

**UNRAVELING THE OLD-FASHIONED MUSLIMS:
Responding to The Challenges of Modernity**

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Abstract

Muslims have a lot of potentials in terms of human resources (HR), natural resources (NR) and Islamic ideologies. Sadly, they are far from being established, prosperous, progressive and prosperous as they have two main challenges they must face and resolve. First, internal challenges which includes terrorism movements due to wrong understanding of Islamic teachings. Second, external challenges, such as the fear of the Europeans and the West against Islam and its adherents (Islamophobia), clash civilization stigma, and Muslim backwardness in developing science. Due to these two main challenges, it is necessary to find a solution to face and deal with them, so that the Muslims can rise above their adversity. The internal solution, for example, is to encourage them to understand the true, inclusive and interactive teachings of Islam so that they truly become a guideline and solution for any individuals and Muslims themselves. It is expected to abolish radicalism's understanding and movement and motivate the Muslims to improve the development of science and technology. In the meantime, the external solution includes bridging communication to demonstrate the true teachings of Islam which are inclusive, merciful and interactive to eliminate Islamophobia. In addition, conducting collaborative scientific and technology-based research at international level to catch up with the modernity is also a good option.

Keywords: *Challenges, Progress, and Muslims*

Abstrak:

Umat Islam mempunyai banyak potensi yang terdiri dari potensi sumber daya manusia (SDM), potensi sumber daya alam (SDA) dan potensi ideologi Islam. Namun, umat Islam ternyata masih jauh dari kata mapan, makmur, berkemajuan dan sejahtera. Karena memang umat Islam mempunyai dua tantangan pokok yang harus dihadapi dan diselesaikan. Pertama, tantangan internal yang meliputi gerakan terorisme akibat pemahaman yang salah terhadap ajaran Islam. Kedua, tantangan eksternal yang meliputi ketakutan masyarakat Eropa dan Barat terhadap Islam dan pemeluknya (islamophobia), stigma clash civilization, dan tertinggalnya umat Islam dalam mengembangkan ilmu pengetahuan. Berdasarkan dua tantangan pokok tersebut sehingga perlu dicarikan solusi dalam menghadapi dan menyelesaikan tantangan tersebut

sehingga umat Islam bisa bangkit dari keterpurukan. Solusi internalnya adalah mendorong umat Islam untuk memahami ajaran Islam yang benar, inklusif dan interaktif sehingga ajaran Islam betul-betul menjadi pedoman dan solusi bagi pribadi dan umat Islam. Dengan harapan bisa mengikis pemahaman dan gerakan radikalisme serta bisa memotivasi umat Islam dalam meningkatkan pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi. Dan solusi eksternalnya adalah menjalin komunikasi dalam rangka menunjukkan ajaran Islam yang sebenarnya, yaitu bersifat inklusif, rahmah dan interaktif untuk mengikis dan menghilangkan islamophobia. Juga, dengan mengadakan kerjasama riset dan penelitian ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi secara internasional untuk mengejar ketertinggalan umat Islam dalam bidang tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Tantangan, Kemajuan, dan Umat Islam

Introduction

Historically, Muslims with their Islamic ideologies and teachings have made a golden era by creating a great and brilliant civilization. Such era has happened because of the integration of various Muslim potentials in terms of human resources, natural resources and strong belief towards the ideology, values, spirit and teachings of Islam.

The number of Muslims is more than a half (1/5) of the world's inhabitants. This is actually an asset to make progress and achieve glory without limits.¹ Surprisingly, the number of adherents of Islam has increased drastically from time to time, exceeding the number of adherents of other religions. The Muslim population in 2016 has reached 2.14 billion people, exceeding the number of Christians which is 2.07 billion people. As released by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on its web <http://www.religiouspopulation.com>.²

¹Maḥmūd Hamdī Zaquq, *Humūm al-Ummah al-Islāmiyyah* (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabah al-Ussrah, 2001), 7.

²The study shows the Muslim population has kept increasing due to a higher birth rate and conversion while the number of adherents of other religions either drops or remains static. The Christian population in the west & America (North & South), for example, is dropping due to the lesser growth rate birth rate or conversion as compared to Muslim population. Christian population is increasing in many of Asian and African countries by both birth rate and conversion. Current data illustrates that the 2016's Christian population is about 2.07 billion, whereas the number of Muslims is about 2.14 billion. We calculate the population data by multiplying the growth rate such as Muslim 1.84% and Christianity 1.13% respectively as cited

This number of human resource has an extraordinary potential if it is integrated and utilized in running the wheels of life in various aspects such as economics, politics, social, education, science, military, technology and others, including reviving the Islamic civilization that has been engulfed by the history.

In term of natural resource potential, the countries with largest Muslim populations have extraordinary natural resources. The Islamic countries, for example, have strategic areas, large populations, and oil resources that play a huge role in the world.³ Even various kinds of earth content are mostly in Muslim majority countries. The content includes petroleum, natural gas, gold, copper, nickel and even various kinds of flora and fauna. In addition, Middle Eastern countries are countries that are rich in petroleum content as the main economic foundation for Western countries.⁴ If these extraordinary natural resources are managed intensively and integrated to various Muslim countries, there is high possibility that the community of Muslim countries would become

from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "Religious Population in Million" <http://www.religiouspopulation.com/> accessed on June 26, 2018.

³Samuel P. Huntington, *Benturan Antar Peradaban Dan Masa Depan Politik Dunia*, translated by M. Sadat Ismail (Jakarta: Qalam, 2012), 9.

⁴Dilip Hiro, *Al-Ushūliyyah Al-Islāmiyyah fī al-Aṣri al-Ḥadīth*, translated version (Kairo: Al-Hay'ah Al-Maṣriyyah al-Āmmah li al-Kitāb, 1997), 13.

a new and respected giant power. In the end, it can bring up the dignity of Muslims in the world, especially in the economic field.

