

Development Of Moderate Theological Mazhab In Islam

Hamzah Harun Al-Rasyid

Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar Sultan Alauddin No.36 Samata-Gowa. South Sulawesi Indonesia,
hamzahharun62@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to discuss the achievements of Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari in building a moderate theological school in Islam. The study's problem is who Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari is, his method of thought and their testimony of moderation of his ideas in the field of theology. This study is descriptive and qualitative by using library sources related to the works of Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari. For the completeness of the study data, the authors use secondary data, namely written materials that have been published and circulated in the form of books, documents, magazines, and others that are relevant. Apart from being bibliographical, this study is descriptive, namely exploring the products of thought by previous scholars as material for improvement. This study finds that Abu Hasan Asy'ari is a phenomenal scholar in Islamic history. He is known as the initiator of the establishment of an intermediate school of Islamic theology. Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari's expertise in the field of theology can present alternative solutions amid the violent upheaval of thoughts from various mainstream thoughts currently existing and warm in his time. The approach used by Asy'ari in the study of theology uses a rational approach and a balanced textual approach. The Asy'ari approach is considered a moderate methodology to attract the people's sympathy and gain the most significant adherents in the Islamic world, including Indonesia and Malaysia. In the history of Kalam (Islamic Theology), several ideological understandings have developed rapidly across history, for example, Shia, Khawarij, Murji'ah, Mu'tazilah, Salaf (ahl al-hadith), and Ash'ariyyah. The movement and understanding created today cannot be separated from the action. It is a relay of the epistemology of previous ideas. So that nowadays, they are known as neo-mu'tazilah, neo-khawarij, neo-salafiyah and others. In this context, it takes the presence of a moderate theological thought that can quell the feuds of the various mainstream ideas, and what is appropriate and appropriate for that is the "Moderate Theological School of al-As'ariyyah".

Keywords: sect, school, theology, moderate, al-Asy'ariyyah.

INTRODUCTION

Abu al-Hasan Ali Ibn Ismail al-Ash'ari (260-324/H) was the builder of a moderate school of thought in the flow of kalam (theology). The theological school he built was Al-Asy'ariyyah, and in the literature of the science of kalam, it is often encountered with another term, namely "Ahli Sunnah wal Jama'ah". This school emerged after Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari declared himself out of the Muktazilah as a sect he had adhered to

until the age of 40 years. Since then, he has formulated a new theology and gained many followers because it is considered a continuation of the Sunni understanding embraced by most Muslims but has never been formulated thoroughly and systematically.

Historical facts show that the appearance of al-Asy'ari was suitable when the feud between the two extreme groups was heating, namely, the Muktazilah supported by the authorities and the hadith expert groups supported by the majority of

the general population. Al-Asy'ari's efforts to reconcile the two extreme groups have caused many experts to judge that the al-Asy-'ariyyah school is a middle school (moderate) between the Muktazilah and hadith experts on the one hand and between the Jabariyyah and Qadariyyah on the other.

A moderate flow between the Muktazilah, who are metaphorical rationalists and the extreme textualist al-hadith, al-Asy-'ariyyah, in his kalam methodology and using primary sources. (in the form of sacred texts from the Qur'an and al-Sunnah as practised by hadith experts)) also uses a rational method (in the form of logic or Aristotelian logic) to use reason and naqal in a balanced way. Based on the description above, a study problem can be taken: who is Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari, what is his method and paradigm of thinking, and where is the moderation of theology he built?

A BRIEF ABOUT ABU HASAL AL-ASY'ARI

Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari was a thinker who emerged during the Islamic period when it was at the peak of thought progress. He is one of the greatest mutakallim the Islamic world has ever had. The greatness of this figure is evident from the majority of Muslims in the world, including in Indonesia and Malaysia, and the State of Brunei Darussalam are adherents of al-Asy'ariyyah, especially those of the Shafi'i school. Al-Ash'ari was originally an influential figure among the Mu'tazilites.

He received intellectual training under the guidance of a Muktazilah figure, Abu Ali al-Jubbai. His achievements as a Muktazilah cadre have been tested by the trust bestowed by al-Jubbai, to represent the teacher in arguing with his debating opponents.

