

The Conformity of Maturidiyah Theology to Sunni Islam with the Shafi'i School of Thought

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the theological framework of Maturidiyah and its compatibility with the Shafi'i school of thought, focusing on ways to bridge the understanding and acceptance of Maturidiyah principles among Shafi'i adherents. Both theological traditions share a Sunni foundation, yet they differ on key issues such as the role of reason in faith, the concept of divine attributes, and the interplay between predestination (qadar) and free will. The study emphasizes the importance of highlighting shared values, such as the commitment to Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah and the balance between textual evidence (naql) and rational inquiry (aql). It argues that Maturidiyah theology's rational approach to faith and its nuanced view of divine justice and human agency can enrich the spiritual and intellectual framework of Shafi'i believers without undermining their core principles. Through historical analysis and comparative theology, the paper provides strategies for presenting Maturidiyah as a complementary perspective rather than a conflicting one. Practical recommendations include inter-school dialogues, educational programs, and mentorship initiatives led by scholars grounded in both traditions. Ultimately, the paper underscores the significance of fostering unity and mutual understanding in addressing contemporary challenges faced by the Muslim community.

Keywords: maturidiyah, shafii, predestination, sunni, comperative theology

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INTRODUCTION

The diversity in Sunni Islam reflects the rich intellectual tradition of Islam, with a variety of theological and jurisprudential schools offering nuanced interpretations of faith and practice. Among these traditions, the Maturidiyyah school of theology, founded by Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, has a significant place in the development of Sunni thought. Known for its emphasis on reason (aql) and rational inquiry, the Maturidiyah provides a balanced framework for understanding faith and divine justice. However, its principles are often poorly known by adherents of the Shafi'i school of fiqh, which is traditionally in line with Ash'ari theology (Istifarin, Nurnajib, Alfani, & Vidityas, 2023).

Adherents of the Shafi'i madhhab, which is firmly rooted in the teachings of Imam al-Shafi'i, emphasizes strict adherence to textual evidence (naql) while still respecting rational thought. This alignment with Ash'ariyah theology often leads to the perception of theological differences with Maturidiyah, especially regarding the role of reason, the interpretation of divine attributes, and the balance between destiny (qadar) and free will (Apriyani, Amri, & Aderus, 2024).

This paper seeks to explore how Maturidiyah theology can be presented to Shafi'is in a way that encourages understanding and acceptance without challenging their basic beliefs. By emphasizing common values, such as a commitment to Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah and efforts to achieve theological coherence, this research aims to build a bridge between these two intellectual traditions (Syakhrani, 2023).

The introduction will outline the historical context of Maturidiyah and Shafi'i thought, identify important theological differences and similarities, and propose the need for dialogue and mutual enrichment. Thus, the book underscores the importance of unity in answering the spiritual and intellectual challenges faced by the Muslim community today.

Islamic theology, particularly Sunni Islam, is marked by its rich intellectual diversity, with various schools of thought contributing to a broader understanding of faith and practice. Among these schools, Maturidiyah theology holds a distinctive position due to its intellectual rigor and balanced approach to divine attributes, human responsibility, and the integration of reason and revelation. This theological tradition, initiated by Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, emphasizes the role of human intellect (aql) in interpreting and understanding divine truths, providing a rational foundation for Islamic belief and practice. However, despite its intellectual significance, Maturidiyah remains somewhat underappreciated in some Sunni circles, particularly among followers of the Shafi'i school of thought, which predominantly follows the Ash'ari school of theology (Mustamin & Rahman, 2019).

The Shafi'i school, one of the four major Sunni schools of Islamic jurisprudence, emphasizes the importance of strict adherence to textual evidence derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. However, it also recognizes the role of reason, particularly in interpreting legal rulings. Despite these commonalities, the Shafi'i school tends to rely more heavily on the textual traditions and leaves less room for rational inquiry compared to Maturidiyah, which integrates both textual evidence and intellectual reasoning to reach theological conclusions. This difference in emphasis has led to varying interpretations of theological principles, especially regarding divine attributes, predestination (qadar), and the balance between free will and divine omnipotence (Fajri, 2015).

A key point of divergence between Maturidiyah and Shafi'i thought concerns the use of reason in understanding divine matters. Maturidiyah theology places a strong emphasis on reason, particularly in understanding the nature of God's attributes and human agency. For example, Maturidiyah holds that human beings, while subject to divine will, have the capacity for free will (kasb) that allows them to make moral choices. In contrast, the Ash'ari school, which is closely associated with Shafi'i jurisprudence, is more inclined to accept divine omnipotence over human action, which may lead to a more deterministic view of human behavior. This difference in approach has sometimes created tension between the two schools, particularly when it comes to theological discussions on predestination and human responsibility (Masturin, 2014).

Despite these differences, Maturidiyah and Shafi'i schools share common roots in their commitment to Sunni orthodoxy and their emphasis on Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, the community of believers adhering to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the consensus of the scholars. This shared foundation provides a basis for reconciling the two theological traditions and fostering a more unified understanding of Islamic belief. By focusing on the shared commitment to faith and practice, this study aims to explore ways in which Maturidiyah theology can complement, rather than conflict with, Shafi'i thought (Sulaeman & Almisri, 2023).