In addition, in terms of ideology and religious spirit, Muslims are large societies who are very loyal in fighting for and carrying out their religious teachings considering that Islam is not only considered a religion, but is more than just religion. It is also believed to contain a variety of social rules compatible for all Muslims, even for humanity as a whole. No wonder it is called a civilization that always lives in various dimensions of time and place in many countries.⁵In maintaining faith and belief, the Muslims are well prepared to sacrifice anything including their life and property. If this potential can be developed and directed for the sake of mutual benefit, then the religious and spirit potential will be able to boost and eliminate the social, scientific, and economic issues faced by them.

Sadly, the reality is indeed different. The Muslims are divided and their power is scattered around. In addition, their potential dries and their spirit declines.⁶In fact, the Muslim countries that take political policies as Non-Aligned countries face many conflicts, poverty and lack of political stability and have just declared their independence.⁷

Referring to the above issues, it is very important to find ways to empower the great potentials of Muslims and Muslim countries and to find solutions and alternatives for various challenges and issues faced by Muslims and Muslim countries. In other words, Muslim countries and Muslims are assets to shape and develop a progressive and advance society. At last, it is also challenges faced by Muslims and Muslim countries in the field of jihad to fight for prosperous life in general and the benefit of Muslims in the world and in here after especially.

⁵Ibid., 14.

⁶Maḥmūd Hamdī Zaquq, 7.

⁷Samuel P. Huntington, 7.

Muslim Challenges

Historically, the black notes of the historical burden experienced by Muslims have actually hampered their resurrection. Since the collapse of the Abbasid government about seven centuries ago at the hands of the Mongol empire,⁸they have inherited backwardness, oppression and marginalization, old-fashion, and poverty which are considered as their initial nadir point of decline. In particular, with the rise of Europe in the 16th century, they increasingly experienced setbacks and backwardness. This state coincided with the military invasion by the Westerns and Europeans that succeeded in destroying the Middle East Islamic countries, especially the Ottoman Empire experienced defeat after the defeat in the war against the Europe starting from the defeat of ruling Vienna in 1683 AD as the gate of Eastern Europe. This marks the starting point of failure to defend several regions in Eastern Europe until they fell into the hands of Europeans.⁹

Day by day, the lands controlled by the Muslims gradually moved into the hands of European and Western imperialists. They began to rule and conquer Muslim countries. Even after the end of the Crusades, the oppositions and conflicts between Muslims in the Muslim countries and Europeans and Westerns kept

⁸In 1219, the Mongol troops attacked the Khawarizmi sultanate and colonized important cities, such as Bukhara and Samarkand. From there, the troops overran to the north and defeated the Russian troops, and they turn back and conquered the regions of Afghanistan and Iran. After the death of Genghis Khan, the conquest process did not stop at all, instead it became stronger. In 1258, Hulagu Khan even attacked the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad and caused the main symbol of the leadership of the Islamic world to collapse. From there, the Mongols continued to invade Syria and Palestine, and tried to enter Egypt, but were held back by Egyptian Mamluk soldiers through the battle of *Ayn Jalut*. The Mongol conquest of the Islamic world finally ended. In the North, the troops continued to invade Eastern Europe to the Adriatic Sea, and almost went to the Western Europe. See Alwi Alatas, "Mongol, Penakluk yang tertaklukkan" in <https://www.hidayatullah.com/kajian/sejarah/read/2010/01/27/266/mongol-penakluk-yang-tertaklukkan.html> accessed on June 26, 2018.

⁹Ach. Maimun Syamsuddin, *Integrasi Multidimensi Agama & Sains; Analisis Sains Islam Al-Attas dan Mehdi Golshani* (Jogjakarta: IRCiSoD, 2012), 66-67.

going. In the end, the Western imperialists ruled almost all Muslim-majority countries in 1945. There have been only four Muslim countries that are independent: Turkey, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen throughout the Islamic world.¹⁰

In the 20th century, along with the fading of the cold war between the Western Bloc led by the United States of America and the Eastern Bloc coordinated by the Soviet Union, civilization and political maps of the world underwent a very visible change. It is as if the world only circulated in two forces of world civilization; the West and Islam. Practically, the power of USA has finally become the main axis of European and Western forces, and even become the axis of the world.¹¹ Consequently, Muslims who have the largest population and live in countries with abundant natural resources are faced and positioned as competitors that threaten the hegemony of the Western Bloc. In addition, the Middle Eastern countries are countries that are very rich with fuel sources as the main foundation of the Western countries economy.¹² Further, the Islamophobia or fear of Islam happening in the Western and European countries spread all over the regions. Islam has been perceived to become the enemy to replace the Eastern Bloc and threaten the world civilization¹³, especially the civilization of the United States and its Allies.

In response to all aforementioned challenges, the main figure of the Islamic reformist movement, Muhammad Jamaluddin Afghani, argues that the phenomenon regarding the decline of Muslims is none other than the defects they have caused themselves.¹⁴ Therefore, Hamdi Zaquzuq maps the

challenges faced by Muslims in the 21st century into two categories; internal challenges and external challenges.¹⁵

Internal Challenges of Muslims

The internal challenges here include; *first*, the rampant of terrorism phenomena in various Muslim countries. In 1997, for example, there was a very frightening act of terrorism Egypt. The terrorists spread terror by killing and destroying human life without considering young children, women, old people and youth. Such act of terror was baseless, without any logical reason. Ironically, they committed it in the name of disseminating Islam by shouting *takbir* (*Allâhu Akbar*).¹⁶ In addition, next terror and violence occurred in a row, especially the incident concerning the destruction of the twin towers of WTC in America on September 11, 2001 and the Bali Bombing on October 12, 2002. This further confirms the negative views of the international community towards Islam and Muslims.

