

The Paradigm of Quran as the Main Element of Islamic Civilization

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Abstract

The paper would like to demonstrate the fundamental problems of Islamic civilizations on how the sharia concept lean-to fail to solve the problem of poverty, corruption, as well as social injustice in numerous Islamic countries and other regions in the world. However, Muslim scholars simply explain that the Islamic system as a solution within the framework of technical and practical, albeit they do not implement the concept of the paradigm of Qur'an in running Islamic system in daily social life. Due to these conditions, 'the glorification' of Islamic system just stuck as normative values, the imagining the glory of Islam in the future fatalistically as caused the absence of the fundament framework of thinking to satisfy as a tool for analyzing and transforming the social reality. According to these realities, the paper would like to; a) explain the roots of crisis in Islamic civilization which it seeks by socio-religious perspectives; b) to conceptualize the term of the paradigm of Qur'an as an epistemology and the construction of thought which it affected towards human belief and praxis; c) demonstrating the correlation between the paradigm of Qur'an and Muslim contribution towards science and civilization in the global world by mapping numerous Muslim intelligentsia's works in the Golden Age of Islam era.

Keywords: Paradigm, Qur'an, Civilization, Society, Islamic.

Abstrak

Tulisan ini berupaya untuk menunjukkan masalah mendasar tentang peradaban Islam, dimana secara realitas sosiologis hukum *Syariah* yang menjadi ujung tombak peradaban terkesan belum efektif dalam menyelesaikan masalah kemiskinan, korupsi, serta ketidakadilan sosial baik di banyak negara

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Islam maupun belahan dunia lainnya. Salah satu persoalan mendasar yang mengakibatkan ketidakberhasilan itu adalah pada penerapan Syariah Islam dalam menjawab segala tantangan. Hal ini lantaran diskursus tentang hukum Islam sebagai solusi hanya berada di wilayah teknis dan praktis, namun alpha dalam menempatkan paradigma Qur'an sebagai landasan berpikir dalam menerapkan hukum Islam itu sendiri. Karena kondisi ini, 'glorifikasi' hukum Islam hanya terjebak sebagai nilai-nilai normatif, membayangkan kejayaan Islam di masa depan secara fatal sebagai akibat tidak adanya *framework* berpikir yang memadai untuk dijadikan alat, guna menganalisis atau untuk mentransformasikan realitas sosial. Berangkat dari realitas tersebut, tulisan ini ingin; a) menjelaskan akar-akar krisis dalam peradaban Islam yang dicari oleh perspektif sosial-keagamaan; b) mengonseptualisasikan istilah paradigma Qur'an sebagai epistemologi dan konstruksi pemikiran yang mempengaruhi keyakinan dan praksis manusia; c) menunjukkan korelasi antara paradigma Qur'an dan kontribusi Muslim terhadap sains dan peradaban di dunia global dengan memetakan berbagai karya intelektual Muslim di era Golden Age of Islam.

Kata Kunci: Paradigma, Qur'an, Peradaban, Masyarakat, Islam.

Introduction

It is a question uttered by M. Natsir (1908-1993) to express that the nature of civilization progression and regression depends entirely on its education and scientific development. The same statement is also mentioned by historian and philosopher Muslim, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406): the civilization is a product of several elements, such as; a) government ability, social organization, as well as political power; b) occupations and source of livelihood, c) the creation of science and technology. Moreover, science is the fundamental element which it determined the essence of civilization and affecting another element of civilization itself than politics. In other words, a nation and civil society will be civilized (cultured) only if it has achieved a certain intellectual and scientific level. Afterwards, the progression/regression of a civilization is related to the advancement of science.¹

¹ Ibnu Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, (Great Britain: St. Edmunds Press, 1978) and S. F. Al-Attas, *Applying Ibn Khaldun: The recovery of a lost tradition in sociology*, (New York: Routledge, 2014).