One of the most significant contributions of Maturidiyah theology is its nuanced understanding of divine justice. While both Maturidiyah and Ash'ari thought agree that God's will is supreme, Maturidiyah emphasizes that God's justice is not arbitrary. Instead, divine justice is viewed as being inherently rational, with human beings being accountable for their choices. This view provides a framework for understanding the relationship between predestination and free will, with Maturidiyah offering a middle ground between the extreme views of the Mu'tazilah, who advocated for absolute free will, and the Jabariyah, who emphasized complete determinism (Zukhdi, 2017).

Another area of potential reconciliation between Maturidiyah and Shafi'i thought is the interpretation of divine attributes. While both schools affirm that God's attributes are eternal and distinct from His essence, Maturidiyah's approach to interpreting these attributes is more flexible and metaphorical compared to the more literalist interpretations found in other Sunni schools. This flexibility allows for a deeper engagement with the metaphysical dimensions of Islamic theology, offering a more intellectually satisfying understanding of the divine while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic tradition (Muspiroh, 2017).

In addition to its theological contributions, Maturidiyah also offers practical insights into the application of faith in everyday life. The integration of reason and revelation in Maturidiyah theology encourages Muslims to engage with the world in a rational and ethical manner. This emphasis on intellectual engagement with religious teachings provides a valuable framework for addressing contemporary issues, such as secularism, modernity, and the challenges of pluralism. In this way, Maturidiyah can offer a response to the intellectual and spiritual challenges faced by contemporary Muslims, especially those living in diverse and rapidly changing societies like Indonesia (Murtopo, 2014).

Indonesia, as the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, presents a unique context for exploring the relevance of Maturidiyah theology. The country's diverse Muslim population is predominantly Shafi'i, yet many Indonesians are also influenced by Ash'ari theology. In recent years, Indonesia has experienced a surge in religious and intellectual diversity, with increasing exposure to secular ideologies and alternative religious beliefs. This context makes it imperative to provide a theological framework that encourages rational thought, tolerance, and ethical responsibility. Maturidiyah theology, with its emphasis on reason and divine justice, offers a compelling model for addressing these challenges and promoting unity among Indonesia's Muslim population (Mansur & Saputra, 2019).

The role of Maturidiyah theology in contemporary Indonesian society is particularly important in the context of religious pluralism. Indonesia is home to a variety of religious communities, and the ability to engage with these communities in a constructive and respectful manner is essential for maintaining social harmony. Maturidiyah's rational approach to faith provides a basis for interfaith dialogue, as it emphasizes the importance of reason in understanding religious truths while also respecting the diversity of belief systems. This makes Maturidiyah a valuable resource for promoting religious tolerance and social cohesion in Indonesia (Kiswati, 2015).

Furthermore, Maturidiyah's emphasis on human responsibility and free will aligns with Indonesia's socio-economic development goals. In a country where poverty and inequality remain significant challenges, the teachings of Maturidiyah, which stress the importance of individual effort and accountability, can inspire Muslims to take proactive steps in improving their lives and contributing to the broader community. This emphasis on human agency, combined with a belief in divine justice, encourages individuals to work towards social and economic justice while trusting in God's wisdom and mercy (Alwana, 2020).

The integration of Maturidiyah theology into Indonesia's religious education system has the potential to significantly enhance the intellectual and spiritual development of young Muslims. By incorporating the principles of Maturidiyah into the curriculum of Islamic schools, universities, and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), Indonesia can provide a more balanced and comprehensive approach to religious education. This will help young Muslims navigate the challenges of modernity while remaining true to their faith, fostering a generation of thinkers who can engage with both religious and secular knowledge in a constructive and balanced manner (Hanani, 2017).

In addition to its role in education, Maturidiyah theology also has significant implications for religious leadership in Indonesia. Islamic scholars and religious leaders who are well-versed in Maturidiyah theology can play a key role in promoting moderation and

combating extremism. By emphasizing the importance of reason, ethical responsibility, and divine justice, these leaders can help guide their communities towards a more inclusive and tolerant understanding of Islam, countering the rise of radical ideologies that often exploit religious texts for political or ideological gain (Yusuf, 2018).

As Indonesia continues to grapple with the challenges of modernity and religious pluralism, the role of Maturidiyah theology in providing a rational and balanced framework for understanding Islam has never been more critical. By promoting interfaith dialogue, ethical responsibility, and intellectual engagement, Maturidiyah can help foster a more harmonious and just society. In this way, the teachings of Maturidiyah offer a valuable resource for addressing the contemporary challenges faced by the Indonesian Muslim community and for promoting peace, unity, and progress in the wider society.

In conclusion, Maturidiyah theology provides a powerful and intellectually rigorous framework for understanding Islam, one that balances the use of reason with the adherence to revelation. Its emphasis on divine justice, human responsibility, and the harmonious integration of intellect and faith makes it a valuable tool for addressing contemporary challenges. By fostering a deeper understanding of Maturidiyah among Shafi'i adherents, and promoting its teachings in Indonesia's educational and religious institutions, this theological tradition can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Islam in Indonesia and beyond.

