

# Reassessing Classical Kalam: A Critical Analysis of the Relevance of Islamic Theology in the Age of Globalization

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## Article Information

Received : November 24, 2025    Revised : November 26, 2025    Accepted : November 27, 2025

## ABSTRACT

Islamic theology is a field of study concerned with matters of creed. However, throughout its historical development, classical Islamic theology has been characterized by a predominant focus on metaphysical issues and the vertical relationship between humans and God. **The objective of this study** is defined as the identification of epistemological weaknesses and the tendency toward stagnation within classical Islamic theology, which is considered irrelevant to the contemporary context. Therefore, the reexamination of classical Islamic theology is deemed necessary so that it may remain relevant to the issues faced by humanity in the present century. **A qualitative method** with a library research approach is employed in this study. Data analysis is conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and interpretation in order to obtain a comprehensive conceptual understanding. **The findings** indicate that classical Islamic theology is marked by stagnation due to its excessive emphasis on metaphysical matters, resulting in limited capacity to address social challenges in the era of globalization. Globalization is viewed as necessitating a renewal of theology that is more rational, adaptive, and relevant to societal needs. **It is concluded that** a contextual and transformative reconstruction of Islamic theology is required. The concept of ummatan wasathan is presented as offering a foundation for the development of a moderate theology that is responsive to contemporary change. The implications suggest that Islamic theology needs to be directed toward a form of social theology capable of addressing issues such as poverty, injustice, and identity crises.

**Keywords:** Islamic Theology, Globalization, Ummatan Wasathan

## ABSTRAK

*Teologi Islam merupakan bidang kajian yang membahas persoalan akidah. Namun dalam perkembangan sejarahnya, teologi Islam klasik lebih banyak berfokus pada persoalan metafisik dan hubungan vertikal antara manusia dengan Tuhan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kelemahan epistemologis dan cenderung stagnasi dalam teologi Islam klasik yang tidak relevan dengan konteks saat ini. Oleh sebab itu, teologi Islam klasik butuh dikaji kembali agar relevan dengan persoalan manusia abad*

ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode *kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan (library research)*, Analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan interpretasi untuk memperoleh pemahaman konseptual yang komprehensif. **Penelitian ini menemukan** bahwa teologi Islam klasik cenderung stagnan karena terlalu berfokus pada persoalan metafisik sehingga kurang mampu menjawab tantangan sosial di era globalisasi. Globalisasi menuntut pembaruan teologi yang lebih rasional, adaptif, dan relevan dengan kebutuhan masyarakat. **Penelitian ini menyimpulkan** perlunya rekonstruksi teologi Islam yang kontekstual dan transformatif. Konsep ummatan wasathan menawarkan landasan bagi pengembangan teologi moderat yang responsif terhadap perubahan zaman. Implikasinya, teologi Islam perlu diarahkan menjadi teologi sosial yang mampu menangani persoalan kemiskinan, ketidakadilan, dan krisis identitas.

**Kata Kunci:** Teologi Islam, Globalisasi, Ummatan Washatan

## INTRODUCTION

Islamic theology, commonly referred to as *Ilmu Kalam* or *Ilmu Tauhid*, is understood as a discipline concerned with beliefs and doctrines related to God. However, throughout its historical development, classical Islamic theology has been characterized by domination of metaphysical debates regarding the attributes of God and the vertical relationship between humans and the Divine (Kusharyati dkk., 2025). This narrow focus has been perceived as generating theoretical problems, particularly when confronted with contemporary social dynamics that require more adaptive theological responses. Such stagnation has been increasingly observed in the twenty-first century, marked by issues of poverty, injustice, underdevelopment, and humanitarian crises that cannot be adequately addressed by the medieval theological framework. (Sulaeman, 2020).

Following the global developments after the tragedy of September 11, 2001, issues such as national security, the redefinition of state power, and tensions between the Western world and Islam have been recognized as significantly reshaping globalization discourse. Recent studies in theology have been shown to shift toward more dialogical, rational, and social approaches in responding to global currents. It has been emphasized by contemporary thinkers that theology can no longer be positioned as merely a normative metaphysical discourse but must be reformulated as an instrument of social analysis capable of engaging with complex global realities. (Affan, 2021).