If we look further, Islam as a *dīn* also has its own construction of civilization. As stated by SMN Al-Attas which is inspired by the statement of Ibnu Manzur (1232-1311) in *Lisān al-'Arab*; Islam as a *dīn* does not mean only as a religion (as understood by the western religious history), but also as a means to create a civilization (*tamaddun*) based on Islamic values.² A western historian H.A.R. Gibb (1895-1971) even stated that, "Islam is indeed much more than a system of theology, it is complete civilization".³

Al-Qur'an stated that; each man is created to worship Him, QS. al-Dzariyat [51]: 56 and the leader of ALLAH on Earth, QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 30. Moreover, in order to be the leader on earth by doing His command and upholding Islamic civilization, knowledge is very important. As importance as it is, Allah grants distinction for those in seeking knowledge, QS. al-Mujadilah [58]: 11. And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Mighty and Forgiving QS. Faatir [35]: 28. Using our knowledge is the only way to understand the nature and reflection out His greatness (versess), wisdom, sunnah, and characters. Allah takes us into submitting our self to Him, QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 164; QS. Fussilat [41]: 53. A good deed must be based on well-applied knowledge. As narrated by *Muawiyah*, *Rasulullah* stated that a good deed depends on the level of knowledge applied to it (knowledge and understanding). That is why Islam sets knowledge as the highest value in creating an Islamic civilization.⁴

² Naturally, the word *dīn* in Arabic originated from the word DYN, which contains multiple interpretation. Although the interpretations are not contradicting to each other, each meaning tied conceptually thus forming an inseparable unity. There are at least four interpretation of the word *dīn*, they are: (1) indebtedness, (2) submissiveness; (3) judicious power; (4) natural inclination/tendency. Furthermore, Its verb, *dāna*, originated from the word *dīn* which means the obligation to be responsible and to run a civilization ruled by law and authority based on the vision of Islamic value and teaching. Therefore, when Allah's *dīn* (religion) named Islam has been perfected in a place, the place is then called Madinah. The root of the word *dīn* and Madinah create a new branch of word, *madana*. Which means to build, to establish a city, to develop, to advance, and to uphold. The root of comes from *tamaddun*, which literally means a civilization which also means a culture-based city. See S. M. N. Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, (Kuala Lumpur: IBFIM, 2014) and S. M. N. al-Attas, *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: UTM Press, 2014).

³ See H.A.R. Gibb, *Aliran-Aliran Modern dalam Islam*, (Djakarta: Tintamas, 1954) and Mohammad Natsir, *Capita Selecta (Jilid I). Tjetakan ke-2*, (Bandung: Penerbitan Sumup Bandung, 1961).

⁴ See W. M. N. Wan Daud, *Budaya Ilmu: Satu Penjelasan*, (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 2007).

If we are referring to Qur'an, we could find that there are 854 out of 6,236 verses in the Qur'an that use various etymological variants of *'ayn lām mīm ('i-l-m)*, the Arabic root for terms relating to knowledge.⁵ This number is higher compared to the number of verses regarding the shariah law -which it al-Ghazali (1058-1111) stated only 500 verses in the Quran have legal materials.⁶

Moreover, Bucaille stated that "...It is, moreover, perfectly legitimate, not only to regard the Qur'an as the expression of a revelation, but also to award it a very special place, on account of guarantee of authenticity it provides and the presence in it of scientific statements..."⁷ Due this numerous amount of 'knowledge' in Qur'an, Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), Quthb (1906-1966), also al-Attas (1931) explained that Allah is telling the human to seek for the truth by using his mind and senses.⁸ Therefore, Açıkgenç divided three important period of the descent of Qur'an, they are: the first period (early Mecca period): The birth of Islamic way of life; the second period (late Mecca period): The emergence of knowledge structure in the perspective of live, and the third period (Madinah Period): The birth of Islamic knowledge tradition.⁹

⁵ M. Ashraf Adeel, *Epistemology of the Quran: Elements of a Virtue Approach to Knowledge and Understanding*, (Switzerland: Springer, 2019), 5.