In fact, the *ghîrah* or Islamic spirit of the Islamic activists has never been bad. They want to call on and invite Muslims to purify the teachings of Islam and return to the teachings of Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad, awaken the spirit of jihad to liberate Muslim countries and demand the rights of Muslims robbed by the Western imperialists. However, as their way and reaction to the activists of the Islamic movement is too frontal and radical and is considered to threaten the preservation of Western hegemony against the Muslim countries, the West and Europe use this moment to propagate negative issues against their struggle by labeling them as Islamic fundamentalist, Militant Islam, terrorists and so on. In the same way, they mean to give a negative stigma to the Islamic movement. The Western imperialism, especially the United States, can also make these negative issues an excuse in fighting for the Islamic movement without being

¹⁰G.H. Jansen, *Islam Militan; Sebuah Uraian dan Analisa yang Tajam Tentang Konfrotasi Antara Islam dengan Barat Saat Ini*, translated version, second edition (Bandung: Pustaka Salman, 1983), 80-81.

¹¹Syaifulloh Yazid, "Melacak dan Menyikapi Proyek Revivalisme dalam Gerakan Fundamentalisme Islam", *KALAM* 11, no. 1 (2017): 59.

¹²Dilip Hiro, 13.

¹³Mahmûd Hamdî Zaquzuq, 36.

¹⁴Muhammad Habbay, *Al-Fikr al-Islâmy al-Hadîth wa Şillatuhu bi al-Isti'mâr al-Gharby*, thirteenth edition (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1997), 61.

¹⁵Mahmûd Hamdî Zaquzuq, 36.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 37.

accused of violating human rights. Further, they consider the Islamic radicalism movement is intentionally carried out by fanatical people who wish to threaten the Western interests.¹⁷

This is very unfortunate that some Islamic activists react to the negative issues and stigma by committing negative actions such as terror, bombings, intimidation and violence against the general public who are not involved. Consequently, Islam is claimed to support and promote the rise of terrorist movements, ferocious, violence, human rights violation, and disruption to the security and tranquility of mankind. In addition, the effects of the terror acts do not only threaten the non-Muslims, but also globally threaten the future of humanity in various aspects of life; economic, political, social culture and educational aspects. Essentially, such acts are not only detrimental to a government or a particular group, but also cause a negative impact on society in general, and especially become the psychological terror of the global community.

According to Khamami Zadda, citing Horace M. Kallen's opinion, mentions the general tendency of radicalization comes from several factors: (1) radicalization is a response to ongoing conditions. The response usually appears in terms of evaluation, rejection or even resistance. The things which are rejected include assumptions, ideas, institutions or values responsibly accounted for the progress of the conditions that are being rejected, (2) radicalization does not stop at rejection phase, but continues to replace the order with another form of order. This feature shows it has a program or world view. Here, the Radical groups make a strong effort to create a new order instead using the existing order, and (3) the strength of the radicalism belief in the truth of the program or ideology they bring. At the same time, this belief denies the truth of other systems that will be replaced. In social movements, the belief about the truth of a program or philosophy

is often mixed with some ways of achieving it in the name of the ideal values such as the nation or humanity. However, the strength of this belief can cause emotional attitudes that lead to violence.¹⁸

Second, misunderstanding the Islamic teachings. Islam is a religion of justice and moderate. Therefore, it despises radicalism and exaggeration in religion and calls for simplicity and compassion for humans. Although it has complete teachings, unfortunately there are some people who interpret the teachings as they wish by directing the interpretation to the right and left line. Consequently, various misinterpretations cause the teachings to be old-fashioned, exclusive and particularistic and are neither compatible with the era nor contextual to various life changes.¹⁹

This so-called black-and-white perspective develops and is believed as the theological understanding of the terrorist groups which strongly strengthened by their fundamentalist-radical ideology, as a foundation of thinking and acting. Therefore, any terror in the name of jihad brings a bad image of Islam although it is not the only cause, but sadly it is perceived to be the teaching of Islam and Islam is believed to be a religion full of terror and fear.²⁰

In fact, because of this exclusive and particular understanding, it has led to disunity, disputes and accusing one other of heathenism which in the end causes war among them, especially they have historically experienced internal conflicts. From the very beginning, after Prophet Muhammad passed away, conflicts and violence almost never stopped and became a historical phenomenon, and took place in the entire period of civilization. The interests of Muslim groups motivated by the ambitions of power and differences in understanding also grow and develop and trigger internal conflicts among them.²¹

¹⁸Mohamad Rapik, "Deradikalisasi Fahaman Keagamaan Sudut Pandang Islam", *Inovatif* VII, no. II (2014), 108-109.

¹⁹Mahmūd Hamdī Zaqzuq, 38.

²⁰Wasid, "Teologi Perdamaian dalam Tafsir Jihad", *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 1, no. 2 (2011), 275.

²¹M. Alfandi, "Prasangka: Potensi Pemicu Konflik Internal Umat Islam", *Jurnal Walisongo* 21, no.1 (2013), 126.

¹⁷Dilip Hiro, 13.

Islam is a teaching and view of life that all Muslims must believe wholeheartedly. As it is a teaching, it is supposed to be flexible, elastic and adaptive to changes in conditions and situations without sacrificing the existing principles. Accordingly, it will become a view of life compatible with the term “*likulli zamân wa wa al-makân.*” Wherever and whenever, the teachings of Islam can still exist responding to changes in life and remain *istiqamah* (persistent) to bring security and peace. Concerning the nature of Islam, Shaykh Al-Azhâr, Sayyid Thânthawiy mentions the term Islam will all mean security, tranquility and submission to the right things which cannot be intervened by evil deeds.²² Hence, Islam is a religion that teaches mankind to create security and peace of life anywhere and anytime by always defending and submitting to the essential truth.