Various modern Muslim thinkers, including Jamaluddin al-Afghani, have been credited with promoting theological reconstruction through ideas on *qadha qadar*, rationality, and communal progress (Bistara, 2021). These efforts have been interpreted not only as reactions to the internal decline of Muslim societies but also as responses to Western advancement and global

transformation. Recent literature in social theology and *wasathiyah* has likewise been shown to stress the need for a moderate, adaptive, and socially relevant theological framework. (Latief, 2015).

Although numerous studies on the renewal of Islamic theology and its relevance to modernity have been conducted, most have remained focused on historical analysis or normative critiques of classical theology. Limited research has been devoted to explicitly addressing the gap between the needs of contemporary global society facing social, political, and identity crises and the abstract metaphysical character of classical theology. Furthermore, no systematic mapping has been provided regarding how moderate theology grounded in *ummattan wasathan* may be reconstructed as an applicable form of social theology.

This article is intended to analyze the relevance of Islamic theology within the context of modern globalization and to identify epistemological weaknesses in classical theology that have been viewed as contributing to intellectual stagnation. The main research question is posed as follows: *How can Islamic theology be reconstructed so that it becomes relevant to contemporary global challenges?* The novelty of this study is demonstrated through a comparative approach between classical theological formulations and modern social needs, as well as through the integration of the *wasathiyah* concept as the foundation for a contextual and transformative social theology. Through this contribution, Islamic theology is expected to be advanced toward greater responsiveness to global challenges.

## METHODS

A qualitative approach was employed in this study, using the library research method. This approach was selected because the research was directed toward the examination of texts and literature to understand Islamic theology in the era of globalization and to reassess whether classical Islamic theology can still be considered relevant to contemporary humanitarian problems.

To facilitate this research, several research techniques were employed. A literature study was used for the collection of data through valid sources such as books, journals, and articles, and these sources were utilized to organize the findings and data obtained through the literature review. (Moleong, 2004). Subsequently, a data-analysis technique was applied to arrange the collected data into patterns, categories, and basic units that had been predetermined. Several data-analysis techniques were used in this research; among them, an interpretation technique was employed to understand, explain, and reveal implicit meanings.

## RESULTS

### 1. The Definition of Islamic Theology and Globalization

#### a. Islamic Theology



The term “Islamic Theology” has been formed as a combination of the words “theology” and “Islam.” The root of the term *theology* has been derived from the Greek word *theologia*, which is understood as a combination of *theos* (God) and *logos* (knowledge or discourse). In other words, theology is defined as a field in which discussions about God or Allah are carried out. (Latief, 2020). The term *theology* was first found in Plato’s *Republic*, and it was later modified by Aristotle, by whom its scope was restricted to metaphysical subjects.

According to Hombi, theology has been described as originating from the English term formed through the combination of *theos* and *logos*, referring to a knowledge system in which God and the relationship between the divine world and the physical world are discussed. (Darifah dkk., 2021) The root meaning of theology has also been taken from the Cambridge Dictionary, in which theology is defined as “a set of beliefs about a particular religion.”

As cited from Franz Magnis-Suseno’s book *Menalar Tuhan*, theology has been described as one of the methods by which a person’s faith can be justified, alongside rational methods. In the theological method, revelation is used as the source of faith; therefore, if one’s faith is to be justified theologically, it must be aligned with the revelation of the religion one adheres to. As a consequence, individuals outside that religious belief cannot be included within it, because the revelation of that religion is not accepted by them as a source of faith. (Magnis Suseno, 2015).

Islam, as a religion, has been interpreted as a belief system and as a set of rituals. The definition of Islam has been described in Surah al-Mā’idah verse 3 as *dīn*. According to Ibn Manzhar, the term *dīn* has been given more than six meanings. *First*, according to al-Baghawi, *dīn* is interpreted as the completion of the laws contained within religion. *Second*, according to al-Zamakhshari, *dīn* is understood as the act of defeating enemies in battle and attaining victory. *Third*, al-Baidhawi interprets *dīn* as the triumph of Islam over other religions or as the perfection of creed, law, analogy, and *ijtihād*. *Fourth*, Abu al-Su’ud states that the meaning of *dīn* aligns with al-Baidhawi’s interpretation, while other scholars define *dīn* based on narrations of certain *tābi’īn* and companions. (Ilyas, 2018).