The term "al-Asy'ari" is attributed to one of the Prophet's companions, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari. The founder of this school is; Abu al-Hasan Ali Ibn Ismail ibn Abi Bishr Ishaq Ibn Salim Ibn Ismail Ibn Abdillah bin Musa Ibn Bilal Ibn Abi Burdah

Amir Ibn Abu Musa al-Ash'ari. he was born in Basra in 260 H and died in Baghdad in 324 H.

Abu al-Hasan al-Asy'ari first learned to read, write and memorise the Koran under the care of his parents, who later died when he was a child. Then he studied hadith, fiqh, interpretation and language with al-Saji, Abu Halifah al-Jumhi, Sahl ibn Nuh, Muhammad Ibn Yaqub, Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Khayr and others.

He studied Shafi'i fiqh from a Faqih, Abu Ishaq al-Mawardi (W.340 H), a Muktazilah figure in Basra, and until age 40, he was still a loyal follower of the Muktazilah. Al-Ash'ari studied with Abu Ali Al-Jubbai (303 H), a famous Muktazilah figure. He often gets the task of replacing his teacher in teaching duties. But when he was in his mature age of thinking, he experienced a conversion. He left the Muktazilah ideology and turned to attack his teacher with the tools (logic) used in the school itself and then established a new understanding that he adhered to.

Before building a new school, Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari adhered to and studied the thoughts of the Muktazilah through a Muktazilah figure in Barsah, namely Ali Ibn al-Jubbai. Even though al-Ash'ari has reviewed this school for a long time, he has not yet found peace in his soul and mind, even in Ash'ari's judgment. logical arguments and the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith are references and guidelines. Still, on the contrary, religion is only a slavery of reason.

On the other hand, al-Asy'ari saw that the muhaddistin and hasyawiyah methodology would lead people to stagnation of thought, so Muslims were trapped in the form of frozen views. Therefore, uniting the rationalist school with the textualist school in a moderate orientation and paradigm of thought is a must because, in addition to restoring the dignity and integrity of the ummah, it also places Nash and reason in a balanced and proportionate manner. The new understanding that he founded, Al-

Asy'ariyyah, has the characteristics and advantages of various existing thought patterns so that it can dominate the Islamic world today. During the eleven centuries in its history of growth and development, this school has experienced ups and downs in its spread and varied in its doctrinal formulations. Since Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari was declared a "Moderate" theology, this understanding has received much sympathy from Muslims because it is considered a continuation of Traditional knowledge, which is embraced by the majority of Muslims but has never been comprehensively and systematically formulated before.

The paradigm of "moderate theology" remains committed to using logic as the "main capital" and as an antithesis to the Muktazilah ideas. The orientation of its thought then took the form of a theological school with its name, "al-Asy'ariyyah", as stated in the books written by Ash'ari himself, namely, the book *al-Luma 'fi al-Radd alā Ahl al-Ziyagh wa al-Bida'*; *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*; and *al-Ibanah'an Usul al-Diyanah*. Besides that, there are also books written by his followers.

In subsequent developments, this school received the support of most Muslim ummah and scholars. Al-Nashyar said: "scientists and figures of the al-Asy'ariyyah school are scientists who have succeeded in expressing the actual substance of Islamic philosophy. Because only they can present the content of the Qur'an and al-Sunnah philosophically, the theological side of Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah has been incarnated and crystallised in their thinking so that the al-Asy'ariyyah school can become an example of Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah's creed to this day. And will be preserved until Allah accepts the earth and its contents (the Day of Resurrection).

METHODOLOGY OF THINKING

The methodology of thinking of Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari can be seen from two aspects of the review, namely:

Basis of Footing (Source) Al-Asy'Ari.

