Exploring the Meaning of Faith and Kufr: Perspectives of Islamic Theological Schools

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Abstract

This article discusses the meaning of faith and kufr from the perspective of Islamic theological schools. Faith and kufr in particular in the four main schools, namely Mu'tazilite, Murjiah, Ash'arite and Maturidiyah. Some of the important themes focused on in this article are amal (action), sahadat (confession of testimony), tasdiq (convincing belief), and ma'rifah (sincerely believed knowledge). Despite differences in views, all traditions recognize the importance of the concepts of faith and kufr as foundational in religious practice. Tolerance and mutual respect within this diversity of views are key to maintaining ukhuwah islamiyah in Muslim religious life. This article reviews the views of four schools of Islamic theology on faith and kufr. Mu'tazilites emphasize that faith is not only related to belief, but is also influenced by good deeds as a reflection of sincere faith. Meanwhile, the Murjiah consider faith to be in the heart and not bound by deeds, but rather by beliefs believed in the heart. Ash'arites attribute faith to belief in the heart and recognize the importance of deeds in strengthening faith and earning God's pleasure. On the other hand, the Maturidis emphasize the importance of a sincere understanding of faith and kufr, which will affect the way one practices faith on a daily basis. The formulation of the problem in the article is how can the spirit of ukhuwah islamiyah be maintained in the diversity of views on faith and kufr among Muslims? Despite the differences in views, this article emphasizes the importance of tolerance and mutual respect in maintaining Islamic brotherhood in the religious life of Muslims. By respecting each other's differences, Muslims can live in harmony and peace, practicing their respective religions with understanding and compassion. the spirit of ukhuwah islamiyah can be maintained in the diversity of views on faith and kufr among Muslims.

Keywords: Iman, Kufr, Moslem, perspective, theology.

Introduction

Islam as one of the major religions in the world has teachings that govern the lives of its followers. Two central concepts that form the basis of Muslim religious practice are faith and *kufr*. Faith is the foundation of belief and trust in Allah and His teachings, while *kufr* is the rejection or denial of these teachings. In the world of Islamic theology, there are various schools that provide different interpretations and understandings of the meaning of faith and

kufr. Each school has its own perspective on these theological concepts. This article will explore the meaning of faith and disbelief from the perspective of different schools of Islamic theology. The Battle of Siffin, which resulted in the political defeat of Ali ibn Abi Talib, played an important role in the development of Islamic theological schools. It was one of the key events in the early history of Islam that had a major impact on the political and theological dynamics of Muslim society at that time (Nasution, 2008).

Initially, Islamic theological schools did not emerge as separate entities from political issues. The political issues that arose after the Battle of Siffin had a profound impact on the development of theological thought among Muslims. The cause was related to the dispute between different groups over the leadership of Muslims after the death of Caliph Uthman bin Affan. The feud between Ali ibn Abi Talib and another group that came to be known as the Khawarij and Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, over who was entitled to be caliph and how to treat the perpetrators of Caliph Uthman's assassination, brought about differences in theological views and understandings. These opposing parties each had their own views on the legitimacy of leadership and how to view the control of power.

This political dispute then created different theological understandings, and eventually gave rise to Islamic theological schools such as Shia, Sunni, and Khawarij. Different views on political leadership and other political issues became the catalyst for the emergence of different schools of Islamic theology. Although it was initially political issues that influenced the emergence of Islamic theological schools, over time, these theological thoughts became more crystallized and carried wider implications for the religious practices and beliefs of Muslims. Theological issues thus became the center of extensive debate and research in the history of Islamic thought. "Faith and *kufr*" was the first major agenda item to emerge in Islamic theology. The issue was first raised by the Khawarij who regarded a number of the Prophet Muhammad's companions as infidels because they were considered to have committed major sins. The Khawarij group rejected the wisdom of Ali ibn Abi Talib who accepted *tahkim* (arbitration) as a settlement of the caliphate dispute with Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. At first, the Khawarij were loyal supporters of Ali ibn Abi Talib, but later they broke away and formed a separate group that opposed Ali, Mu'awiyah, and those involved in the acceptance and implementation of the *tahkim*.