Islamic Theology has been regarded as another term for *Ilm al-Kalām* and *Ilm al-Tawhīd*. The emergence of this discipline has been inseparable from the development of Islam in its early period, such as the expansion of territorial rule and the increase in the number of Muslims. Since then, Islamic Theology has continued to be developed. (Dja’far, 2024).

## b. Globalization

The term *globalization* (globalisation) has been defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “a situation in which available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become similar in all parts of the world,” by which a process is described in which specific goods and services, or social and cultural influences, are gradually made similar across all countries.

Globalization has been understood as a process in which societies are made global and territorial boundaries are no longer recognized. Globalization has been described as having been born from ideas and thoughts that were promoted and then followed by other nations. According to Wignjosoebroto, globalization has been defined as a process in which the scale of human life, initially local, is expanded into a national sphere. (2020).

Anne Krueger has defined globalization from an economic perspective; according to her, globalization is interpreted as a phenomenon in which economic agents in any country are affected by events occurring in other parts of the world. This condition is caused by cross-border economic activities, trade cooperation, and import–export interactions. (Wolf, 2007) In the field of education, globalization has been interpreted as a condition in which education is no longer regarded as a luxury in the global era, but is instead considered a necessity that must be fulfilled by every individual in order to face the future. (Widya Anggraini dkk., 2023).

## 2. The Impact of Globalization on Islamic Thought

The entry of modernity into the Islamic world has been described as having occurred through a process referred to as an invasion. This process has been recognized as first taking place through the well-known historical event of Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt from 1798 to 1801 CE. Since that moment, modernity has been understood not only to bring positive impacts but also to give rise to various problems and challenges for the Muslim community. Moreover, the rapid advancement of the West has often been perceived as exceeding the expectations and readiness of Muslims. These challenges have continued to increase in line with the development of science and technology in the Western world.

Ironically, the West—as the origin of modernity has now begun to question various aspects of its own modern experience, both in terms of its benefits and its negative consequences. Several key ideas are currently being critiqued, including nominalism as found in the thought of Thomas Hobbes, the concept of the sovereignty of the subject from Descartes, historicism, the theory of relativity, secularism, rationalism, Auguste Comte's positivism, as well as Karl Marx's dialectical materialism, and others. This shows that the problems of modernity are not faced only by Muslims but also by Western societies, although the challenges encountered by Muslims tend to be more severe. The severity of modernity's impact on Muslims is caused by several factors, namely:

- a) demographic pressures in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,
- b) authoritarianism within political institutions,
- c) the influence of foreign ideologies such as liberalism, secularism, and communism, which are often incompatible with the needs of the Muslim community.



When the Muslim world finally emerged from the dominance of colonialism and Western ideologies, it was confronted with the reality that Islamic thought did not yet possess a sufficient system, resources, or intellectual strength. Meanwhile, everything associated with modernity continued to develop rapidly in the West. This situation triggered diverse responses within the Muslim world, including acts of violence by some contemporary Islamic movements and a sense of alienation among rural communities from their cultural roots, turning many into manual laborers in urban areas. On the other hand, political power was often monopolized by a single individual, party, or monarch, further aggravating the situation. The accumulation of these problems generated various uncontrolled social upheavals and reactions. (Rusdy, 2018).

Classical Islamic thought often focused on metaphysical discussions without adequately considering the progression of time. As a result, many Islamic intellectual frameworks mostly oriented toward revisiting the past do not necessarily align with contemporary social changes. In reality, what Islamic theology offers is not as simplistic as that impression; rather, it promotes openness and rational thinking, for theology in its essence is rational reflection guided by revelation. In terms of intellectual approaches, classical theologians can be categorized into three main groups:

- a) The rationalist group, pioneered by the Mu'tazilah.
- b) The textualist group, preserved by the Salaf tradition.
- c) The synthesizing group, which combines both approaches, developed by the Ash'ariyyah and Maturidiyyah schools. (Ermagusti, 2021).

The interaction between Islam and modernity has had significant effects on Islamic thought, encompassing all forms of intellectual output produced by Muslims regarding various aspects of life. These include matters of faith, Islamic law, spirituality, physical and worldly necessities, as well as political, economic, and social concerns moving beyond a sole focus on metaphysical discussions.

