

# **STUDIA ISLAMIKA**



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## The Belief in *al-Qaḍâ* and *al-Qadr* in Indonesian Islamic Theological Discourse

**Abstraksi:** *Sebagai sebuah organisasi dengan misi gerakan pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia, Muhammadiyah dan Persatuan Islam (Persis), yang masing-masing didirikan pada tahun 1912 dan 1923, oleh beberapa kalangan ternyata masih digolongkan sebagai kelompok tradisional. Mereka yang berpandangan demikian, terutama memberikan argumen melalui interpretasi atas berbagai pandangan teologis kedua organisasi tersebut. Arbiyah Lubis, misalnya, di dalam karyanya “Pemikiran Muhammadiyah dan Muhammad Abduh: Suatu Studi Perbandingan”, menyimpulkan bahwa teologi Muhammadiyah lebih cenderung ke faham Jabariyah, sementara Noer Iskandar al-Barsany melihat bahwa teologi A. Hassan dari Persis banyak dipengaruhi oleh mazhab salaf.*

*Akan tetapi, menurut penulis artikel ini, penilaian sebagai organisasi tradisional di atas tidak dapat diatributkan kepada Muhammadiyah dan Persis secara mutlak, karena hal itu hanya bisa cocok untuk menilai Muhammadiyah dan Persis di masa-masa awal berdirinya (formative) saja. Apalagi, yang menjadi rujukan penafsiran mereka adalah Kitab al-Imân yang merupakan himpunan keputusan Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah tahun 1929, dan kitab Al-Tauhid karya A. Hassan, tokoh Persis yang menulis kitab ini pada tahun 1937.*

*Pada saat itu, penulis berargumen, adalah sangat sulit untuk membayangkan ide teologi rasional sebagaimana yang diperlihatkan oleh penafsiran ‘Abduh terhadap Mu’tazilah. Ini disebabkan karena mu’tazilism masih dianggap heretik dan tidak dapat diterima oleh kaum Sunni.*

*Dengan kata lain, untuk menilai kecenderungan teologi Muhammadiyah dan Persis, penulis artikel ini mengajak pembaca untuk memper-*

hatikan, baik konteks sosial, politik maupun konteks historis saat suatu teks ditulis. Maka ketika dibandingkan dengan pandangan ulama belakangan dari Muhammadiyah maupun dari Persis, akan didapatkan pemahaman yang berbeda dari pemikiran sebelumnya. Hal ini disebabkan oleh adanya perkembangan baru tidak saja di dalam lingkungan Muhammadiyah dan Persis, akan tetapi juga di dalam segala bentuk kehidupan intelektual masyarakat Indonesia pada umumnya.

Untuk mengelaborasi pembahasan tentang teologi Muhammadiyah dan Persis tersebut, artikel ini mencoba mengkaji pemikiran seorang tokoh modernis Islam, Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, atau yang lebih dikenal sebagai Hamka (1908-1981), yang juga merupakan salah seorang tokoh terkemuka Muhammadiyah. Pemikiran Hamka yang menjadi rujukan, terutama adalah yang tertuang dalam dua buah buku karangannya, yaitu *Pelajaran Agama Islam* (1956) dan *Tafsir al-Azhar* (1982-1988). Telaah atas pemikiran Hamka ini juga dimaksudkan untuk melihat perbedaan pandangan dan pendekatan dengan para pemikir dan tokoh-tokoh Muhammadiyah sebelumnya. Yang menjadi objek kajian adalah konsep kebebasan bertindak (*freewill*) manusia.

Percaya kepada *qaḍā* dan *qadr* adalah merupakan rukun terakhir dari rukun iman yang mewajibkan setiap muslim untuk percaya bahwa Allah telah menentukan *taqdir* atas segala sesuatu. Ini berdasar pada ayat al-Qur'an 57:22 yang artinya "Tiada suatu bencanapun yang menimpa di bumi dan tidak pula pada dirimu sendiri melainkan telah tertulis dalam kitab sebelum Kami menciptakannya." Ayat ini menegaskan bahwa semua yang terjadi di bumi ini telah ditentukan oleh Allah SWT., dan ini juga untuk menggambarkan kekuasaan mutlak Allah.

Akan tetapi, di samping ayat-ayat yang bisa ditafsirkan untuk mendukung sikap fatalisme ini, di dalam al-Qur'an juga terdapat beberapa ayat yang mendukung kebebasan manusia untuk bertindak. Di sinilah letak perbedaan pendekatan dan pemahaman Hamka dari tokoh-tokoh pendahulunya. Ia berusaha untuk menafsirkan ayat-ayat fatalistik dalam kerangka spirit kebebasan bertindak (*freewill*).

Dengan pandangannya ini, penulis berkesimpulan bahwa sebenarnya ide-ide teologi rasional Mu'tazilah telah diperkenalkan oleh Hamka lebih dahulu dari usaha-usaha yang dilakukan oleh Harun Nasution di dalam beberapa karyanya. Walaupun Hamka tidak secara eksplisit menjelaskan keberpihakannya pada teologi Mu'tazilah ini, ternyata pandangannya lebih dapat diterima di kalangan awam dari pandangan Nasution yang banyak dikritik oleh berbagai kalangan.

## The Belief in *al-Qadâ* and *al-Qadr* in Indonesian Islamic Theological Discourse

خلاصة: على الرغم من أن جمعيتي المحمدية (Muhammadiyah) واتحاد الإسلام من الحركات التجديدية (Persis) اللتين أنشئتتا على التوالي في ١٩١٢م و ١٩٢٣م فقد بقيتا في نظر الكثيرين على المذاهب السنية التقليدية؛ ويظهر ذلك واضحا وبصفة أخص في آرائهما الكلامية، فقد انتهى آرياه لوبس (Arbiyah Lubis) على سبيل المثال في بحثه تحت عنوان "أفكار المحمدية والشيخ محمد عبده: دراسة مقارنة" إلى القول بأن الآراء الكلامية عند المحمدية تميل إلى الجبرية، بينما يرى نور اسكندر اليرساني (Noer Iskandar al-Barsany) أن آراء أحمد حسن الكلامية - من جمعية اتحاد الإسلام - متأثرة بدرجة كبيرة بمذهب السلف.

ولكن هذا التفسير ينطبق في نظر كاتب هذا المقال على الجمعيتين في المراحل الأولى من إنشائهما خاصة وأن المرجع الأساسي الذي يرجع إليه الباحثان هو كتاب الإيمان وهو مجموع فتاوى مجلس الترجيح للمحمدية لسنة ١٩٢٩م؛ وكتاب التوحيد للشيخ أحمد حسن، أحد أشهر العلماء بجمعية اتحاد الإسلام، الذي ألفه ١٩٣٧م.

إذ كان من الصعوبة في ذلك الوقت كما قال الكاتب تصور بناء فكر كلامي عقلائي كما كان يقوم به الشيخ محمد عبده في تفسيره لآراء



المعتزلة لأن عقلانية المعتزلة لم تكن مقبولة لدى أهل السنة؛ وبعبارة أخرى يدعو الكاتب إلى ملاحظة الجوانب الاجتماعية والسياسية والتاريخية لهذه النصوص المرجعية؛ ولذلك فإنه عندما أجريت مقارنة بين المفكرين المتأخرين من المحمدية واتحاد الإسلام نجد أن أفكارهم مختلفة عن سابقهم نتيجة تطورات لاحقة ليس فقط في أوساط المحمدية واتحاد الإسلام وإنما في جميع المجالات الفكرية بإندونيسيا عموماً.

ومن أجل ذلك قام كاتب هذا المقال بإلقاء الضوء على آراء الحاج عبد الملك كريم أمر الله، أو المشهور باسم حمكا (Hamka) (١٩٠٨-١٩٨١م) أحد أعلام المحمدية بناءً على كتابيه *Pelajaran Agama Islam* (التعاليم الإسلامية) و *Tafsir al-Azhar* (تفسير الأزهر)، للوقوف على آرائه ومنهجه المخالف لسابقه، وينصب الموضوع على فكرة حرية الإنسان في أفعاله.