'Ali, Mu'awiyah, 'Amr ibn Ash, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, and others, who accepted *tahkim* (arbitration), in their view were disbelievers. Khawarij supporters cling to the Word of God in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa verse 60:

ومن لم يحكم بما أنزل الله فأولئك هم الكافرون

"Whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, then they are the disbelievers" (Agama RI, 1992).

Citing this verse, the Khawarij argued that accepting tahkim or arbitration in resolving *khilafah* disputes was a form of denial of God's law and meant refusing to decide based on the sharia law that God had established. Therefore, in their view, those who accept *tahkim* are considered disbelievers because they have abandoned the principles of faith in Islam. The motto "*la hukma illa li Allah*" (no decision except that of Allah) became the motto of the Khawarij. They adhered to the belief that only God has the right to determine laws and decisions, thus rejecting the election or appointment of human leaders who are not fully based on God's law. The political issues that arose after Ali's defeat in the battle of Siffin then led to theological issues, especially about who was considered an infidel and who was not. The Khawarij, (Nasution, 2008). As a group that opposed the *tahkim* decision, declared Ali and other leaders who accepted *tahkim* as infidels, because they were considered to

have deviated from the teachings of Islam (Izutsu, 1994).

In its development, the Khawarij group split into several sects that had different theological views. Changes in the concept of *kafir* also occurred among these groups. Initially, the Khawarij group considered disbelief only to those who did not establish laws based on the Qur'an, especially in the context of their rejection of *tahkim* (arbitration) in resolving disputes over the caliphate. Over time, however, the Khawarij groups underwent a change in their view of who was considered a disbeliever. They began to consider as disbelievers also those who committed major sins (*murtakibal-kaba'ir*). This meant that not only those who did not follow the provisions of the sharia were considered disbelievers, but also those who committed grave sins were considered to have left the religion.

This change in concept then led to the emergence of later schools of Islamic theology, such as Mu'tazilah, Murjiah, Asy'ariyah, and Maturidiyah. These schools brought discussions and debates on the issues of faith and *kufr,* as well as the status of the perpetrators of major sins in religion. Within these Islamic theological groups, there are differences of view even among their own followers. Discussions and debates on the issues of faith and disbelief, as well as the status of the perpetrators of major sins, became major issues in the development of theological thought in Islam.

Ibn Taymiyyah, a renowned Islamic scholar, also observed the importance of theological issues arising from these political tensions. He noted that differing views on faith and kufr were among the first disputes among Muslims, which eventually led to the formation of different theological schools and continue to be debated in the history of Islamic thought. Overall, the complex relationship between politics and theology in the early history of Islam shows how political dynamics can affect the understanding and interpretation of religious teachings, and how theological issues became central to the debate and development of Islamic thought. Through a deeper understanding of the various perspectives of theological schools, it is hoped that the reader will gain a more comprehensive picture of how the meanings of faith and kufr are defined and understood in the diverse theological traditions of Islam. Not only that, this article will also discuss the importance of understanding different views in a climate of mutual respect and appreciation. The spirit of *ukhuwah islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) reflected in the attitude of interfaith tolerance is important to maintain unity and harmony in the diversity of beliefs in Muslim societies.

Research Methods

The research method used in this article is more expository or descriptive, which focuses on providing an understanding of the different views of faith and kufr from the perspective of Islamic theological schools, using several research methods, namely:

1. Literature Review: This method involves tracing and analyzing various references, books, articles, and academic works relevant to the research topic. Through the literature review, the author can compile the views and theories that have been proposed by experts in the field of Islamic theology.
2. Documentary Analysis: This method involves analyzing classical texts and religious ocuments that are the main references in the schools of Islamic theology. The author can study the writings of scholars and religious figures representing each school.
3. Comparative Analysis: This method involves comparing the various views and teachings held by the schools of Islamic theology. In this way, the author is able to discover the differences and similarities in the understanding of faith and kufr among these schools.

