

Research Article

## Al-Kindi Thinking: Harmonization of Islam and Philosophy

Jefri Rieski Triyanto

Jember University History Education Study Program  
E-mail: [jefririeski@unej.ac.id](mailto:jefririeski@unej.ac.id)

Copyright © 2025 by Authors, Published by Risalah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Islam. This is an open access article under the CC BY License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).

Received : January 9, 2025

Revised : January 26, 2025

Accepted : February 15, 2025

Available online : February 27, 2025

**How to Cite:** Rieski Triyanto, Jefri. n.d. "Al-Kindi Thinking: Harmonization of Islam and Philosophy". *Risalah, Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*. Accessed March 18, 2025. [https://jurnal.faiunwir.ac.id/index.php/Jurnal\\_Risalah/article/view/828](https://jurnal.faiunwir.ac.id/index.php/Jurnal_Risalah/article/view/828).

**Abstract:** The purposes of this study are as follows: (1) to analyze and describe Al-Kindi's philosophers about philosophy; (2) to analyze and to describe the philosopher of one of the Islamic figures named Al-Kindi in an attempt to harmonize his thinking between philosophies and Islamic religions. The research method used in this research uses historical research with an approach to the study of literature. The result of this study is the study of philosophy and religion carried out by Al-Kindi realized with the existence of reconciliation to prove that between philosophers and religions equally constitutes a science of truth and there is no difference between the two. Therefore, the role of the Al-Kindi figure is very important as the first philosopher who came from the Muslim community.

**Keywords:** Thought; Al-Kindi; Islam; Philosophy.

**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut: (1) menganalisis dan mendeskripsikan pemikir Al-Kindi tentang filsafat; (2) menganalisis dan mendeskripsikan pemikir dari salah satu sosok tokoh Islam bernama Al-Kindi dalam upaya pemikirannya menselaraskan antara filsafat dengan agama Islam. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian sejarah dengan pendekatan studi literatur. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah pengkajian filsafat dan agama yang dilakukan oleh Al-Kindi diwujudkan dengan adanya rekonsiliasi untuk membuktikan bahwa antara filsafat dan agama sama-sama merupakan sebuah ilmu kebenaran dan tidak ada perbedaan diantara keduanya. Upaya rekonsiliasi yang dilakukan oleh Al-Kindi akan berpengaruh terhadap masuknya gerbang filsafat kedalam dunia Islam dan juga berpengaruh menambah khazanah intelektual dengan melahirkan filsafat islam. Oleh karena itu, peranan dari sosok Al-Kindi sangatlah penting sebagai tokoh filsuf pertama yang berasal dari kalangan muslim.

**Kata Kunci:** Pemikiran, Al Kindi, Islam, Filsafat

## **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of concepts of thought and ideas among Muslim figures since the second half of the 7th century has been closely linked to the development of the thought of the Greek-Roman people, the Arabs surrounded by nations of high culture, such as Greeks, Romans, Indians, Persians, and other nations. When the Arabs were ruled by the Romans, it was the Hellenistic culture that influenced the minds of Islamic figures (Berkey, 1992; Idris, 2012). Hellenistic thought began to come into contact with the Arabs since the Umayyad dynasty, when there was frequent debate with non-Muslims about theology. Islam recognizes that in Hellenistic culture it is very close to rationality and literature (Lapidus, 2002).

The thinking of Europeans here is then considered attractive to Muslims to study. Muslim figures study a lot of the works of European figures in the form of literature written by non-Muslims. From the literary works and the writings made by non-Muslims, then the Muslim figures also get a lot of information and amazing facts about the life of non-Muslims. Since the ninth century, many Muslim figures have decided to carry out translations of books or literary works produced by thinkers in Europe with the aim of making them accessible and accessible to the general public for easy study (Adamson, 2002; Corbin, 1962). With the translation activities carried out by the Muslims, then subsequently some Muslim figures have been able to capture and recognize various concepts of thought delivered by the Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle. Furthermore, Muslim figures began to undertake more in-depth research and examination of the thoughts of the philosophers in Europe in order to develop the thinking of the Philosophers who, in subsequent development, were then enriched by the use of Islamic approaches so that they could then emerge a new concept of discipline known as Islamic philosophy (Fakhry, 1983). But it is not true that Islamic philosophy was born entirely because of the translation of the books of Greek philosophers, because learning does not mean imitating. A phenomenon can be studied by everyone, but the theory or philosophy of each individual will differ from one to the other (Leaman, 2004). God created man with his mind, and his mind with his soul, and he made his mind different from his mind (Mirdad & Rahmat, 2021).