والاعتقاد بالقضاء والقدر من أركان الإيمان وهو يوجب على كل مسلم أن يؤمن بأن الله تعالى قد حدد لكل شيء قدره بناءً على الآية ٢٢ من سورة الحديد (٥٧) حيث قال تعالى {ما أصاب من مصيبة في الأرض ولا في أنفسكم إلا في كتب من قبل أن نبرأها إن ذلك على الله يسير} إذ تقضي هذه الآية بأن كل شيء يحدث في الأرض قد حدده الله وهو يدل على المشيئة الإلهية المطلقة.

يبد أنه بجانب الآيات التي تؤيد هذا الموقف الجبري فإن في القرآن أيضاً آيات تدل على حرية الإنسان في أفعاله، وهنا موضع تمييز حمكا واختلافه مع سابقه في آرائه ومنهجه، فهو يفسر الآيات التي تشير إلى الجبرية على أساس حرية الإنسان في أفعاله.

وينتهي كاتب المقال إلى أن المنهج العقلاني للمعتزلة قد سبق أن روحه حمكا في آرائه الكلامية قبل قيام هارون ناسوتيون (Harun Nasution) بنفس الخطوة، وإن لم يكن يصرح بميله إلى الفكر الاعتزالي إلا أن أفكاره كانت مقبولة لدى الجمهور بخلاف آراء هارون ناسوتيون الذي تعرض للنقد والمعارضة.

The emergence of Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam in 1912 and 1923, respectively, representing the Islamic reform movements in the early twentieth century, constituted a response to the need to purify Islam from the "corrupting" local influences of popular customs. The Islamic religious reforms advocated by these movements encompassed several aspects of life, individual as well as social. However, the primary concern voiced by the reformists was with certain theological issues which were essential to the whole movement. This is evident in some of the main factors that led to the establishment of Muhammadiyah such as the impurity of religious life, the inefficiency of religious education, the activities of Christian missionaries, and the indifferent and even anti-religious attitude of the Indonesian intelligentsia.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the purpose for which Muhammadiyah was initially founded was to purify Indonesian Islam from corrupting local influences and practices, and to reformulate Islamic doctrines in light of modern thought.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Persatuan Islam was founded in order to establish the faith even more on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and to accelerate the propagation of Islam.<sup>3</sup>

Purifying religious belief and practice has been an essential tenet of the reformist group, in addition to *ijtihad*, or rational interpretation by individuals of the text of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The reformists' insistence on the necessity of *ijtihad* is to some extent meant to counter *taqlid*, or the blind acceptance of the words of '*ulama*' without critical consideration. The purification of religious practice is therefore a necessary expression of safeguarding orthodox belief against all elements of non-Islamic mysticism, animism, and Hindu-Buddhism that had been erroneously incorporated into Islam. The same process is also designed to uncover the original, pure and true Islam. This is because both in ancient and contemporary times the faith is seen as being eternal, and it is only with purified of faith that the believer is able to rationalize much of the modern world.<sup>4</sup>

However, in spite of their claim to be upholders of purified and true doctrines of Islam, the principal beliefs maintained by both Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam are actually not significantly different from those upheld by the traditionalists. Some studies have recently indicated that both Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam theology is very much in the tradition of Ash'arite scholarship. According to these studies, reformist theology essentially revived tradition. Arbiyah Lubis, for instance, in her comparative study of

Muhammadiyah and 'Abduh's doctrinal positions, concludes that (the early) Muhammadiyah theology is more inclined to *Jabariyah*, or predestinarianism, employing the Salaf approach and sticking to issues developed by the Ash'arites.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, al-Barsany, in his study of Hassan's theological thought, also notes that Hassan was very much influenced by the school of Salaf, especially the Wahhabi, and that the issues he developed in his doctrinal formula are also based on the Salaf teachings.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Hassan's greater reliance on textual arguments than on intellectual inference indicates a strong traditionalist inclination.<sup>7</sup>

It must be kept in mind, however, that this interpretation is based on the early development of Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam. Both the *Kitab al-Iman* of Muhammadiyah's *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* and Hassan's *At-Taubied* were written in 1929 and 1937, respectively. In due course, it is hard to imagine that at that time the idea of rational theology exemplified by 'Abduh's interpretation of the Mu'tazilah would be easily acceptable to orthodox Indonesian Muslim thought.<sup>8</sup> One may not appropriately blame Dahlan, the founding father of Muhammadiyah, for his lack of acquaintance with 'Abduh's theological thought. Although Dahlan was reported to have read some of 'Abduh's works, his interest was focused more on religious activism than on theology.<sup>9</sup> Indeed it is impossible to expect that Muhammadiyah or Hassan would advocate a rational theology similar to 'Abduh or the Mu'tazilites, since at that time the acceptable theological doctrines were restricted to either the Ash'arite or Maturidite schools. Mu'tazilism was considered heretical, and thus completely unacceptable for Sunnites. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the *Kitab al-Iman* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* is almost entirely based on Ash'arite doctrines.

It also seems impossible to assume that the later scholars of Muhammadiyah, like Hamka and H.A. Malik Ahmad, deviated from the theological doctrines outlined in the *Kitab al-Iman*.<sup>10</sup> It goes without saying that they upheld different theological positions, especially in their discussion of human freedom and the absolute power of God. Probably, it is wiser to consider their attempts to find a different perspective as a part of the new development occurring not only in Muhammadiyah circle but also across all forms of Indonesian intellectual life. Likewise, it is necessary to examine the development of Muhammadiyah thought by later scholars in terms of the general intellectual environment. Of particular interest are two works by

Hamka, the *Peladjaran Agama Islam* (1956) and *Tafsir al-Azhar* (thirty volumes, 1982-1988). In these works, Hamka began to explore the issues of *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadr* from a different approach than that maintained by earlier scholars, with a spirit which was more congruent with an ideal to stimulate Muslims' cultural and social progress. Therefore it will be very interesting to examine how Hamka discusses this issue, in order to compare it with the discussion provided by the *Kitab al-Iman* and the one offered by Hassan in his *Pengajaran Shalat*.<sup>11</sup>

### On the Meaning of the Belief in *al-Qaḍā'* and *al-Qadr*

The belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadr* is one of the six pillars of the Muslim creed. This, together the other five doctrinal beliefs, is based on a Hadith narrated by 'Umar b. al-Khattab who reported that the Prophet has said that the *iman* is that "you believe in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, in the Day of Judgment, and in God's decree, either good or bad."<sup>12</sup> This belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadr* as the last element of Muslim beliefs emphasizes that it is incumbent upon Muslims to believe that Allah has determined the decree of all things before He created them. He governs the whole universe in accordance with His knowledge, His will and His wisdom. All deeds made by humans are determined by His decree and humans have only to make an endeavor (*ikhtiyār*).<sup>13</sup> Thus, in general, the *qaḍā'* and *al-qadr* means the decree or determination designed by God, who is the most powerful, governs individual fates through His knowledge, wisdom and will. This idea is based on certain Qur'anic verses, such as "No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls, but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence. That is truly easy for Allah" (57:22). Nevertheless, it is admitted that there remains room for human beings to play a role, through the means of "acquisition," or *al-kaṣb*. All agencies are from Allah, and endeavor is required of humans. Human actions, perceived from the side of Allah, are His creation. Humans are only required to arrange what has been granted by God to them in the form of sustenance, health and progeny.<sup>14</sup>

In the *Kitab al-Iman* of Muhammadiyah's *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*, the belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadr* as the sixth pillar of faith expresses the idea that all Muslims should affirm that God created every single thing in the universe. He puts forth commands and prohibitions, as God's decree is absolute determination (*qadrān maqdūrān*). Allah determines (the measure of) everything before creation, and

governs all with His knowledge, choice, wisdom and will. God predetermines human actions and humans can do nothing but exercise their endeavor (*ikhtiyâr*).<sup>15</sup> The exposition of *qadâ'* and *qadr* in the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* indicates clearly that from Muhammadiyah's point of view, God has absolute power over all creation, and even human actions are predetermined by His knowledge. Nevertheless, the individual is allowed to exercise his or her endeavor, which implies that there is some room for humans to exercise their freedom, but to what extent is not clearly defined.