Results and Discussion

Theological Thought on the Concept of Faith and Kufr

Iman and *Kufr* are two central concepts in Islam. Faith is a deep acceptance and belief in the teachings of Islam, while *kufr* is the rejection or denial of these teachings. However, in the world of Islamic theology, there are various schools that have different understandings of the true meaning of faith and *kufr*. This article will explore the meaning of faith and *kufr* from the perspective of several schools of Islamic theology.

According to Hasan Hanafi, in the discussion of the concepts of faith and kufr, the key terms often used by Muslim theologians are *amal* (good or obedient deeds), *ikrar* (verbal acknowledgment), and *tasdiq* (justifying with the heart), which also includes *ma'rifah bi al-qalb* (knowledge with the heart) (Hanafi, 1991).

In the book "The Dividing Line between Kufr and Faith," it is stated that the word "faith" has two basic meanings in the Qur'an. First, faith as justifying (*tasdiq*), which is a strong belief in the heart in the truth of the teachings of Allah and His Messenger. Second, faith as charity or a commitment to perform deeds in accordance with religious teachings (Khalid,1996). Meanwhile, in the same book, "*kufr*" is defined as "going out and deviating from the foundation of faith." The reason for this is when a person is aware of the proofs of monotheism in front of him and there is something that encourages him to believe in Allah, but he continues to act in his falsehood and kufr, as if he does not care or ignore the proofs (Khalid,1996).

However, based on some specific literature that addresses the issue of faith, it can be concluded that faith has three elements. First, tasdiq bi al-qalb, which is a firm belief in the heart in the truth of religious teachings. Second, *ikrar bi al-lisan*, which is a verbal confession and utterance related to faith in Allah and His Messenger. And third, charity bi al-arkan, namely the implementation of actions that become pillars or pillars in the religion that is believed (Ritonga, 1996). Thus, the concept of faith in the literature includes elements of *tasdiq* (belief in the heart), *ikrar* (verbal acknowledgment), and *amal* (the implementation of good deeds in accordance with religious teachings). In addition, the difference between faith and kufr is based on a person's attitude and deeds in response to religious evidence and teachings (Ritonga, 1996). According to the respective schools of Islamic theology, faith and kufr and the status of the perpetrators of major sins, as follows:

The Khawarij School

The Khawarij theological stance relating to the issue of faith and kufr was more politically motivated. The truth of this statement seems undeniable because the emergence of Khawarij theological issues around the issue of *tahkim* between the camps of 'Ali and Mu'awiyah asking whether they remain believers or disbelievers. Since both parties had tahkimed people, then they had committed a major sin, whoever commits a major sin, according to all Khawarij sects except the Najdah sect --- is a disbeliever and tortured in hell forever. In the view of the Khawarij sects (except the Najdah sect), they consider that both parties who commit the grave sin of accepting the *tahkim* are disbelievers and will be tormented in hell forever. This position became the cornerstone of Khawarij theology regarding the issue of faith and disbelief (Al-Ash'ariy, n.d.).

Furthermore, Azzariqah, as a very extreme sub-sect of Khawarij, stated that the perpetrators of major sins such as in the tahkim case above, were punished as polytheists. In fact, anyone from the Muslim community who does not want to join their ranks is also considered

a polytheist and may be killed (Ritonga, 1996). According to Azzariqah's view, the perpetrators of this major sin have changed their faith status to *kafir millah* (disbeliever in religion), which means they have left Islam. They will remain in hell together with other disbelievers (Al-Syahrastaniy, n.d.).

