



ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND ITS CHALLENGE

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Abstract:

The contribution of Islamic thought to world civilization has been openly, objectively and sympathetically acknowledged by Western scholars. However, the glory of Islamic civilization has now passed, leaving only the nostalgia of historical beauty. Little by little, Muslims began to experience decline and weakness in various fields. In order to maintain their Islamic identity, there is a tendency for Muslims to be defensive and exclusive. This happens, for example, in some Islamic boarding schools and madrassas that tend to only emphasise the study of Islamic Knowledge the loss of the sacred aspect of the concept of general knowledge and the defensive attitude toward Muslim Knowledge causes stagnation. This is dangerous for the development of Islamic Knowledge. Therefore, an idea emerged to bring together the advantages of the two, so that a new modern Knowledge was born but still religious and relevant to the concept of tawhid, this idea is known as the Islamization of Knowledge. The method used in this research is library research, and the primary data source in this research is documented data from Muslim scholars on Islamization. While secondary data in this research is in the form of journals, books, and websites related to the research topic. The data analysis technique is done by reducing, presenting, and drawing conclusions. The findings of this research will be presented in the form of an overview of how far the relevance of Islamization of Knowledge its challenges, as well as some actions that can be taken to answer the challenges in the current era.

Keywords: *Islamization of Knowledge, Muslim Scholars, Modern Era*

INTRODUCTION

Today, human civilisation is at its peak in material terms. However, the progress of this civilisation is mostly controlled by the West, resulting in the colonisation of Western civilisation over the Islamic world. Islamic civilisation, which once dominated the world, is now sinking under the hegemony of the West. Western progress is due to the mastery of Knowledge and technology. On the other hand, the Islamic world is plunged into the valley of decline and backwardness, after having dominated world civilisation for several centuries before. Sheikh Muhammad Abduh stated that the cause of the decline was caused by his people. "Al Islaamu makhjuubun bil muslimiin". Islam is closed by the Muslims themselves.

Muslims are left behind because of divisions, power struggles and abandoning the teachings of their religion, which has implications for backwardness in Knowledge and technology. On the other hand, there is an awareness among Muslims and humanity in general, that Knowledge, Knowledge and technology today have negative implications, the emergence of a global crisis. Knowledge and technology on the one hand only provide false happiness, and on the other hand contribute to the emergence of ecological crises, humanitarian crises and uncomfortable world conditions. For this reason, there is an awareness to reconstruct Knowledge through the big project of Islamisation of Knowledge. The author is interested in further examining the Islamisation of Knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with social problems. The techniques used were interviews, observations by sorting out the problems that occurred

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Importance of the Islamisation Of Knowledge

Islam is a perfect religion that governs all areas of life. It touches all aspects of life. It is country and homeland, government and people, morals and strength, compassion and justice, civilisation and legislation, knowledge and justice, material and natural resources, income and wealth, jihad and da'wah, army and thought, as it is the straight aqeedah and true worship. Islam is also a high religion and there is nothing higher than it. *Al Islamu ya'lu wa la yu'la alaihi*. Muslims are referred to as *khoiru umat*, as expressed in the Qur'an Surah Ali Imron verse 110. The phrase *khoiru umat* is not just a slogan of pride but has been proven by Muslims by controlling most of the territory in the world and building a civilisation that is unmatched in the world (Hasjmi, 1975). While Europeans were still immersed in the darkness of civilisation, the Islamic world had become the centre of civilisation, illuminating the whole world with its glorious light.

The contribution of Islamic thought to world civilisation has been openly, objectively and sympathetically acknowledged by Western scholars. (Mulyadi, 2011). However, the glory of Muslim civilisation has now passed, leaving only the nostalgia for the beauty of history. Little by little, Muslims began to experience decline and weakness in various fields. Starting with the divisions among Muslims and the struggle for power among the kingdoms that resulted in the decline of the caliph's power and the weakening of the position of Muslims until finally there was a tragedy that became a black record in history, the fall of Baghdad into the hands of Hulagu Khan which was followed by the destruction of centres of scientific activity and the massacre of teachers and scientists. The fall of Andalusia was followed by the eradication of Islamic culture and identity (Kuthub, 2011).

This resulted in Muslims losing harmony and uncertainty. This bitterness was compounded by the defeat of Muslims in the Third Crusade and the consequent destruction and loss of the spirit of civilisation. More tragically, the Ottoman Turkish caliphate fell in 1924. Muslims also suffered serious setbacks in political, economic, social, educational and cultural life followed by defeat in intellectual, moral, cultural and ideological life.