The novelty of this study lies in its approach to bridging the gap between Maturidiyah theology and Shafi'i thought, particularly through the lens of reason and divine justice. While both traditions share common Sunni foundations, the nuanced differences in their theological frameworks have not been extensively explored in previous literature. This research proposes that Maturidiyah theology, with its emphasis on rational inquiry, can complement Shafi'i thought by providing a broader intellectual framework without challenging the core principles of Shafi'i jurisprudence. It aims to present Maturidiyah not as a competing theology, but as a complementary perspective that enhances the spiritual and intellectual understanding of Shafi'i adherents, particularly in the context of contemporary challenges such as secularism and pluralism.

The primary objective of this study is to explore how Maturidiyah theology can be presented to Shafi'i adherents in a way that encourages mutual understanding and acceptance. By highlighting the shared values between the two schools and emphasizing the complementary nature of their theological frameworks, the study aims to foster unity within the broader Sunni community. The findings will benefit scholars, religious leaders, and educators by providing a framework for theological dialogue and collaboration between the Maturidiyah and Shafi'i schools. Furthermore, the research aims to promote a rational and balanced approach to Islamic faith that can address contemporary challenges such as extremism, modernity, and interfaith relations. By integrating Maturidiyah teachings into religious education and public discourse, this study hopes to contribute to a more inclusive and intellectually robust understanding of Islam.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research methodology to explore how the principles of Maturidiyah theology can be effectively conveyed to Shafi'i adherents. This approach integrates historical, comparative, and analytical methods to examine the theological and intellectual interactions between these two traditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Analysis

Socio-political and Intellectual Conditions of Central Asia

The 9th and 10th centuries in Central Asia were marked by significant socio-political and intellectual developments that greatly influenced the emergence and formulation of Maturidiyah theology. Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, who worked in this context, answered the unique challenges of his time.

Socio-Political Context

Central Asia was part of the Abbasid Caliphate, which was marked by its cultural and intellectual development. Although Abbasid political control weakened, their protection of scholars remained influential.

Local rulers, such as the Samaniyds in Transoxiana (modern Uzbekistan and beyond), supported Sunni orthodoxy to counter sectarian and ideological divisions.

Central Asia is the meeting place of various religious traditions, including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity, in addition to Islam. The presence of these diverse beliefs requires a strong theological response to affirm Islamic orthodoxy.

Al-Maturidi theology provides a systematic and rational defense of Islam in a pluralistic environment.

Sects such as Mu'tazilah (rationalist) and Jabariyah (determinist) became famous, leading to fierce theological debate.

Al-Maturidi's work emerged in response to these extremities, advocating a balanced framework of Sunni theology.

Intellectual Climate

The dominance of Mu'tazilah in the Abbasid court during the mihnah (Inquisition) period (833-848 AD) promoted a rationalist approach to theology. Although the Mu'tazilah suffered a political setback in the 10th century, their intellectual influence remained, prompting Al-Maturidi to engage their ideas critically.

Central Asia became a center of intellectual activity, with scholars excelling in the fields of theology, philosophy, and science. Cities such as Samarkand and Bukhara host vibrant scientific communities.

Al-Maturidi, based in Samarkand, took advantage of this intellectual environment to develop a theology that harmonizes reason and revelation.

The Hanafi school dominated jurisprudence in Central Asia, which emphasized reason and analogy (qiyas) in legal decisions.

Al-Maturidi, a Hanafi theologian, adapted this rational approach into theology, blending jurisprudence methods with theological inquiry.

Mu'tazilah emphasizes absolute free will, while Jabariyah advocates total predestination. Al-Maturidi developed a nuanced position, affirming human responsibility within the framework of divine omnipotence, a hallmark of Maturidiyah's theology. The literalist interpretation of God's attributes by certain groups (e.g., Karramiyah) poses a challenge. Al-Maturidi refutes these views, interpreting God's attributes metaphorically to preserve His transcendence. Central Asia is a region that has just embraced Islam, which requires the integration of Islamic principles with local culture and traditions. Al-Maturidi's rational and moderate theological framework facilitates this process, making Islam intellectually and spiritually accessible to new converts.

Summary of Factors Influencing the Development of Al-Maturidi Theology:

Religious pluralism, requires a strong theological framework to defend Sunni Islam. Sectarian competition, a response to Mu'tazilah's rationalism, Jabariyah's fatalism, and Karramiyah's anthropomorphism is needed. Hanafi jurisprudence, encourages a rational approach to theology. Intellectual Development, providing resources and a platform for

scientific debate. Socio-Political Support from rulers such as the Samanias supported Sunni orthodoxy. These conditions shaped Al-Maturidi's theology as a balanced and rational response that upheld Sunni orthodoxy while addressing the complexities of its time.

Maturidiyah with Other Theological Schools

Abu Mansur al-Maturidi developed Maturidiyah theology as a balanced Sunni framework, interacting with and responding to other major theological schools of his time. These interactions are shaped by differences in methodology, interpretation of divine attributes, and human agency.