The view of another Khawarij sub-sect, the Najdah, gives the same predicate as Azzariqah, namely polytheism, to any Muslim who persistently commits a minor sin. However, major sins, if not committed continuously, then the perpetrators are not considered polytheists but only disbelievers (Al-Syahrastaniy, n.d.). This also applies to Muslims who do not agree with the Khawarij group. As for the followers of Khawarij, if they commit a major sin, then they will be tormented, but not eternal in hell, but will later enter heaven. This view shows the level of extremism and the strictness of the assessment of major sins in the view of the Khawarij sub- sect (Ritonga, 1996).

A very moderate sub-sect of Khawarij, the Ibadis, holds the view that every perpetrator of a major sin is still considered a muwahhid (one who believes in the oneness of Allah), but not a believer (one who believes wholeheartedly). Therefore, the perpetrators of major sins are still called *kafir*, but the type of *kafir* they consider is *kafir ni'mat*, not *kafir millah* (*kafir* in religion). In the Ibadi view, although the perpetrators of major sins are considered disbelievers, they do not consider them as disbelievers who leave Islam. In the afterlife, those who are considered disbelievers by the Ibadis will receive eternal torment in hell along with other disbelievers. (Al- Ash'ariy, n.d.). In addition, the Ibadiyya opinion about Muslims who do not agree with them is that they are considered as infidels, not polytheists (idolaters). In the Ibadi view, they are allowed to marry people who are considered as infidels but are not allowed to marry people who are considered as polytheists. This moderate view of the Ibadiyya shows that they maintain their position as muwahhid and still view Muslims as religious brothers, despite their differences. They emphasize tolerance and respect for people with different beliefs, so they are considered a moderate sub-sect of Khawarij. Khawarij's theological approach in this context shows that political considerations and events of the time were influential in their views on faith and kufr. They placed strict criteria in judging one's faith based on political actions and subjective assessments of grave sins committed in political disputes.

This view of Khawarij theology shows how the development of theology in Islamic history was often influenced by the political and social context that existed at the time. This confirms that in the context of religion and theology, political and social aspects can play an important role in shaping people's beliefs and views.

Murjiah sect

As a reaction to the Khawarij theology, the Murjiah sect emerged. The main opinion of the Murjiah school is that the perpetrators of major sins are still considered believers, and the punishment for their sins is postponed until the Day of Judgment (Nasution, 2008). Their view contrasts with that of the Khawarij, who place primary attention on the issue of which of the Muslims have become disbelievers. The Murjiah focus on the issue of faith, i.e. which of the Muslims are still considered believers and remain within the fold of Islam. They put more emphasis on the aspect of faith and belief, and postpone the final judgment on one's faith status until the Day of Judgment. Thus, the Murjiah sect offers a more tolerant view and favors the perfection of faith and piety, by providing opportunities for perpetrators of major sins to gain redemption and repentance at a later date. This is different from the Khawarij view, which tends to take a stricter stance in assessing major sins and disbelieving the perpetrators. Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari classified the Murjiah theological school into 12 sub-sects based on their views on faith. These sub-sects include al-Jahmiyah, al-Salihiyah, al-

Najjariyah, al- Gailaniyah, al-Junusiyah, al-Syimriyah, al-Sa-baniyah, ibnu Sabib and his followers, Abu Hanifah and his followers, al-Tumaniyah, al-Marisah, and al-Karamiyah (Al-Ash'ariy, n.d.).

However, there is also another classification approach taken by Harun Nasution and Abu Zahrah, which divides the Murjiah theological school into two main groups, namely moderate *Murjiah* (*Murjiah Sunnah*) and extreme *Murjiah* (*Murjiah Bid'ah*) (Al-Maturidi,1979). The extreme Murjiah group argues that faith is only a confession or justification in the heart (*tasdiq bi al-qalb*). That is, faith lies in the belief in the heart that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. Based on this concept, they argue that a person does not become a disbeliever for committing a major sin, even though he has declared his disbelief verbally.