⁶ G. S. Reynolds (ed), *New Perspectives on the Qur'an: The Qur'an in the Historical Context 2*, (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2011), 73.

⁷ Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science: The Holy Scriptures Examined in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, (Pakistan: KAZI Publications, 1977), 251-252.

⁸ See Alparslan Açıkgenç, *Islamic Science: Towards a Definition*, (Kuala Lumpur, ISTAC, 1996) and Nidhal Guessoum, *Islam's quantum question: Reconciling Muslim tradition and modern science*, (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

⁹ In his work, Alparslan divided three periods, they are: the first period, where the Islamic way of life is portrayed by the revelation received by Muhammad. As explained above, the Islamic way of life, as a quasi-scientific worldview, started from Muhammad's central role in telling and explaining his revelation. In other words, Mecca period is very important in creating the Islamic way of life. Furthermore, due the numerous *Sura* descended in Mecca (85 out of 114 *Sura*), then the Mecca period is divided into two other periods: The early and late Mecca period. **(1) Early period**, when the revelation given to Muhammad contained the concept of godhood and faith, resurrection day, creation, afterlife, heaven and hell, judgement day, bad and good, helping the poor, protecting the orphan, and all of them are the important elements in the structure of Islamic worldview. **(2) Late Mecca period**, the revelation contained the more general and abstract concept, such as the concept of *'ilm*, *nubuwwah*, *dīn*, *ibādah* dan etc. **(3) Medina period**, where most of the revelation contained the improvement of the liturgy practice, pillars of Islam, law system that arrange the interpersonal relation, family, and society; including law on *jihād*, marriage, inheritance, the Muslim's relation with another religion and so on. In the context of life's perspective, the formation of world concept happened after Mecca period, while the structural configuration of scientific concept, scientific conceptual scheme in Islamic way of life happened during the Medina period. See Alparslan Açıkgenç, *Islamic Science...*

This shares something in common with the knowledge tradition built by Rasulullah and his friends. They established a study group named *Ashâb al-Suffa* in Madinah. In this group, Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (d. 855) explained there are 70-80 resident members of *Ashâb al-Suffa*. According to Qurtubi (d. 1273), there were about four hundred students who live studied in the *Suffah*.¹⁰ On every day the members of the *suffah* spent their time studying Islam and leading a life of spiritual avocation.¹¹ As the result, numerous brilliant experts in *hadith* and Qur'an emerged from the group, for instance; Abu Hurairah (598-678), Abu Dzar al-Ghifary (d. 652), Abdullah bin Mas'ud (d. 650), as well as Salman al-Farisy -who also expert in Christian and Zoroastrian faith and the first person who translated parts of the Qur'an into Persian-, ect. There are many *hadith* recorded and Qur'anic verses retyped by *Ashâb al-Suffah* as well. Absolutely, these traditions were encouraged by the verses in Qur'an that transformed the *jahiliyah* people into well-educated and fair-mannered society; thus transforming the *jahiliyah* Arab generation from the least interesting society, into the respected world leaders.

In Islamic civilization, Medina Charter and Pact of 'Umar (*al-Shurut al 'Umariyyah*) in Aelia, Jerusalem are the evident that Islam also attend for prosperity and rights of the people as its nature. As the result, the Muslim could create long-lasting peace and plural society that guarantee freedom of faith and worship among the other religion.¹² Furthermore, the *khulâfa'urraşyidîn* era shows that the government institution, scientific community, school, and society in general could work together to create a prototype of civilized society. In the era of Umar bin Khattab's Caliphate, Muslim forces had successful to conquer Jerusalem city without 'bloodshed' as well as guarantee the security for churches, synagogues and Christian-Jews religious activities. Moreover, the Muslim became mediator to arbitrate conflict inter-Christian sects regarding Holy Sites reclaim.¹³

¹⁰ Usman Ghani, "Abu Hurayra' a Narrator of Hadith Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Hadith with special reference to Classical Islamic modes of criticism", Ph.D Thesis, (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2011), 44.