Methodology

As previously stated, before the emergence of this school, the theological thought scene was dominated by two competing theological mainstreams in understanding the Islamic creed. The two mainstreams in question are the Muktazilah school and the Hanabilah school. Muktazilah is a school that upholds reason in theological studies, while Hanabilah is a school that highly respects texts in expressing its thoughts. Based on Imam Asy'ari's evaluation, the two mainstreams in question are equally dangerous for Muslims because both are seeds of division that threaten the integration of Muslims. According to Asy'ari, the Muktazilah school will lead Islamic teachings to philosophical studies that are far from the clarity of the Islamic faith. In contrast, the Hanabilah school will lead the teachings of Islam to stagnation.

It was from the objective conditions that included the Muslim Umt that it gave inspiration and motivation to Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari. He then believed that it would be ideal if the rational and textual circles could unite and meet in a "moderate" school and appreciate the two sources of faith in a balanced way, namely, between reason and texts in an integrated manner. Imam Ash'ari then initiated the creed of Ahlissunnah Waljama'ah with a new thought construct by trying to harmonise reason and texts in understanding religious texts. In this case, al-Ash'ari said:

"Relying on the texts without allowing reason to corroborate the nature contained in them is naivety because stupid people can only do it. Likewise, following the reason that is free from the bonds of texts, especially in matters of faith, is wrong and even worse and dangerous. Therefore, for the sake of truth and groups who want to reveal the truth, I must pioneer a 'moderate' thinking methodology that may combine text and reason. It is expected to be able to avoid mistakes that will arise if only following one of them".

Several scholars and intellectuals criticised the methodology of al-Asy'ari's thought, especially in the field of theology, with the view that the natural source of al-Asy'ari's methodology was the methodology of Ibn Kullab. Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad al-Bahi reinforced this issue.

Imam al-Ash'ari has made developments on the methodology of Ibn Kullab. He explained the problems that were not clear and anything global in nature and added new arguments to strengthen Ibn Kullab's opinion in dealing with the schools that he considered wrong. Thus, Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari is regarded as a continuation and perfection of the Kullabiyyah school. The contribution of al-Ash'ari was very impressive and made Ibn Kullab's school become popular and spread.

Al-Syahrastani, for example, said, "Imam al-Asy'ari has joined the Kullabiyyah group. He supports his opinion and uses his kalam methodology so that this school officially becomes the Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah school". In addition, Ibn Asakir said that "al-Ash'ari's contribution that appeared to the Kullabiyyah school was his contribution in explaining this school and then fighting for it".

However, what is interesting to point out is whether al-Asy'ari survived and was consistent with his methodology. Or because of the development factor of his thinking, he has 'adopted' another method that he considers more room for reason to think more creatively and productively? In the following sub-section, this problem will be explained.

Al-Asy'ari. Methodological Dualism

Some theological scholars consider that al-Asy'ari switched to a new methodology different from the method he developed previously because he could not stick to the Salaf methodology. Thus he has taken two methodologies of thought, namely, a methodology of thinking that has approached the Salaf and a method of thinking that has approached the Mu'tazilites.

As for the methodology of thought that is considered close to the Salaf, he took it as a logical consequence of the objective conditions he experienced when he hated the Muktaزيلah school because it was too excessive in using reason. This kind of thinking methodology is outlined in his work 'al-Ibanah'. According to history, this work was written not long after he switched from the Muktaزيلah school. Al-Ibanah contains evident attitudes and views of al-Ash'ari regarding the positions of the texts that are higher than those of reason. His methodology, considered close to the Muktaزيلah thinking methodology, is a consequence of developing his thinking after restoring balance. After what he was worried about from the Muktaزيلah school disappeared from his mind. This methodology of thinking is formulated in his work 'al-Luma', the work he wrote after al-Ibanah.

In al-Luma 'Ash'ari, the position of the reason is equal to texts, in contrast to his attitude in the previous al-Ibanah, which puts the position of texts above reason. Even in al-Luma' book, when he discusses theological issues, his works are a little higher than the position of the texts.

One of the arguments put forward by the reviewers is the reality of the two monumental works written by Imam Asy'ari. They say that in his first book, al-Ibanah, al-Asy'ari appreciated and praised Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's methodology. However, we no longer find this condition in al-Luma's second work. What we get is Asy'ari's criticism of the thinking methods adopted by the Hanabilah followers. He states that the Hanabilah thinking methodology cannot build a correct theological thinking paradigm.