This view shows that for the extreme Murjiahs, the main aspect of faith is belief in the heart, and verbal utterances or actions with the limbs have no direct impact on one's faith status. In this case, they emphasize more on the importance of a strong and straight belief in the heart as the main indicator of faith, this is due to the Murjiah belief that the pledge and 'amal are not part of faith (Amin, n.d.). Thus, the extreme Murjiah group offers a very tolerant view of major sins, by not disbelieving someone because of verbal or deed errors, as long as the belief in his heart remains firm in the basic principles of Islamic faith. This view reflects a moderate approach in assessing faith and sin and is different from the Khawarij view which tends to be more strict in determining one's faith status based on political actions and subjective assessments of major sins.

The moderate Murjiahs hold that faith consists of two elements, namely "tashdiq bi al -qalb" (belief in the heart) and "ikrar bi al-lisan" (verbal confession). Merely having belief in the heart is not enough to be considered faith. Likewise, simply confessing faith with the tongue is also not enough to establish one's faith. These two elements are interrelated and cannot be separated in the concept of faith. According to their view, perpetrators of major sins are not considered disbelievers, although they will receive punishment in hell according to the magnitude of their sins. However, there is a possibility that God will forgive their sins so that they can avoid the punishment of hell (Al-Syahrastaniy, n.d.).

According to Harun Nasution and Ahmad Amin, among the Murjiah sub-sects that fall into the moderate category are Abu Hanifah and his followers (Nasution, 2008). They argue that a perpetrator of a major sin is still considered a believer, even though the sin he commits has real implications and consequences. That is, the sin is not ignored, but they believe that if someone goes to hell as a result of their sin, it is because of Allah's will, and they will not remain in it forever. In other words, there is a possibility that Allah will forgive their sins and eventually they will be free from the punishment of hell after being punished for their sins (Hanifah, n.d.). The extreme Murjiahs and the moderate Murjiahs such as al-Jahmiyah, al-Salihiyah, al-Syimriyah, and al-Gailaniyah share the same view of the stable nature of faith that does not increase or decrease. They believe that faith does not change in its essential meaning.

However, there are different views among them regarding the fluctuation of faith in terms of the subject's belief. Abu Hanifah, as a representative of the moderate Murjiah, views that there is a possibility of fluctuation in one's faith. That is, one's faith can increase and decrease from the point of view of the beliefs held by the individual. Furthermore, Abu Hanifah also argued that all Muslims are similar in the matters of *tawhid* (belief in the oneness of God) and iman (belief in the teachings of Islam). However, they can differ in the intensity and quality of the deeds they perform. In other words, despite having the same beliefs, Muslims' religious deeds and practices can vary in their level of depth and sincerity.

(Hanifah, n.d.). All the Murjiah sub-sects mentioned by al-Ash'ariy, except al-Saubaniyah, al-Tumaniyah, al- Marisiyah, and al-Karraniyah, contain the element of "ma'rifah" in their concept of faith. The notion of "*ma'rifah*" in this context refers to love for God and complete surrender to Him (*al - Mahabbah wa al-khud*). For them, faith is regarded as something that resides in the human heart and is the deepest spiritual event that takes place in the human soul. In other words, the "*ma'rifah*" intended by this sub-sect is "*ma'rifah bi al-qalb*" or "*tasdiq*" (belief in the heart). This shows how important the inner dimension is in their view of faith.

It can be concluded that moderate Murjiah is a group that holds a tolerant view and postpones the final judgment on faith until the Day of Judgment, while extreme Murjiah is a group that has a more extreme view regarding faith and the judgment of major sins.

Mu'tazilah School

The emergence of the Mu'tazilah school in Islamic theological thought is also related to the status of the perpetrators of major sins, whether they still have faith or have become disbelievers. The difference lies in the perspective on this matter. While Khawarij disbelieved the perpetrators of major sins, Mu'tazilah did not determine the exact status and predicate for the perpetrators of major sins, whether they remained believers or had become disbelievers. They describe the status with a very famous term "*al manzilah baina al-manzilatain*"(Hasan, 2002) which means that every major sinner is in the middle position between the position of believer and disbeliever (Al-Subhaniy, 1970).

