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Reinforcement of the New Islamic Civilization Through Qur'anic Literacy

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide a solution for how the new Islamic civilization in the modern era should be the answer to overcoming the various problems of the world community. Since its emergence, Islam has provided answers related to the role of science as a whole contained in the Qur'an, so it is not surprising that Muslim scientists and their work have become a reference for scientists around the world for 14 centuries ago. However, the literacy of Muslim scholars is too focused on *qouliyah* verses that contain Sharia, rather than *kauniyah* verses that contain science. On the other hand, Western scholars are very interested in studying the sciences and discoveries that have been discovered by Muslim scholars in the past. Through this writing, I offer a new idea through a description of the symbolic verses in the Qur'an that expected to provide a new colour in science.

Keywords: Literacy, Civilization, Islam, Qur'an, Symbolic Verses, Science

Introduction

The presence of Islam on earth has initially been brought by the Prophet Muhammad at the command of Allah amid a nation (Arab) who was suffering. Only in a short time history was made astonished, a country that was relatively backward and loaded with conflict, able to form a new civilization with a series of the famous and fantastic rostrum of the world. Islam is not only limited to Arabic, but Islam cannot be separated from the Arabs. Because from this nation Islam was born, developed, and shaped its civilization.

After the apostles of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the period of companions of Islamic rule continued by two dynasties (Umayy and Abbasit) who tackle each other. In those days, Islam made a significant contribution to world civilization, especially in the fields of philosophical knowledge, mathematics, sociology, medicine, astronomy, and others. The development of intellect and discoveries by Muslim scientists in the reigns of the Abbasids and the Umayyads (Andalusia) was astounding. Relics of civilization sites in Andalusia and Baghdad show that empirical evidence. The presence of Islam and its civilization became the epicentre of the rise of nations in Europe to build their culture after Greece collapsed (Boediman, 2019; Tijani, 2016).

The development of Islamic thought and civilization is because it is supported by caliphs who love science with maximum facilities and funds, established political and economic stability. This is in line with the high enthusiasm of Muslim scholars and intellectuals in carrying out the development of religious, humanities, and exact sciences through the movement of research, translation, and writing of scientific papers in various fields of science. Then the progress of their real work in the field of civilization artefacts (Salam, 1994).

Through the Islamic thought movement, religious disciplines or Islamic sciences developed, such as al-Qur'an, *qira'at*, Hadith, kalam / theology, *fiqh*, linguistics, and literature. In addition, social sciences and exact sciences also developed, such as philosophy, logic, metaphysics, language, history, mathematics, natural sciences, geography, algebra, arithmetic, mechanics, astronomy, music, medicine, and chemistry (Baloch, 2017; Fuller, 2014). The exact sciences produce technologies that are needed to support the Islamic civilization. The result of the development of thought that had been pioneered from the early classical period was the progress of Islamic civilization which reached its peak of glory, especially during the two caliphs of the Abbasid Dynasty, the Caliph Harun al-Rasyid (786-809 AD) and his son al-Makmun (813-833 AD). When both of them ruled, the country was prosperous, abundant wealth, security was guaranteed, although there was also a rebellion, it did not affect the political stability of the country, and the vast territory of the Abbasid Dynasty from North Africa to India (Akkach, 2019).

But these intellectual developments and findings paused for a long time and were even stopped by the collapse of the two caliphates (Baghdad and Andalusia). The history of Islamic civilization has changed completely, from brightness to gloom (Hoodbhoy, 1991). Sadly, Muslims have not only succeeded in polishing the world with the new civilization that was created but also carved a dark history that continues to be inherited by his people until now. The tragedy is indeed not a true monopoly on Muslims; other nations with their respective religions also experience the same thing. But for Islam the event was very tragic, because it is often used as a reason for historical critics to justify Islam as a religion that has a tendency to swallow its biological children. Although at the same time, Islam is recognized as a mercy for the world in building its civilization (Marcotte, 2006).

Currently, when the world has changed completely with the new civilization, Muslim societies have not experienced much change because they are preoccupied with various internal problems such as the *khilafiyah*, power struggles and other issues that are not too important to sustain the challenges of Islamic civilization going forward. For centuries that condition continued without any internal strength that could knit the scattered (people) scattered.

