

## Theology of Al-'Ashr and Muhammadiyah Ethos: History of Thought K.H. Ahmad Dahlan

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### Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan sejarah pemikiran K.H. Ahmad Dahlan tentang etos perjuangan Muhammadiyah dalam eksistensinya sebagai organisasi masyarakat yang bergerak dalam bidang keumatan dan implementasinya pada bidang pendidikan keagamaan, sehingga dapat dijadikan sebagai pedoman bagi penerus perjuangannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif yang bersifat *library research* dengan pendekatan analisis konten, dimana datanya diperoleh berdasarkan literatur yang relevan dengan tema penelitian ini dan kemudian dilakukan analisis untuk memperoleh sebuah kesimpulan. Hasil dari kajian ini bahwa teologi Al-'Ashr dimaknai sebagai konsep modernitas yang menjadi landasan pergerakan perjuangan Muhammadiyah dalam melakukan amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar, misi keadilan sosial dan keumatan menjadi tolak perjuangannya, sehingga Muhammadiyah melakukan pergerakan dalam semua bidang dan memiliki napas pembaharuan sehingga Muhammadiyah mengemban misi untuk membuka cakrawala berfikir yang progresif dan terbuka.

**Kata kunci:** teologi Al-'Ashr, etos muhammadiyah, sejarah pemikiran.

### Abstract

*The aim of this research is to describe the history of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan regarding the ethos of muhammadiyah's struggle in its existence as a community organization operating in the field of ummah and its implementation in the field of religious education, so that it can be used as a guide for the successors of its struggle. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that is library research with a content analysis, approach where the data is obtained based on literature relevant to the theme of this research and then analyzed to obtain a conclusion. The result of this study is that the theology of Al-'Ashr is interpreted as the concept of modernity which becomes the foundation of Muhammadiyah's struggle in doing amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar, the mission of social justice and the community becomes the benchmark of its struggle, so that Muhammadiyah carries out movements in all fields and has a breath of renewal so that Muhammadiyah carries a mission to open progressive and open horizons of thinking.*

**Keywords:** Al-'Ashr theology, muhammadiyah ethos, history of thought.

### INTRODUCTION

The complex problems of social life are frequently the cause of every human being who is not ready for it to act outside of the teachings and guidance of religion (Syukron, 2017). This is certainly inseparable from human needs that continue to rise; changes and developments in science and technology

frequently have a negative impact on those who are not ready to accept it in order to live together (Al-Kansa et. al., 2023). In the framework of this modern period, with the rapid development of science and technology, it is a challenge for Muslim scholars and academics to respond effectively to the development of this era, so that Muslims are not

underestimated and can compete in this modern era (Andika, 2022).

Since its inception, Islam has answered and supplied solutions to a wide range of social, economic, political, cultural, scientific, and other issues (Ahirin, Yusefri & Nuzuar, 2018). A report with their specific fields of expertise and propensity to offer solutions to these diverse challenges, there are several histories of scholars in this regard. This process is continuous, utilising a variety of techniques and strategies to address a range of issues facing humanity.

The statement above indicates that people require self-guidance in order to solve a variety of issues in their lives, and this study clearly demonstrates the significance of Surah Al-'Ashr as a human foundation for tolerant and truthful advice (Ahmad, 2013, p. 23). The argument certainly validates the role and operation of Muhammadiyah, one of the biggest mass organizations in Indonesia. It uses Surah Al-'Ashr as its theological foundation for amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar, regardless of the method employed, to ensure the message can be accepted in the context of society. This statement certainly confirms the role and function of one of the largest mass organisations in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah, which makes Surah Al-'Ashr as its theological basis in carrying out amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar regardless of what approach is used but solely so that

the message conveyed can be accepted in the midst of society.

Counselling and guidance can be a valuable alternative in assisting people with problem-solving. Giving support to those in need so they can explore their potential and make wise decisions about the issues they confront is known as guidance and counselling (Ahmad, 2013). In this instance, Muhammadiyah was present as a solution to the different issues Muslims in Indonesia faced at the close of the 19th and the start of the 20th centuries. This presence is maintained to this day through Muhammadiyah's existence of amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar.