In further developments, some Mu'tazilah figures such as Wasil bin Ata' and 'Amr bin Ubaid, and others, explained the content of the term "*al manzilah baina al-manzilatain*" with the term "*fasid*". The term "*fasid*" indicates that this category is neutral and independent, not belonging to the category of believers or disbelievers. Thus, according to their view, the perpetrator of a major sin who is in "*fasid*" cannot be considered a believer because of the sin he committed, but neither can he be categorized as a disbeliever. The term "*fasid*" reflects a neutral position between the two main categories, thus implying that their status is more complex and not easily identified with certainty (Al-Subhaniy, 1970). In other words, a person who affirms the belief that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger, but does not fulfill his obligations, cannot be considered a believer. (Amin, n.d.). Strictly speaking, faith is about charity. Faith here does not simply mean a passive attitude that simply accepts what others say. Rather, according to this view, faith must be active because the human mind is capable of knowing its obligations to God.

Another important aspect of the Mu'tazilah concept of faith is what they call "*ma'rifah*" (knowledge by reason). *Ma'rifah* became as important an element as charity in their concept of faith. The Mu'tazilah's more rational outlook provides a rationale for the importance of ma'rifah in their faith. (Wensich, 1965). In the Mu'tazilah view, "*ma'rifah*" has implications for the rejection of faith based on the authority of others (al-iman bi al-taqlid). They strongly emphasize the importance of logical thinking or the use of reason in faith. Mu'tazilah, as explained by Harun Nasution, believe that all knowledge can be obtained through the use of reason, and obligations can be known through deep thought. Thus, according to the Mu'tazilah view, one's faith can only be considered true if it is based on reason, and not merely because of *taqlid* (following without thought) to others. They value and encourage individuals to use reason and rational thought in arriving at beliefs and understanding of faith, rather than simply following beliefs without logical consideration.

Asy'ariyah school

The Ash'ariyah school was born as a reaction to the harsh policies of the Mu'tazilah school which imposed beliefs about the creation of the Qur'an (*khalq al-Qur'an*) on the Muslim community at that time. The Asy'ariyah sect was founded by Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari, who was previously a loyal Mu'tazilah believer. Later, al-Asy'ari took a different stance from Mu'tazilah and criticized the teachings of Mu'tazilah theology which was considered incompatible with the characteristics and understanding of the majority of Muslims at that time. He rejected the Mu'tazilah doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān understood rationally and emphasized the importance of accepting the truth of the Qur'ān directly from the text, without the intervention of reason.

Therefore, on the issue of faith and disbelief, the Ash'ariyah school has a fundamentally different view from the Mu'tazilah school. The Asy'ariyah school appreciates the role of reason in religious understanding, but emphasizes the importance of accepting religious teachings strictly based on the text of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, without imposing rational interpretations on them (Nasution, 2008).

As such, the Ash'ariyah school is one of the schools of Islamic theology that reinforced the traditional and majority views of Muslims at the time, while opposing the rational approach and imposition of views by the Mu'tazilah. The differences between these two schools have formed a diversity of thought in the history of Islamic theology. The Ash'ariyah believed that human reason is incapable of achieving true knowledge (*ma'rifah*) and proper action (*amal*) in matters of religion. They believe that humans can only know religious obligations through revelation from God. In other words, humans must accept revelation as truth, including the obligation to know God. Hence, for the Ash'ariyah, faith is *tasdiq* (belief) based on acceptance of the revelation that comes from God and what His Messenger brought.