Since the enlightenment in Europe, the development of rational knowledge in all fields of study is very rapid and almost entirely pioneered by Western scientists and scholars. As a result, the Knowledge that develops is formed from the reference to Western philosophical thinking influenced by secularism, materialism and humanism so that the concept, interpretation and meaning of Knowledge itself cannot be avoided from the influence of secularism, materialism and humanism by eliminating all possibilities of transcendental values. Such concepts of thought are consumed by Muslims, who because of their position as defeated people, tend to be dazzled and dependent on the West. Muslims, suffer from what Abulhassan Banisadr calls *Westomania*, a mental illness that considers the West to be everything (Amien & Rais, 1990).

Muslims study Western Knowledge without realising the connection between Western historical ties and Western knowledge, so Muslims fall into Western hegemony (cultural imperialism) and this process results in the essence of Islamic civilisation increasingly helpless in the midst of the progress of secular Western civilisation. The hegemony of Western civilisation which is dominated by a scientific worldview, according to Adnin Armas, has a very negative impact on other civilisations, including Islam. At the epistemological level, there is a process of westernisation which

Syed Naquib al-Attas said is a "virus" contained in modern secular Western Knowledge, and this is the biggest challenge for Muslims today (Daudn 1998).

Currently, there is an awareness that the paradigm of Knowledge that has been influenced by secularism, materialism and humanism has made modern knowledge dry and lost transcendental values (separated from the values of tawhid and theology). As a result, there is alienation and separation in human life. Humans understand nature as a convex reality by relying on reason alone without allowing transcendent possibilities to influence a person (Syaeifuddin, 1987).

Modern man suffers from alienation and anomaly. There is imbalance, disharmony and disorder. As a result, the world is currently faced with a multidimensional crisis, which is a crisis that reaches worldwide, has various aspects, and has a very high problem weight. Haidar Bagir and Zainal Abidin in the introduction to the book *Philosophy of Knowledge according to AlQur'an* call the crisis a global crisis of mankind. These crises include ecological crisis, economic crisis, political crisis, moral crisis and personality crisis. The human soul is now experiencing spiritual schizophrenia, which has no way out except by reviving transcendental values. On the other hand, there is a tendency for Islamic Knowledge that is in contact with theological values and fiqh, too oriented towards religiosity and spirituality without regard to the importance of general Knowledge which is considered secular. There is a tendency for dichotomous thinking among Muslims. General Knowledge (modern Western Knowledge) is often considered inferior in scientific status.

In order to maintain their Islamic identity, there is a tendency for Muslims to be defensive and exclusive. This happens, for example, in some Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs that tend to emphasise only Islamic studies. On the other hand, general education institutions tend to ignore Islamic studies. The loss of the sacred aspect of the concept of general Knowledge and the defensive attitude of Muslim scholars have led to stagnation. This is dangerous for the development of Islamic Knowledge. Therefore, an idea emerged to bring together the advantages between the two, so that a new modern Knowledge was born but still religious and tawhid, this idea became known as the "Islamisation of Knowledge".

Around the 8th century AD, during the reign of the Abbasid dynasty, the process of Islamisation of Knowledge continued in a big way, with the translation of Persian and Greek works which were then given a reinterpretation adapted to the concept of Islam (Attas, 2006).

In addition, scientists critically analyse and even reconstruct the thoughts of Greek philosophers. One of the major works on the Islamisation of Knowledge is Imam al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah*. In this book, Imam al-Ghazali has countered the Greek philosophers in the field of metaphysics. He did not attack and discard philosophy as a system of thought, but only straightened out the traditions of most philosophers who according to him could confuse the *aqidah* of Muslims. Thus, although they do not use the label Islamisation, the activities they have carried out are in line with the meaning of Islamisation.

In addition, in the 30s, Muhammad Iqbal emphasised the need to Islamise Knowledge. In his book, *The Reconstruction of Religion Thought in Islam*, he realised that the Knowledge developed by the West had been atheistic so that it could shake the *aqidah* of the ummah, so he suggested that Muslims should "convert modern Knowledge", or reconstruct thinking. However, Iqbal did not follow up on his idea. There was no clear identification of the fundamental epistemological problems of modern Western secular Knowledge, nor did he put forward any conceptual or methodological suggestions or programmes to convert this Knowledge into Knowledge that was in line with Islam. Thus,

at that time, there was no systematic conceptual explanation of the Islamisation of Knowledge.

