioned in the azāli time are not attributed with the alphabets, spellings, and sounds as well as the attributes of the creatures in everything. What is meant by al-Māturīdī that the Koran is the existing Kalām that stand on the dhāt of the mutakallim (the speaker) and expressed with the words is the expression of Kalām. They constitute the meanings adhered to the dhāt.

Concerning the qidām of the Qur’an, al-Māturīdī argues on the verse of the Arabians challenged to compete with the Qur’an of Allah’s kalām and ḥujja. As the ḥujja that the Qur’an is Kalāmullāh, there are two points of view to be noted. First, it is the proof that the Arabians are unable to make the verses like the Qur’an or to compete with it. Second, all recited from the Qur’an are not expressed through the verses but the mind that can show the limited understanding of the ḥikma mentioned in the Qur’an. These become an argument that kalām belongs to the dhāt of Ālim and no secrecy for Him. From this point of view, the Qur’an is the Words of Allah that are not new. It is Kalāmullāh with the meaning that it is the essence of His kalām.

7 Ibid., p. xii.
3. Ru’yatullāh (Seeing Allah)

There are no differences on ru’yatullāh between al-Ashʻari and al-Māturīdī.8 This question differs from that of Kalāmullāh as stated clearly in the following quotation.

“The difference between al-Māturīdī and al-Ashʻari is only on what heard by the Prophet Musa as His existing kalām. al-Māturīdī denies what heard by the Prophet Musa as Kalāmullāh that has existed the earliest and been on His dhaṭ. On the contrary, al-Ashʻari thinks that what heard by the Prophet Musa is Kalāmullāh that has existed the earliest.”9

Both al-Māturīdī and al-Ashʻari have the same view on ru’yatullāh when they reject the opinion of Mu'tazila denying ru’yatullāh. According to them, the term ru'ya means seeing Allah in the judgement day as mentioned in the Qur’an: “Some faces, that Day, will beam (in brightness and beauty); looking towards their Lord.” (al-Qiyāma: 23).

Different from al-Māturīdī and al-Ashʻari, Mu'tazila bases the discussion of ru’yatullāh on the logical thinking that ru’yatullāh needs a certain place for both the seer and the seen. In this sense, Allah certainly has a place. Allah is, however, in fact the Holy from place and time changing.

In addition, according to al-Māturīdī, ru’yatullāh in the judgement day is a part (ahwâl) of the judgement day, event that only Allah who knows what and how it will be. Human beings can only know the expressions determining the event without explanation and unquestionable. Different from that, Mu'tazila thinks that seeing Allah can be analogised with seeing thing (jīsm). So, in this point of view, Mu'tazila analogises the immaterial (God) with the material. This can be done with the note that the immaterial consists of the material or the unseen thing from the seen one. From this point of view, al-Māturīdī determines ru’ya as the part of the judgement day event that only Allah who knows what and how it will be.

It is clear enough that, according to al-Māturīdī, Allah can be seen in the hereafter because He exists although He does not have the shape, take the place, and is infinite. If He is finite, al-Māturīdī adds, He will be material (jism) as the jism is the name of every finite thing. Allah is in fact a shai’ (the one) that means ithubāt la ghair (the one that surely exist, not the others). The existence of universe is for example, the evidence of ithubāt that Allah exists. For this, Allah is called syai’.

Al-Māturīdī’s rejection to Mu’tazila’s opinion of ru’ya is reflected in his rejecting the opinions of al-Ka’bī, whose argument is based on the following verse of the Qur’an, that: “No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, Yet is acquainted with all things”, (al-An’ām: 103).