¹¹ R. A. Gabriel, *Muhammad: Islam's First Great General*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), xxv.

¹² Yetkin Yildirim, *The Medina Charter: A Historical Case of Conflict Resolution, Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 439-450, October 2009, 441.

¹³ See Oded Peri, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: The Questions of Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times*, (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001), and M. Y. Abu-Munshar, *Islamic Jerusalem and Its Christians: A History of Tolerance and Tensions*, (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

Definitively and conceptually, Islamic teaching in advancing the science as process to be closer to Allah and abiding His command in creating an Islamic civilization that is graceful for all (*Rah̄matan li al-‘Alamīn*). However, nowadays, in the reality, there are numerous Muslim countries are falling back socially, culturally, economically, and politically. An interesting fact from a research by Scheherazde S. Rehman and Hossein Askari titled *How Islamic Are Islamic Countries?* released in 2010 shows that the country ranked as the 1st to 37th most Islamic value-applying country are not Muslim countries. Quite the contrary, the Muslim countries such as Malaysia is ranked in the 38th position, followed by Kuwait (48th), Bahrain (64th), Brunei (65th), UAE (66th), and Indonesia (140th). Plus, there are still 44 other Muslim countries ranked under the 100th position. In the same year, Sceherazade S. Rehman and Hossein Askari also released their research on Economic Islamicity Index, a research about how far countries in the world have applied the key economics value that closely related to Islamic value. The result is rather similar with their previous research, Malaysia is in the 33th position, followed by Kuwait (42), Kazakhstan (58), Brunei (55), and Bahrain (61), Indonesia (104), and other Muslim majority countries ranked under the 100th position.¹⁴ Based on the Statistical Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries in 2007, Muslim countries generate only 6 per cent of the world’s wealth, while accounting for nearly 22 per cent of its population.¹⁵ The data represented in Islamicity Rank and Economic Islamicity Index Rank portrays that the lack of Islamic quality applied in the Muslim countries has reduced the quality of economic application with Islamic vision.

Moreover, the Corruption Perception Index 2015 released by International Transparency (TI) shows that among the researched 187 countries, the Muslim countries have the lowest rank of Corruption Perception Index in the world. Somalia is ranked in the 167th position, Afghanistan (166th), South Sudan (165th), Libya (161), Iraq (161), Guinea-Bissau (158), Yemen (154), Turkmenistan (154), Syria (154), etc. Meanwhile, the Global Peace Index 2015 released by the Institute for Economics and Piece also shows the same result. Among 162 countries

¹⁴ See S. S. Rehman and H. Askari, “How Islamic are Islamic Countries?” In *Global Economy Journal 2010*, Vol. 10, Iss.2 and S. S. Rehman and H. Askari, “Economic Islamicity Index”. In *Global Economy Journal 2010*, Vol. 10, Iss. 3).

¹⁵ See A. A. Allawi, *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 207.

in the world, the Muslim countries are considered as the dangerous countries as they are ranked in the lowest position of the safest country in the world. Syria is in the 162th position, Iraq (161th), Afghanistan (160th), South Sudan (159), Somalia (157th), Sudan (156th), Pakistan (154th), etc.

Then how about the education system applied in the Muslim majority country today? SCImago Journal & Country Rank 2014's report shows that the Muslim majority countries have the lowest scopus index of scientific publication. As stated by the report; Iran is in the 16th position (39.573) scientific publication, Turkey is in the 19th (37.095 publications), Malaysia in the 23rd (25.330 publications), Saudi Arabia is in the 35th (6.117 publications), Egypt is in the 37th position (14.196 publications), Pakistan is in the 43rd position (10.541 publications), Tunisian is in the 50th (5.863 publications), and Indonesia is in the 52 position (5.499 publications). Quite the contradiction, America is in the 1st position (552.690 publications), China is in the 2nd position (452.877 publications), United Kingdom is in the 3rd position (160.935 publications), Germany is in the 4th position (149.595 publications), and Japan is in the 5th position (114.999 publications).