The idea of the Islamisation of Knowledge was revived by Syed Hossein Nasr, an Iranian-born American Muslim thinker. He realised the danger of secularism and modernism threatening the Islamic world. Therefore, he laid the foundation for the concept of Islamic Knowledge in epistemological, ontological and axiological aspects through his works *Knowledge and Civilization in Islam*, *Islamic Knowledge*, and *Islamic Art and Spirituality*. Through *Knowledge and Civilization in Islam* and *Islamic Knowledge*, Nasr presents the Islamic philosophy of Knowledge. Through *Islamic Art and Spirituality* Nasr explains the relationship between art and spirituality (Nasr, 1993).

The idea was later developed by Syed M. Naquib al-Attas as an "Islamisation" project which he introduced at the first World Conference on Islamic Education in Makkah in 1977 (Adian, 2005). Al-Attas, the Bogor-born Malaysian Islamic scholar, is regarded as the first to discuss and emphasise the need for the Islamisation of education and the Islamisation of Knowledge.

In addition, consistently in everything he discusses, al-Attas emphasises the great challenge facing the times today, namely Knowledge that has lost its purpose. According to al-Attas, "Knowledge" as it exists today is a product of the confusion of scepticism that puts doubt and speculation on a par with "scientific" methodology and makes it a valid epistemological tool in the search for truth. Moreover, current and modern Knowledge, as a whole, is constructed, interpreted and projected through the worldview, intellectual vision and psychological perception of Western culture and civilisation. If this understanding pervades the minds of the educated elite of Muslims, it will contribute to the emergence of a dangerous phenomenon identified by al-Attas as "the virus of delamination of the Muslim mind". Therefore, as a form of concern for the development of Knowledge, he proposed the idea of "the Islamisation of present-day knowledge" while providing a systematic initial formulation.

Al Attas' idea was then finalised with the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur in 1987 with the support of many parties, including the then Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim (Nata, 2008). When you hear the term Islamisation of Knowledge, there is an impression that there is some Knowledge that is not Islamic so they need to be Islamised. And to Islamise them, they are given the label "Islam" so that then the terms Islamic economics, Islamic chemistry, Islamic physics and so on appear. There are even some people who carelessly consider Islamisation as a process related to external objects, and then associate it with computers, trains, cars and even Islamic bombs.

The definition of the Islamisation of Knowledge is clearly explained by al-Attas, namely: "The liberation of man from magical, mythological, animistic, national cultural traditions (which are contrary to Islam) and from the shackles of secularism on thought and language. Islamisation is also the liberation of human reason from doubt (shak), conjecture (dzan) and empty argumentation (mira') towards belief in the truth about spiritual, intelligible and material reality. Islamisation will remove contemporary interpretations of Knowledge from secular ideologies, meanings and expressions.

With the Islamisation of Knowledge, Muslims will be freed from the shackles of things that are contrary to Islam, so that harmony and peace arise within themselves, in accordance with their nature. In line with this, Mulyadhi Kartanegara states that the word Islam in the "Islamisation" of Knowledge does not have to be understood strictly as a teaching that must be found in its literal reference. Mulyadhi Kartanegara states that the word Islam in the "Islamisation" of Knowledge, should not be understood strictly as a teaching that must be found literally in the Qur'an and hadith, but should be seen in terms

of its spirit which should not conflict with the fundamental teachings of Islam (Kartanegara, 2003).

The implementation of the Islamisation of Knowledge in the Islamic world has many different approaches. There are at least three kinds of approaches to Islamising Knowledge, namely:

1. the labelling approach,
2. axiological approach,
3. the application of Islamic values and the concept of Tawhid.

The labelling approach

Islamisation with such an approach is to give an Islamic label to a certain theory or Knowledge. The labelling approach is based on the assumption that the Qur'an is a revelation of God that can explain everything (Shihab, 1992). Departing from this understanding, all fields of Knowledge can be sought information from the Qur'an so that the labelling of a theory can be done. In this approach, Knowledge and Islam do not conflict.

In the context of building self-confidence, as proof of the truth of Islam and to strengthen faith, the labelling approach may be quite useful. But in terms of building Knowledge and civilisation building, this approach is less useful. For this reason, Al-Attas rejects the view that the Islamisation of Knowledge can be achieved by labelling Knowledge and Islamic principles over secular Knowledge. According to him, such an effort will only make things worse and there is no benefit as long as the "virus" is still in the body of Knowledge itself so that the resulting Knowledge becomes floating, whereas the purpose of Islamisation itself is to protect Muslims from contaminated Knowledge that is misleading and causes errors.