This opinion is different from the views of the Khawarij and Mu'tazilah, which take more account of the role of human reason in seeking and understanding religious truth. The Khawarij and Mu'tazilah schools tend to emphasize rational and logical understanding in determining religious obligations and laws. However, the Asy'ariyah school has a similar view with the Jabariyah in terms of the importance of receiving revelation and belief in religious teachings. The Jabarians believe that everything that happens is the result of fate and cannot be changed by human will. In terms of faith, they also argue that faith is a belief that is determined by God and humans must accept it.

In the view of the Asy'ariyah school, tasdiq is a confession in the heart that contains knowledge or *ma'rifah* about Allah (Musa, n.d.). *Tasdiq* is a belief that is born from a correct understanding of the teachings of religion and the truth of Allah. For them, faith is only tasdiq, because tasdiq itself is the essence of *ma'rifah* for someone who knows that something is true, and he will confirm it with a strong heart and conviction.

In other words, for the Ash'ariyya school, faith is not just theoretical knowledge, but rather involves a deep conviction in the heart born out of a correct understanding of God and His teachings. *Tasdiq* becomes the essence of ma'rifah and is the foundation of one's belief and faith in God. In this understanding, faith is a deeper and more meaningful confession, as it comes from ma'rifah or knowledge that is in accordance with the truth of religious teachings. Thus, tasdiq becomes the core of the definition of faith according to the Ash'ariyah school.

In this case, al-Syahrastani states that according to al-Ash'ari, faith is essentially *tasdiq bi al-Janan* (belief in the heart). Whereas speech with the tongue (*qaul*) and actions with the limbs (*amal*) are only branches or parts of faith. Therefore, someone who believes in the oneness

of God in his heart and also justifies His messengers and the teachings they bring, then such faith is a strong faith. A person will not lose his faith unless he rejects one of these things (Al-Syahrastaniy, n.d.).

The above opinion unites the three elements of faith - tasdiq, qaul, and amal - in their respective places and combines the two different definitions given by al-Ash'ari in his books, namely "*Maqala*t," "*al-Ibanah*," and "*al-Luma'.*" With regard to the perpetrators of major sins, al-Ash'ari - who represents the view of Ahl al- Sunnah - states that they do not disbelieve those who prostrate themselves towards the House of Allah (*Ahl al-Qibla*), even if they commit major sins such as adultery or theft. In their view, the person is still considered a believer even if he commits a major sin. However, if the person commits it believing that it is permissible and not believing that it is forbidden, then the person is considered to have disbelieved.

The Maturidi School

The Maturidi school was founded by Abu al-Mansur al-Maturidi. Like the Ash'ariyah, he was also a scholar who opposed the Mu'tazilah. Ironically, however, the Samarkand Maturidis associated with al-Maturidi used a method of thinking that had much in common with the Mu'tazilah method of thinking that relied heavily on reason. According to the Samarkand Maturidis, reason has the ability to attain belief in the existence of God. Therefore, according to them, faith is not merely justifying and accepting what others say but must be more active. Faith according to this school must be based on ma'rifah (knowledge) gained from the intellect. Therefore, *tasdiq* (belief) must be obtained through understanding derived from reasoning, and not just based on revelation alone.

The Samarkand Maturidis used the naqli argument from the Qur'an in Surat al-Baqarah verse 260 to support their view:

ذاِو لاق مَ̈هربإ بر نرأ فيك نحت نتومﻼّ لاق ملوأ نمؤت لاق بلَب نكلو نئمطيل بلق لاق ذخف ةعبرأ نم ريطﻼّ نهرصف كيﻼِ
مث لعجأ ىلع لك لبج نهنم اءزج مث نهعدا كنيتأي ايعس ملعاّو نأ هﻼ زيزع ميكح

Meaning: "And (remember) when Abraham said: "O my Lord, show me how You bring the dead to life". Allah said: "Have you not believed?" Ibrahim replied: "I have been convinced, but in order that my heart may be firm (in my faith) Allah said: "(Then) take four birds and chop them up. (Allah said): "Then place on each hill a part of it, and call them, and they will come to you quickly". And know that "Allah is the Mighty, the Wise" (Yulianti, 2023). The verse tells the story of Prophet Ibrahim AS who asked Allah to show him how to bring a dead bird back to life. Allah then brought the dead bird back to life by His power, and Prophet Ibrahim became convinced of Allah's power through his understanding and reasoning (Al-Maturidi, 1979).