One of the most famous and widely used legacy ideas of thought among Europeans at that time was philosophy. Philosophy is a form of rational, abstract, and methodical consideration of reality as a whole or a fundamental dimension of human existence and experience. Philosophical investigation is a central element in the intellectual history of a civilization. Simply put, philosophy can be defined as a form of critical and comprehensive thinking involving an intellectual process that includes analysis and synthesis (Hardaker & Sabki, 2018; Muhammad & Al-Attas, 2005).

In the beginning, the position of philosophy among the Muslims was considered to be something that crosses the understanding of Islam, until then appeared the figure of the philosopher among Muslims called Al-Kindi. It is not uncommon for many Orthodox scholars to refuse to acknowledge the truth of the theories presented in the doctrine of philosophy and then ended with the emergence of disputes among scholars when philosophers are associated with

the teachings in the religion, especially Islam (Astuti et al., 2022).

This article specifically in it will discuss the relationship between philosophy and religion using the thinking perspective of one of the leading Muslim philosophers, Al-Kindi. In addition, this study will show about the position of philosophies in Islam before and after the reconciliation between religion and philosophie carried out by Al-Kindi. If it is examined from the perspective presented by Al-Kindi, there is no difference between philosophy and religion. However, among the scholars at the time, it is just that philosophers and religion are two contradictory things that need to be analysed and examined more thoroughly from the perspectives of Al-Kindi's thinking about philosophies and religions. This article will produce new insights into intellectual history, especially the insight into the thought of Al-Kindi in an attempt to reconcile philosophy and religion. In addition, in the approach of the persecution also requires an empirical study related to the study of the relationship of philosophers with religion in the intellectual sphere, so that later readers will obtain insights and complete information related to influence of the idea of the mind of Al-Kindi on the development of the position of Philosophy in religion, especially in the evolution of Islamic religion.

### RESEARCH METHODS

In this article, researchers use the type of historical research with an approach to the study of literature. Historical research itself can be defined as research involving the systematic search for data to respond to events that have occurred in the past. The purpose of historical research is in order to make a reconstruction of the past systematically and objectively (Carr, 2014). The method used by the researchers is the method of historical research, on the grounds that the research carried out is a historical study. Within certain limits the historical method is scientific, i.e. the results must be verifiable and can be approved or rejected by experts (Kuntowijoyo, 2013).

In history itself, there are four stages concerning the historical methods to be used in this research, among others: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The first stage to be undertaken in historical research is the heuristic stage. The heuristic stage is the stage for searching and collecting historical sources. There are relevant and relevant reference books for research topics. In this case, the researcher will gather facts, data and research traces from literature related to the problem and object of the research being carried out. The written sources or documents that will be used by the researchers here are from primary books, national journals and international journal.

The second stage to go through is the verification stage, which is a critical filtration of the sources that have been obtained, especially of the primary sources, in order to catch up with the facts of their choice. This is what is called a critical of the source, both of the material (external) source and of the substance (full) source. In this phase, the data obtained as a written source is filtered and selected to evaluate and investigate the relevance, correlation and objectivity of the source.

The third phase is the phase of interpretation. In this phase an interpretation is done of the data that has been obtained and sorted so that it

becomes a sequence of events that can be accepted by common sense. There are two interpretations: analysis and synthesis (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). Analysis means delineating a history story one by one to find out the unrevealed facts and can broaden the perspective in historical facts. Synthetic interpretation is to draw a fact from the whole story and conclude a fact out of the historical story.

The fourth stage is the historiographic stage. After collecting material, doing criticism and interpretation, then the last thing to do is to do the process of preparation and disposal of the entire research results into written form. The purpose of historiography at its highest level is to recreate the totality of historical facts in a way that does not violate the true past (Gottschalk, 1969). As far as historiography is concerned, the researchers here will carry out the preparation of a historical writing derived from sources that have been obtained and have gone through some previous stages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Biography of Al-Kindi