In the academic sphere, the study of Islamic thought generally encompasses several major disciplines: Ilmu Kalam (Islamic theology), Islamic philosophy, Sufism, and Ushul al-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence). For a set of ideas to be classified as part of Islamic thought, it must remain aligned with and not contradict the fundamental principles of Islam as derived from the Qur'an and the Hadiths.

Among Muslim millennial youth, contemporary expressions of Islam are commonly grouped into three main types: Islam as an ideology, puritanism, and populist piety. (Widya Anggraini dkk., 2023).

Islamic teachings are neither local nor confined to a particular ethnic group or generation, unlike some earlier religious traditions. Islam presents itself as a universal message intended for all of humanity across all times until the end of worldly life. Because of this universal nature, Islamic teachings are not bound to any specific geographical region or historical era. Therefore, from the

Islamic perspective, it is not relevant to discuss Arab, Turkish, Iranian, Pakistani, or Malaysian social systems as separate categories. What exists is one unified social system the Islamic social system even though its implementation may begin in particular countries or communities. This idea is supported by several factors:

- a) Islamic law (Shari'ah) constitutes a set of values, rules, and norms directly revealed by Allah the One who knows human needs best. These rules are formulated in harmony with the fundamental principles of humanity, both individually and socially. Therefore, there can be no contradiction between divine revelation and human nature.
- b) All Islamic teachings aim to preserve and enhance human well-being, encompassing the protection of religion, life, intellect, honor, and property. Islam commands only what is good and forbids what is harmful. It never legitimizes what is immoral nor prohibits what is beneficial. Islam serves as a transformative force that elevates humanity from darkness to light. These forms of darkness may include ignorance of divine law, disobedience to God, and various forms of oppression. Islam liberates individuals from sin to obedience, from ignorance to understanding, and from oppression to freedom, where every human being is valued equally and distinguished only by their piety.
- c) Islam possesses a comprehensive (syumūliyah) nature, meaning it addresses all aspects of human life. Its teachings are not limited to worship but encompass belief, ethics, law, knowledge, social relations, family life, morality, and interpersonal conduct. All of these dimensions are interconnected and inseparable. In this context, the principle of tawhid serves as the foundational basis acknowledging the absolute oneness of Allah both metaphysically and morally. From this principle arises the concept of unity in all things: the universe, truth, knowledge, life, and humanity.
- d) The Islamic value system is expressed through general principles that guide human progress. History records that Muslims were once pioneers in many fields of life, in line with the elevation of human dignity. The advancement of Islamic civilization was built upon the foundations of faith ('aqidah), justice, brotherhood, equality, and other noble values. (Tauhid, 2014).

### 3. Islam and the Digital Era: Challenges and Opportunities

Within the framework of the boundaries of modernity, at least three main pillars are regarded as its foundation: scientific knowledge, through which a rationalistic worldview is produced; the concept of the nation-state, through which nationalism is fostered; and the marginalization of the role of religion, through which secularism is generated.

These three aspects are considered to be the sources of various problems as well as the primary challenges faced by Muslims in confronting the waves of modernity that were intensified

in the nineteenth century and were further complicated with the arrival of the era of information globalization at the end of the twentieth century. Additional challenges such as issues of tolerance, pluralism, and cultural change have also been brought forth. (Rusydy, 2018).

The tension between Islam and the West is frequently discussed today, and the issue has been framed as a significant point of debate. Fundamental differences in their conceptual foundations are perceived as creating gaps that often give rise to various problems. Islam is understood as a religion with a strong theological principle, whereas globalization dominated by secular thought is viewed as disregarding the divine element in its perspective. Islam is regarded as a dynamic force through which the lives of Muslims are directed in various aspects, including dress, culture, communication, politics, and scientific knowledge, and this force is continually shaped over time.

A variety of issues have been generated within the context of the modern era, sharpening the tensions between Islam and the global world that is now dominated by currents of globalization. The question has been raised as to whether any common ground can be found between the two, or at the very least, whether Islam can be positioned in a balanced manner amid the strong currents of globalization flowing from both the West and the East, particularly in economic and political spheres. Concerns about the negative influence of external ideologies and modes of thought have been expressed, leading some Muslims to adopt attitudes of rejection and self-protection in order to preserve their religious values and Islamic identity. By some, these external influences are even perceived as a systematic attack on Islam.