By seeing these phenomena, then how do we create a better Islamic education for the sake of Islamic countries in the world? Although Qur'an have been completely memorized and discussed by many Muslim in their countries, then how is possible for the Muslim country to be so degraded in term of civilization, education, and morality? According to these questions, this paper aims; a) to conceptualize the term of the paradigm of Qur'an as an epistemology and the construction of thought which it affected towards human belief and praxis; b) demonstrating the correlation between spiritual of knowledge seekers in Islam -which it covered in the paradigm of Qur'an- and its contribution towards science and civilization in the global world by mapping numerous Muslim intelligentsia's works in the Golden Age of Islam era.

The Paradigm of Qur'an as a Concept

According to the problem of the paradigm, in *Islam and Secularism* al-Attas imagined that the banality of Islamic civilization of the degradation of Muslim in the contemporary era had occurred as caused by the error in interpreting the nature of knowledge in Islam-which

led to the epistemological crisis, miss-orientation, and theological disorientation-that makes the Muslim lose their decency which it directly affecting to the appearance of incompetent Muslim leaders, who lack in moral, intellectual, and spiritual aspect.¹⁶ Of course, according to the data of Global Peace Index above, these conditions not only had affected to the misery for their nation and society, but also had affected to the humanity of the global world.

If we analyze the al-Attas perspectives above, it can be simplified that the error does not come from the Qur'anic verses, albeit comes from the error in understanding the meaning contained in the Qur'an as a guidance of life, belief, as well as action. In this matter, the Muslim's biggest challenge is to become the solution in creating an ideal civilization to transform a well-characterized social-transcendental society " *yukhrijûnahum min al-zhulumât ila al-nnûr*" QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 257, in which the spirituality and moral of the Muslim (*bathiniyyah*) must be a stimulant to develop the social-political knowledge towards the value of divinity. In other words, the Muslim must be able to analyze deeply the factor that significantly regresses the Islamic world. This awareness to know and learn such problem must be used to elaborate the factors of the problem into a more structured scientific theory in order to explain the non-empirical and empirical reality of the universe and also provide insight regarding its changes and transformation.¹⁷

However, the social-transcendental agenda will not be achieved unless the Muslim, as the agents of change, know their purpose, needs, and goal in the world. So, in order to know the purpose, goal, need, and creation, the Muslim must follow the guidance provided with the Qur'an.

As stated within the Qur'an, the purpose of the human creation is no less than to worship Him, QS. al-Dzariyat [51]: 56, also becoming the leader on Earth, QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 30, human must be obedient (*thâ'ah*) to Allah by following its nature (*fithrah*) created by Allah, QS. al-Rum [30]: 30). The nature of human being tightly related to its agreement with the God (*mîtsâq, 'ahd*) who has created its purpose, nature, and action,

¹⁶ See S. M. N. Al-Attas, *Islam and...*

¹⁷ The transformative character described in this theory is one of the Marxian social theory that becomes a pretension to not only interpret the empirical reality, but also to become the will to change the reality according to the desired structure of paradigm. In this case, Islam also derives the teaching from Qur'an and *Sunnah* to transform the reality into the desired social and universal structure. See Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi untuk Aksi*, (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2008), 548-565.