From this information, it can be seen that the Samarkand Maturidis, like the Mu'tazilah, also associate "ma'rifah" with faith, although there are differences in the way the concept is conveyed. Meanwhile, the definition of faith according to the Bukhara Maturidis, as explained by al-Bazdawi, consists of two aspects: "*tasdiq bi al-qalb*" (justifying in the heart) and "*tasdiq bi al-lisan*" (acknowledging with the tongue). "*Tasdiq bi al-qalb*" means justifying and believing in the heart of the oneness of Allah and the messengers sent by Him. While "*tasdiq bi al-lisan*" is to recognize the truth of all the main points of Islamic teachings verbally. In other words, faith in the view of the Bukhara Maturidis is a belief that involves justification in the heart and verbal recognition of the teachings of Islam (Al-Bazdawi, 1969).

Thus, the Samarkand Maturidis viewed reason as an important means of achieving deeper

belief and faith. The understanding and reasoning of reason became the main foundation in their understanding of faith, which was seen as more than mere *tasdiq* (belief).

Conclusion

In Islam, faith and kufr are two central concepts that form the basis of Muslim religious practice. This article has explored the meaning of faith and kufr from the perspective of Islamic theological schools. Moderate Murjiahs argue that faith consists of "*tasdiq bi al-qalb*" (belief in the heart) and "*iqar bi al-lisan*" (verbal confession). Meanwhile, extreme Murjiahs argue that faith is only a justification in the heart (*tasdiq bi al-qalb*). The Mu'tazilah view that faith is not only limited to "*tasdiq*", but also involves "*amal*" (action) and "*ma'rifah*" (knowledge with the intellect). The Ash'ariyah argued that faith is essentially "*tasdiq*", while "qaul bi orally" (verbal confession) and "*amal bi arkan*" (deeds by association) are lesser aspects and are part of faith. The Samarkand Maturidis argued that faith is not only limited to "*tasdiq*", but goes beyond that, and "tasdiq" must be acquired through "*ma'rifah*" (knowledge by reason).

The Bukhara Maturidis held that faith consists of "*tasdiq bi al-qalb*" and "*tasdiq bi al-lisan*" (verbal confession). Khawarij held that people who commit major sins are disbelievers. Extreme Khawarij sub-sects, such as the Azzariqah, punish polytheists and allow the killing of those who commit major sins. Meanwhile, according to the Murjiah view, people who commit major sins are still considered believers; the Mu'tazilah hold that they are neither disbelievers nor believers, being in the middle position; the Ash'ariyah do not disbelieve people who commit major sins; and the Maturidiyah, both Samarkand and Bukhara, hold that people who commit major sins remain believers.

The importance of tolerance and mutual respect in the diversity of views is highlighted. The spirit of *ukhuwah islamiyah* as Islamic brotherhood must be upheld in the face of differing views on faith and kufr. An open attitude and respect for differences will help maintain harmony and unity in Muslim societies. In the face of the complexity of Islamic theology, it is important for Muslims to continue to strengthen their understanding of religion through research, dialogue and onstructive exchange of views. That way, the unity of the ummah and the spirit of mutual respect in the diversity of beliefs can be maintained and make a positive contribution in creating a harmonious and tolerant society.

Exploring the meaning of faith and kufr from the perspectives of Islamic theological schools provides an insight into the diversity of views within the religion. Despite differences in interpretation and understanding, the essence of faith and kufr remains a central element in Muslim religious belief and practice. It is important for Muslims to understand these different views by promoting tolerance and mutual respect, so that the spirit of ukhuwah islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood) can be maintained in the diversity of beliefs.

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