Something almost similar to the above interpretation of the belief in *al-qadâ'* and *al-qadr* is offered by Hassan in his *Pengajaran Shalat* (reprinted 1991). In this work, Hassan defines the belief in *qadâ'* and *qadr* as being to the extent that the fate of every created being has been determined for either good or bad, and one cannot escape from it.<sup>16</sup> Another part of the book also discusses the point that *qadr* means "measurement" or "decree," in the sense that Muslims have to believe that bad and good things or even death and life will not happen except by the decree of God. However, Hassan asserts that there are two different groups of verses that seem to contradict each other. On the one hand, there are some verses (4:78, 57:22, 9:51) which indicate that all good or bad things that happen to humans are determined by God, that God has predetermined everything that will happen to them, and that nothing will happen to humans except by the decree of God. All of these ideas signify that God has absolute power and leaves little room for humans to exercise their freedom. But on the other hand, there are other verses indicating that the evil things that happen to humans are caused by their own actions, and that those who do good deeds will find their rewards, and those who do bad deeds will find punishment (42:34, 4:79). Accordingly, humans have a degree of free action, independent of God's decree.

However, Hassan does not perceive these two different groups of verses to be contradictory. The paradox is resolved by the concept of *ikhtiyâr* (endeavor). Although the first group of verses testifies that God determines everything that happens to humans, they do not clearly denote that humans have no chance to make their own decisions. If humans did not have the chance to make their own decisions Hassan argues, they would not be punished for their transgression of God's prohibitions. It is true that through *qadr* God has determined either good or bad things, but humans are endowed with the capacity of choice. Indeed without faith in the power of free choice,

the believers may lose the moral resolve necessary to undertake God's commands and thus becoming apathetic and submissive, unwilling to initiate any action.<sup>17</sup>

Hassan provides an interesting illustration of this point by stating that in the early Islamic era, cowardly men were made courageous by whole-heartedly believing in *qadr* while undertaking God's command and defending the faith. Similarly, the timid became willing to sacrifice their lives. They did so because they trusted in God that nothing would happen to them except what had already been determined by Him, and that they would never die unless He had decreed that they should. Accordingly, belief in *qadr* made strong men even more courageous and enlivened the weak, so they would not fall into desperation. Hassan's point of view seems to be in line with that of 'Abduh, as Charles C. Adams explains below:

[T]he belief in God's predetermination of events, if rightly understood, exerted a moral influence of great value. Belief in predestination (*kada' wa kadam*), if striped of the idea of compulsion, gives rise to characteristics of boldness, daring, courage, steadfastness, generosity, and self-sacrifice on behalf of the truth. If one believes that the limit of one's life is appointed, and his daily sustenance provided, and all things are in the hands of God to direct as He will, how can he fear death in defense of the truth and in the service of his country and his religion, or fear poverty in devoting his substance in accordance with the commands of God.<sup>18</sup>

Unlike those people in the early Islamic era, however, the belief in *qadr* has rendered Muslims of today passive and timid. This, according to Hassan, is because they understand the belief in *qadr* in the wrong way.<sup>19</sup> He reprimands his fellow Muslims for being unmotivated and unwilling to strive courageously to fulfill the nobility inherent in their nature. Only the weak, according to Hassan, argue that they must mindlessly submit their will and fate entirely to God's decree. They complain that if God willed them to be courageous they would become courageous easily in spite of their passivity. Similarly, they maintain that they would become prosperous and revered if God wished them to be. However, Hassan notes that it is astonishing that such fatalistic people would not also submit themselves to the decree of God for their daily meal and drink. Strictly following this way of reasoning, concludes Hassan, they should not concern themselves with vital needs, since God will give all that is destined. Another interesting illustration is given by Hassan when he states that if a person owed some money to a friend, the lender should not

demand repayment of the debt, since if God's decree determines all, the lender will get his money back without fail.<sup>20</sup> Due to this line of reasoning, Hassan's work forms an important starting point for the promotion of non-fatalistic belief. Ultimately, the goal was to enhance activism among Muslims of his country. Unfortunately, this concept was never fully developed either by Hassan himself or by any other scholar associated with Persatuan Islam after him.

### Some Foundations for the Belief in *al-Qadā'* and *al-Qadr*

For Muhammadiyah, although it is more inclined to fatalistic notions — as shown in its *Kitab al-Iman* — later scholars belonging to this association developed a new perspective regarding the relationship of human action to God's omnipotence. For instance, Haji 'Abd al-Malik Karim Amrullah, more popularly known by his abbreviated name "Hamka" (1908-1981),<sup>21</sup> has inspired a new discourse on this issue. In his *Peladjaran Agama Islam* and *Tafsir al-Azhar*, he developed an interesting exposition of *qadr* which is quite different from that found in the *Kitab al-Iman* of the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih*.<sup>22</sup> Hamka, in the former work, begins his discussion by describing the belief in *qadr* as encompassing everything that happens in this world including what happens to human beings, whether good or evil, happy or sad; no single movement in a human's life is removed from God's decree or *qadr*.<sup>23</sup> Based on this point of view, a question arises: Are the actions of human beings by nature free or pre-determined? Basically, according to Hamka, a human is not free. All the plans an individual might make will not be fully approved and cannot be actualized unless they are made in congruence with the "grand plan" predetermined by God. For example, a human is born into this world but without their consent. One cannot choose one's parents, family, or social environment. Even the date one is to be born is beyond one's control. A newly born baby has no power at all to decide any of these matters although they are directly related to his or her personal interests.<sup>24</sup>

Hamka then refers to the two different trends of Islamic theological thought: the Qadrite and the Jabrite. Like A. Hassan, Hamka also maintains that there are two different groups of verses in the Qur'an, each of which gives support to either the Qadrite (free will) or Jabrite (predestination, fatalistic) schools of thought. Hamka quotes verse 2: 20 of the Qur'an: "Allah hath power over all things," on the basis of

which he asserts that God has unlimited power. Therefore, if a person says that God does not create evil and cannot make somebody poor or foolish, it implies that this person has belittled God's omnipotence. However, it would not be allowed for anybody to say that it is God who has made an individual poor or foolish, and must use a particular manner in expressing such an idea to maintain his polite attitude and subservience to God.<sup>25</sup> But Hamka does not specify or give an example of how this polite attitude toward God should take form in dealing with divine judgment. He simply indicates that it would be strange if, believing in God's omnipotence, a person justifies a crime on the basis of divine will. For instance, they cannot escape from punishment on the pretext that they committed a crime because God had willed them to do so.<sup>26</sup>

Similar to Hassan, Hamka tends to minimize the difference between the two groups of Qur'anic verses supporting either fatalistic or non-fatalistic tendencies in Islamic theology. While A. Hassan, as discussed previously, proposes the concept of *ikhtiyâr* (endeavor) to reconcile those differences, Hamka's solution simply states that indeed there is freedom for humans to exercise their will, but this freedom is limited. Human's limited freedom is likened to the freedom given to citizens of a country in which everybody should obey the regulations imposed upon all. This solution by Hamka is congruent with his earlier statement that all plans proposed by humans will not work except when they are made in congruence with the "grand plan" predetermined by God, the creator of the universe. Therefore, Hamka insists that the verses of *jabr* (fatalistic) and *ikhtiyâr* (free will) are both equally true.<sup>27</sup> In Hamka's point of view, the verses of *ikhtiyâr* indicate that there is freedom for human beings, but one should not forget that this freedom is limited as shown by the verses of *jabr*.<sup>28</sup> Hamka further emphasizes that both aspects of *jabr* and *ikhtiyâr* represent the original forms of spiritual instruction for humans. A human may grow arrogant with one's own personal success and become presumptuous regarding the capacity of one's agency. He/She does not realize that indeed one's success is due to the blessing of God bestowed upon them. Therefore, one must be aware that it is possible that someday God will change His favor and withdraw His blessing, so that he or she will soon fall into misery.

Hamka refers to an example of how humans successfully split the atom. This was a seminal achievement in science, but it has become a horror since it has been used to destroy cities and now threatens us



with the fear of global annihilation. In such conditions, Hamka reminds his readers, humans should remember the verses of *jabr* in which God has explained His unlimited power. The individual's achievement is no more than God's blessing upon him or her. Yet, if the individual falls into misery, they should not become apathetic, since God has decreed that the individual's negligence, i.e. their unwillingness to employ their reason to overcome their predicaments, would put them in danger. Therefore, it is incumbent on humans in such a condition to refer to the verses of *ikhtiyâr*. They should remember that humans are the best of creation, for whom all the oceans and lands were created. Time and again God reminds humans through His statements: "Don't you think," "don't you consider?" "Aren't you given eyes to see, ears to listen, mind to contemplate?" All of these are special gifts from God to human beings. According to Hamka, the fatalistic verses do not give license to be submissive or to behave childishly under the protection of God. The gift of reason demands that humans not take such an attitude. The free will verses therefore should enliven humans and inspire dynamic resolve.<sup>29</sup> Yet, Hamka acknowledges the efficacy of both the fatalistic and non-fatalistic verses of the Qur'an in human's life as being equally important. They balance each other.