In this verse, al-Ka’bī defines the word idrāk as ru’ya, which means that Allah is the Holy from being seen. Al-Māturīdī rejects this opinion with defining the term as “having control over the finites”. According to al-Māturīdī, Allah is really the Holy from this attribute of finite because He is Infinite. Allah creates all things. Again, he explains that ru’ya does not cover the finite. It even happens to the things which essence cannot be recognised except with the understanding of it. The word idrāk only means seeing the limit of thing. With this limit the thing can be seen. For example, the brightness of the day can be seen but the essence of it cannot. For this, ru’ya does not refer to seeing the finite thing. In addition, al-Māturīdī supports his opinion of ru’ya with argumentation on the saying of Muhammad as quoted popularly by al-Maghribī: “You will see your God in the judgement day as you see the full moon”.

Seeing is in this case the limit and width of seeing. The essence of it cannot be seen although what can be seen externally can be dominated. It can be seen convincingly. According to al-Māturīdī, ru’ya without idrāk is based on the Prophet Musa’s request for being able to do ru’ya or to see Allah as in His Commandment (al-A’rāf:143). If ru’ya were not permitted, certainly the Prophet Musa would never understand his God. In fact, for the one who does not know his God, his composition cannot be trusted.

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10 al-Māturīdī, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, p. 79.
Another argument presented by al-Māturīḍi is that *ruʿya* constitutes an additional gift and reward from Allah (Yūnus: 26). Allah promises the better goodness from Muslims do in the world. Finally, al-Māturīḍi states firmly that *ruʿya* is not only through the knowledge of conscience, but also the real *ruʿya* that real knowledge cannot be realised except with *mushābada*.

4. Al-Murtakib al-Kabīra (*Behaviour of Great Sin*)

According to al-Māturīḍi, faith will not disappear because of doing a great sin. The faith and performance do not influence or eliminate each other since the faith is in *qalb* (heart) and the performance in the movement of the parts of body.

The explanation of faith and performance lead to an understanding that *maʿrifa* consists of faith that is thicker than *taṣdiq* (to justify). *Maʿrīja* is to find the meaning of the faith whereas *taṣdiq* is only the information on the truth of faith. From this point of view, the strong and weak faith depends on the strong and weak intelligence in finding the faith itself. For this, the act or performance does not influence the thickness or thinness of faith. However, viewed causally or rationally, the strength of faith gives encouragement and dynamics to the growth of high and glorious morals. This concept leads to the understanding that the sin of Muslims cannot influence their faiths. According to al-Māturīḍi, *murtakib al-kabīra* (behaviour of great sin) of Muslims is not eternal in the hell, although they die before they repent to Allah. al-Māturīḍi’s explanation is based on the Qurʾan (al-An’ām:160).

According to al-Māturīḍi, the bad acts (*sayyiʿa*) will be replied proportionally as many as the acts. The eternity in the hell is for only the people who believe in more than one God and those who do not believe in Allah or become atheist. The sinful men who believe in Allah are not the same as those who do not believe in Allah. The latter will be under the former. If they are in the same punishment, it will be in contrast with the promise of Allah himself. Allah is the Holy from breaking his promise.

… the faith will not disappear because the great sin. The sinful man who believes in Allah is still a *Muʿmin* (believer). Allah will decide his
great sin and He will punish him proportionally as many as his acts in
the hereafter. Allah may apologise or punish him as many as his sins.

The true one in the case of *Mu'minūn* who perform the great sin is
submit their matters to Allah. If Allah wishes, He will apologise them
as His excellence, goodness, and mercy. If He wishes, He will punish as
many as their sin quality. For this, they are not eternal in the hell. The
people who have the faith are between expectation (*raja‘*) and fear
(*khawf*). It is therefore possible for Allah to punish the people with the
small sin and apologise those with the great sin as His commandment
that actually Allah does not apologise the people who ally Allah with
others, and He will apologise a part from that for those Allah wishes.
Those who ally Allah with others have performed the great sin.\(^{11}\)

The reward and punishment Allah promises may not, according
to al-Māturīdī, take place certainly in the hereafter.\(^{12}\) It is clear that if
Allah promises, He will do it and never break it. He is obliged to give
reward to those who perform goodness and punish those who perform
badness. It is impossible, according to this concept, that if Allah does
not keep His promise and He avoid His wisdom and justice.