The aforementioned two big challenges have eventually caused the backwardness befalling Muslims in various aspects of life; politics, social, scientific, health, economy, education and others. In addition, by the emergence of various teachings and practices deviating from Islam leads to the existence of various groups with different beliefs and teachings. Consequently, the Muslims are disunited. More surprisingly, the Western and Europeans imperialists also apply the political strategy of ‘*breaking bamboo*’ to rule the Muslim countries, in the way of propagating the terms of Islamic fundamentalism, militant Islam, Sunni Islam and Shiah Islam so that the rupture of Islamic groups actually bring the conflicts and cause disunity among Muslims themselves.

External Challenges of Muslims

The external challenges are closely related to the internal ones. Both of them influence each other. Some of the external challenges of the Muslim community include; **first**, the

²²Muhammad Sayyid Tanhawî, *Hâdha Huwa al-Islâm fî Daw ‘Hadîth Jibrîl ‘Alayh al-Salâm*, Vol. 1 (Cairo: Majma’ Matâbi’ al-Azhâr as-Sharif, 2003), 9.

spread of Islamophobia in the Western world. This phenomenon happens due to two factors; protection of the assets and investments of Western and European countries in Muslim countries and the strong reaction of some Islamic groups to the Western and European hegemony against the Muslim countries.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which became a balancing force for Western powers at the end of 1991, the 74-year-old Soviet Union finally were disunited and divided into several countries which have now members of the Commonwealth of Independent State (CIS). This unity has marked the end of the cold war under the American victory. The Soviet Union itself was officially disbanded on December 25, 1991. Accordingly, the United States has become the only country with super power in the world and turn into the world leader.²³ This confirms Samuel Huntington’s thesis regarding the war of civilization between the West, Islam and China after the end of the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union.²⁴

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the dependence of Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East, on America has inevitably got higher. Almost all Muslim countries are loyal allies to the country except Iran and Syria. In addition, the natural resources especially petroleum that exist in Muslim countries are indeed required by the United States and European countries as their allies.²⁵ The petroleum is the main factor encouraging the powerful countries to compete to rule Middle Eastern countries.²⁶

To protect and safeguard the economic assets and investment of Western and European

²³Andi Rafael Saputra, *Dari Uni Soviet Hingga Rusia*, first edition (Jogyakarta: Penerbit Palapa, 2014), 86-87.

²⁴Sulaiman Ibrahim al-Askari, *Al-Islam wa al-Gharb; Shurra’u fi Zamani al-‘Aulamah*, first edition (Cairo: Kitab al-Araby, 2002), 108.

²⁵Husain Sharif, *Al-Siyâsah al-Khârijiyyah al-Amrikiyyah; Ittijâhatuhâ wa Tatbiqâtuhâ wa Tahdiyâtuhâ min al-Harb al-‘âlamîyyah al-thâniyyah ilâ al-Nidhâm al-Dawly al-Jadîd 1945-1994* (Maktabah: al-Ussrah, n.d.), 369.

²⁶Ibid., 370.

countries, they tighten and increase their protection and security against Muslim countries that have become their allies. The United States itself, for example, intensively offers various types of military and economic assistance to countries that feel threatened internally and externally.²⁷ Seeing this phenomenon, some Islamic activists seem to be furious and cannot stand to see if the restraints and hegemony by the Western and European in their own country. In the Western countries' point of view, the Islamic activist resistance movement is considered as a fanatical movement which is very dangerous to their interests.²⁸ This is confirmed by the statement of contemporary Islamic thinker Fazlur Rahman saying the formation of a fundamentalist Islamic movement is the result of a long interaction between the history of development in Islam and the Western hegemony that happened more than a century and a half ago.²⁹

These conditions are the cause of political and religious turmoil among Islamic activists, especially among hardline Islamic activists who fully (*kaffah*) want to be independent and implement the Sharia. They appeal to Muslims to commit jihad and sacrifice in order to fight against the oppression and colonization by the Western and European imperialists in Muslim countries. Moreover, the Western imperialist political and military factors do not only give an ugly impression to Muslims, but are also considered as immoral, uncivilized, non-intellectual and arrogant.³⁰ In the end, this increasingly fuels and increases their enthusiasm for jihad against the Western colonialists.

The defeat and oppression of Muslims in politic, military and economy has finally made them internally 'touched'. This is responded by various reactions by the Muslims, one of which

motivates the growth of various groups who all want their revival. Each group attempts to offer various reform ideas and Islamic revival projects. As it has its own style and variety, some Islamic revivalist groups are labeled as Liberal Islam, Fundamentalist Islam, Modernist Islam, militant Islam and others according to the character of their movement.³¹

Seeing that the revival of militant Islam movement is the anti-Western, it does not hesitate to commit acts of violence in one side. In another, the Western and Europeans think the Islamic awakening movement is a threat endangering the hegemony and Western interests in the Islamic world. With this act of violence, they label such movement as a fundamentalist Islamic movement and militant Islam. Here, they consider the emergence of the movement in Muslim countries as a new enemy to the Western and European world. This adds and strengthens the stigma of Islam phobia in the Western and European world. Essentially, the term 'militant Muslim' and "fundamentalist" does not necessarily give negative meanings. According to Ali Syuaibi, fundamentalism, which in Arabic is called the *uṣūliyyah* meaning *returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah*. Such understanding sees the majority of Muslim believers are classified as fundamentalists (*uṣūliyyun*). They neither practice violence nor believe in terrorism considering they contradict to the teachings of Qur'an and Tahfidz. Therefore, when the term fundamentalism is embedded in the political Islamic movement which is often coloured by acts of violence and terror, it cannot absolutely be regarded as an Islamic religious movement, but closer to the ordinary political movement.³²

Second, clash civilization. The phenomenon is closely related to Islam phobia in the West. Indirectly, the position of Muslims who have their own civilization, Islamic civilization will

²⁷Ibid, 369.