In the remainder of the book, Hamka also discusses some crucial issues dealing with real experiences in human life. For example, it occasionally happens that those who commit crime escape punishment, while righteous people are punished. Hamka tries to solve this problem by asking: "Should we determine God's will, or is it God who determines our will?" Based on this rhetorical inquiry, Hamka insists that it is not difficult to overcome this problem insofar as the individual's heart is filled with trust in God. When people who have committed crimes are released without punishment, in reality, their release is itself a punishment. On the contrary, if the righteous persons are put in jail, it is not really a punishment. Hamka argues that people who intentionally stay away from God and disdain His commands are cursed with a life of punishment, although they may dwell in palaces. But for those who do not transgress God's commands, their life is grace, even though they have to live behind bars.<sup>30</sup> That is the solution given by Hamka in his discussion under the heading "Everything Is Under the Rule of *Taqdîr*."<sup>31</sup> In conclusion, for Hamka, a deep-rooted belief and trust in God's omnipotence will give relief

to people in their attempt to cope with the problem of injustice. Unfortunately, Hamka's discussion of this issue is less than illuminating. It is a gross oversimplification to assert that the very complicated problem of injustice in human life can be sufficiently solved by a deep-rooted belief in God. Hamka may have based his argument on his own personal experience and worldview as a devout Muslim preacher (*muballigh*), with an inclination toward Sufism, who revelled in all the joy and hardships of religious struggle.

### Free Will and Rationality

A heavy reliance on rationality and an emphasis on free will seem to be more apparent features of Hamka's theological thought, a tendency clearly manifested in his monumental work, the *Tafsir al-Azhar*. He holds reason in high esteem on the grounds that it has the capacity to guide human beings in attaining the truth. For Hamka, the quality of reason determines human's intellectual capacity to judge one's own actions, either good or evil. More significantly, it is through reason that the individual begins to understand the signs of God as compiled in the Qur'an.<sup>32</sup> Some of the Qur'anic signs that have remained unintelligible since revelation may at last be elucidated through scientific progress. Hamka refers to the Qur'anic verse "Soon will We show them Our signs in the horizons (of the world), and in their own selves until it cometh manifest unto them that He is the Truth" (41:53). Hamka argues that this signifies that the ultimate truth of the Qur'an will be more widely discovered through scientific progress. As an example, Hamka mentions the atom (*dharrab*), the smallest substance in the universe, which is also encompassed in the knowledge of God. It can hardly be imagined how early Muslims understood this concept when the verse was first revealed to the Prophet. It was only fourteen centuries later that humans could truly understand its nature, thanks to scientific achievement. Therefore, concludes Hamka, the more science advances, the more extensively the truths of the Qur'an will be uncovered.<sup>33</sup>

As has been noted previously, Hamka admits the validity of grouping some Qur'anic verses relating to human's actions and God's omnipotence into a fatalistic tendency on the one hand and a tendency toward free will on the other. Nevertheless, as reported by M. Yunan Yusuf, Hamka interprets the fatalistic verses in a different way so as to give a sense of free will.<sup>34</sup> For instance, in interpreting "God hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing, and upon their sight is a

covering, and for them is a great chastisement” (2:7), Hamka insists that the seal (*khatam*) is a label or stamp of unbelief given by Allah to people after they have refused to accept the truth. The label of being an infidel cannot be changed or removed, and thus nothing can turn them into believers. Such an interpretation implies that those people labeled by God as infidels have been predetermined to be so and therefore it gives an impression of fatalism. Hamka, however, disagrees with this idea, and suggests that one must examine why some people become infidels while others become believers. According to Hamka’s point of view, their disbelief is due to arrogance, dissidence, and obstinacy. Thus the label of infidel is merely a result of their own attitude toward the truth revealed by God. Therefore, in Hamka’s opinion, it is not due to God’s determination that they have become infidels, but due to their own choice. They could have either accepted or refused the truth that God, in His mercy, has revealed. The choice, once made, leads a soul down its adopted path. A stamp is then sealed on the heart identifying its character as either believer or infidel. Hamka’s assessment seems to be in line with the idea held by Mu‘tazilite theologians in their interpretation of the Qur’anic passage 2:7, as follows:

The general idea underlying the interpretation of such passages was that God’s sealing of men’s hearts was something which followed on their unbelief and did not precede or cause it. Some held that it was the testimony and judgment that these men do not in fact believe and that it did not prevent them from believing. Others, while agreeing that the seal did not prevent a man from believing, adopted the more picturesque interpretation that it was the black mark placed on the heart of an unbeliever so that the angels may know that he is one of ‘the enemies of God’ and not [H]is ‘friends.’<sup>35</sup>

Since Hamka refuses to interpret this verse in a fatalistic sense, he emphasizes that a Muslim preacher (*muballigh*) should not assume that it would be useless to call people into Islam. Islam will flourish, insists Hamka, only through the summons (*da‘wah*), and insofar as its thinkers unceasingly devote their life to uncovering the secrets of Islam in order to implement the way of the righteous in the social and individual spheres. Otherwise, Islam will become morally frozen. Indeed, the verse regarding the seal upon hearts is meant as a warning for the Prophet that he should never despair in propagating Islam. It is, on the contrary, intended to encourage him and his followers to spread Islamic teachings more vigorously since the stamp of identity meant by this verse is only a label for obstinacy and arro-

gance, and is not a final judgment. With resolve, Muslims can summon them to Islam.<sup>36</sup>

The above passage from the Qur'an dealing with the idea of *khatam*, or "seal," is only one among several other verses conveying a similar concept. Moreover, the word *khatam* is not only used to describe the heart, but is also applied to the mouth (83:25) and the ears (45:22), signifying that God reprimands unbelievers for their improper use of these physical organs. Had they used them properly, they would have been able to perceive God's signs correctly, which, in turn, would lead them to accept Islam. Hamka is not alone in interpreting the "verse of *khatam*" in a non-fatalistic sense. Daud Rahbar, for instance, in his discussion of God's justice, maintains that the "verses of *khatam*" have two different directions of interpretation. On the one hand, they tell Muslims to give up calling infidels to Islam since their hearts, being sealed by God, are hardened. On the other hand, the verses serve as a reprimand to the unbelievers themselves. According to this interpretation, the sealing is a result of their disbelief and not vice versa. This is similar to Hamka's position noted previously. Like Hamka, Rahbar seems to be more inclined to the second viewpoint in interpreting the sealing of the unbelievers' hearts as a consequence of their disbelief. Rahbar fortifies his argument by citing other Qur'anic verses dealing with God leading astray unbelievers as a result of their idolatry (45:22). Therefore, Rahbar concludes that it would be incorrect to assume that *khatam* is the result of God's arbitrary sealing of human hearts.<sup>37</sup>

Another example of how Hamka interprets fatalistic verses in terms of the spirit of free will can be seen in his interpretation of "What! Is he on whom the sentence of chastisement hath been justly passed (*equal to one who deserveth a reward*)? Canst thou rescue him who is in fire?" (39:19). This verse pronounces, in an interrogative fashion, a rejection of the idea in question. In other words, it is impossible for Muhammad to rescue people condemned to hellfire since during their lifetime they fell into the temptations of evil, did wrong, and followed the path of unbelief up until Judgment Day. Therefore, their destiny is Hell, and they will never find their way to Paradise. Hamka emphasizes that the choice to follow the right way to Paradise must be made in this worldly lifetime by believing in God and fulfilling His commands, and should not be postponed until later in the hereafter.<sup>38</sup> On this point, Hamka may be contrasted with the upholders of fatalism who contend: "man is compelled (*majbûr*) in his actions,

having no power (*qudrah*) and no will and no choice.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, “reward and punishment, like human actions, are subject to compulsion (*jabr*),”<sup>40</sup> and furthermore, “if God punishes a man [sic] whose acts are mainly good, [H]e is not unjust, since [H]e is not obliged to reward good acts,”<sup>41</sup> and vice versa. Likewise, according to al-Ash‘ari’s idea, “[w]ith regard to the eternal rewards and punishments, a problem of justice does not even arise; for, regardless what God does with us, ‘the Lord of the Worlds is not under a *shari‘ah*,’ and therefore justice and injustice cannot be predicated to His acts in any sense intelligible to us.”<sup>42</sup> In contrast, Hamka’s *qadri* point of view seems to be in agreement with the idea held by al-Hasan al-Basri (642-728) that God does not predetermine human beings to a good or bad course of action since God only judges the human beings according to their free actions.<sup>43</sup>