### 5. Afāl al-‘Ibād (Human Being)

Al-Māturīdī rejects Mu’tazila’s view that Allah is obliged to do
well or even the best for mankind. According to him, this obligation
of Allah does not decrease His absoluteness. The absolute Power and
the Will of Allah are certainly defined with the following terms that:
1) Human beings have free will and action.
2) Allah’s sentencing is not on the basis of arbitrariness and His
absolute Power and Will, but on human beings’ freedom to use his
capacity created by Allah.

From this point of view, it can be understood that, according to
al-Māturīdī, Allah’s Power and Will are not arbitrary. Good deeds are
from Allah. Bad deeds are not from Him, but from human beings
themselves. The logical consequence of this view is that Allah’s Justice
means implementing the norms of Allah. The rewards are for those
who perform righteousness and the punishment are for those who
perform badness are Allah’s justice.

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This question has to do with whether human beings have freedom to create and determine their own free will or are they subject to Allah’s predestination. In this context, it must be asserted that to realise a deed there must be will and capacity to perform the will. In addition, it should also be criticised whom the will belongs to? Does it belong to human or belong to Allah? In this case, al-Māturīdī argues that there are two deeds, Allah’s deed and human being’s one. The deeds to take the shape of human being’s capacity and the use of capacity are human being’s deeds. The human being’s deed is that in real meaning, not in figurative one.

The reward and punishment are based on the use of capacity created by Allah. For this, human beings will get reward based on the right use of capacity and punishment is based on the wrong use of capacity.

The explanation of reward and punishment presented by al-Māturīdī above gives an understanding that human being’s wish or desire determines the use of capacity, both for reward and punishment. In this case, human beings are free to choose because Allah gives them capacity to choose. For this, their right or wrong choice depends on their capacity to choose and Allah will reward or punish them based on what they have done.

Concerning the question above, al-Māturīdī follows Abū Ḥanīfa’s opinion of mashī’a (wish) and riḍā (willingness). According to him, Allah’s wish or desire is His willingness. Human being’s deeds are on His wish or desire, but not on His willingness. On the one hand, they do right on His wish and willingness. On the other hand, they do evil on His wish, not on His willingness.13

According to al-Māturīdī, human beings’ free will is the freedom to choose what Allah likes and dislikes.

D. Some Remarks on al- Māturīdī’s Thought

Jalāl Muḥammad Mūsā states that “the two imāms of Sunny, al-Ash‘arī and al-Māturīdī, are the Imams of Aḥl al-Sunna wāl-Jamā‘a.”14

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13 Ibid., p. 256.
14 Ibid., p. 282.
Although, the Sunny theologians are in fact not only two, but there are three. The third one is al-Ṭahāwī from Egypt.\(^{15}\)

Al-Ash’ārī gives more influences than al-Māturīdī. His works are more popular than al-Māturīdī’s ones. This is because of his closer living to the centre of Islamic government than al-Māturīdī. For this, al-Ash’ārī was easier to have opportunity to teach and got the supporting ideas from the public and Muslims’ opinions.

In fact, al-Māturīdī was earlier at good service of enforcing the concepts of *Ahl al-Sunnah* orienting to correct the concept of *Muʿtazila* which also developed in the area of al-Māturīdī and was considered to do deviation in Islamic *ʿaqīda*. In this point of view, it is thought that many Muʿtazila doctrines are not in line with the Qur’an and the Sunna because of its liberal thinking based on the philosophy and logics. Besides, at the time Muʿtazila did not get support from the incumbent power, al-Mutawakkil (237-247) from Abbasid who had great contribution to support *Ahl al-Sunnah*.