On the other hand, a group of Muslims has been observed to accept all things introduced from the West or the East without much consideration. Progress in developed countries is admired by them, and those who disagree are labeled as outdated or conservative. However, in facing the challenges of globalization, Muslims are not to be trapped in extreme attitudes whether in total rejection or unconditional acceptance. A critical and selective stance is required so that elements compatible with Islamic principles may be filtered from those that are not. Responses to global currents must therefore be undertaken with caution and comprehensive consideration.

It has been emphasized by Mahmud Hamdi Zaqqu that an understanding of Islam must be carried out comprehensively. *First*, Islam is regarded as a firm religion, not merely a school of thought or a slogan. No fear is considered necessary regarding the emergence of new schools of thought, since Islam already possesses strong foundations in both history and its religious law. *Second*, globalization is recognized as an unavoidable reality that influences various sectors of life economic, cultural, and political. *Third*, it must be acknowledged that we are living in a globalized era that offers revolutions in technology, information, and communication; thus, it cannot continually be ignored or entirely avoided. (Ibrahim dkk., 2023).



Various impacts of globalization have been experienced by the Islamic world, both beneficial and challenging. On the one hand, technological advancements such as the internet have been utilized to facilitate access to religious knowledge, broaden intellectual horizons, and simplify the processes of learning and disseminating Islamic teachings. Improvements in transportation have also been used to support mobility in the pursuit of knowledge, making access to Islamic education more efficient and widespread. In addition, mass media has been used to provide religious information quickly and practically.

On the other hand, negative effects of globalization have also been felt. Western cultural influences, often characterized as liberal, have been perceived as eroding Muslim identity and causing a decline in religious understanding and moral values. Many Muslims have been deprived of their potential due to the limited space available for independent thinking amid global pressures. Excessive adoption of foreign values has also been identified as influencing the perspectives and behavior of Muslims. Media such as television, radio, and print saturated with Western cultural content have accelerated the shift of identity away from Islamic values. (Ibrahim dkk., 2023).

In facing economic globalization as a contemporary reality, moral teachings of Islam have been applied to prevent exploitation among human beings. The principle of equality has been emphasized, whereby wealth is not to be circulated among a small privileged group. The primary purpose of Islamic economics has been stated as the achievement of collective welfare. Its foundational principles include belief in the oneness and sovereignty of Allah, which requires complete obedience to His commands. This principle provides a basis for human unity in obedience to God and implies nondiscriminatory economic activity.

Justice is also upheld as a crucial value for establishing social welfare and societal dynamics. The principle of responsibility is emphasized, requiring every economic actor to be accountable for their actions not only to themselves but also to society and the nation. This includes the prohibition of environmental destruction resulting from excessive use of technology. Such principles are provided as responses and solutions to shortcomings within capitalist economic systems.

In cultural matters, Islam is understood as possessing a cosmopolitan cultural framework while still acknowledging local cultural expressions. This cosmopolitanism has been shaped through interaction with local cultures in regions where Islam has developed. This is evident in the diversity of expressions such as Javanese Islam, Madurese Islam, and Iranian Islam all of which retain their cultural uniqueness while remaining within the unity of Islam. Through this process of assimilation, new cultural forms have been created.

In the educational sphere, Islam is recognized as offering an integrated and holistic educational model. Unlike contemporary secular educational systems that tend to be dualistic, Islam rejects the separation between worldly and spiritual aspects. Islamic education aims not only at

worldly success but must also be grounded in divine values. Morality is regarded as essential for forming a balanced human life. Islam does not reject modernism; however, education must remain rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah as the foundation for developing science and technology capable of addressing contemporary challenges without neglecting theological and doctrinal aspects. The ultimate purpose is the formation of human beings who possess complete and enduring piety.

Regarding technology, its proper and purposeful use is emphasized in Islam technology is to be employed not only for convenience but also with humans remaining its primary controllers. Reckless use of technology that causes environmental damage is prohibited. Forms of globalization driven by environmentally destructive technologies are therefore rejected from an Islamic perspective. (Khotimah, 2009).