²⁸Dilip Hiro, 13.

²⁹Fazlur Rahman, *Roots of Islamic Neo-Fundamentalism*, in *Change and The Muslim World* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981), 24.

³⁰Ibid, 34.

³¹Syaifulloh Yazid, 60.

³²Dwi Ratnasari, "Fundamentalisme Islam", *KOMUNIKA* 4, no.1 (2010): 40-57.

be confronted by the Western civilization that has now dominated the world, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union as the balancing force of United States power. In addition, the United States becomes the only super power country in the world and the ‘world police’.

During the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, Muslims were made as one of the United States’ allies to defend and fight against the Soviet Union’s civilization, which professed a communist ideology. Here, the United States supported Muslims against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Through the CIA, it also tried to weaken the Soviet Union by promoting Islamic politics in the Soviet majority of Central Asia. In the same way, the CIA expected the ISI anti-communist movement in Pakistan to be willing to train Muslims from all over the world to participate in jihad against the Soviet Union.³³

However, after the end of the cold war, the intimate relations between the United State and Islamic activists who strongly opposed Soviet communism was finally over. On the contrary, the existence of the movements is then considered to endanger the United State hegemony and interests in Muslim countries. Surprisingly, it is hard to be dictated and regulated by the local government which is loyal and becomes the United States allies. Therefore, the phenomenon of the growth of Muslim militancy in Muslim countries is feared by the United States. This is seen from the emergence of an Islamic movement called *al-Qâidah* in Afghanistan and ISIS in Middle Eastern countries that strongly oppose the Western hegemony against Muslim countries and go against the government loyal to the Western. Such phenomenon is inseparable from the view that *jihad* is not done yet. Al-Qâidah has then been involved in a series of actions aimed at fighting the hegemony of Western ideology symbolized by the United States. The group’s actions are considered dangerous not only because they openly oppose

³³Ibid, 78.

Western hegemony, but also have a wide network, spread in various countries, including in the Western countries themselves.³⁴

Third, the rapid development of science. As the time goes on and the scholars have enhanced their innovations, the science escalates in various aspects. In turn, whoever possesses knowledge has the power and whoever has the power will rule the world. In addition, every innovation that comes from science will create more economic values many times over, especially innovations in natural resource management. The development of this science is not only in the economic field but also in the field of military equipment and defense systems.

The issue of Islamic science comes from the development of the issue of Islam and science which has been traced from the beginning of the eighteenth century due to Islamic contact with the West in the entire Islamic world. At that time, the Islamic world was infected by *catching up syndrome*. In particular, the discourse is inseparable from the efforts of the Ottoman Turks to modernize themselves after the various defeats experienced in the wars against Europe.³⁵ The defeat after the defeat of the Islamic military is the only thing that made Muslims aware of the importance of science and technology. Therefore, both become a big challenge for Muslims. Pursuing backwardness in both fields, for example, is an effort to rebuild the glory of Islamic civilization. This type of modernization implies the view that both do not affect religious beliefs as they are neutral tools, they can be used by anyone even if they have different religion and culture.³⁶

Internally, Islam as a teaching and living guide has openly motivated its people to think, innovate, create and observe the universe and its phenomenon as the object of science.³⁷ However,

³⁴Muhammad Asfar (ed.), *Islam Lunak Islam Radikal; Pesantren, Terorisme dan Bom Bali* (Surabaya: JP Press Surabaya, 2003), 38.

³⁵Ach. Maimun Syamsuddin, 66.

³⁶Ibid., 69.

³⁷As stated in the Qur’an, Fuṣṣilat: 53: “We will show them our sign (power) in all regions of the earth and to themselves, until

it is unfortunate that most Muslims have not been able to live up to the Qur'anic verses. Consequently, the verses are only read textually instead of contextually. It is not surprising if they are left far behind compared to the Western and European scholarship in the field of science and technology.

In fact, Muslim countries are countries that are endowed with various natural resources needed by the world, especially fuel, copper, iron and others. But the concerned reality is that they are very dependent on the Western and European countries in mining and managing these resources. As a consequence, the Muslim countries that produce natural resources can economically enjoy a little of the results without more added economic values. All of this happens due to underdevelopment and backwardness in mastering science in the field of natural resource management. It is not so surprising if they have only been consumers of natural resources and have no important role in determining the world economic market. The policies and provisions of the world economy seem to only determine the Western and European countries.

Answering the Modern Challenges of Muslims

Referring to the two challenges faced by Muslims, the internal challenges in the body of Muslims themselves and external challenges that come from the outside, the internal awareness of Muslims is very much needed as an attempt to introspect and internally criticize themselves. In addition, in resolving the external challenges of Muslims, it is strongly correlated with the internal solutions, especially through all Muslim individuals as their emergence is more or less caused by various kinds of problems that infect the internal body of the Muslims themselves.

Internal Business Solutions

Internally, Muslims can make several efforts

it is clear to them that the Koran is true. Isn't it enough that your Lord is a witness to everything?"

to overcome them, one of which is *First*, understanding the values of the teachings of Islam correctly. This solution has basically become the *ijma'* (consensus), by all Islamic religious figures consisting of Traditionalist Islamic figures, Fundamentalist Islamic figures, Reformist Islamic figures and Modernist Islamic leaders. All agree that the right solution to solve all problems faced by Muslims is by understanding and practicing the true teachings of Islam, namely understanding and practicing the teachings and values of Islam according to the guidance of Qur'an and Hadith.