Mu'tazilah emphasizes rationalism and free will, often placing reason above textual revelation. Al-Maturidi has the same commitment to rational inquiry, but maintains that revelation has the highest authority.

Mu'tazilah rejects God's eternal attributes (e.g., knowledge, power) in order to preserve His oneness. The Maturidiyah affirmed the eternal Divine attributes, interpreting them in a way that avoided anthropomorphism. Mu'tazilah advocates absolute free will. Maturidiyyah balances man's free will with Allah's supreme control over creation (man chooses, but Allah creates their actions). Maturidiyah offers a middle ground, integrating rationality with textual faith to counter Mu'tazilah's excessive dependence on reason.

The Maturidiyah and Ash'ariyah schools are both Sunni and aim to fight the theology of Mu'tazilah, but their methodologies are different. Al-Maturidi and Al-Ash'ari share the same basic beliefs, such as affirming divine attributes and balancing reason with revelation. Ash'ariyah relied more on textual evidence and limited the role of reason in theology. Maturidiyah gave greater weight to reason, allowing it to complete the revelation. Ash'ariyah believes that faith is internal and is not influenced by deeds. Maturidiyah argues that faith includes internal beliefs and affirmations through works.

These two schools coexisted as Sunni orthodoxy, with the Maturidiyah appealing to areas influenced by Hanafi and Ash'ariyah jurisprudence dominating the Shafi'i areas.

The Athariyah school is associated with traditionalist scholars such as Ahmad bin Hanbal, upholding strict textualism and rejecting rational theology. The Maturidis opposed their literalist approach, especially on the attributes of God, while still respecting Athariyah's adherence to Sunni orthodoxy. Athariyah interprets God's attributes literally, avoiding metaphorical explanations. Maturidiyah uses metaphorical interpretation to avoid anthropomorphism. Athariyah rejects speculative theology (kalam) and relies only on the Quran and Sunnah. Maturidiyah emphasizes reason to interpret and defend Islamic beliefs. The Maturidiyah provided a rational alternative to Athariyah's strict textualism, appealing to intellectuals while retaining Sunni orthodoxy.

The Maturidiyah approach makes it a moderate and inclusive theological framework that addresses a wide range of intellectual and theological challenges.

Comparative Theology

Maturidiyah, Ash'ariyah, and Mu'tazilah

Key Similarities

These three schools affirm the oneness of God (monotheism) as the main principle of the Islamic faith. They reject the idea that God resembles His creation, but differ in their approach to interpreting divine attributes. These three schools contributed to formulating Islamic theology as an answer to the philosophical and ideological challenges of their time.

Key Differences

Aspects of Maturidiyah Ash'ariyah Mu'tazilah

The Role of Intellect

Maturidiyah, the intellect is very important but secondary after revelation.

Ash'ariyah, prioritizing revelation, reason is limited.

Mu'tazilah, reason has virtue, even above revelation.

Divine Attributes

Maturidiyah, affirms eternal qualities but interprets metaphorically to avoid anthropomorphism.

Ash'ariyah, emphasizes eternal attributes but often avoids extensive metaphorical interpretation.

Mu'tazilah, denying the eternal attributes to defend the oneness of Allah.

Free Will vs Predestination

Maturidiyah, balancing free will with the actions of Allah who creates. Allah determines all actions, man obtains them (kasb).

Ash'ariyah, human beings have complete free will and are responsible for their actions. Mu'tazilah, Faith and Deeds Faith is a verbal belief and affirmation, deeds are not part of faith, but reflect it. Faith is only belief, deeds do not depend on faith. Faith includes faith and deeds.

School Contributions

Maturidiyah, provides a balanced framework that integrates reason and revelation. Strengthening Sunni orthodoxy, especially in the Hanafi region. Offering a theological response with Mu'tazilah and Jabariyah nuances. Ash'ariyah, unites Sunni orthodoxy by reconciling rational theology with textualism. Played an important role in defending Sunni theology against Mu'tazilah's rationalism.

Inspired theological works throughout the Shafi'IMu'tazilah region, introduced rationalism into Islamic thought, influenced theologians later in life. It emphasizes divine justice and human free will, inspiring debate about ethics and accountability. Leaving behind the intellectual heritage that forms Islamic philosophy and kalam.

Textual Analysis

Primary Sources

Main Concepts of the Works of Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, al-Tawhid and Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah

Kitab al-Tauhid (Book of Tauhid):

Establishing the basic principles of Islamic monotheism (monotheism), emphasizing the oneness and uniqueness of Allah.

Maturidi argued that the intellect is a very important tool for understanding the existence of God and His attributes. However, human reason is limited and must rely on revelation to understand metaphysical truths.

Humans have free will, but their actions are created by God. It balances divine omnipotence with human accountability.

God's attributes, such as knowledge, power, and will, are eternal and inseparable from His essence. This book refutes Mu'tazilah's excessive emphasis on Jabariyah's rationalism and fatalism. The book of Tawhid explains the oneness of God, emphasizing the harmony between reason and revelation, free will, and divine justice.

Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah (Interpretation of Sunnah):

Interpretation of the Qur'an that interprets the verses of the Qur'an in the context of Sunni theology while still upholding rational analysis. The emphasis on balancing textual understanding with rational evidence, ensures that interpretation is in line with broader Islamic principles.

Verses relating to God's attributes are explained metaphorically when their literal meaning can lead to anthropomorphism.

This interpretation provides ethical and theological insights to guide Muslims in understanding Divine justice, mercy, and wisdom. Resisting rigid literal interpretations that are contrary to the essence of divine transcendence and justice.

Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah offers a rational and nuanced interpretation of the Qur'an that upholds Sunni principles, balancing textual fidelity with metaphorical understanding.

Secondary sources

Al-Bayhaqi, a prominent theologian and scholar of the Ash'ariyyad school, recognized the Maturidiyah school for its deep emphasis on rationality without sacrificing Sunni orthodoxy. He praised the Maturidiyah approach for its balanced methodology in affirming God's attributes while avoiding anthropomorphism. Al-Bayhaqi appreciated how the Maturidiyah upheld the Sunni faith amid the challenges of a more extreme theological position.

Al-Juwayni (died 1085 AD), known as "Imam al-Haramayn," a prominent Ash'ari theologian, highlighted the intellectual rigor of the Maturidiyah in theological discourse. He appreciated their method of using reason to support faith, especially their arguments against Mu'tazilah's rationalism and Jabariyah's fatalism. Al-Juwayni acknowledged the contribution of the Maturidiyah in strengthening Sunni theological unity during an era of significant ideological differences.

Concept of Maturidiyyah Theology

Maturidiyah Theology

The Maturidiyah school, founded by Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, provides a rational framework for understanding Islamic beliefs (aqidah), which emphasizes HARMONY between CREED (aql) and REVELATION (naql), a view that is in harmony with the intellectual and rational methods of the Hanafi school. Maturidiyah theology emphasizes Divine justice and human accountability, complementing the Hanafi school's emphasis on moral reasoning.

Maturidiyah theology, founded by Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 944 AD), is one of the two main schools of theology in Sunni Islam, alongside Ash'aris. This school provides a systematic and rational approach to Islamic theology (aqidah), which emphasizes a balanced relationship between reason (aql) and revelation (naql). The Maturidiyah school is widely associated with the Hanafi school of jurisprudence and is dominant in regions such as Central Asia, Turkey, and some parts of the Indian subcontinent.

Key Principles

Teologi Maturidiyah

The Maturidiyah school argues that reason (aql) and revelation (naql) complement each other.

This school states that man, through reason alone, can recognize the existence of God, the obligation to worship Him, and basic moral principles. Revelation provides more detailed guidance on things that are beyond human comprehension, such as worship and supernatural things.

Maturidiyah emphasizes the middle way between destiny (jabr) and complete free will (qadar).

Humans have free will and are responsible for their actions, but their ability to act and the results of their actions are created by God.

This view ensures divine justice while affirming God's omnipotence.

This school affirms the names and attributes of Allah, interpreting them in a way that avoids anthropomorphism (tashbih) or negation (ta'til).

For example, when discussing attributes such as the "hand" or "face" of God, the Maturidiyah interprets them metaphorically or in a way that corresponds to the majesty of Allah, without investigating them precisely.

The Maturidi school defines faith as a belief in the heart and chanting with the tongue and Charity is considered a complement to faith, which means that a person's faith will not be nullified by committing sin, as long as they do not reject the core belief.

Maturidiyah emphasizes the importance of prophets to convey divine guidance that cannot be inferred by reason. Maturidiyah upholds the solemnity (ismah) of the prophets in conveying Allah's message. Maturidiyah theology highlights man's accountability for his or

her choices, as each individual has the capacity to discern right and wrong through reason and revelation.

This school argues that the supreme judgment belongs to Allah, but emphasizes that individuals who do not receive the message of Islam in a clear and untainted form can be forgiven based on divine justice.

Typical Characteristics

Maturidiyah Theology

Although advocating the use of reason, the Maturidiyah school insists that reason operates within the framework of revelation. Unlike Mu'tazilah, who prioritized reason over revelation, the Maturidiyah maintained a balance between the two.

It rejects the idea that God's actions are arbitrary, and upholds that God's decrees are inherently just, even though the wisdom is not immediately visible to man.

Maturidiyah teaches that human beings are born with an innate tendency (fitrah) to know and seek Allah, which is strengthened by reason.

The Mathurids had a significant influence on the development of Sunni Islamic theology and were widely followed in Central Asia (e.g., Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan), Turkey, parts of the Indian subcontinent and the Balkans.

Comparison with Ash'arism

Although Maturidiyah and Ash'arism share many of the same basic beliefs, Maturidiyah gives a more prominent role to the intellect than Ash'arism in seeing moral and theological truths. Maturidiyah considers a believer who is a sinner to still have faith, while Ash'arism emphasizes more on deeds as a reflection of faith.