Surah Al-'Ashr includes only three verses, yet it contains at least six essential lessons, including those about time, general human conditions, believers, good acts, messages to the truth, and messages of patience. Surah Al-'Ashr is notable for its theology of al-Maun, which incorporates one of the interpretations of Al-'Ashr theology's praxis, namely righteous actions, allowing Muhammadiyah to move in the social sphere and thrive for almost a century.

Based on various facts about K.H. Ahmad Dahlan with his thoughts contained in the values of Muhammadiyah sparked the author to examine more deeply related to the main points of his thought and its implementation in everyday life, this question certainly aims to find a new perspective as a basis for continuing his

struggle in carrying out amar nahi mungkar where the letter Al-‘Ashr stands as a theological foundation. The concept of Al-‘Ashr theology emerged long before the organisation was formed. The concept of this theology is K.H. Ahmad Dahlan’s thoughts about Surah Al-‘Ashr, which is the 103rd surah consisting of 3 verses and was revealed in Mecca. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan formed a recitation called the wAl-‘Ashri recitation.

## **METHOD**

The object of this research is descriptive analytics, using a library research research (Adlini et. al, 2022). Descriptive analytics are based on materials that have a link to this research, both primary, secondary and general literature. Primary data sources are data related to the subject matter, namely the theology of Surah Al-‘Ashr, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan’s thoughts and the Muhammadiyah ethos of struggle. While secondary data is taking the results of thoughts in interpreting the subject matter (Darmalaksana, 2020). Fundamental data is obtained from primary data sources, but this does not rule out the potential of secondary data being required as confirmation material, which is pertinent to this study.

In the following stage, if the data has been collected, an analysis will be performed on the descriptively-analytically obtained data, with the author analysing relevant content first.

Second, once the data has been acquired, it will be sorted, classified, or grouped with comparable data, which will then be critically and extensively evaluated in order to achieve a true formulation (Mahmudi, 2019). Furthermore, the formulation will be detailed in depth in order to make conclusions based on the literature utilised as a reference.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The History of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan**

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, born on 1 August 1868 in Kauman, Yogyakarta, is a significant person in Indonesian Islamic history (Hadi, 2019). He hailed from a distinguished lineage of intellectuals, with his father, K.H. Abu Bakar, serving as the imam of the Great Mosque of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta, and his mother being the granddaughter of a sultan. Ahmad Dahlan was the 12th descendant of Maulana Malik Ibrahim, also known as Sunan Gresik, so reinforcing his historical significance in the context of Islam in Indonesia. Due to his efforts, religious studies were incorporated into public schools, and religious institutions provided general knowledge, a subject that was previously deemed taboo (Hamsah et.al, 2021). K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was the fourth son of K.H. Abu Bakar, a preacher endowed with extensive knowledge and experience. He returned to his native land. He established Muhammadiyah, an organization dedicated to Islamic religious instruction.

Prior to founding the Muhammadiyah organization, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan served as a religious instructor in his hometown (Ismail, 2014). In addition, he also instructs at public institutions, including the Kweek-School (King's School) in Jetis (Yogyakarta) and the Opleiding School Voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren. Jetis (Yogyakarta) and Opleiding School Voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren (OSVIA, School of Education for Indigenous Servants) in Magelang. He simultaneously engaged in teaching, trading, and preaching.

### **Surat Al-'Ashr**

Al-'Ashr is the 103rd surah of the Qur'an and consists of three verses. This surah begins with a commitment that employs *waw al-qasam* (*wa al-'ashr*). Some view knowledge of *as* part of the noontime (the period between the sun's descent and before dusk), afternoon prayer, or the Prophet's life (Mubarok, 2017). According to ath-Thabari, Ibn Kathir, and others, the first meaning, which is time or time in general, is stronger and more widely understood, hence it is frequently translated as for the sake of time rather than for the sake of time (At-Thabari, 1992). According to Bintu Shati', Allah swears by time since it is important for people to keep time. Indeed, al-Razi in his tafsir *Mafatih al-Ghaib* discusses six conversations regarding the magnificence of time and time (Abdurahman Binti al-

Syāti'. *al-Tafsir al-Bayan li al-Quran al-karim* jilid 2, h. 77).

Although simple terms, the substance of this letter is highly profound and includes the essence of human life (Quthb, 1992). Surah Al-'Ashr was revealed in Makkah (Makiyyah). According to Muslim theology, the Qur'an is also a 'religious message' that must always be referenced in a Muslim's daily practice (Muliati, 2016). This subject is also related to Surah Al-'Ashr and the prior Surah At-Takastur. Allah sends a sharp reminder to individuals who collect money to the point that they disregard the fundamental goal of true life, hence in Surah Al-'Ashr, Allah warns about the importance of time (Shihab, 2002). As a result, time is essential in all human activities and routines.