In this article there is an important question: How is the process towards a new Islamic civilization in accordance with the Qur'an? This paper seeks to provide a general description, how Muslims should be able to lead to a modern civilization with the power of the Qur'anic sciences that have not been widely studied, so it is possible the emergence of discoveries from Muslim scholars.

After the Caliphate Until the End of the Second Millennium II

After the collapse of the two symbols of Islamic civilization (Baghdad and Cordova), many small kingdoms emerged - especially in the former rule of the Abbasids - who fought

each other for power. In these times, many Muslims were marked by political-power upheaval. Islam is no longer unifying blood that binds brotherhood but is only used as a transcendent symbol associated with God. The issue of politics and power, in the development of Islamic civilization, has the same characteristics as other groups, both of which often trigger ambitions to master it (Chaney, 2013).

One of the nations that appear from this product is the Ottoman Turks. After Seljuq - the protector of the Othoman tribe - was defeated by Mongolia, the Othmani declared their independence from the government of any nation (699 / 1299-1923). They were the forerunners of the establishment of the Uthoman sultanate, which in its long journey had conquered Hungary, Belgrade, Albania, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and the entire Islamic world in the East (Naik, 2000).

The great achievement of the Ottoman Empire was that when Sultan Muhammad II (al-Fatih) succeeded in invading Constantinople (857/1453) and ended this empire and replaced Byzantium with the name Istanbul, which became the centre of the Islamic caliphate. The Othoman Sultanate lasted 624 years, which was far longer than the Abbasid and Umayyad caliphates in Damascus and Andalusia (Masood, 2009).

Entering the end of the second millennium, there were many countries with a majority Muslim population, gaining independence or declaring independence from colonial countries; English, Dutch, Italian, French, Portuguese, and Japanese. Among these Muslim majority countries, there are; 1) which succeeded in creating national political stability without economic dependence; 2) succeeded in creating political stability with economic dependence on developed countries; 3) countries that continue to experience political crises with an economy that is not improving.

Countries that fall into the first category such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Morocco and several other countries in the Middle East region such as Iran, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar. They are countries that have very large petroleum deposits with relatively better political stability. In the past three decades, these countries are included in the group of Muslim majority population countries that are able to organize domestic political stability and are able to develop natural resources and (a fraction of) human resources become countries that are not dependent on donor countries.

The second group, such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria. They are countries that in the last three decades have been able to organize political stability in the country - although sometimes they are still tinged with noise, like Pakistan - but are still economically dependent on donor countries. In these countries, the limitations of human resources (human resources) from the perspective of technological capabilities cause dependence, even though it has very abundant natural resources.

The third group is mostly experienced by countries in Africa and parts of Central Asia and parts of the Middle East such as: Sudan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Siera Lion, Uganda, Bangladesh, Syria, Libya, Iraq - the last three countries have experienced economic stability and politics at the end of the second millennium. In the past three decades, in a number of countries almost never experienced a leadership without resistance and even ended in a coup. The loss of the opportunity to build a stable government has implications for the economic problems that continue to plague these countries. Even though these countries have a wealth of

petroleum that can be used as capital to build a better economy. The noisy political constellation seemed to be a ritual that never stopped causing upheaval in the country.

According to data reported by the Centre for Pew Research Forum on Religion and Public Life in the world domiciled in Washington, United States, the number of Muslims in 2010 reached 1.6 billion (23 percent) of the total number of adherents of world religions (<https://www.pewforum.org/>). Of that number, around 1 (one) billion Muslims live in countries that are predominantly Muslim, the remainder being minorities in non-Muslim countries such as China, India, Britain, France, Germany, America, Australia, South Africa, Russia and so on.

It should be grateful that the emergence of Islam in these secular countries is the implication of the local government policy that implements open immigration politics. Where with this political policy citizens of any country of origin are given the opportunity to become citizens of that country. For example, America, Britain, Germany, Australia, France, are secular countries that open up opportunities for foreigners to become local citizens.