Most Indonesian Muslims are the followers of *Ahl al-Sunnah* which their theological doctrines develop and refer to the concepts composed by al-Ash’ārī and his followers. This reality can be seen from the books on *ʿAqīda* taught and the characteristic influenced by the doctrines. For example, the popular “fifty religious doctrines” in Indonesian Muslims are mainly found in the Islamic *pesantren*. It is seen that the work of ethics is less found in Indonesian Muslims, mainly in reaching the world welfare as if they do not have authority to determine their own deeds and fate. On the other hand, the theological doctrines of al-Māturīdī, of both taken from his works and developed by his followers, are almost ignored although the name of al-Māturīdī has been known since he learned the theological doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunnah waʾl-Jamāʿa* school of thought.

The different opinion between al-Māturīdī and al-Ash’ārī is about 30 – 40 of *kalam* questions such as the understanding of the term *qaḍa* and *qadar*. Al-Māturīdī thinks that *qadar* is the certainty of Allah in *azāli* time for everything (the creatures) that will find the fate with the certainty. *Qaḍa* means the wish of Allah in *azāli* time that the creatures

\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, p. 281
must be in specific order. However, these differences do not make them consider one another infidel because these differences are of the semantic question rather than that of the essence problem.

Al-Māturīdī is considered as the founder of Sunni Kalam Science that supports the ‘aqīda of Ahl al-Sunna with logics. Although he lived at the same time as al-Ash’ārī, both of them never communicated and knew each of their opinions. In case of the purpose and the way to reach the purpose, they are much the same. However, in term of manhaj (methodology), al-Matruridi is different from al-Ash’ārī. Their background of fiqh influences them. Al-Matūrīdī follows the fiqh of Abū Ḥanīfa who is known as abl al-ra’y (rationalist), whereas al-Ash’ārī follows al-Shāfi‘ī who is moderate but more traditional and bound to nasṣ.

According to Harun Nasution16, al-Matūrīdī has the same concept as Mu‘tazila who says that the mind can recognise the human beings’ obligation to thank to Allah. As stated by his follower, al-Bazdawi, “the belief in God and thankfulness to Him before divine revelation is compulsory in the concept of Mu’tazila. In this case, al-Matūrīdī has the same concept as Mu’tazila’s, and so do the Samarkand and Iraqi ulama.”

E. Conclusion

Based on the above explanations, there are some important points that are interesting to think in dealing with the discussion of al-Matūrīdī’s concepts and thoughts. At the first part, the position of al-Matūrīdī is important to remark. Al-Matūrīdī was really concerned with the effort of correcting Islamic ‘aqīda (belief) based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah at the time that Mu’tazila committed to enforce al-milḥna.

Of the most remarkable achievement of al-Matūrīdī is the fact that al-Matūrīdī was successful in synthesising aql and naql with free way of thinking. As it has been critically analyzed, al-Matūrīdī had succeed in resolving the conflict of theological concept and discusses such difficult questions as şifāt Allāh, ‘arsh, istiwa’, shafā’a, ru’ya, murtakib al-kibara, etc. This has been done based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah

16 Ibid., p. 78-79.
and by taking advances philosophical arguments and logics. Given the fact that he was close to Hanafiyyah school of thought, this way of thinking could not be separated from his teachers who followed the prominent figure of *ahl al-ra‘yi*, Abu Hanifah.

Al-Māturīdī and al-Ash‘arī were firstly in the same influence of Mu‘tazila. However, they were different in logics and philosophy they used. In facing Mu‘tazila, they had different way of answering. al-Māturīdī was closer to Mu‘tazila but Al-al-Ash‘arī in contrast to Mu‘tazila. But, al-Māturīdī is considered as the first founder of *Kalām Sunni* because al-Ash‘arī firstly followed the concept of Mu‘tazila. After the age of 40 (300H), al-Ash‘arī left Mu‘tazila and he involved in Sunni later. On the contrary, al-Māturīdī who was 12 years older passed away earlier and never followed Mu‘tazila.
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