Axiological Approach

In this approach, Islamisation is done by making Islam as the basis of Knowledge. Islam as the basis for the use of Knowledge (axiology), without questioning the ontological and epistemological aspects of Knowledge. In other words, Knowledge is not at issue, what is at issue is the person who uses the Knowledge. The Islamisation approach, therefore, relies on the human aspect. In this approach, it is assumed that Knowledge and technology are neutral. Humans, as users, are the ones who will give value and will determine whether Knowledge brings benefits or on the contrary brings harm. Islamisation in this domain is carried out by humans so that they have a high commitment to practice religion firmly and istiqomah and master their fields of expertise. Thus, Knowledge and technology can provide great benefits to mankind, and not the opposite of bringing disaster to humanity.

The internalisation of Islamic Values and the Concept of the Tawhid Approach

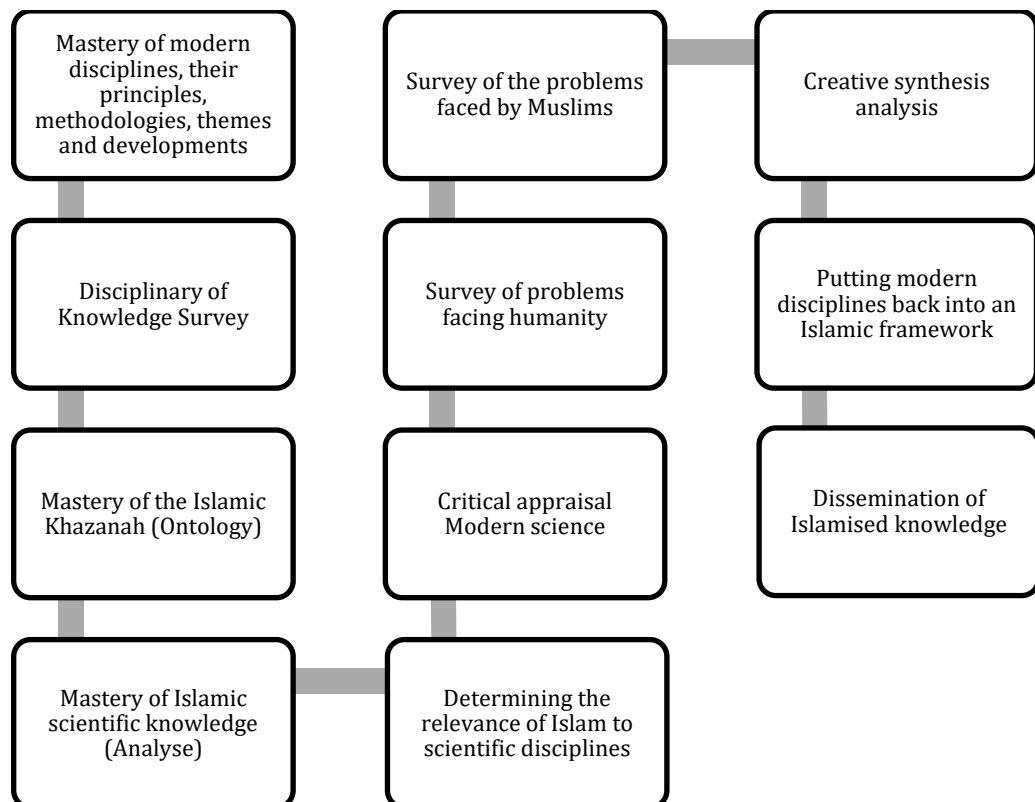
In this approach, the Islamisation of Knowledge is done by incorporating Islamic values into the concept of Knowledge and technology. The assumption is that Knowledge is not neutral, but full of values incorporated by the person who designed it. So the Islamisation of Knowledge and technology is carried out on Knowledge and technology itself, not just on the user side. Such a model approach is quite idealistic and can provide solutions for Muslims in breaking away from the shackles of modern Knowledge dominated by the West. The idea of Islamisation of Knowledge with this approach is embraced by Naquib al Attas, Ziaudin Sardar and AM Syaefuddin, among others.