The policy impacts to a massive wave of immigration in Muslim societies either due to political or economic background, such as those from the Middle East, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Turkey, and from countries that were hit continuously by political tempest. Some intellectual names such as Ziauddin Sardar, Fazlurrahman Ansari (Pakistan), Abul Hasan Bani Sadr (Iran), are the products of immigrants from scientists who are victims of domestic politics. In its development, the countries that became the destination of immigration, like it or not, were "forced" to provide space for the development of culture and civilization on the basis of human rights (Faruqi, 2006).

In America, for example, there are currently around 3000 mosques scattered in various states. The same thing happened in the UK and France, even in these two countries Muslim citizens have applied the halal label in every food that is marketed and also has several supermarkets that only provide halal products. The progress of Islamic culture in secular countries is an exciting phenomenon for Muslims around the world because it can be used as an initial destination towards a more realistic Islamic civilization.

Because of the Impasse of Islamic Civilization and Challenges Ahead

There are at least three things that lay behind the ongoing chaos in the internal Muslim community that blocks the pace of civilization to a standstill: First, the emergence of differences in ideology (*khilafiyah*) in theology. Second, differences in ideology in *fiqh*. Third, the development of the political-power problem. Indeed, it must be admitted, that the three issues in Islamic civilization, led to a clear liquid that produced monumental works. But the third is also a trigger for cracks that form small pieces (*hizb*) in Islam. Here the paradox occurs, even when the results of its civilization are stopped, precisely the clash triggered by the three continues (Al-Hassan, Ahmed, & Iskandar, 2001).

In the face of *khilafiyah* problems, Muslims almost lose their tolerance towards others. The truth of the existence of natural law (*sunnatullah*) that everything that exists is different from each other is no longer an awareness (an awareness) that is recognized as certainty but instead negated to build ego truth (truth claim) of each party. Whereas in the social perspective, for example, it shows that Muslims are not free at all from *talfiq*, namely the attitude of

"infidelity" between schools in their daily practice. And what is even more ironic is that this ummah "almost" did not know that the source of *tafiq* came from the Prophet SAW himself.

Likewise, in theology, some of the views of the Muktazilah, Jabbariah, Ash'ariyah, and even Shi'a, all can be adopted by one individual or group in daily practice without causing inner conflict. But when it entered the realm of institutions (*hizb*), everything changed, where each *hizb* follower felt righter than the other *hizb*. Takfir movement that occurred lately is a product of the legacy of the past and is latently developed by followers of institutions set in schools.

And, the most severe of the two things is the emergence of a third problem, namely politics and power. This problem has dragged Muslims away into an "impossible" complexity. There is hardly a Muslim-majority country that can manage its national political-power without resistance from within the country to mutually coup. The political probabilities of this power have been around for a long time following the killing of the Caliph Uthman bin Affan (644-656) to enter into the III millennium. Here the energy of Muslims in various parts of the world is sucked out to fulfil the lust so that many biological children of Islam are victims of cruelty among each other (Arnold, 1913).

This problem must be resolved before moving towards further goals. In order to face the fight between the nations of the world, Muslims are not continuously made objects of their interests. With deposits of petroleum wealth controlled by Islamic countries up to 70% of the total in the world, it can be used as a large capital to restore the glory of Islam in the past. But these ideals may be merely a utopian empty of dreams, as long as these oil-producing countries experience political inferiority, so they do not have the courage to break away from dependence on developed countries.

Reviewing a New Approach to a New Civilization

When we talk about Islamic civilization, the epistemological basis is the Qur'an, because Islam without the Qur'an is not Islam, even though it was created by a Muslim. This is what distinguishes between Islamic thought with the thinking of Muslims (Muslims). The first means a thought that is built refers to the Qur'an and the second means thinking effort carried out by a Muslim as the subject. The first requires that the results return to the Qur'an, and the second may be the results come out of the Qur'an frame.