The term *Ashr*, which meaning time or period. It can also be understood as the time of *asr* processes. In the Arabic dictionary, the word *Ashr* means "to squeeze" (Mardiyah, 2021). The meaning of Al-'Ashr is progress, which is continually moving forward, not the past, old periods, or backwardness. The word *Ashara* implies to develop, modernise, create something new, and progress (Khoirudin, 2015). So the meaning of the word Al-'Ashr is the foundation for Muhammadiyah as a fighting organization to always think globally, modernly and progressively, this is in line with its fighting mission with a

dynamic or progressive approach. (Setiawan, 2019).

The meaning of Al-'Ashr is that Allah swears by the time that is the end of human life, a time when there are numerous types of things full of wonders and lessons that demonstrate Allah's strength and wisdom. And Allah declares that mankind is in loss and deprivation except for those who possess the qualities of believing only in Allah, performing good acts, reminding one another of the truth, and being patient.

Furthermore, Al-'Ashr refers to a very short period that must be used as efficiently as possible in order to avoid loss. Thus, the meaning of Al-'Ashr extends beyond the asr prayer time, which is only a few hours before sunset or nightfall. However, the life span in this world is extremely short, similar to the asr time. So, Al-'Ashr is Allah's warning to humans to pay close attention to the time allotted to them in order to make the best use of it, in accordance with Allah Subhanahu Waa Ta'ala's instructions and regulations. In order to survive in this brief planet, mankind must become lucky and avoid becoming losers (Slameet, 2015). Thus, in general, humans can avoid losses through four categories: strong faith, good acts, urging each other to obey the truth, and advising each other on patience (Rahmawati, 2022). After completing the four categories listed above, a servant of Allah SWT. emerges

who wins good fortune, resulting in enjoyment in this life and the next.

### **K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and Al-'Ashr Theology**

As a key figure and role model within the Muhammadiyah organisation. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan has given birth to different ideas that serve as the foundation for Muhammadiyah's movement and fight. The notion of Al-'Ashr theology was founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, although it is not widely recognised, and few people are aware of his thoughts on it. The concept of Al-'Ashr theology is a refinement of the concept of Al-Ma'un theology, which is already well known in Muhammadiyah communities. Dismissing as a completion, al-Maraghi describes two types of relationships between this letter and the letter at-Takastur.

To begin, human nature tends to lead to ruin, apart from those who are protected by Allah. Surah at-Takastur illustrates how human nature is inclined to boast and gain money. Second, Surah at-Takastur explains the nature of man who follows his lusts and ends up in disaster, whereas Surah Al-'Ashr discusses the nature of man who adorns himself with commendable traits (Shihab, 1992). These two Surahs have a link in that mankind do amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar.

Al-'Ashr theology is a theological idea in Islam that highlights the role of Islam in striving for social justice, people's

well-being, and humanity's overall advancement. Muhammadiyah, a modern Islamic movement formed by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in the early twentieth century, pioneered this concept. According to Al-'Ashr theology, Islam should contribute to the development of a just and successful society in addition to religious ceremonies. The notion highlights the importance of education, health, and economic growth as essential components of Islam's proselytising mission.

In Al-'Ashr theology, Islam is viewed as a religion that is relevant and useful to humanity throughout history. This notion acknowledges the need of Islam adapting to the times in order to remain relevant and make a constructive contribution to humanity, as well as adapting to the times in order to remain relevant and beneficial to mankind. This universal humanity serves as the foundation for Muhammadiyah's role in national identity and statehood. Muhammadiyah seeks to liberate people from limited limitation by broadening their horizons of thought (Setiawan, 2019). This form of thought that transcends time has ensured Muhammadiyah's eternal existence.

Furthermore, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's ideas is notable for several movements, one of which is the tajdid movement, in which he constantly modifies the execution of Islamic teachings that are relevant to the times. In comprehending

and practicing the principles of Islam, Muhammadiyah develops the spirit of tajdid and ijtihad. The term tajdid refers to renewal, invention, restoration, modernization, and so on (Hambali, 2006). This renewal model is used as a da'wah approach in Indonesian society's different backgrounds, as proven by its continued survival despite the assault of changing times and technological innovations.