For this reason, the revivalist movement initiated by Ibn Taymiyyah focuses on the purification of the teachings of Islam and *jihād fi sabīlillāh* by opposing the static Islamic thought, firmly criticizing all practices outside Islam which infiltrate the teachings of Islam and demanding to return to Qur'an and Hadith. In addition, opening the door to *ijtihad* and neglecting *taklid* (following) are also alternatives.³⁸ In the 18th century AD (1703-1787), the Ibn Taymiyyah movement was continued by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab who is famous for his Wahabi movement with the mission of fighting *bid'ah* (heresy), *khurafat* (superstition) and inviting Muslims to return to the authenticity and the foundation of Islam.³⁹

In the following century, the idea of returning to the original principle of the teachings of Islam was also echoed by the main figures of Reformist Islam such as Muhammad Jamaluddin Afghani (1839-1897) who mentions the teachings of Islam is the only thing that can treat the disability within Muslims. One of the principles of Islam is calling for reform, as what happened to the early days where the understanding is to firmly stick to the basic principles,⁴⁰ Qur'an as a basis to unite Muslims and become an inspiration for their life

³⁸Asep Syamsul M. Romli, *Demonologi Islam, Upaya Barat Membasmi Kekuatan Islam*, first edition (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2000), 33.

³⁹Fathi Yakan, *Gerakan Islam di Abad Modern*, terj. Masrur Zainuddin, first edition (Jakarta: Media Da'wah, 1987), 49.

⁴⁰Muhammad Habby, 61.

in the practice of *jihad* as conducted by the Salaf scholars.⁴¹

Not much different from his beloved student, Muhammad Abduh, he even invited Muslims to fight against the old-fashion of the *fiqh* experts by positioning Qur'an as the initial source in the Sharia. In addition, he also invited Muslims to use mind and reason to realize the commands of Qur'an on the one hand and inviting them to rise up by utilizing scientific advances that have been developed by the West on the other hand.⁴² Here, Muhammad Abduh has attempted to free religious thoughts from the shackles of *taqlid* (following) and pave the way for reforms that would strengthen the spiritual of Islam appropriately for the modern world.⁴³

In the 20th century, an Islamic revivalist movement has emerged, initiated by Hasan al-Banna by sparking the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt. Not much different from his predecessors, Hasan al-Banna also believes that the teachings of Islam are universal and touch all aspects of human life. There is no separation between one aspect of life and another.⁴⁴ Therefore, the first principle of the Muslim Brotherhood movement is the belief that Islam is a comprehensive system that covers all aspects of life. It is a country and homeland, government and people, morality and strength, love and justice, civilization and Act, science and law, material and natural wealth, income and wealth, *jihad* and *da'wah*, troop and thought. In addition, it is also a pure faith and true worship, no less and no more.⁴⁵

⁴¹Ibid.,85.

⁴²Abdullâh Maḥmûd Shaḥatah, *Al-Imâm Muḥammad 'Abduh: Bayna al-Manhaj al-Dîny wa al-Manhaj al-Ijtimâ'i* (Mesir: Al-Hayî'ah al-Maḥriyyah al-'Âmmah li al-Kitâb, 2000), 19.

⁴³Hamis Syafaq, "Radikalisme Sebagai *Blocking Factor* Bagi Perkembangan Peradaban Islam Modern," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam* 4, no. 2 (2014):463.

⁴⁴Lembaga Pengkajian dan Penelitian WAMI Mesir, *Gerakan Keagamaan dan Pemikiran, Akar Ideologis dan Penyebarannya*, terj. A. Najiyulloh, first edition (Jakarta: Al-Ishlah Press, 1993), 10.

⁴⁵Muhammad Abdullah al-Khatib & Muhammad Abdul Halim Hamid, *Konsep Pemikiran Gerakan Ikhwan, Kajian Analitik terhadap Risalah Ta'alim*, terj. Khazin Abu Faqih (Bandung: Asy Syaamil Press & Grafika, 2001), 24.

This view, according to Hasan al-Banna, comes from Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, he adds the *miqyas* (analogy) he uses in constructing all the guidelines for his movement is to use the Qur'an as its *miqyâs* as Qur'an is actually a guideline consisting of the basics of faith, the principles of social benefit and the whole of the worldly Sharia.⁴⁶

Along with the movements carried out by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, in 1940 in Lahore, Pakistan, the Islamic fighters agreed to establish an Islamic *Jamaah* and chose Abu A'la al-Maududi as their leader. As other Muslim movements, the al-Mawdudi movement is also oriented to carrying out all Islamic conceptions in this world to seek Allah's pleasure and happiness in the hereafter.⁴⁷ In general, the reform program brought by al-Maududi consists of four objects; (1) cleansing and purifying the Islamic thought, (2) self-improvement, (3) community improvement, and (4) improving the government system.⁴⁸

In turn, the effort to return to the main sources of the teachings of Islam, Qur'an and Hadith can neither be negotiated nor postponed. All Muslims must have full awareness to refer to both sources as main inspiring sources in thinking. Theologically, the Qur'an, for example, is believed to be the words of Allah, which has gradually come and passed down to humans as an ethical foundation in all aspects of life to be better, far from violence or terror with the real ideals of peaceful life (*al-salâm*) and justice (*al-'adl*).⁴⁹

For this reason, Muhammad Abduh calls for combating abomination and blindness and utilizing sense, intelligence and brain. In addition, he also fights against backwardness and deficiency in understanding Islam by returning to the main spirits of Islam, as in relying on the

⁴⁶Hasan al-Banna, *Majmû'ah Rasâil al-Imâm as-Shahîd Hasan al-Bannâ* (Mesir: Dâr al-Tawzî' wa al-Naḥr al-Islâmiyyah, 1992), 33.

⁴⁷Fathi Yakan, 54.