#### 4. The Concept of *Ummatan Washatan* is Presented as a Solution for Confronting the Currents of Globalization.

Moderate Islam, also known as Islamic moderation, has been derived from the term *washatiyyah al-Islamiyyah*. The word *wasata* has been understood to signify balance, justice, proportionality, or consistency, indicating a stance in the middle without inclining toward either extreme.

According to Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, moderation in Islam is defined as a perspective or attitude in which a middle position is sought between two contradictory or excessive viewpoints. Its purpose is considered to be the prevention of any extreme tendency from dominating one's thinking. A Muslim who is moderate is described as one who is able to assess matters proportionally, assigning each aspect its proper measure without exaggeration. Within this concept, objectivity and appropriateness are implied. (Suharto, 2019).

Al-Asfahaniy states that the term *wasathan* is interpreted as *sawa'un*, meaning the middle position between two extreme boundaries. The term is also associated with justice, referring to a balanced, standard, or moderate stance. In addition, *wasathan* is understood to represent a guarded attitude that prevents both excess (*ifrath*) and negligence (*tafrith*). In the Qur'an, the word *wasath* and its derivatives are mentioned three times: in Surah al-Baqarah (2: 143 and 2: 238), and Surah al-Qalam (68: 48). (Nur & Lubis, 2015).

In the Islamic scholarly tradition, expressions such as "moderate Islam," "Arab Islam," "liberal Islam," "progressive Islam," or "Nusantara Islam" have never been recognized. Islam is regarded as a divine religion revealed by Allah SWT to Prophet Muhammad SAW as a universal message of peace. As a unified religion, Islam is not considered appropriate to be fragmented or reduced by partial labels that may diminish the grandeur and sanctity of its teachings (Nur & Lubis, 2015). Meanwhile, the Qur'an is viewed as a scripture revealed not only for particular individuals

but for all humankind within a social context. For this reason, one of its aims is understood to be the formation of a balanced community, or *ummatan wasathan*. This concept is interpreted as a call to uphold goodness and prevent wrongdoing in society. *Ummatan wasathan* is further understood as an ideal community characterized by harmony, balance, and social cohesion.

The concept of *washatiyyah* in Islam is applied to various essential aspects of life. One such aspect is the balance in worship, where Muslims are taught to perform religious duties proportionally while not neglecting family, work, and social responsibilities. Acts of worship such as prayer and fasting are required to remain aligned with social and economic roles.

Social justice is included as a crucial element. Every individual is encouraged to act fairly in social relations, offering equal treatment regardless of economic, social, or ethnic background. This justice is expected to include the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Tolerance toward differences in belief, culture, and viewpoints is emphasized, and such tolerance is believed to open avenues for interreligious dialogue and strengthen social harmony. Respect for human rights and freedom of religion is also upheld as part of these values.

In education, the value of moderation is placed as a foundation for shaping a healthy understanding of religion. Educational efforts are directed toward the formation of open-minded and critical character, enabling learners to avoid extremist attitudes. Ethics and morality are regarded as the basis for all actions. Muslims are expected to uphold honesty, integrity, and mutual respect in everyday life. The ability to adapt to modern developments is encouraged, as long as such adaptation does not conflict with Islamic principles. This includes the acceptance of scientific and technological advancements that provide social benefit. Active participation in social and economic development is considered a shared responsibility. Such involvement is viewed as a tangible contribution toward building a just, peaceful, and sustainable society (Rahmatia Putri dkk., 2024). In Islamic teaching, believers are urged to perform worship in a balanced manner. This means that extreme attitudes either through excessive literalism or through ignorance of Islamic teachings are to be avoided. Communities are encouraged to deepen their spirituality while maintaining harmony between religious rituals and the application of Islamic values, without falling into ritualism or rejection. Tolerance toward differences is given a central position. In interactions between religious communities or within Islamic groups, respect for differing views and constructive communication is promoted to cultivate peace and mutual understanding.

In social life, Muslims are encouraged to practice justice and maintain balance in their interactions. This sense of justice is meant to be implemented in economic, political, and interpersonal fields to achieve collective well-being. The principle of moderation is intended to be instilled through educational programs that introduce Islamic history, culture, and inclusive

teachings so the younger generation is guided to understand the relevance of moderation in everyday life.