RESULT

Some Reviewers' Views

In the following, the different orientations of the reviewers regarding the Asy'ari style of thought are stated:

1. Among the reviewers and researchers, some use Asy'ari's al-Ibanah to determine the pattern of

al-Asy'ari's thinking. As a result, they stated that Ash'ari only adopted the methodology of Salaf thought. This study concludes that the followers of al-Ash'ari who came later contradicted or violated the methods of thinking of al-Ash'ari because they tended to give a more significant position to reason.

2. Another reviewer sees his first book when al-Ash'ari establishes the characteristics of the Khabariyyah in the Salaf style without specifying the trait's form. When he determined the attributes of Khabariyyah in his second work, it was found that there was a difference because he determined the characteristics of Khabariyyah in the Muktaزيلah style, namely by interpreting religious texts related to these characteristics.

3. Some researchers also argue that the real secret of al-Asy'ari's success is not because he has high rationality but is caused by external factors, such as his family's position in the eyes of his community. His spiritual character, debating abilities, people's hatred of the Muktaزيلah sect, and the people's longing for a figure to emerge who can face various denominations with logical premises and strong arguments.

4. There is also a group of reviewers who only refer to his work 'al-Luma' to determine the style and methodology of al-Asy'ari. According to them, al-Luma' is what reveals the reality of the latest developments in al-Ash'ari's thought. This group does not see any difference in views between the methodology of thought developed by the adherents of al-Asy'ariyyah and the methodology of the study of Imam al-Asy'ari himself.

However, based on the study conducted, the author concludes that, in essence, there is no difference in the scientific attitude of al-Asy'ari in his two works. He was right when al-Ibanah stated his affiliation to Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. His criticism of the Hanabilah followers did not cloud this statement because al-Ash'ari only criticised some Hanabilah followers who were not committed to Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's methodology. According to al-Asy'ari's assessment, some of the Hanabilah have reached

the tasybih level, so they are considered out of the frame Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal has outlined.

From this, we can understand the anger of the Hanabilah followers towards al-Ash'ari, namely only because the Ash'ari violated their excessive attitude in following the literal meanings of the texts. That is also why Hameasy Ghurabah asserts that "researchers who only refer to al-Ibanah to determine al-Ash'ari's thoughts are a mistake, because between al-Ibanah and al-Luma' become a unified whole and complete in the dialectic of thought. al-Ash'ari". In this context, Ahmad Jali stated that "al-Asy'ari's works are consistent in the formulation of his methodology of thinking, especially if we pay attention when he describes issues of aqidah.

Ahmad Jali's argument above is reasonable because if we look closely at the works of al-Asy'ari. It is found that there are differences in terms of affirmation, and they have the same principle in rejecting and opposing the opinions of the Muktaزيلah.

In addition, according to al-Jaly, Asy'ari's works consistently see the need for the Qur'anic texts and the Prophet's hadith and rational arguments to strengthen the theological paradigm. For example, the work of al-Luma' was typically designed to oppose the Mu'tazilites. Therefore, the focus of al-Asy'ari's study in this work is only on the problems that are the central discussion of the Muktaزيلah. In this work, al-Ash'ari does not touch al-Ghaybiyyat's issues at all.

In line with al-Jaly's opinion above, Fawqiyah Husain asserts that al-Asy'ari in al-Luma' uses a thinking paradigm similar to the Muktaزيلah thinking paradigm. This thinking paradigm uses premises and logical issues. On the other hand, he defends logical arguments and then presents various ideas that legitimise their use in creed studies. Among them, al-Ash'ari stated that the Qur'anic evidence that shows the re-creation indicated by the verse *خلقناه لا لنا* shows the legitimacy of the use of reason. Allah uses an analogy approach in this verse, a form of logic.

On several occasions, al-Ash'ari in al-Luma' emphasised that the verses of the Qur'an cannot be contradictory. Therefore, when discussing or studying specific issues, al-Ash'ari considers all the verses related to that issue, which is a must. It is what other theologians often forget because sometimes they only consider the verses that support their opinion.