Maturidiyah theology offers a balanced and rational framework for understanding Islamic beliefs, emphasizing divine justice, human accountability, and a harmonious integration of reason and revelation. His contributions to Islamic thought continue to resonate, providing a structured approach to answering theological and intellectual challenges in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Sunni Islam, Fiqh Hanafi, Maturidiyah

The relationship between Sunni Islam, the Hanafi school, and Maturidiyah theology lies in the same foundations and complementary roles in shaping Islamic thought and practice. Each plays a different but interconnected role within the spiritual, legal, and theological framework of Sunni Muslims.

It is a branch of the majority of Islam and is characterized by adherence to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) which is conveyed through the Qur'an and Sunnah. Which is Jurisprudence (Fiqh), which regulates the practical aspects of worship, transactions, and daily life, and Theology (Aqidah), which regulates beliefs about Allah, the Prophet, and supernatural things. Maturidiyah is one of the two main schools of theology in Sunni Islam, alongside the Ash'arids. The Hanafi school is one of the four major schools (Shafi'i, Maliki, Hambali) of Sunni law.

Sunni Islam provides an overarching identity, the Maturidiyah defines theological beliefs, and the Hanafi school offers practical legal laws.

This combination is dominant in regions such as Asia, the Indian continent, where Hanafi jurisprudence and Maturidiyah theology are widely followed. Together, Hanafi and Maturidiyah created a balance between spirituality, rationality, and practicality, which met the intellectual and legal needs of Sunni Muslims.

Hanafi school and Maturidiyah theology are integral components of Sunni Islam, complementing each other in providing a holistic framework for faith and practice. The Hanafi school regulates daily life and legal issues, while the Maturidiyah addresses deeper theological questions, ensuring a cohesive and rational understanding of Islam. This synergy has played an important role in shaping the spiritual and intellectual heritage of Sunni Islam.

Madhhab Hanafi

The jurisprudence of the Hanafi School, founded by Imam Abu Hanifah, is one of the oldest and most widely followed schools in Sunni Islamic law. Provides a detailed guide to the Law regarding worship (worship), transactions (muamalat), marriage, and criminal law. With a methodology that balances textual sources (Qur'an and Sunnah) with analogous reasoning (qiyas) and juridical preferences (istihsan), so that it is easy to adapt to diverse contexts.

The Hanafi school is one of the four main schools of Sunni Islam in terms of jurisprudence (jurisprudence). This school was founded by Imam Abu Hanifah (699-767 AD), a prominent scholar and jurist known for his rational approach to Islamic law and his reliance on reason (aql) in addition to traditional sources. The Hanafi school is the oldest of the Sunni schools and has had a significant influence on Islamic jurisprudence throughout history.

The Hanafi school takes the rulings from the following sources in order of priority, The Qur'an, as the most important and perfect source of Islamic law. Sunnah, all the words, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Itjima, the consensus or agreement of Muslim scholars. Qiyas (Analogous Reasoning), is widely used by the Hanafi school to obtain laws for new situations by applying existing principles.

The Hanafi school is known for its rational approach and flexibility. Imam Abu Hanifah emphasized the use of reason (aql) in concluding the law and considering the welfare of the community (maslahah). This makes madhhab Hanafi easy to adapt to various contexts and the needs of society that continue to develop.

If a strong or authentic hadith is not available, the Hanafi school allows the use of weak hadith to establish the law, as long as it does not contradict the Qur'an or the established principles.

The Hanafi school accommodates local customs and practices (urf), as long as they do not contradict Islamic principles. This flexibility has contributed to its widespread adoption across different cultures and regions.

The principles of Istihsan (Equality), prioritizing laws that are more practical and less burdensome than strict analogous reasoning, and Istislah (Public Interest), which prioritizes the public interest in establishing laws.

Special Features in Fiqh

Hanafi has special laws regarding prayer times, the placement of hands during Salah, and the method of reading. There is a slight difference in the way zakat is calculated, especially in gold and silver.

This school is known for its detailed laws regarding contracts, trade, and financial transactions. Hanafi has specific laws on marriage contracts, dowry, and divorce procedures.

The Hanafi school of law is the most widely practiced school of law, especially in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh), Central Asia, Turkey, the Balkans and some parts of the Middle East. Although the Hanafi school is essentially a school of law, its theological position is often in harmony with Maturidiyah's theology, which emphasizes reason and a balanced approach to faith.

Madhhab Hanafi And Maturidiyah

Imam Abu Hanifah's rational and systematic approach to fiqh influenced the theological framework of Imam al-Maturidi. Both approaches emphasize the use of reason while adhering to the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The Hanafi school focuses on practical law, while the Maturidiyah addresses theological issues. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for Sunni Muslims, which includes both beliefs and practices, namely: the use of reason in understanding and applying Islamic principles, flexibility and pragmatism in the face of diverse cultural and intellectual challenges. Emphasis on divine justice and human responsibility.

The Hanafi school remains the cornerstone of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence, revered for its rational methodology, adaptability, and emphasis on the welfare of the community. Its principles continue to guide millions of Muslims around the world, providing a framework for navigating the complexities of modern life while adhering to Islamic values.