The approach to the application of the concept of Tawhid is an affirmation of the approach to the application of Islamic values. In this approach, the Islamisation of Knowledge is done by making the concept of Tawhid as a paradigm for building Knowledge and technology. In the conception of Tawhid, Knowledge is essentially from Allah, called ilmullah. Allah as AlKholiq, the creator of this universe, knows everything from the smallest to the largest, the hidden and the real. Therefore, Allah is the source of knowledge. He is Al'Aliim (the All-Knowing) of humanity (Prayitno, 2010).

To realise the Islamisation of Knowledge al-Faruqi outlined a framework with

five objectives in the context of the Islamisation of Knowledge, the objectives in question are 1) Mastering modern disciplines; 2) Mastery of Islamic treasure; 3) Establishing the relevance of Islam to each modern scientific discipline; 4) Combining the values and treasures of Islamic heritage creatively with modern Knowledge directing the flow of Islamic thought to paths that achieve the fulfilment of the pattern of God's plan.

To realise these goals, al-Faruqi devised 12 steps that must be taken first. These steps are (1) Principles, methodologies, problems, themes and developments, (2) Disciplinary surveys, (3) Mastery of the Islamic treasure: an ontology, (4) Mastery of the Islamic scientific treasury: the analytical stage, (5) Determination of the distinctive relevance of Islam to the disciplines, (6) Critical appraisal of modern scientific disciplines and their current level of development, (7) Critical appraisal of the Islamic treasury and its current level of development, (8) Survey of problems facing Muslims, (9) Survey of problems facing humanity, (10) Creative analysis and synthesis, (11) Recasting modern disciplines into an Islamic framework, and (12) Dissemination of Islamised knowledge.



The model of Islamisation of Knowledge with the approach of tawhid has been practised by Muslims in classical times which brought progress to human civilisation. With the tawhid approach, many encyclopaedic and integrated scientists were born, namely, scientists who are not only scholars of religious knowledge (for example fiqh experts), but also experts in the fields of philosophy, medicine or mathematics. This can be seen, for example, in the figures of Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd or Al Razi. Scientists at that time carried out the Islamisation of Knowledge starting from the Qur'an and a deep understanding of the concept of Tawhid.

Islamization of Knowledge Challenge

Commitment of Muslims

Not all Muslims agree with the idea of Islamisation of Knowledge, even Naquib al- Attas revealed that the biggest challenge to the development of the idea of Islamisation of Knowledge arises among Muslims themselves. Muslims do not support the idea of Islamisation, among others, due to the shallowness of Muslim knowledge of

their own religion.

The commitment of Islamic scholars.

The commitment of Islamic scholars still needs to be questioned. The demands of life that have led to a lifestyle of materialism, consumerism and hedonism have eroded the enthusiasm and idealism of Islamic scholars to Islamise Knowledge. Knowledge is considered a commodity that can be traded for profit. As a result, the orientation in demanding knowledge or in developing knowledge has changed, no longer to achieve the "pleasure of Allah" but for self-interest.

The commitment of Islamic higher education institutions

The problem of waning idealism also occurs in higher education institutions. Islamic universities, which are supposed to be the spearhead of the Islamisation of Knowledge movement, are often trapped in pragmatism. Some Islamic Universities are only oriented to meet pragmatic needs, becoming industrial labour factories and no longer a centre for the development of scientific ideas.

The Challenge of Globalisation.

The challenges of globalisation that continue to grow along with the development of communication and information technology increasingly nourish materialism and hedonistic and consumerist lifestyles. This has implications for the waning of idealism and the spirit of realising the Islamisation of Knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Islamisation of Knowledge is essentially an effort to transform Islamic values into various fields of life, especially Knowledge. With the Islamisation of Knowledge, it can be clearly seen that Islam regulates all aspects of life, not just regulating matters of ritual worship such as prayer, fasting, zakat, hajj or taking care of the dead. Islam integrates the problems of the world with the hereafter, synthesising faith, knowledge and charity, combining dhikr with thought.

In short, Islam integrates transcendental values into all aspects of worldly life including Knowledge and technology. Currently, the world is dominated by Western civilisation, which with the superiority of Knowledge and technology controls the world. Western civilisation has contributed to the emergence of a series of global crises. In such conditions, the presence of Islamic Knowledge is a necessity for humanity. So the Islamisation of Knowledge project is a mega project that is awaited for its results.

The realisation of the Islamisation of Knowledge uses several approaches, ranging from labelling, axiological approach, internalisation of Islamic values and application of the principle of Tawhid, to Islamic education. The application approach through education is a fairly idealistic and realistic approach. If this can be operationalised, God willing, there will be a building of Knowledge that leads to harmony and true happiness for humanity and all of nature.

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