In addition, al-Luma' 'al-Asy'ari legalises the use of ta'wil with the provisions of paying attention to the meanings of the zahir verse and may not switch from the definition of essence to the importance of majazi without proof or accompanied by solid arguments (hujjah). But al-Ash'ari did something different in al-Ibanah, and in it, he started his affiliation with the Salaf. Al-Asy'ari emphasised the need for this Salaf methodology because, according to him, the deviations that occurred in the faith must be recognised as a result of irresponsible interpretation of the Qur'anic texts.

It should be emphasised here that although al-Asy'ari asserted in his book that al-Ibanah used verses from the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet, he was not textual because apparently, he also produced logical arguments from those verses. He explains skillfully how a specific verse supports or strengthens his opinion and disproves the opinion of his opponents, who are also drawn from the same verse. We can see this clearly in Asy'ari's argument regarding the issue of ru'yatullah. Three of the arguments put forward by Asy'ari are aqli arguments. One of them he believes there is a connection between the existence of something and the possibility of seeing it. According to al-Ash'ari, everything that exists can be seen. Al-Ash'ari stated as follows:

"Among the proofs of being able to see Allah with the eyes of the head is that nothing exists except that Allah can show it. So, Allah can show himself to us when Allah is a substance."

From the descriptions stated above, it can be concluded that al-Asy'ari has been consistent in

all of the works that he wrote. The differences in his works only lie in the affirmation of the methodology. The methodology is none other than a methodology based on the Qur'an and al-Hadith, with some modifications of interpretation and interpretation. Then he builds logical arguments from those verses, produced from indications of a correct understanding of the text. In this context, Ham quickly Ghurabah stated, "I did not find any difference in the paradigm that I got at al-Ibanah with the paradigm that I got. in al-Luma'".

Aspects of Moderation in Asy'Ari. Theology

Many theological reviewers have concluded that al-Asy'ariyyah theology is a 'moderate' theology among the theologies that existed at that time. The driving factor for this moderation is the external conflict between one school and another, and Al-Asy'ari sees this factual condition as hazardous.

To prove this conclusion, the researchers invite us to refer to the theological issues raised by al-Ash'ari. The point of "kalamullah", for example, al-Asy'ari, chose that there are words of Allah that are nafsi and some are lafzi. This choice was a middle ground between two different options believed by the two mainstreams that developed at that time, Hanabilah and Muktazilah. The first says that kalamullah is ghayr makhluq, while the second says that kalamullah is makhluq.

According to the issue of human actions (af'al al 'ibad), al-Asy'ari also proposes a middle-way option between Jabariyyah, who believes that humans do not create their efforts and Muktazilah, who believes that humans make their actions that are ikhtiyariyyah. Asy'ari emphasised that humans do not complete their activities, but those actions are something that happens by the nature of Allah. However, humans have a role in creating this action which was later named al-Kasb. Al-kasb is under human nature because al-kasb is also what makes humans worthy of punishment or reward.

Likewise, regarding the issue of the characteristics of khabariyyah, al-Asy'ari is in a

moderate position between al-Musyabbihah (who has exceeded the limit in terms of accepting the literal meanings of the text. This exaggeration is the cause of them interpreting the words al-istiwa', al-yadayn, al-wajhu with the meaning of zahir), and Mu'athilah (which denies the existence of khabariyah properties). Ash'ari, in this case, chose to determine the characteristics of the khabariyah without questioning the kayfiyyah.

Similar to the issue of murtakib al-kabair (perpetrators of significant sins), Ash'ari also chose a middle way between the Murjiah and Muktazilah schools. The first says that immoral acts do not affect the nature of faith, just as obedience does not affect the nature of disbelief. It means that if someone has faith, the sin he commits must not shift his status from believing to not believing, and vice versa. According to Murjiah, the sinner will be tortured only for a short time; after that, he is an expert in heaven. While the Muktazilah say that he is between two positions, faith and disbelief, he is neither a believer nor an unbeliever. As a result, if he dies before repenting, then he will go to hell forever. Ash'ari took the middle way and said, "Indeed, the perpetrator of a major sin is a sinful believer. If he dies before repenting, his status will be handed to Allah. If Allah forgives him, he will be free, and if Allah wills, he will be punished.