It is interesting, however, that Hamka does not interpret all of the fatalistic verses in accordance with the spirit of free will. This tendency may reflect his belief that, as noted previously, although humans have freedom of will, this freedom is limited. The individual is obliged to follow God’s will as revealed through the Prophets. Hamka expresses this idea in his interpretation of “Verily this is a reminder, so whosoever pleaseth, taketh unto his Lord the (right) way. And ye desire not save what God desireth; verily God is all knowing, the all wise” (76:29-30). In appearance, these two verses are contradictory: While the first indicates that humans have freedom either to consider God’s reminder or to ignore it, the second is understood by Hamka as abrogating that freedom entirely since humans will not be able to realize what they desire except when it is willed by God. In other words, while the first part of the verse is inclined to the Qadriyah position regarding freedom of will, the latter part is inclined to the Jabariyah position in the sense that human beings have no choice at all since it is to Allah alone that all power belongs. However, from Hamka’s point of view, this contradiction is the result of an “equitable confluence” between human’s endeavor (*ikhtiyâr*) and trust in God (*tawakkul*). Accordingly, Hamka further suggests that the individual should implore God to open one’s heart, to grant the power to progress, and to supply the succor (*tawfiq*) for success in conformity with God’s omnipotence, will, knowledge and wisdom.<sup>44</sup>

When Hamka interprets the fatalistic verses in terms of the spirit of free will, it is fairly reasonable to say that his discussion of the free will verses is more clearly “*qadrian*.” For instance, in interpreting

“Verily have We shown him the (right) way, be he grateful or ungrateful” (76:3), Hamka asserts that the individual, after having been exposed to God’s guidance, should be able to properly use reason, follow the correct moral values, and accept the truth contained in the revelation. But since humans are by nature frequently forgetful of God’s bounty, God purposely makes worldly life a trial to uncover the true mettle of a believer. Faith is therefore distinguished from unbelief by the path one chooses and by one’s resolve to maintain it. Hamka refers to the verse “And (know ye) verily this My path, is the straight one, so ye follow it, and follow ye not (other) ways for they will scatter you away from His path; this doth He enjoins you with, so that ye may guard (yourselves against evil)” (6:153), to support his argument. In effect, God has offered two different ways for humans to choose: the straight path or the errant one. While the errant path is the one paved by Satan to tempt human weakness and is filled with polytheism, obscurantism and heresies, the straight path is taken under the guidance of God.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, since the difference between the two paths is clear, it is up to the individual’s own consideration to decide which path to follow. To emphasize this freedom of choice, God has stated: “And say thou: The truth is from your Lord; so let him who pleaseth believe; and let him who pleaseth disbelieve, verily We have prepared for the unjust (the Hell) fire” (18:29). In short, it is not God who makes humans believe or disbelieve. Moreover, based on the fact that humans are normally empowered with intellectual reasoning, it is their responsibility to make the effort to maintain the straight path. No one else can be blamed for one’s own misfortune or folly. God has reminded humans through His statement: “Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves” (13:11). Thus, Hamka argues, in order to follow the path of Allah the believer must use their intellect and become an active agent. There is no excuse to simply surrender to one’s fate, “like a piece of cotton being blown away by the wind.”<sup>46</sup>

### **Free Will and the Idea of God’s Omnipotence**

In addition to this discussion of free-will and predestination, it is equally important to examine how Hamka interprets the idea of God’s omnipotence and absolute will with regard to human acts. Hamka asserts that divine will is absolute, and in exercising His power, God employs His highest wisdom. This means that since God is all wise

(*al-hakîm*), He never exercises His absolute power of His will arbitrarily. All of His acts are based on and are full of wisdom. Hamka develops this idea in his discussion of the attributes of God in which he considers wisdom (*al-hikmah*) as one of His attributes equal in merit to both *al-qudrâh* (power) and *al-irâdah* (will).<sup>47</sup> However, Hamka does not explicitly state that God's power and will are limited by His wisdom but maintains that in exercising power and will, God follows the "pattern" of His wont. This is the *sunnat Allah*, commonly understood as the perfect and unchangeable "laws of nature." Based on this idea too, Hamka insists that although God is absolutely powerful and is thus able to make all men believers, He does not do so because if He did it would imply that His wisdom is meaningless. A human is bestowed with the capacity to exercise free will. This makes him different from plants and animals which are created as automata; growing, flourishing and decaying in accordance with their given nature. Humans, through their intellect, are able to choose their own fate. It is human's own responsibility, therefore, either to recognize God's wisdom and believe or to refuse it and become an infidel. Moreover, since God's power and will are exercised with all wisdom (and justice?), it is absurd to maintain that God wills wrongdoing by punishing righteous people and rewarding the evildoers. Consequently, Hamka insists that the belief that God has the capacity to unjustly punish the righteous and reward the evildoers is misguided. Indeed there have been some unjust Muslim rulers, one of whom claimed that he ruled on behalf of God by adopting the title *al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah*, the ruler on the authority of God.<sup>48</sup> Hamka dismisses this claim outright. His rule was not based on the will of God. He only abused the name of God to justify his arbitrary and despotic rule and to legitimize the oppression of his subjects on the pretext of defending the authority of God. Hamka considers his rule to be the rule of those who have no sense of wisdom or responsibility.<sup>49</sup>

### Retrospective

Hamka's discussion of free will and predestination has shed new light on the development of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. To a certain degree, it has been a key work in the attempt to transform Indonesian Muslim religious attitudes. According to Hamka's point of view, the negative influence of fatalistic doctrines and the deprivation of the spirit of free will caused the backwardness

of Muslims.<sup>50</sup> Unlike the attempts of Mansoer and Hassan to eradicate polytheism, the works of Hamka attempt to reconstruct Muslims' understanding of Islam. It is no longer a question of custom versus the revealed truth but rather it concerns the human capacity to comprehend truth. Thus Hamka has made another great contribution to the enrichment of Islamic theological discourse. His *Tafsir al-Azhar* gives a fresh understanding of the belief in *al-qaḍâ'* and *al-qadr*. As can be clearly seen in the above examples, Hamka's interpretation of the Qur'anic verses relating to the idea of God's decree was intended to arouse the spirit of his fellow Muslims as well as to unite them in a common goal of achieving new progress in worldly life. In addition to noting some historical events of the early Islamic period, Hamka frequently makes references to the progress made by other civilizations beyond the Islamic world, like the Japanese, European and American civilizations. Of course it is difficult to determine to what extent his discussion of free will and predestination in both his *Peladjaran Agama Islam* and *Tafsir al-Azhar* actually transformed Indonesian religious attitudes. A full analysis of its social impact is beyond the scope of this study and thus requires further examination. But his attempts to introduce a new formulation of a non-fatalistic Islamic worldview is echoed in other subsequent writers among Muhammadiyah such as H.A. Malik Ahmad, Abd al-Rahim Nur, H.A. Azhar Basyir and Yunahar Ilyas.<sup>51</sup>

After Hamka, a tendency toward a non-fatalistic worldview steadily grew more noticeable in daily life and throughout society. An interesting example of this change can be seen in a conference on Islamic theology and development held in Yogyakarta in 1988. In his discussion of al-Ash'ari's theology and the Indonesian development programs, Zamakhsyari Dhofier, one among those who spoke at the conference, stated that almost every person in Indonesia today rushed for material progress. People not only demanded that their basic needs be fulfilled, but also required a house, car, video player or satellite TV; and would even disrespect the rights of others in the bid to obtain them. The people's love of wealth today was explicitly exaggerated, as was their eagerness to achieve further progress in the fields of culture and education. Had they been loyal adherents of Ash'arite theology with its fatalistic doctrines, so Dhofier concludes, it would be impossible to witness such an increase in the demand to gain a better worldly life.<sup>52</sup> Federspiel has more clearly paraphrased Dhofir's account in the following citation:



