

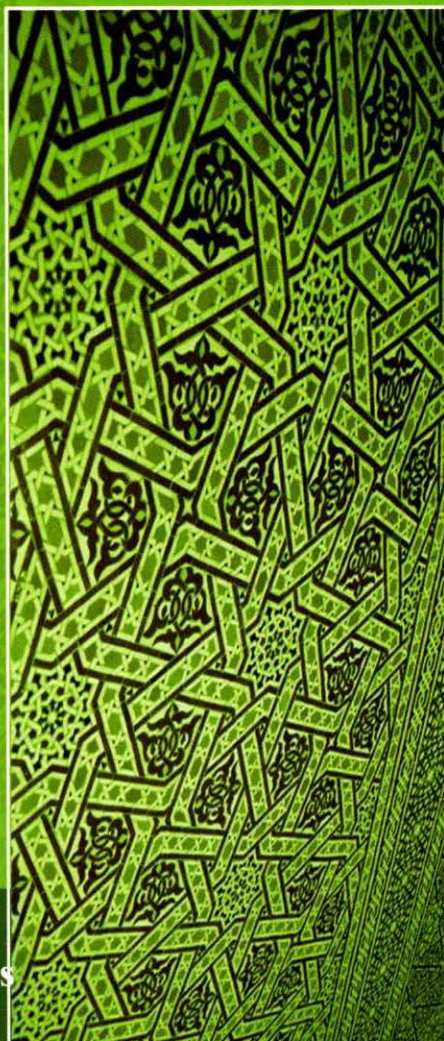
# ISLAMIC RATIONALISM

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF  
HARUN NASUTION'S THOUGHT

Mohd Shuhaimi Ishak



IIUM Press



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# **ISLAMIC RATIONALISM**

**A Critical Evaluation of Harun Nasution's Thought**

**MOHD. SHUHAIMI HAJI ISHAK**



**IIUM Press**



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437915

Published by:  
IIUM Press  
International Islamic University Malaysia

First Edition, 2009  
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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Islamic Rationalism: A Critical Evaluation of Harun Nasution's Thought  
Mohd. Shuhaimi Haji Ishak  
Includes index  
ISBN 978-967-5272-45-5

ISBN: 978-967-5272-45-5

Member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia – MAPIM  
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

Copy no: 11195902  
Initial: AAR  
Date: 26/10/10  
Location: MAIN /PJ /ISTAC /NILAI /K/ K2

22/2/11 mhm

23/2/11 AMR

B  
743  
I 7  
M9526I  
2009

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# ISLAMIC RATIONALISM

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF  
HARUN NASUTION'S THOUGHT

Harun Nasution is an important name in the reformation of religious thought in Indonesia. His idea of reformation in religious thought is by introducing a new theology known as Islamic rationalism modeled along the lines of the classical rational thought of Mu'tazilah. His approach via education had to a certain extent exerted considerable influence on the development of contemporary religious thought particularly at IAIN (Institut Agama Islam Negeri or State Islamic Religious Institute). This book examines the theology of Islamic rationalism, as promoted by Harun Nasution, as the only means to change the attitude of Muslims. Harun Nasution believes that the cause of the backwardness of Muslims is theological in nature and thus can be resolved by the introduction of a new theology called Islamic rationalism. Harun Nasution's rationalism focuses on the relationship of human reason to human action, that is, while God gives the capacity, man has the freewill to determine the shapes and forms of his actions. A new system of values under a new theology in Islam is needed to enable Muslims to understand and interpret their environment and act accordingly. The book also examines the impact of Harun Nasution's Islamic rationalism in religious education at IAIN and the great influence theology had so far exerted in the development of intellectual and religious thoughts at IAIN in Indonesia.

The book concludes that while Harun Nasution's idea of rationalism has strong resemblance to Western liberalism, which presents itself conductively to the changes and demands of the contemporary world, his liberalism had opened the door for ideology of suspicion towards anything that comes from established doctrines, which can be dangerous and harmful as it tantamounts to an absolute skepticism of Islam. Finally, Harun Nasution's influence can be felt by the presence of a large network of liberal thinkers whose opinions and writings have had tremendous impacts on Muslims in Indonesia.



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