These values of balance can be expressed through social action, such as efforts to reduce poverty, oppose injustice, and promote equality and respect for human rights. Muslims are encouraged to take active roles in improving society. In the face of conflict, peaceful approaches based on dialogue and negotiation are recommended. This method is framed around solutions grounded in justice, mutual respect, and the avoidance of violence and fanaticism.

By applying these balanced values across various aspects of life, Muslims are enabled to play a constructive role in building a peaceful, just, and prosperous society—aligned with Islamic teachings that emphasize moderation and harmony. (Rahmatia Putri dkk., 2024).

## DICUSSIONS

Based on the synthesis in the table, it is shown that all the sources analyzed exhibit a similar tendency to position Islamic theology as a framework that must continuously be adapted to global social dynamics. Although each piece of literature proposes different approaches ranging from the defense of classical doctrines to more progressive theological reconstruction the synthesized results indicate that the core issue is situated within the tension between normative understandings and the contextual needs of modern Muslim communities. It is confirmed that classical theology, despite its strong epistemological foundations, cannot be fully relied upon to address contemporary humanitarian problems without undergoing reinterpretation that considers social, political, and cultural realities. Furthermore, it is revealed through comparison that theological reformulation is generally emphasized on ethical and socio-religious aspects as a new orientation, aligning with modern theories in religious studies in which theology is understood not only as a belief system but also as a praxis of social transformation. Therefore, it is suggested through the synthesis that an integrative model of Islamic theology be developed one in which the rational rigor of classical tradition is combined with the humanistic sensibilities required in the era of globalization so that more substantive answers can be provided to the challenges of modern pluralistic societies.

## CONCLUSIONS

Islamic theology in the context of globalization is understood as an era in which major transformations are experienced across various aspects of human life. Islamic theology, also referred to as *'ilm al-kalam*, was originally focused on metaphysical aspects and the understanding of divinity. However, as time progresses, a transformation in Islamic thought is demanded so that it remains relevant to contemporary realities, including issues of poverty, oppression, and social inequality. Globalization, as a social and cultural phenomenon in which geographical boundaries are blurred,

is viewed as presenting both challenges and opportunities for Muslims. Challenges are posed by the dominance of secular and liberal values that often are seen as conflicting with Islamic principles. On the other hand, opportunities are provided through the expansion of da'wah, access to Islamic education, and cross-cultural collaboration.

Islamic thought is required to shift from a stagnant classical theological approach toward a form of thinking that is made responsive to the demands of changing times. This shift is reflected in the emergence of various Islamic reform movements in which rationality and openness are promoted, such as those advocated by figures like Jamaluddin al-Afghani. In the digital era, information technology is regarded as an essential instrument for extending the reach of da'wah, although its use is expected to remain grounded in Islamic values such as honesty, ethical communication, and social responsibility.

The concept of *ummatan wasathan* (the middle or balanced community) is regarded as a key principle in confronting globalization. Moderation in all aspects of life worship, social interaction, economics, and politics is emphasized by Islam so that global currents can be faced without the loss of religious identity. Islam is not viewed as anti-modernity; instead, a selective and critical stance is required in order for external influences to be filtered in accordance with the values of the sharia.

The findings were connected directly to the research question, which was concerned with the extent to which classical Islamic theology remains relevant in addressing contemporary humanitarian challenges in the era of globalization. It was demonstrated that although classical kalām possesses a strong doctrinal foundation, its framework was not considered adequate for responding to modern socio-ethical issues without undergoing reinterpretation that takes present realities into account.

The main contribution of this study was emphasized through the formulation of a framework in which Islamic theology is positioned as a paradigm that must be redirected toward social orientation by integrating the epistemological heritage of the classical tradition with contemporary social realities. This contribution was made significant by providing a conceptual bridge between traditional metaphysical discourse and the urgent social problems faced by Muslims today. Looking forward, the development of Islamic social theology was projected toward a more interdisciplinary model one in which insights from sociology, ethics, economics, and cultural studies are incorporated so that theological formulations can be transformed into practical frameworks that promote justice, equality, and moderation within an increasingly digitalized and interconnected global world.



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