These 'moderate' attitudes and views are often found in Asy'ari's theological discourse. However, what is interesting to mention here is whether Asy'ari's philosophy which is assumed to be "moderate", has received appreciation from other schools. The answer is that if we look at the attitudes of other schools, it turns out that they expressed antipasti to Imam al-Ash'ari. It is because Ash'ari did not fully accept the methodology of each of these schools. He selects and only takes what he thinks is right according to the theological constructs, nuances and paradigms he builds.

Things that are no less important to be addressed here are; that another group of researchers say that Asy'ari did not develop a moderate methodology,

but he was a genuine Hanabilah. This group refers to the statement that Asy'ari has expressed to confirm their assumption.

In his work al-Ibanah, Asy'ari said, "the opinion we believe in, the religion we follow is to adhere to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, as well as respect what was narrated from the companions, tabi'in and the Imams of Hadith. All of that we hold we also hold the opinion of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, and we disagree with people who violate the views of Imam Ahmad. In the author's opinion, what is assumed by the group above should not be taken for granted because of the moderate methodology understood from the Ash'ari methodology.

There are fundamental differences found in the substance of the Hanabilah methodology itself.

For this reason, if there is no way except to be similar, then the water that is almost the same as the Ash'ari school is the Salaf school, not the Hanabilah school. Because the Salaf madhhab chose to tafwid on the Mutasyabihat texts. Tafwid means accepting the texts as they are without making interpretations. It is, of course, very similar to the Ash'ari school, which stipulates the existence of these qualities without determining their form.

On the other hand, the view that the attitude of Ash'ari is Salafi based on the opinions of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal also cannot be accepted. His refusal was because Asy'ari was proven to have added the Salaf methodology in the form of philosophical approaches that were not found in the previous Salaf methodology. Asy'ari has chosen to enter the study and paradigm of theological thinking and even considers it a must. At the same time, this is something that was not well received by previous Salaf figures.

Based on the facts and data that have been revealed, it is clear that the basic principles of the Asy'ari methodology are not the same as the Salafi method and paradigm but do not contradict or contradict the methodology and paradigm of the salaf ulema. It is not the difference between Salaf and other schools.

Likewise, Ash'ari's statement that he had adopted the creed of Ahmad bin Hanbal. This statement does not contradict the earlier conclusion that his methodology is only close to Ahmad's, not the same as his. Because what must be understood from Ash'ari's statement is that he did not go out of the frame and basic framework laid by the Salaf, including Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that;

1. The theological concept that Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari has built is the concept of 'moderate theology'. Al-Asy'ari's moderate theological formulation, in addition to using textual arguments in the form of sacred texts from the Qur'an and Al-Sunnah as carried out by supported hadith experts, also uses rational arguments in the form of logic or Aristotelian logic. However, he uses this logic approach not as a framework for truth but as a tool for making clarity.
2. The approach used by al-Asy'ari in the study of 'moderate theology' is unique. He takes the good from the textual salafiyyah approach so that he uses reason and naqal arguments in a balanced way. It exploits reason maximally but is not as accessible as Muktazilah, holds naqal firmly but is also not as strict as the Hanabilah regarding their rejection of logical arguments.
3. Al Asy'ari's trend of moderation in the field of theology is evident in several sub-studies, including; The issue of "kalamullah" al-Asy'ari chose the middle position of the two growing mainstreams, Hanabilah and Muktazilah. Regarding human actions (af'al al 'ibad), al-Asy'ari chose the middle between Jabariyyah and Qadariyyah. Likewise, with the issue of the characteristics of khabariyyah, al-Asy'ari is in a moderate position between

al-Musyabbihah and Mu'atthilah. On the murtakib al-kabair (perpetrators of significant sins), Ash'ari chose a middle way between the Murjiah and Muktazilah schools.

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