In the Qur'an there are many symbolic verses that can be explored in meaning to be used as epistemological studies in building Islamic civilization. These symbolic verses not only speak at the level of a scientific epistemology, but also an applied axiology that operationally will benefit the lives of humanity. For example, about maritime technology (QS. Huud: 37), aerodynamics (QS. Shaad': 36), aeronautics (QS. Al-; -Rahman: 33), mining (QS. Al-Hadid: 25), steel construction (QS. Al-Kahfi: 96), astronomy (Surah An-Najm: 1), Marine economics (Surah An-Nahl: 14), medicine (Surah Yusuf: 96), tailors (Surah Al-A'raf: 40) and many more (Asmaji, 2017).

While the classics or contemporary commentators (even), the results of the interpretations they make have not touched the science-technology needed to answer the challenges of need, unless they are still limited to discussion of Shari'a law (fiqh) or less than that, as the work of scholars non-Muslims achieved through the development of philosophy. Therefore, if all the existing interpretations are perceived as absolute truth from an interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, and this holy book should not be reinterpreted with

a transformative approach because of restrictions on *ijtihad*. It is the same as degrading the infinite knowledge of God. Because the Qur'an is not just talking about law, but more talking about various disciplines of all kinds (Tahri, 2012).

Al-Quran is a miniature of Allah's knowledge, which was revealed on earth to be a reference for every Muslim on all issues. He is not only a holy book that functions as *hudan, syifaa'un limaa fii al-shuduur and furqaan*, but also a source of knowledge that never dries. But to prove the truth of the thesis, the verses of the Qur'an need to be reinterpreted in a more comprehensive way, especially on symbolic verses that have not been touched by the thoughts of the old commentators. Proof of this thesis can be realized through an empirical-applicative approach or other approaches that produce interconnection in their scholarship. At present, the challenge that must be answered to revitalize Islamic civilization as in the past, is to explore the symbols of science contained in the Qur'an with various methods of methodology.

We may often read this verse: "O our Lord, did not you create all this in vain"; (Surah Ali Imran: 191), but to what extent is the understanding of the verse to be realized as a Muslim intellectual to build a new civilization? The meaning of the verse which means: "The creation of all of this" is all of God's creations that unfold in the heavens and on the earth, which appear invisible and which are invisible. In the development of the world and its civilization, the verse is not possible to produce any spectrum of meaning that can be implemented for the benefit of life, if left unchecked without deep reflection on its ontology, except merely to become reading practice.

Efforts to think into that realm have never been found in classical interpretations. Therefore, to achieve this goal, the Qur'an needs to be explored in terms of various comprehensive approach methodologies (Shamsaei & Mahmoudi, 2017). Not only using the methods of the empiricist-rationalist approach, but also the methods of non-empirical-supra rationalist. Included in the second category of this approach is the use of the *ijtihad ruhiyah* method, which is an approach methodology that is based on the strength of the immanent holistic². Because not all knowledge in the Qur'an can be achieved (mastery) with an empiricist methodology approach. Limitation with a methodology that is visible (empirical) is equivalent to limit the knowledge of Allah that is not limited. If so, there will be a lot of dumping of expertise because it is considered not empirical-rationalistic.

We need to think philosophically that the verses that encourage us to *tadabbur, tabasshur, tanadhur*, are not the same way of reflecting them with the verses that encourage us to contemplate and pray. The first group of verses for discussion is more focused on metaphysical-suprarationalists (eg, Surah An-Naml: 40; Joseph: 46-49; Al-Kahf: 66-82) etc., while the second group of discussions is more focused on metaphysical-rationalist (eg, Surah Al-Hadid: 25; al-An'am: 40; Yaasin: 37-41; Shaad: 24) etc. Two differences in the way they reflect do not necessarily indicate that the two types of knowledge cannot be put together. The emergence of "*silaturrahim*" of the two approaches is expected to bridge the creation of unification of knowledge (*muwahhid fii al-ilm*) or the unification of knowledge that is not only normative, but also in any open application.

² This is a method of approaching a phenomenon while paying attention to the phenomenon as a unified whole that operates in every natural process under God's authority. These terms were developed by me in the framework of writing the Symbolic Verse Interpretation that is being worked on.