According to the statement above, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's goals are twofold: first, to ensure that everyone is aware of time, and second, to have a strong faith that guides his life. Third, so that humans can compete on goodness. Fourth, persons should have a sense of duty. Fifth, he founded the Wal-'Ashr school in the hopes that his students would devote their time to learning in order to become intelligent, forward-thinking, and hardworking individuals. This letter has multiple connotations, one of which is modernity. Furthermore, for his trainees to abandon things that are not beneficial.

### **Ethos of Muhammadiyah**

Muhammadiyah was founded as a modern Islamic movement and Muhammadiyah was established in 1912 (Nashir, 2010). K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's friends, including Alimin, recognised him. He described K.H Ahmad Dahlan as honest and pious (Nashir, 2010). In addition, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was a da'wah fighter and reformer who mixed with a variety of different parties. He

pioneered the step of rebirth when he was just 20 or 21 years old, returning from Mecca for the pilgrimage. After returning to Indonesia, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan provided new inspiration for religious knowledge while also establishing the roots of the movement (Setiawan, 2019).

Since its inception, Muhammadiyah's identity has been based on reformist/moderate doctrine. Muhammadiyah arose in response to the turbulence and anxiety that characterised Islamic ideology. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's *ijtihad* through Muhammadiyah resulted in a spectacular breakthrough in 1912. Muhammadiyah launched a charitable movement by creating schools, hospitals, and poor houses (Setiawan, 2019). K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's thoughts and social activity were founded on his belief in the inherent applicability of Qur'anic interpretation, universal human experience, and scientific and technological discoveries. According to KH Ahmad Dahlan, the amount of evidence supporting the interpretation of the Qur'an and scientific and technological breakthroughs is a measure of their value in tackling universal humanitarian problems (Setiawan, 2019). The phenomena of demonstration serve as the foundation for human belief in the teachings of their religion.

The goal of Al-'Ashr theology, which served as the foundation for Muhammadiyah's expansion, has enhanced

the identity of the Islamic movement formed by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan on November 18, 1912. That is, the cosmopolitan Islamic movement (Setiawan, 2019). The 2015 Makassar Congress recommendations clearly demonstrate Muhammadiyah's cosmopolite movement pattern. The only recommendations are for moderate diversity, fostering Sunni-Shiite dialogue, tolerant diversity, and protecting minority communities (Burhani, 2016). The Muktamar ideas demonstrate Muhammadiyah's openness and willingness to engage in discourse with anyone. Muhammadiyah is also willing to contribute to the development of peace in a civilised society (Setiawan, 2019). This stage embodies the genuine *Rahmatan Lil Alamin* Islam, in which each group can collaborate with all groups.

Muhammadiyah's aims to increase national and state engagement are based on universal humanity (Setiawan, 2019). Muhammadiyah was created to give people the freedom to think broadly. Its paradigm of thought, which transcends eras, ensures its eternal existence (Setiawan, 2019). His *ijtihad* through Muhammadiyah resulted in a spectacular breakthrough in 1912. Muhammadiyah created a charitable movement by creating schools, hospitals, and poor houses. Furthermore, social institutions for economic education and health continue to flourish, demonstrating that a

struggle founded on universal humanitarian ideals will be readily accepted by all groups.

Haedar Nashir said Muhammadiyah will survive facing increasingly challenging challenges. This is founded on a reformist, moderate worldview, a progressive perspective of Islam, the potential of human resources, charitable organisations, and owned networks (Nahir, 2011). Muhammadiyah has emerged as a pioneer, empowered by the spirit of progressive Islam. Muhammadiyah must now be creative in developing new solutions to meet the problems of the second century, a battle that will undoubtedly yield no definitive results as long as humanitarian principles in all walks of life are not lost in the spirit of the struggle.

## CONCLUSION

In order for Muhammadiyah to carry out movements in all fields and have a breath of renewal in order to carry out the mission to open progressive thinking horizons, Al-'Ashr theology, which is interpreted as the concept of modernity, becomes the foundation of Muhammadiyah's struggle in doing amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar. This concept is very relevant to the goals of K.H. Ahmad dahlan's struggle, where the mission of social justice and keummatan becomes the benchmark of his struggle.

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