QS. al-A'raf [7]: 172.¹⁸ The nature of the “promise” and “definition” of the human being with its God is in the form of religion (*dîn*) and true submissiveness (*aslama*) QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 125. So that human being will fulfill his promise with Allah, human being must implement the promise with all of its soul into his action (*'amal*, by referring to *'ibâdah*) in obeying His command and upholding His rule (*syarî'ah*) QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 48-49) that contains scientific and spiritual values. And to perform the nature as His servant, human being needs the *ilm* (knowledge). In Qur'an, *al-ilm* is a seminal concept related to *al-âlim* (human being) and *al-ma'lûm* (the universe) and all of them must be tied to (The Creator), QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 164, al-Ra'd [13]: 3-4, a unity with *Khâliq*¹⁹ the obtained through an observation towards His creation which requires a verification (*istidlâl*). Human being is a creature required by *Khâliq* to do the act of *akhlâq al-karîmah* to Allah, His emissary, and humanity in general, QS. al-Syu'ara [26]: 183; Luqman [31]: 18, and all of the universe is His creation, QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 11; al-Syu'ara [26]: 183, and upholding justice by creating wisdom.²⁰

Rasulullah paradigmatically implemented the whole teaching of Qur'an in his life, as stated by Aisyah RA that Rasulullah is the living Qur'an. In this case, Rasulullah translated the whole noble value contained with the Qur'an into his personal life. Rasulullah's behavior, as stated within the Qur'an -the guidance and blessing for those who are doing goodness, QS. Luqman [31]: 3- contains the concept of Allah,

¹⁸ S. M. N. al-Attas, *Prolegomena...*, 144.

¹⁹ The meaningful relation between the *Khalq* corresponds to the understanding of *khâliq*, *makhlûq*, and *akhlâq*, which are based on KHLQ. It means as 'giving something appropriately and accordingly'-which is actually the human's true nature for doing good in according the value of the creator. The character of *the Khâliq* is embedded within each soul and it does not work the other way around. Rasulullah SAW stated that; "Allah created the human on His image". See S. M. N. al-Attas, *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2001), 105-106. At the same time, William C. Chittick also shares the same idea that; "The Islamic God is *anthropomorphic*, because the Islamic human is *theomorphic*". If Allah in interpreted as the character of human being, there will be a gap between His and the human character, QS. al-Syu'ara [26]: 11; al-Ikhlâs [112]: 4). *Re-ligio* or "trying back" to God is impossible without images of God and imagining God. See William C. Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World*, (Oxford: Oneworld), 87 and Nidhal Guessoum, *Islam's quantum question...*, 24 and see W. M. Watt, *Islamic Revelation in the Modern World*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969).

²⁰ As stated by al-Attas, the human must be fair in implementing the knowledge by knowing its limit and extent; knowing how to implement the knowledge for the sake of others; implementing it appropriately under the supervision of its expert. Knowing how to use a knowledge appropriately is called as wisdom. See S. M. N. al-Attas, *Prolegomena...*, 41-90 and S. M. N. al-Attas, S.M.N, *Risalah untuk Kaum...*, 105-106.

Malâ'ikah, *akhirah*, *ma'rûf* (good) and *munkar* (bad), and so on. These paradigmatically abstract concept must become the spirit in learning and transforming the concrete and observable phenomenon, such as the concept of the universe, helping the *fuqarâ'* (poor), *dhu'afâ* (weak), *mustadh'afin* (oppressed), fighting against the *dzâlimûn* (tyrant), warning the *aghniyâ'* (the rich), *mustakbirûn* (the ruler), *mufâsidûn* (corruptor) as well as many other concept applied by Rasulullah.²¹

In this respect, Rasulullah's *akhlâq* (behavior) was in line with the value contained in Qur'an. From Qur'an, the structure of Islamic Worldview is based on the frame of Tauhid to Allah which is manifested into the paradigm al Qur'an. Moreover, the paradigm of Qur'an -*paradigm*, which it was defined by Thomas Kuhn as a concept of thought that guides every human-being for understanding the reality which it should orientate to resolve the society by scientific measurement- should be utilized for two functions; 1) as 'an epistemology' in understanding a meaning and spiritual enhancement that will transform into the action; 2) as a construction of thought for digging the wisdom of every teaching, story, proverb, and value contained in the Qur'an, that will affect the quality of the transcendental faith manifested within the intellect, moral, and social life.²²