Abu Yusuf Ya'qub Ibn Ishaq as-Sabbah Al-Kindi was one of the first philosophers among the Muslims who raised his thoughts on Islam. According to Al Khalili, he was born in Kufah, Iraq in 188 H. (804 M). However, then other sources also say that Al-Kindi was born in 185 H (801 A.D.) (Adamson, 2007; Gaudah, 2007). Al-Kindi was born into a very noble family and can be said to have a fairly important position in the Arab tribe Kinda. His own father was a government official in the time of the Caliph of Aaron Ar-Rasyid. Then Al-Kindi had to lose his father when he was a kid because of his father's death (Madani, 2015). Since childhood, Al-Kindi has spent a lot of time in Kufah. Although since the children of Al-Kindi had to lose their father and become an Orphan, yet Al-Kindi continued to be enthusiastic in the pursuit of science and to continue to study the various kinds of science that are found at Kufah, Basrah, and also in Baghdad. As for the things that Al-Kindi has studied, it starts with the science of religion, and then it continues with the learning of other sciences, such as philosophy, logic, mathematics, music, astronomy, physics, chemistry, geography, medicine, even to the science that studies engineering (Druart, 1993; Gaudah, 2007).

In addition to being known for his abilities in philosophy and medicine, Al-Kindi is also well-known for his ability to master a foreign language, especially the two languages, namely the Greek language and the Suryani language. With the ability to master the language, it then provides facilities for Al-Kindi to be able to master various kinds of science and put himself into an influential figure for the Caliph Al-Ma'mun who then decided to raise Al-Kindi as a translator of books, especially foreign books that are obviously considered important (Aryati, 2015; Habibah, 2020).

### Philosophy in the Perspective of Al-Kindi

The early contributions of Al-Kindi in the field of philosophy and theology first appeared precisely around the 9th century as in that century the movement of translation gained a fairly high social and political support among the public. In this

context, Al-Kindi's personality dared to be optimistic in taking the prospect of bringing ideas from Greek and then transformed into an intellectual discourse in Arabic. Al-Kindi believed that the introduction of ideas from the Greek philosophers here would not replace or change the teachings of Muslim religion in Arab (Adamson, 2007). The optimistic attitude of Al-Kindi to introduce and bring in ideas that originate from the thinking of the Greek characters themselves also turned out to gain much rejection from the Muslim community because the concept of thinking of Greek ideas is a foreign thing in the teachings of Islam (Staley, 1989).

The most important achievement of an al-Kindi in the field of philosophy was the establishment of the philosophical terminology (a term specific to the concept) and philosophies which had been translated into Arabic, leading to conceptual transformation. Al-Kindi himself also intends to make a coalition between the Islamic Faith and Hellenistic thought (philosophy and science). In the hellenistic concepts philosophy and science can be understood as a knowledge that will be used to justify the teaching of rational scientific activity within Islamic religion. Al-Kindi's thinking about the concept of philosophy is much conceived on metaphysics and the science of truth. Philosophy is the highest science of his position for Al-Kindi. Thus is the knowledge of the truth (Yusron et al., 2023). Al-Kindi thinks that philosophy is the science of the facts studied according to the level of its abilities, which includes knowledge of gods (rububiyah), knowledge of idolatry (wahdaniyyah), science of preference (wishilah), all the knowledge that is useful and how to obtain it, as well as how to avoid harmful things (Aravik & Amri, 2019). So, according to Al-Kindi, the philosophy of Divinity occupies the highest position, because all truth comes from the Lord.

Al-Kindi's philosophical views emerged and gained much influence from the works written by the Greek philosopher. In his writings, Al-Kindi believes that revelation is a higher source of knowledge than reason. This is because revelation will be able to guarantee things that are mainly related to the belief that is in a person. Al-Kindi himself even managed to incorporate Aristotelian and neo-Platonist thought into the Islamic philosophical framework, and became an important factor in the introduction and popularization of Greek philosophy among the intellectual world of the Muslim community (Fitzmaurice, 1971; Musa et al., 2018).

Al-Kindi himself also decided to commit to formulating agreement between philosophical ideas with certain articles already regulated and loaded in the teachings of Islam, by outlining a Tauhid mode of philosophy. In this case, Al-Kindi placed Allah as Al-Wahid Al-Haqq Al-Awwal (Yang Utama). As Al-Kindi has explained about the understanding of philosophy, then it can be known that Al-Kindi considers philosophical as a product produced by human reason and has its own limitations. For Al-Kindi Philosophy may have discussed a lot about the concept of the highest truth in its entirety, but on the other side religion here according to Al-Kindi has indeed reached the higher truth. This is due to the fact that the knowledge acquired by the Prophets is entirely pure from the direct inspiration and will of God. Meanwhile, the knowledge acquired among the philosophers is the result of what is created by his own deliberate thinking, using

the help of logic and arguments that can strengthen the ideas of the thought of a philosopher.