⁴⁸Lembaga Pengkajian dan Penelitian WAMI Mesir, 24.

⁴⁹Wasid, 276.

original references, authentic Qur'an and Hadith, and the history of *tasyri'* as well as the practices shown by Prophet Muhammad Companions and guidance from the righteous *salaf* scholars.⁵⁰

With these efforts, all Muslim individuals are internally expected to understand the teachings of Islam correctly and inclusively, instead of the other way around, exclusively and closed-mindedly considering that understanding a religion exclusively can be a fertile ground for the development of radicalism. One of the fundamental factors that cause radicalism is when a religion is understood and taught in an exclusive particularistic manner.⁵¹

However, understanding the principles of the teachings of Islam does not mean ignoring and being hostile to the local socio-cultural customs. On the contrary, it must be under the theory of *muqtdlâ al-hâl* and *muqtadlâ al-'aql*. In this sense, when the teachings take a place, it must be understood and internalized in a peaceful, interactive and even solutive way to various problems. The religious figures and the callers of Islam are demanded to be intelligent to interact with the teachings of Islam by being able to understand the local community. Therefore, it is very important to apply the concept of “*Maintaining good old customs and taking new and better customs*”. The internalization of the principles can also help get rid of the differences, disputes and disunity among Muslims.

Even though one *aqeedah* is the *aqeedah* of Islam, but the different sources of interpretation, internalization, and study of the Qur'an and Hadith is proven to be able to disharmonize Muslims.⁵² Consequently, it can threaten their unity and strength. In the end, with this correct, inclusive and interactive understanding, any disputes and conflicts that occur within the body

of the Muslim community are finally eliminated. The positive effect is the unity of Muslims as the main asset in building strength, security, prosperity, peace and mutual benefit. In external aspect, it can increasingly make the Muslims authoritative and respected by the world which will eventually be involved in developing a world-wide civilization based on the values of justice, interest and humanity.

Further, a true and interactive understanding of the teachings of Islam, especially regarding the progressive teachings of Islam in the field of science will enable to awaken and motivate Muslims to promote scientific research and studies in science and technology as it, indeed, greatly encourages the research and studies. In turn, the integration relationship will provide greater insight including science and religion so that both can work alongside actively. It is said science can maintain and escalate the faith of religious people by providing scientific evidence of revelation.⁵³

According to Jamaluddin al-Afghani, although he really is anti-Western in term of imperialism, he turns out to be inclusive and pro-modern as science and technology are the tools needed for development, while the objectives to achieve are determined by Islam. The teachings of Islam do not contradict with science and even highly recommend achieving it.⁵⁴ Thus, Muslims must get rid of any negative stigma that knowledge and science are against Islam or the enemy of Islam.

External Business Solutions

After the internal problems of Muslims have finally found their solutions, such solutions will eventually support to answer the external challenges. The emergence of external challenges

⁵⁰Abdullâh Maḥmûd Shaḥatah, 7.

⁵¹Karwadi, “Deradikalisasi Pemahaman Ajaran Islam”, *Al-Tahrir, Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 14, no. 1 (2014): 141.

⁵²M. Alfandi, “Prasangka: Potensi Pemicu Konflik Internal Umat Islam”, *Jurnal Walisongo* 21, no. 1 (2013):114.

⁵³Nihayatur Rohmah, Mengintegrasikan Agama dan Sains Menuju Kalender Islam yang Berperadaban (Respon terhadap Kongres Kesatuan Kalender Hijriyah Internasional di Istanbul, Turki, Mei 2016), in *Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies AICIS 2016, Sub Theme 5: Islamic, Science and Technology* (Lampung: IAIN Raden Intan Lampung), 344.

⁵⁴Ach. Maimun Syamsuddin, 69.

is directly or indirectly somewhat due to the internal challenges. As an effort to solve them, there are several efforts to take; **first**, it is very necessary for Muslims, especially the Islamic religious figures and Islamic political leaders to hold and establish intensive communication with the international community in order to show the nature of the teachings of Islam as the *rahmatan lil 'alamîn* (the blessings of the whole world) and uphold the values of tolerance between human beings regardless of their religion, ethnicity, country, language and cultural customs. By displaying friendly Islamic teachings, values and tolerance, it will gradually be able to erode the negative stigma about Islam, especially concerning the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West which is one of the external challenges of Muslims.

The treasures of Islamic and Western civilizations are not necessarily to be confronted. Given the fact that both civilizations expect interests and goodness for humanity universally and globally, they must indeed be adapted and interacted with the values of the teachings of their respective religions. It is very clear, that Islam also recognizes the existence of multi ethnicities, multi ideologies, multi customs and multi cultures that cannot be avoided in the reality of human social life. The existence of these multi-civilizations and their variants is not a reason to cause clash and conflict. Further with the variants, it also opens the door of *ta'aruf*, help each other and bond unity,⁵⁵ and even fix each other's weaknesses in each civilization.

God's intention to create multi-ethnic and multi-cultural human beings is to precisely enable humans to know each other. This means one person and another complete each other to achieve the perfection of life. With mutual correction, one

community and another will be able to correct any perspective deficiency. According to al-Farabi, it is not possible for humans to achieve perfection naturally except by creating some communities that help each other. Every community must help meet the needs of other communities so that there will be several communities doing the same thing to achieve perfection.⁵⁶ Similarly, Ibn Khaldun mentions communities are deliberately formed to realize two basic needs; (1) fulfilling the needs of human nature in society and in common life by realizing the security and tranquility of a peaceful life; and (2) meeting the basic economic needs to maintain life and survival as living things.⁵⁷

As a religious teaching that carries the slogan *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (the blessings for the whole world), Islam should be one of the solutions to create a safe and peaceful global condition. The slogan here should not only be interpreted as an internal obedience for its adherents, but also a blessing for adherents of other religions. The blessings also go universally, whenever, wherever and to whomever. As adherents of Islamic ideology, Muslims who become the center and reflection of blessed and tolerated teachings of Islam should be able to demonstrate by actualizing the values of Islamic nature in their daily lives, both individually and socially.