This is an approach that the author is striving for, with the hope that no knowledge is scattered (wasted) without meaning. Because we need to realize that not understanding people in a particular knowledge does not mean that they do not know about knowledge in other areas, and for that every Muslim needs to be encouraged to elaborate each other's scientific applicability, according to the basic expertise and ability without having to look at the scientific or not scientific. Thus, the excavation of these symbolic verses will enliven Islamic scholarship, which is reborn to colour the life of the people (especially Muslims) in the midst of world civilization.

Qur'an as Part of the Development of Literacy Culture

Islam has put a high value on education and as faith spreads among diverse cultures, education has become a significant medium through which to create a universal and coherent social order (Alam, 2018; Altwaijri, 2009). By the middle of the 9th century, knowledge was divided into three categories: Islamic science, Metaphysical and Natural Sciences (Greek knowledge) and Literary Arts (Sahin, 2018; Tijani, 2016). The Islamic sciences, which emphasized the study of the Qurān (Islamic scripture) and the Saadīth (prophet Muhammad's sayings and traditions) and their analysis by leading scholars and theologians, were most highly regarded, but the Greek scholarship was considered equally significant, although less virtuoso.

Early Muslim education emphasized practical studies, such as the application of technical knowledge to the production of irrigation systems, architectural inventions, textiles, iron and steel products, earthenware and leather products; the production of paper and gunpowder; the progress of trade; and the maintenance of a merchant marine (Faruqi, 2006; Zakaria, 2010). After the 11th century, however, denominational concerns dominated higher learning, and Islamic sciences gained popularity. Greek expertise has been studied in private, if at all and literary arts has decreased in importance as educational policies supporting academic freedom and new learning have been replaced by a closed structure marked by intolerance towards technological advances, secular subjects and artistic scholarships. This denominational system has spread across eastern Islam from Transoxania (roughly modern Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and southwest Kazakhstan) to Egypt, with some 75 schools in action between 1050 and 1250.

The simplest form of early Muslim education was provided in the mosques, where scholars who had come together to discuss the Qur'an began teaching religious sciences to interested adults a long time ago (Boediman, 2019; Millie, 2017). The number of mosques under the caliphs increased, particularly the Abbāsids: 3,000 of them were reported in Baghdad alone in the early decades of the 10th century; as many as 12,000 were reported in Alexandria in the 14th century, most of them with schools attached.

Some mosques—such as that of al-Man Ayur, founded during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd in Bagdad, or those in Isfahan, Mashhad, Ghom, Damascus, Cairo, and the Alhambra (Granada)—became centers of learning for students from all over the Muslim world. Each mosque typically contained a number of study circles (halqah), so called because as a rule, the instructor sat on a dais or a cushion with the pupils gathered in a semicircle in front of him. The more advanced the pupil, the closer he was to the teacher. Mosque circles differed in approach, content of classes, size and standard of teaching, but the form of instruction typically emphasized lectures and memorization.

Elementary schools (maktab, or kuttab), in which students have learned to read and write, date back to the pre-Islamic era in the Arab world. After the advent of Islam, these schools grew into centers for the education of elementary Islamic subjects. Students were supposed to memorize the Quran as perfectly as possible. Some schools also included poetry, elementary algebra, penmanship, ethic (manners) and elementary grammar studies in their curriculum. Maktabas have been very popular in almost every town or village in the Middle East, Africa, Sicily and Spain.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, the conclusion that I can describe is that the development of Islamic civilization arises from the open, tolerant and accommodative attitude of Muslims towards advanced foreign civilizations, and the love of Muslims for science. From this was born an academic culture in the whole community, so that many Muslim scholars who take part in government and social institutions. To achieve this, there must be a scientific field which is the object of study by Muslims, especially applied sciences that have a direct impact on the progress of Muslims in daily life. There have been many Muslim scholars who study the science of *shari'a* and religion originating from the Qur'an, but almost none in this modern era, the findings of Muslim scientists whose use is used by people throughout the world. Because, if Muslims succeed in deciphering *kauniyah* knowledge with discoveries from symbolic verses in the Qur'an, then the modern Islamic civilization will be able to emerge immediately and have a positive impact on the Islamic world and even have a strong influence on global civilization.

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