Madhhab Syafi'i

The Shafi'i school is one of the four main Sunni schools in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). This school was founded by Imam Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (767-820 AD), a brilliant scholar known as the "Architect of Islamic Fiqh" for his systematic methodology in making legal decisions. The Shafi'i school is characterized by its balanced approach, which combines strict adherence to textual sources with a structured framework for reasoning.

Primary Source of Law

The Shafi'i school prioritizes sources

The Qur'an: The main and most authoritative source of law.

Sunnah: The words, actions, and tacit approval of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). The Shafi'i school places significant emphasis on the authenticity of the hadith. **Ijma' (Consensus):** An agreement of qualified scholars on a particular issue.

Qiyas (Analogical Reasoning): Applied when no clear evidence is found in the Qur'an or Sunnah.

Imam al-Shafi'i is a strong supporter of verifying the authenticity of the hadith. He argued that the Sunnah should complete and clarify the Qur'an and that weak or invalid hadith cannot be used as a legal basis.

The development of Usul al-Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence) Imam al-Syafi'i has been instrumental in formalizing the principles of jurisprudence (ushul al-fiqh), providing a systematic methodology for obtaining the law. His work, *Al-Risalah*, remains a fundamental text in Islamic legal theory.

The Shafi'i school establishes a clear hierarchy for resolving legal issues, the Qur'an and Sunnah take precedence, Consensus (ijma') follows and Analogous reasoning (qiyas) is used when direct evidence is not available.

Unlike the Hanafi madhhab, the Shafi'i madhhab rejects istihsan (juridical preference), because it is considered too subjective. On the contrary, this school emphasizes strict adherence to established sources and principles.

There are specific rulings regarding the recitation of Bismillah aloud in prayer.

The placement of hands when praying is slightly different from other madhhabs. Emphasis on the implementation of Prostration (prostration of the law that is more practical and less burdensome than strict analogous reasoning when reading certain verses in the Qur'an).

Detailed laws on purification, including the conditions for ablution and compulsory bathing. Strong emphasis on the difference between pure and impure substances. Proper calculation for zakat on wealth, livestock, and agricultural products.

The emphasis is on distributing zakat to eight eligible categories mentioned in the Qur'an. Clear guidelines on marriage contracts, dowries, and divorce conditions. The law on guardianship and the role of witnesses in marriage.

Strict adherence to fairness and transparency in trade and business contracts. Prohibition of ambiguous or deceptive practices (gharar).

The Shafi'i school is widely practiced in various regions such as in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Southern Thailand), the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti), parts of Yemen and South India (Kerala).

The Shafi'i school is often associated with Ash'ari theology, which emphasizes divine omnipotence and reliance on revelation over human reason in matters of faith.

The Shafi'i school is the cornerstone of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence, known for its structured methodology and balanced approach to law. Its focus on source authenticity and systematic reasoning has made it a reliable framework for Muslims in a variety of contexts. Imam al-Shafi'i's legacy continues to inspire scholars and practitioners, ensuring the relevance of his teachings in responding to contemporary challenges.

Conduct a Survey

Understand how Maturidiyah theology is interpreted and applied in a modern context.

Gather insights into its relevance to address contemporary issues such as interfaith dialogue, extremism, and education. Identify challenges and opportunities to preserve and promote the principles of Maturidiyah.

How do scholars use Maturidiyah principles (e.g., rationality and balance) in modern Islamic thought?

How do they address ethical dilemmas such as environment, human rights, or technological ethics?

How is Maturidiyah theology incorporated into the Islamic curriculum in schools and universities?

What sources (texts, methodologies) are used to teach Maturidiyah theology?

How do practitioners and religious leaders use Maturidiyah principles to promote moderation and counteract extremism?

What role does Maturidiyah theology play in fostering social cohesion and interfaith understanding?

The Role of Maturidiyah Theology in Educational and Religious Institutions

Reviewing the inclusion of Maturidiyah theology in Islamic schools and universities, Religious education includes Maturidiyah theology as a counterweight to extremist ideology.

How are the principles of Maturidiyah adapted to answer contemporary issues such as secularism, pluralism, and science?

Observe whether the Friday Sermon discusses ethical responsibility or divine justice rooted in Maturidiyah theology.

Evaluate how Maturidiyah theology is used to counter extremist narratives by promoting balance, moderation, and intellectual engagement.

Studying how religious institutions use the Maturidiyah rational approach to encourage dialogue and cooperation between religions

Proposed Methodology for Research

Conduct Surveys and Interviews

Develop structured and semi-structured questionnaires that focus on Maturidiyah theological relevance in a modern context.

Its role in personal, communal, and community development.

Visiting educational and religious institutions in areas historically influenced by Maturidiyah theology.

Document teaching practices, course content, and sermons to assess how Maturidiyah principles are conveyed to students and the community.

Analyzing contemporary writings on Maturidiyah theology by scholars.

Expected results:

Insights into how Maturidiyah theology has evolved from its historical roots to answer modern challenges.