The truth is the truth, and the truth is not the truth. In other words, Al-Kindi believes that there is a guidance between philosophy and religion that occurs because of some reasons, namely: 1) the science of religion is also part of the philosophers, 2) the truth contained in philosophies has a consistency with the revelations sent down and accepted by the prophets, 3) in religion there are commandments that command men to demand science logically (Aravik & Amri, 2019; Syarif, 1994).

Based on Al-Kindi's views regarding philosophy, it can be seen that in fact the function of philosophy according to Al-Kindi is as a knowledge that can be used to challenge the truth, especially in relation to the truth of Revelation or in other words, philosophy can also be used to claim superiority and similarities in Revelation. Based on this function, philosophy here cannot claim to be the highest path used to obtain the truth. Apart from that, philosophy must also humble itself as a supporter of Revelation, because according to Al-Kindi philosophy is only limited to knowledge in which it expresses everything whose limits are only as far as the range of knowledge possessed by humans. So, as stated by Al-Kindi, philosophy has limitations and philosophy itself cannot overcome problems that are beyond the reach of human thought, such as problems related to the miracles of the Prophets, problems regarding heaven, hell, or even human life in the afterlife (Qadir, 1991).

### Reconciliation of Philosophy and Religion

As is known before that the discussion about the relationship between religion and philosophy was very much discussed in the era of Al-Kindi. Even many of the Orthodox scholars refused to acknowledge the truth of philosophical theories so that later this arose conflict especially if associated with the existence of religious teachings. In response, in this case, Al-Kindi became the first Muslim philosopher to seek harmony between philosophy and religion or between reason and revelation.

In an attempt to introduce and introduce philosophy to the Muslim community, Al-Kindi conducted many studies of what is called philosophical by using approaches and perspectives derived from religion. There is no contradiction between philosophy and religion, because each is the knowledge of the truth, while the truth is one. Philosophy includes divinity, the unity of God, and the glory of God and other sciences that teach how to obtain what is considered to be beneficial and away from what is thought to be harmful (Mursidin, 2020). Al-Kindi has made several attempts to reconcile philosophy with religion through a number of basic stages, including: (1) Al-Kindi collects the stories or historical records of the past that show the relationship between the Arabs and the Greeks, showing that they are actually brothers, so that there is no need to be hostile to each other; (2) Al-Kindi expresses the view that truth can come from any direction and from anyone, even if it comes from the philosophers; (3) Al-Kindi argues that Philosophy is a necessity that can be used as a means of facilitating the process of thinking of an individual, and not as something that is considered strange or too luxurious in nature; (4) Al-

Kindi also states that indeed the methods that exist in religion with the method that exists in philosophies, but fundamentally different from either religion or religion, have a common goal of achieving both practical and theoretical purposes. (Soleh, 2016).

The reason why the spirit of an al-Kindi in an attempt to reconcile religion and philosophy is based on the belief that it is true that between philosophers and religions there is a standard that can be said to be almost equal in some aspects and that there is no difference. Al-Kindi introduced and introduced philosophical theories into Islam because philosophy is a science that contains the elements of truth, and faith is the reality of a truth.

Al-Kindi himself built his philosophical thinking by referring to classical Greek sources and based it on the Neo-Platonic heritage. Al-Kindi argues that in order to be a perfect philosopher, it is necessary to have the knowledge of Rububiyah or the teachings of Tauhid which in it contains Allah S.W.T. Because in this case there is knowledge of the cause. This is then the mark of an Al-Kindi's emphasis on philosophy.

### CONCLUSION

There is a view of philosophy presented by Al-Kindi in fact has made a considerable contribution in connection with the opening of the door of Philosophy to the Muslims, not except for the Muslim figures after Al- Kindi. As the Qur'an has explained before, the truth is in it, and the truth in it is more convincing. He is the highest among the philosophers. He is also very firm in the Quran and in the power of reason, especially when he is presenting his ideas concerning the concept of Divinity besides the influence of the Greek philosophies. Though the two are equal in the truth, it is clear that they are not contradictory. This is what then reinforces the belief of an All-Kindi to make an effort to reconcile philosophy with religion.

The soul of Al-Kindi's philosophy itself was influenced by the ideas of thought presented by Platinum, especially those relating to the concept of spirit, and also by the thought of an Aristotle in conveying his theory of reason. It is not the soul that is composed, but it is the soul which has a substantial meaning, even a noble meaning, because the substance of the individual soul is from his Lord. The soul itself in this way is also something unconnected and even different from the body.