[F]atalism is not really a part of al-Ash‘ari’s doctrine as is popularly assumed, even though he recognizes the power of God as absolute. [Dhofier] observes further that in contemporary Indonesia the Friday sermons of the religious scholars do not ask worshippers to be fatalistic, but, rather, stress the responsibilities of humans for the conduct of their own lives and that of the nation. Still the attitude of fatalism persists among much of the population, raising [rhetorical] question of whether Islam’s theological models are correctly formulated or, more likely, whether the explanations of the creed is properly understood by contemporary society. Dhofier believes the latter explanation to be more likely.<sup>53</sup>

It must be kept in mind, however, that such an inclination was not particularly found in Indonesia at the time indicated by Dhofier. Even in the time of ‘Abduh at the turn of the nineteenth century, Muslims — as ‘Abduh himself testified — were not completely fatalistic. In addition, indeed within the Ash‘arite theology itself there is a notion of free choice within the doctrine of “acquisition” or *kasb*. This term, which has its origin in classical Islamic theology, is believed to be the basis of reward and punishment. Therefore, from ‘Abduh’s perspective, although the belief in *al-qadâ*’ and *al-qadr* was once contaminated with traces of belief in compulsion and thus caused misfortunes that have befallen them, through the passing of time, this belief turned out to be more moderate.<sup>54</sup>

Hamka has established a firm foundation for further development of an Islamic resurgence in Indonesia. It is also interesting to notice that through his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, Hamka, in reality he preceded Harun Nasution in introducing certain Mu‘tazili concepts concerning the freedom of action and moral responsibility. But, unlike Nasution, Hamka was never explicit in this enterprise. Without actually mentioning that the concept he offered was based on Mu‘tazilism, he used it directly to interpret the Qur’anic verses relating to a specific issue. Yet there was no protest against his approach to his *Tafsir*, although he had started to introduce these ideas much earlier than Harun Nasution.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps this is due to the fact that the approach of Hamka was much less scholarly. While Nasution offered his reinterpretation of Mu‘tazili doctrine through IAIN, which greatly shocked the older ‘*ulama*’, Hamka, by contrast, successfully planted the seeds of rationality in religious attitudes by means of his *Tafsir*. Hamka, therefore, was much more effective in reviving Muslim faith in the pious use of rationality. However, inducements to avoid a fatalistic worldview and endorsements to work hard have been prescribed by K. H. Ahmad Dahlan, the founding father of Muhammadiyah, since

the time when he first initiated this reform movement. It fell, however, to subsequent scholars to reformulate it within a clear theological framework. Moreover, the foundation of the organization was actually meant to facilitate the moral injunction in order for it to be realized more effectively and to serve as a vehicle to implement its values.<sup>56</sup>

Hamka is one of the most important Muhammadiyah scholars whose works mark a significant shift in the development of Islamic theological discourse in Indonesia. He began to introduce a radical theological outlook by adopting a rational interpretation of the belief in *al-qadâ*' and *al-qadr*. He insisted that the negative influence of fatalistic doctrine and the deprivation of the spirit of free will had brought Indonesian Muslims to a state of lethargy and backwardness. The fatalistic verses of the Qur'an should not give license to Muslims to be submissive or to behave childishly under the alleged protection of God. Muslims, Hamka suggests, must be responsible for improving their own worldly well being since God will never change the fate of people unless they are willing to change it themselves (13:11).

## Endnotes

1. Abdul Mukti Ali, "The Muhammadiyah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction." (MA Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1958), p. 21.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
3. Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1970), p. 15.
4. James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 18.
5. Arbiyah Lubis, *Pemikiran Muhammadiyah dan Muhammad Abduh: Suatu Studi Perbandingan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1993), p. 183.
6. Noer Iskandar al-Barsany, "Pemikiran Teologi Islam A. Hassan." (Ph.D. Thesis, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 1997), p. 181.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 206. For the biography of A. Hassan (1887-1958), see Tamar Djaja, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1980); A. Minhaji, "Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia" (Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1997), pp. 83-118.
8. Harun Nasution (1919-1998) was known as the first person responsible for introducing Mu'tazilism to Indonesian readers in a more comprehensive and systematic way. He wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on 'Abduh's theological concept with the conclusion that 'Abduh's theology was in line with Mu'tazilism. In the early 1970s, when Nasution was asked why he did not translate (into Indonesian) and publish his dissertation that he wrote at McGill University (1968), he replied that the conclusion he reached concerning 'Abduh's theological thought would be hardly acceptable to Indonesian Muslims. When he was further asked about the reason, he stated: "Let's consider what the point of view that might be held by these 'ulama' and Muslim leaders who are present here." One of those present curiously urged him to reveal his finding, asking: "So, what is your conclusion?" Nasution replied: "Indeed 'Abduh upheld a theological concept which is in line with that of Mu'tazilites." A voice was then heard among the 'ulama': 'Na'udhu bi Allāh min dhālik' (We seek refuge to Allah from that [matter]), signifying his indignation at the idea of Mu'tazilism. Nasution, therefore, had to wait for about fifteen years until conditions were suitable enough for him to publish a part of his dissertation which discusses 'Abduh's theological point of view. See Harun Nasution, *Muhammad 'Abduh dan Teologi Rasional Mu'tazilah* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 1987), pp. v-vi (Preface).
9. See K.R.H. Hadjid, *Falsafah Ajaran K.H. Ahmad Dahlan* (Yogyakarta: Siaran, n.d.). In his preface to the work, Hadjid listed some books of 'Abduh read by Dahlan, including *Kitab [Risalat] al-Tawhid, Tafsir Juz 'Amma* and *Kitab al-Islām wa al-Naṣrāniyyah [ma'a al-'Ilm wa al-Madaniyyah]*. In this work, Hadjid, as one of the direct disciples of Dahlan, tried to summarize the entire teachings of his mentor. Nevertheless, none of these teachings reflects an explicit influence of 'Abduh's theological thought. Hadjid's exposition emphasizes that Dahlan was more concerned with an attempt to improve the quality of Muslims' religious commitment rather than with theological speculation.
10. Arbiyah Lubis, in her work cited above, testifies that not all of the later Muhammadiyah scholars agree with the doctrinal beliefs formulated in the *Kitab al-Iman*. Those scholars, like Hamka and H.A. Malik Ahmad, tended to adopt

- Muhammad 'Abduh's thought, especially dealing with the idea of God's limited power and human's freedom of will. See *Pemikiran Muhammadiyah*, p. 183.
11. *Pengajaran Shalat* is basically a manual on how Muslims should perform their daily prayers in strict accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Yet Hassan devotes a large section to a general discussion of the pillars of Islamic belief, even in the beginning of the book. The reason for this is unclear, since this wider issue is not explicitly connected to the central topic of the work. This is unlike his *Sual-Djawab* (1931, reprinted 1957-1958), which is intended to elucidate any problem raised by his co-religionists dealing with all aspects of religious doctrines.
  12. For the complete citation of this Ḥadīth, see Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi-Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1980), vol. 1, p. 114; Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Saḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: 'Izz al-Dīn, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 64-65.
  13. *Ikhtiyār* in Arabic means either "choice" or "free will." But this word has been adopted into Indonesian in a different meaning, that is, "endeavor" or "effort" in addition to "free choice." See John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, *An Indonesian-English Dictionary*, 3rd edition (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 218. It is in this Indonesian sense of "endeavor" and "effort" that the word *ikhtiyār* should be understood in this context.
  14. M. Yunan Yusuf, *Teologi Muhammadiyah: Cita Tajdid dan Realitas Sosial* (Jakarta: IKIP Muhammadiyah Jakarta Press, 1995), p. 26. The problem of *kasb* or "acquisition" is very crucial in classical Islamic theology. Through this concept, al-Ash'ari denies free will as well as compulsion by stating that humans do not produce but "acquire" acts. See A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 92. However, al-Ash'ari was reported to have adopted this term from Dirar b. 'Amr, a Mu'tazilite scholar who had invented this concept. Disregarding the fact that Dirar was one of the leading figures among the Mu'tazilites and his perseverance in the use of rational arguments, he sided with the majority of the general religious movements in believing that all events, including human actions, were determined or controlled by God. This last idea was considered to be the reason for his distinction from the rest of the Mu'tazilites. Through this concept, Dirar was trying to reconcile God's omnipotence with His justice in punishing wrongdoers. It would be unjust for God, so he asserts, to punish someone for an act for which he was not responsible. Therefore, every single act of man comes from two different agents, that is, from God who creates it, and from man who "acquires" it (*iktasabahu*). See W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), pp. 191-192. See also, idem, "The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition," in his *Early Islam: Collected Articles* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990). This article first appeared in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (1943), pp. 234-247; L. Gardet, "Kasb," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 4, pp. 692-694.
  15. Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (Yogyakarta: PP. Muhammadiyah Majelis Tarjih, 1976), p. 19.
  16. A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat* (Bangil: Tamaam, 1991), p. 21.
  17. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
  18. Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muhammad 'Abduh* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1968), p. 154.