An understanding of how Maturidiyah principles are applied in various fields such as education, social ethics, and interreligious relations.

Recommendations to defend Maturidiyah theology as a framework for moderation, rationality, and ethical responsibility in the Muslim world.

Framework

Maturidiyah Theology, Sunni Muslims and the Shafi'i School in Indonesia

Indonesia, as the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, mostly follows the Shafi'i school. The Shafi'i school is the most widely followed school in Indonesia. Although the Shafi'i school mainly regulates the practical aspects of Islamic law (fiqh), many Indonesian Muslims are also in line with Ash'ari theology in terms of beliefs (aqidah). However, introducing and applying Maturidiyah theology can provide significant benefits in answering contemporary challenges faced by the Muslim community in Indonesia.

Many Indonesian Muslims, especially the younger generation, face intellectual challenges from modern ideologies such as secularism, materialism, and skepticism. Maturidiyah theology emphasizes the harmony between reason (aql) and revelation (naql), which allows Muslims to overcome doubts and engage in rational discourse while remaining rooted in Islamic teachings. This rational approach is in line with Indonesia's growing need for contextual religious education that bridges tradition and modernity.

The common belief among many Indonesian Muslims is that destiny (qada' wa qadar) is certain, which leads to an attitude of fatalism and a lack of effort to improve one's condition. Maturidiyah theology corrects this by emphasizing human responsibility and free will while affirming God's omnipotence. This teaching is in line with the principles of hard work and initiative, which are very important for Indonesia's socio-economic development.

Indonesia faces internal divisions within its Muslim community due to different interpretations of Islamic teachings.

Maturidiyah theology promotes moderation (wasatiyyah) and inclusivity, providing a unifying framework that accommodates diversity while maintaining adherence to Sunni orthodoxy. This complements the inclusive nature inherent in madhhab Shafi'i, which respects local customs and traditions.

With the rise of radical ideologies, there is a growing need for a theological framework that can counter extremism.

The emphasis of Maturidiyah theology on a rational understanding and balanced interpretation of God's attributes can effectively counter literalist or extremist tendencies.

Maturidiyah theology and the Shafi'i school are part of the tradition of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, so that both have inherent compatibility.

The Shafi'i school focuses on practical laws, Maturidiyah provides a strong theological foundation. Together, they create a holistic framework for faith and practice.

Maturidiyah theology and Ash'ari theology (which is generally followed by adherents of the Shafi'i school) also emphasized divine justice and avoided anthropomorphism. This makes the transition or integration of Maturidiyah teachings smoother.

Implementation In Indonesia

Educational Reform, integrating Maturidiyah theology into the Islamic educational curriculum, including Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and universities.

Train teachers and scholars in the principles of Maturidiyah to ensure accurate and effective disposition.

Using the media, public lectures, and online platforms to promote balanced and rational Maturidiyah theological teachings.

Addressing common misconceptions about theology, such as the relationship between destiny and effort.

Collaborate with Shafi'i scholars and community leaders to highlight the compatibility of Maturidiyah theology with the Shafi'i school.

Encourage dialogue between Maturidiyah and Ash'ariyah scholars to foster unity and collaboration. Forming a mentoring initiative where experienced scholars guide the younger generation in understanding and applying Maturidiyah principles in real-life contexts. Ensuring

that the teachings of Maturidiyah are presented in ways that are in accordance with Indonesian culture and values, so that they are easy to understand and practical.

Benefits For The Indonesian People

The rational approach of Maturidiyah helps Muslims align their faith with modern scientific and intellectual developments.

By providing a common theological framework, Maturidiyah can help bridge the gap between different Muslim groups in Indonesia. Emphasizing human effort and responsibility can inspire individuals to take proactive steps in improving their lives and contributing to the progress of the nation.

Rational theology provides tools to combat literalist and extremist interpretations of Islam, promoting peace and moderation.

CONCLUSION

Maturidiyah's theology, with its rational and balanced approach, offers a valuable framework for addressing contemporary challenges faced by Sunni Muslims in Indonesia. By integrating with the practical laws of the Shafi'i madhhab, it provides Indonesian Muslims with a comprehensive and adaptable system of beliefs and practices. This theology promotes divine justice, human accountability, and moderation, playing a crucial role in strengthening Indonesia's religious, social, and intellectual landscape. Māturīdī's emphasis on reason as a divine instrument and revelation as the ultimate guide fosters a balanced understanding of faith and morality, integrating intellectual inquiry with spiritual devotion. This balance not only fortifies individual faith but also cultivates universal ethical awareness, allowing both believers and non-believers to recognize their moral responsibilities through the combined light of reason and divine guidance. By affirming God's justice and compassion, Maturidiyah presents a loving view of divine sovereignty while emphasizing human accountability, encouraging ethical responsibility and rational reflection. Thus, Māturīdīyah theology stands as a timeless and universal model for understanding Islamic beliefs and their application in diverse contexts, asserting that reason and revelation complement each other, uphold divine justice and mercy, and ensure moral accountability that is accessible to all of humanity, regardless of their exposure to revelation.

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