Internally, Muslims must firmly realize and believe the true values of the teachings of Islam as their life guideline. With determined belief, it will awaken their enthusiasm and confidence that they are the best people chosen to promote goodness, peace, interest and development of the world and prevent as well as fight against the wrongdoing, socio-economic inequality, harm and crime.⁵⁸ Therefore, they should view and understand the

⁵⁵Maḥmūd Hamdī Zaqqūq, 43. As mentioned in Q.S. al-Hujarat: 13. "O people, we Truly created you from a man and a woman and made you a nation and tribe, so that you know each other. Surely the noblest persons of you beside Allah are those who are most devoted among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Understanding and All-Knowing.

⁵⁶Muḥammad Sayyid Aḥmad al-Musayyar, *Al-Mujtama' al-Mithāly fī al-Fikr al-Falsafī wa Mawqif al-Islām minhu* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1989), 177.

⁵⁷Alī al-Hawwāt & Aḥmad al-Naklāwī, *Ilm al-Ijtimā'; Madkhal li Dirāsah al-Mushkilāt al-Ijtimā'iyyah*, first edition (Tripoli, Libya: Manshurāt Jāmi'ah al-Fātiḥ, 1982), 33.

⁵⁸As stated in Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 110. "You are the best people who were born to humans, to tell the ma'ruf (good things) and prevent from the evil as well as believe in Allah."

values of Islam universally for their own interest and the benefit of humanity together.⁵⁹

The more Muslims can actualize these values, the more negative stigma about the teachings of Islam and its adherents will be eroded and the ‘virus’ of Islamophobia which has infected the European and Western societies. With the loss of this ‘virus’, it will become a big capital for Muslims and Western and European communities in eliminating the negative stigma of the clash of Islamic and Western civilizations. In addition, it can become a big asset in establishing communication between the Islamic and the West civilization without being disturbed by negative prejudices. The two civilizations here are expected to synergize to achieve the benefits of human life without losing their individual identities and fundamental suspicion.

After the communication and relations happen between the Islamic world and the West, the second external solution of Muslims can be applied. That is a developing science and technology by holding scientific collaboration between them and even with the international global community. Basically, God wants to create two types of creation. One creation is controllable and has no power, no freedom and no choice. This creation is manifested in terms of a universe, besides human beings. The second creation is the human beings that God creates as a creature given responsibility. God has created a caliph on earth, so they could prosper the earth with all goodness. In addition, God glorifies and prioritize all beings. This glory is deliberately devoted to humans because God has bestowed brain, freedom and will.⁶⁰

Therefore, God grants His grace to humans by

⁵⁹Allah said in Hūd: 61. “He has created you from the earth (soil) and made you prosperous.”

⁶⁰Maḥmūd Hamdī Zaquq, 15-16. As mentioned in Q.S. al-Aḥzab: 72. “We have really given mandates to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, all are reluctant to carry out the mandates and they are worried of betraying them. In the end, the humans request to carry out the mandates. Truly, man is very wrong and very foolish”.

subjecting the universe to the interest and benefit for all mankind.⁶¹ In addition, He teaches them his knowledge, so they can carry out His holy mandate as a caliph on earth, the caliph who is able to enliven the earth for the sake of creating common interest and goodness.⁶²

If Muslims do not want to be left behind in the scientific and technological fields from the Western world, then it is time to revive or revitalize the Islamic intellectual inheritance that has been neglected and if necessary redefine science with an epistemology based on the two sources of revelation (Qur’an and Hadith). Therefore, they must rediscover this valuable inheritance by always remembering that science is the treasury of the believers who have been lost. Whoever finds it is entitled to it.⁶³

In the end, it is clear that Islam informs and teaches mankind to be creatures that prosper and enliven the world. Prospering and enlivening here must be based on science and knowledge. With both values, the universe will be able to be utilized without causing any damage and loss. In turn, an advanced and modern human civilization will be built and make human life easier and happier.

Conclusion

The setback, backwardness and under development of Muslims in various fields are an accumulation of their various shortcomings both internally and externally. These shortcomings are their challenges to face and to deal with. Internally, for example, they must be open-minded about the teachings of Islam and the development of era. Such teachings must be understood and believed to be a solution, as a guide to live universally in

⁶¹Allah said in Q.S. al-Jāthiyah: 13. “And He has granted you what is in the heavens and what is on earth, (as a mercy). There really are, indeed, signs (of Allah) for those who think.”

⁶²As mentioned in Q.S. Hud: 61. “And to Thamud we sent their brother, Salih. Salih said: “O my people, worship Allah, there is no Lord for you except Him. He has created you from the earth (the land) and made you prosperous, so ask His forgiveness, and then repent to Him. My Lord is indeed very close (His mercy) and listens to His servants’ prayer.”

⁶³Nihayatur Rohmah, 345.

answering the challenges of the era.

Therefore, the teachings must be interpreted in an inclusive and interactive manner in various aspects of life. They are not only ideologically believed, but also understood as spirit and soul in the internal interaction between Muslims and external interaction among religious communities. Further, it is also understood contextually. As a result, the teachings will truly become the unifying teachings of Muslims as well as universal grace and become a global solution for humanity. In addition, the teachings will make them as good as the people who are “*ṣâlih li kulli zamân wa al-makân*” (compatible with time and place) and individually (*âmanû*) and socially (*‘amilû al-sâlihât*) pious. In the end, all the problems and challenges faced by Muslims, both internally and externally, will be resolved on their own.

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