Al-Kindi's unconscious ideas have given a significant influence on the history of civilisation and thought among Muslims, especially those in the Arab region. Besides, the figure of Al-Kindi in this regard can also be said to have succeeded in establishing a philosophy of the soul which was later followed by the philosophers.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adamson, P. (2002). Before Essence And Existence: Al-Kindi's Conception Of Being. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 40(3), 297-312. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2002.0043>

- Adamson, P. (2007). *Great Medieval Thinkers Al-Kindi*. New York:Oxford University Press.
- Aravik, H., & Amri, H. (2019). Menguak Hal-Hal Penting Dalam Pemikiran Filsafat Al-Kindi. *SALAM: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-i*, 6(2), 191–206. <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v6i2.11228>
- Aryati, A. (2015). Filsafat Di Dunia Timur: Pemikiran Al-Kindi Dan Al-Farabi. *El-Afkar*, 4(1).
- Astuti, Gempita, B. C., & Yafie, I. A. (2022). Sejarah Perkembangan Filsafat Islam (Mulai Penerjemahan Filsafat Yunani Sampai Kemunduran). *Raudhah Proud To Be Professionals: Jurnal Tarbiyah Islamiyah*, 7(2), 268–276. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.48094/raudhah.v7i2.226>
- Berkey, J. P. (1992). Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period, 700 A.D. to 1300 A.D. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 63(3), 346–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1992.11778369>
- Carr, E. H. (2014). *Apa Itu Sejarah*. Depok:Komunitas Bambu.
- Corbin, H. (1962). *History of Islamic Philosophy*. London:Islamic Publication.
- Druart, T. A. (1993). Al-Kindi Ethics. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 47(2), 329–357. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20129494>
- Fakhry, M. (1983). *A History Of Islamic Philosophy (Second Edition)*. New York:Columbia University Press.
- Fitzmaurice, R. G. (1971). *Al-Kindi On Psychology*. Montreal:Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University.
- Gaudah, M. G. (2007). *147 Ilmuwan Terkemuka Dalam Sejarah Islam*. Jakarta: Al-Kautsar.
- Gottschalk, L. (1969). *Understanding History : A Primer Of Historical Method (second edition)*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff.
- Habibah, S. (2020). Filsafat Ketuhanan Al-Kindi. *Dar El-Ilmi : Jurnal Studi Keagamaan, Pendidikan Dan Humaniora*, 7(1), 19–34. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52166/dar%20el-ilm.v7i1.2025>
- Hardaker, G., & Sabki, A. A. (2018). Philosophy of Islam and Knowledge. *Pedagogy in Islamic Education*, 35–54. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78754-531-120181004>
- Idris, M. (2012). Hegemoni Filsafat Yunani Dalam Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v12i2.28>
- Kuntowijoyo. (2013). *Metodologi Sejarah*. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana.
- Lapidus, I. M. (2002). *A History Of Islamic Societies (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leaman, O. (2004). *An introduction To Classical Islamic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Madani, A. (2015). Pemikiran Filsafat Al-Kindi. *Lentera*, 17(2), 106–117. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21093/lj.v17i2.433>
- Mirdad, J., & Rahmat, S. (2021). Sejarah Dalam Perspektif Islam. *El-Hekam:Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 6(1), 9–19. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.31958/jeh.v6i1.3303>
- Muhammad, S., & Al-Attas, N. (2005). *Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction*. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, 1, 11–43.



- Mursidin, I. I. (2020). Philosophical Thought of Al-Kindi and Al-farabi. *Jurnal Al-Dustur*, 3(1), 51–66.
- Musa, A., Labbo, I., Shehu, B., & Bello, L. (2018). An Overview on Alkindi's Translations at House of Wisdom: An Islamic Philosophical Reflection. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research*, 6(4), 33–37. [www.seahipaj.org](http://www.seahipaj.org)
- Qadir, C. A. (1991). *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*. London: Raoultedge.
- Soleh, K. (2016). *Filsafat Islam dari Klasik hingga Kontemporer*. Yogyakarta: AR-RUZZ MEDIA.
- Staley, K. (1989). Al-Kindi on Creation: Aristotle's Challenge to Islam. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50(3), 355–370. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/2709566>
- Syarif, M. (1994). *History of Muslim Philosophy*, Terj. Ilyas Hasan, Para Filosof Muslim. Bandung: Mizan.
- Yusron, M., El-Yunusi, M., & Rozyan, B. A. (2023). Relasi Pola Pikir Aristoteles dan Al-Kindi dalam Memahami Hakikat Tuhan. *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v6i1.48958>