19. A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat*, p. 143.
20. *Ibid.* The last example by Hassan is reminiscent of the “*Maymûn* and *Shu’ayb* affair” reported by al-Ash’ari in his *Maqâlat al-Islâmiyyîn*. The two persons were of the Kharijite sect upholding different points of view regarding the idea of *qadr*. *Shu’ayb* was reported to have borrowed some money from *Maymûn*. When *Maymûn* demanded *Shu’ayb* to repay his debt, the latter said: “I shall give it to you if God will.” *Maymûn* replied: “God *has* willed that you should give it to me now,” upon which *Shu’ayb* insisted: “If God had willed it, I could not have done otherwise than give it to you.” *Maymûn* said: “Verily, God has willed what He commanded; what He did not command, He did not will, and what He did not will He did not command.” In order to resolve their disputation, they agreed to write to ‘Abd al-Karîm al-‘Ajarrad, their Kharijite leader who was being held in prison. In reply to their letter, al-‘Ajarrad wrote to them: “Our doctrine is that what God willed came about, and what He did not will did not come about; and we did not fix evil upon God.” Al-‘Ajarrad’s reply reached them when the latter died. *Maymûn* claimed that his position was supported by the statement “we do not fix evil upon God.” On the other hand, *Shu’ayb* also claimed that al-‘Ajarrad supported his position by his statement: “what God willed came about, and what He did not will did not come about.” Thus they maintained their association with al-‘Ajarrad but dissociated themselves from one another, and each of them represented two different trends in the Kharijite thought: an inclination to Mu’tazilite brand of *qadr* under *Maymûn*, called *Maymûniyah*; and an inclination toward *jabr* represented by *Shu’ayb*, called *Shu’aybiyah*. See Abû al-Ḥasan ‘Alî b. Isma‘îl al-Ash‘arî, *Maqâlat al-Islâmiyyîn wa-Ikhtilâf al-Muṣallîn*, ed. Helmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963), p. 93; W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London: Luzac & Co., 1948), pp. 32-33.
21. Many scholars have discussed Hamka’s personality. Fachry Ali, for instance, has described Hamka as one of the forerunners of Indonesian Islamic modernism. See his “Hamka dan Masyarakat Islam Indonesia: Catatan Pendahuluan Riwayat dan Perjuangannya.” *Prisma* (February 1983); as quoted in M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 15. Gerard Moussay reports that Hamka was one of the most prominent Muslim figures in contemporary Indonesia. Although he did not complete elementary school, he achieved greatness through self-education in many fields of the arts, including journalism, literature, anthropology, history, politics and Islamic sciences. See Moussay’s article, “Une grande figure de l’Islam indonesien: Buya Hamka.” *Archipel*, vol. 32 (1986), p. 103. For further discussion of his biography, see Hamka, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1966, *an autobiography*); H. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983); idem, *Kenang-kenangan 70 Tahun Buya Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983, *a memoir*); Nasir Tamara, Buntaran Sanusi and Vincent Djauhari (eds.), *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984). For a brief report of his early education, see M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, pp. 34-53. For a critical study of his scholarly career, see Abdurrahman Wahid, “Benarkah Buya Hamka Seorang Besar? Sebuah Pengantar,” in *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, pp. 19-50.
22. Although Hamka was involved in Muhammadiyah movement since his youth,

- and later became an important member of its central leadership board (1953-1971), he always displayed an independence and originality of thought, refusing to be blindly tied to the thought of the organization. He often freely voiced his opinions concerning contemporary issues without waiting for official approval from the Muhammadiyah. This included his exposition of his theological thought that countered the official position outlined in the *Kitab al-Iman*. See Milhan Yusuf, "Hamka's Method of Interpreting the Legal Verses of the Qur'an: A Study of His *Tafsir al-Azhar*" (M. A. Thesis, McGill University, 1995), pp. 11-12.
23. Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, p. 253.
  24. *Ibid.*
  25. Hamka, as with many other Indonesian writers of his age, offers scarcely any reference to support his discussions. In classical Islamic theology, this issue is generally related to the problem of whether or not God creates evil. Hamka, therefore, also addresses the problem of evil, although he did not fully develop it. His idea may be in agreement with a saying that "God has power over evil but not power to do evil, that is that what God creates is not to be ascribed to Him in the same way as an act is ascribed to an agent and characterizes the agent." This idea was held by Muḥammad 'Isā Burgūth of the Ahl al-Ithbāt, or the "affirmationists." Watt characterizes people belonging to this group as those who affirmed God's *qadr* and held a very definite belief in God's omnipotence. Their driving power came from truly Quranic outlooks and not from pre-Islamic fatalism. Watt further notices that the term Ahl al-Ithbāt is only found in al-Ash'arī's work *Maqālat*. Among the theologian figures included in this group are Dirār, al-Najjār, Burgūth, al-Kushānī, Muḥammad b. Ḥarb, and Yaḥyā b. Abī Kāmil. Although Dirār was claimed to be the most prominent figure in the group, it was rather al-Najjār whose formulation of doctrines was considered the fundamental norm to be adopted as the identity of the group. See W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination*, pp. 112-116; *idem*, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 116-118. See also al-Ash'arī, *Maqālat al-Islāmiyyin*, pp. 201-203.
  26. Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, pp. 258-259.
  27. In Hamka's list, including into fatalistic verses are: 2:8, 11:34, 39:19, 16:36, and 76:30. Including into free will verses are: 76:3, 6:123, 4:110, and 13:12. See *ibid.*, pp. 262-264.
  28. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
  30. In Hamka's biography we are informed that in 1964 Hamka was arrested and put in jail by the Sukarno regime, on an accusation of plotting subversive actions. These charges were due to the rise of the so-called Anti-Sukarno Movement (Gerakan Anti Sukarno, GAS) which involved some Muslim figures from the MASYUMI, the leading Islamic party up to 1960. The accusation was never proven, however, but they were not released from jail until the Sukarno regime collapsed in early 1966. It would be interesting to know whether or not Hamka realized what he had written about ten years earlier concerning this experience. Yet, during his arrest, Hamka was reported to have retained his productivity with his scholarly works, writing his voluminous *Tafsir al-Azhar*. Hamka regarded this imprisonment as a "divine wisdom" (*hikmah Ilahi*), since he believed that otherwise he probably would not have completed his *Tafsir* due to his being

unable to leave his day-to-day life. Hamka also believed that his imprisonment had “preserved” him from the filth of despotism. He expresses this in the following statement: “[I have to be] grateful to God, because during two years and four months I have been preserved by God, so that I was free from the filth of the despotic era. Probably, had I been out there at that time, I would have had to follow the way of the hypocrites in order to save my life, being compelled to support the tyrannical regime which was definitely against my heart.” See his *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1982), vol. 1, p. 57. For the account of his life in prison, see Hamka, “Prof. Dr. Raden Kasman Singodimedjo al-Haj: Kenangan Setelah Usianya Mencapai 75 Tahun,” in Panitia Peringatan 75 Tahun Kasman, *Hidup Itu Berjuang: Kasman Singodimedjo 75 Tahun* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1982), pp. 368-383. Like Hamka, Singodimedjo was a leader of both the MASYUMI and Muhammadiyah, and was put in jail together with the former. For a brief account of his writing of the *Tafsir al-Azhar*, see “Hikmah Ilahi” a part of his introductory remarks to his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 1, pp. 50-58.

31. Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, pp. 272-274.
32. M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 103.
33. Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 25, p. 7.
34. M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 120.
35. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 233.
36. Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 1, pp. 130-132.
37. Daud Rahbar, *God of Justice: A Study in the Ethical Doctrine of the Qur'an* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), pp. 126-128.
38. Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 24, pp. 32-33.
39. Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 606, citing from al-Shahrastani's *al-Milal wa'l-Nihal*, p. 60.
40. *Ibid.*, quoting *al-Milal*, p. 61.
41. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 106.
42. George F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of 'Abd al-Jabbar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 12, based on al-Ash'ari's *al-Ibanah 'an Usul al-Diyanah*, p. 50.
43. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 102. Al-Basri's argument is based on his interpretation of the Qur'anic verse “God sends astray whom He will” (13:27) which must be correlated with another similar verse “God sends astray the evildoers” (14:27). It implies that the phrase “whom He will” in the former verse must be understood as being specified with another phrase in the latter, “the evildoers.”
44. Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 29, pp. 297-298; M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 122.
45. Hamka, *ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 128.
46. *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 71. The above phraseology is very popular among the Muslim writers in describing human's position in fatalistic belief. It can be traced back to Muḥammad 'Abduh in his discussion of *al-qadā'* and *al-qadr*, in which he states “*anna al-muslimin bi-'aqidat al-qadā' yarawnā anfusabum ka al-rishât al-mu'allaqat fi'l-hawâ' tuqabbiluhâ al-riyâh kayfamâ tamil,*” that Muslims, in their belief in God's decree, are like a feather hung in the air, being blown by the wind and driven to which ever direction the wind moves. This article first ap-

- peared in *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, vol. 7, (May 1884), and was reprinted in Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tārīkh al-Ustādih al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh* (Cairo: al-Manār, 1344 H.), vol. 2, pp. 259-267.
47. Hamka, *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, pp. 76-77. It is unique to Hamka to consider *al-hikmah* as an attribute of God equal to His *qudrat* and *irādah* and the other attributes. Unlike other writers in Islamic theology, Hamka, in discussing the attributes of God, does not follow the ordinary way outlined by Muslim theologians such as al-Ash'arī or al-Māturidī. Hamka apparently mixes God's attributes and His most beautiful names (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*). Based on this unique approach, he discusses the attributes of God (although he does not specifically put it under the title of the attributes of God) consisting of *al-wujūd* (existence); *al-awwal* (He is the first without the beginning); *al-ākhir* (He is the last and the eternal, without ending); *laysa ka-mithlih shay'* (He is the unique, He resembles nothing); *al-ghani* (He is the rich, self sufficient, having no need to anything); *al-waḥdāniyyah* (the absolute unity); *al-qudrat wa al-irādah* (having absolute power and will); *al-hikmah* (the highest wisdom); *al-'ilm* (knowledge); *al-sam' wa'l-baṣar* (hearing and seeing); and *al-kalām* (speaking). It is not clear, however, what his basic argument to formulate the attributes of God as such is. On the other hand, it is also unclear why, for instance, he does not include *al-'adl* (justice) with God's attributes, and puts "wisdom" instead. For Hamka, the attribute of justice may have been included into the concept of wisdom, since in discussing the latter he mentions cursorily that justice is the perfect attribute of God, but without further elaboration.
48. Hamka does not specify which Muslim ruler (and of which era or dynasty) claimed himself to be al-Ḥakīm bi-Amr Allāh. However, in Islamic history, the ruler with such a title refers to Abū 'Alī al-Manṣūr, the sixth Fatimid caliph of Egypt (985-1021), who succeeded his father at the age of eleven. The young Abū 'Alī al-Manṣūr was proclaimed as a new caliph on the instruction of his father who was on his deathbed. On his caliphal inauguration, al-Mansur was solemnly presented to the dignitaries in the great *imam* of the Palace, seated on a golden throne, and was greeted with the title of *imam* with the *laqab* of al-Ḥakīm bi-Amr Allāh. Al-Ḥakīm ruled as an absolute despot, obeying only his own caprice and mood, decreeing the most extraordinary and the most unpopular measures. His reign was characterized as a time of terror, overwhelmed with a great number of executions and cruelties as well as rebellions and manifestations of discontent among the population. He was also notorious for his eccentricities, verging on madness and his claim to be recognized as divine. However, there is no clear account of his theological inclination, either to support fatalism or free will. Nevertheless, as an Ismā'ili ruler, he was reported to have upheld a religious fanaticism, especially through enhancing a spirit of Shi'ism, while taking harsh measures against Christians, Jews, and even against Sunni Muslims. See M. Conard, "al-Ḥakīm bi-amr Allāh," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, vol. 3, pp. 76-82; Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), pp. 330-337. However, being a despotic Muslim ruler with arbitrary oppression was not to be ascribed solely to al-Hakim of the Fatimid. There were numerous Muslim rulers who made use of the title of *khalīfat Allāh*, the deputy of God, as a pretext to legitimize their unjust and oppressive reigns. With this claim, they demanded



- Muslims obey their rule, since obeying the Caliph is equal to obeying God; and disobeying the Caliph or his agents is equally a refusal to acknowledge the authority of God. See Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 84-85.
49. *Peladjaran Agama Islam*, p. 77.
  50. M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam*, p. 115.
  51. Each of these writers, except the second, has discussed the problem of free will and predetermination as a part of their examination of the principal beliefs of Islam. Their works dealing with this issue are: H.A. Malik Ahmad, *Aqidah: Pembahasan-pembahasan Mengenai Allah dan Taqdir* (Jakarta: al-Hidayah, 1985); Abd. Rahim Nur, *Percaya Kepada Taqdir Membawa Kemajuan atau Kemunduran* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1987); H. A. Azhar Basyir, *Pendidikan Agama Islam I (Aqidah)* (Yogyakarta: Perpustakaan Fakultas Hukum Universitas Islam Indonesia, 1995); and Yunahar Ilyas, *Kuliah Aqidah Islam* (Yogyakarta: LPPI-Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 1993). They all agree to emphasize that Muslims should understand the doctrine of free will and predetermination proportionately, and encourage them to turn to non-fatalistic theology for their betterment of the worldly life.
  52. Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Teologi al-Asy'ari dan Pembangunan," in M. Masyhur Amin (ed.), *Teologi Pembangunan: Paradigma Baru Pemikiran Islam* (Yogyakarta: LKPSM-NU, 1988), pp. 39-43. However, a deep reconsideration of the necessity of adopting non-fatalistic theological worldviews may have emerged only late among the traditionalists. This can be seen, for instance, from the publication of Machasin's work, *Menyelami Kebebasan Manusia: Telaah Kritis terhadap Konsepsi al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: INHIS-Pustaka Pelajar, 1996). In his preface, the publisher explicitly mentions that this book may be the first work written by a traditionalist scholar on this controversial issue dealing with human's freedom and predestination. Yet, although in his conclusion Machasin admits human's freedom of choice distinguishes them from other creations, this freedom is not unlimited. The unlimited power only belongs to God. He gives freedom to humans only in the fields of voluntarily actions (*ikhtiyariyah*), by virtue of which God will apply His promise and threat (*al-wa'd wa'l-wa'id*). Human's freedom lies within one's practical ethics, but not in ontological terms. Nevertheless, humans have to maintain their belief in mysterious matters, by virtue of which they may be able to resist any form of turbulence in life. See *ibid.*, pp. 143-144.
  53. Howard M. Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development in Indonesia* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1992), p. 32.
  54. Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism*, pp. 152-153.
  55. Hamka started his *Tafsir* in a regular lecture he delivered every morning in his grand mosque, Masjid Agung al-Azhar, Jakarta, in the early 1960s. However, the draft of the *Tafsir* was not completed until he worked on it during his imprisonment for more than two years in the mid-1960s, an event—as has been noted earlier—which he considered to be a "blessing in disguise."
  56. M. Rusli Karim, "Modus Baru Partisipasi Muhammadiyah," in M. Rusli Karim (ed.), *Muhammadiyah dalam Kritik dan Komentar* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), p. 275.

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