In this case, the paradigm is considered as the base of an action and observation towards the reality of human civilization and phenomenon of the universe that enable us to understand and also to construct the reality, as taught by the Qur'an. Based on this review, the paradigm of Qur'an encourages each Muslim to interpret, formulize the grand design of Islamic system, and the Islamic knowledge in general to create a solution for the humanity in the world and the afterlife. In this case, the paradigm of Qur'an not only becomes as the axiological foundation, but also becomes the epistemological foundation in shaping a civilization.

From the Paradigm of Qur'an to the Pinnacle of Islamic Civilization: the Birth of Muslim Intellegensia in the Golden Age of Islam

As explained above, the Islamic way of life manifested in the paradigm of Qur'an has become the beacon and knowledge to transform the "value" of humanity and universe, which *Tawheed*

²¹ Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam...*, 550.

²² See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution (third edition)*, (Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press), and Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam...*, 548-563.

become the prominent principles in metaphysic, ethic, axiology, and aesthetic²³ in Islamic civilization. In this context and connection, the correlation development of *‘Ilm*, principle of *adab*, and practice of *akhlâq* which is depicted in the Qur’an has been a source of inspiration and created a solid structure of civilization in all areas of life, including;

Areas of Government: Umar bin Abdul Aziz, Nuruddin al-Zanki,²⁴ Shalahuddin al- Ayyubi,²⁵ Muhammad al-Fatih, ect. Areas of Literature: From *shadr al-Islâm* (The simplistic Early Period, 1-100H /622-720) where poet Hasan bin Tsabit, Ka’ab bin Malik, and Abdullah bin Rawahah were born, *Dhuḥâ al-Islâm* (The *Tawazûn* of Middle Period: around 100-656 H/720-1258)²⁶ where poet Abdul Hamid al-Katib (130

²³ In Islam, art is developed as a concrete esthetical effort by the Muslim to create a visually satisfying artistic product as a way to be closer to Allah. However, ever since the Christian secularism, the developed art was no longer to fulfill the Christian esthetical purpose and no longer tied to Christian theology. For example, Sunan Kalijaga altered the tradition of storytelling in *pewayangan* (shadow puppet) by switching the character from Hindu and Budha teaching with the new character such as *Jimat Kalimasada*, *Dewa Ruci*, and *Petruk Dadi Ratu*. *Jimat Kalimasada* originated from Syahadat. See A. A. L. Kencana, *The Influence between Islam and Javanese Mysticism in the Aesthetics of Wayang Purwa: A Religio-Cultural Acculturation*, Master Thesis, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2014), Pierre Fournié, “Rediscovering the Walisongo, Indonesia: A potential new destination for international pilgrimage”, In *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, Vol. 7, Iss. 4, Article 10, and D. C. Knauth, *Performing Islam through Indonesian Popular Music, 2002-2007*, Ph.D Dissertation, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh).

²⁴ Nuruddin al-Zanki was a Leader known as an expert in *ḥadīths* and involved in learning-teaching activity. He was also known as a faithful person and entitled by some historians as the 6th *Khulafâ’ Râsyidîn*. There has not been any Muslim ruler who was on par with Umar bin Abdul Aziz. He appointed many ulama’s who were also the experts on various scientific field. When he was in charge, Nuruddin al-Zanki lived in a humble way. One even said that the poorest individual who lived during his leadership is none other but himself. But, his kingdom reach a high level of economic advancement and development that never achieved before. His humble behavior (*zuhûd*) was followed by his ministers. His wife endows their wealth to build a public inn in Hajar al-Dzahab region and several Sufism housing in hatun Bab al-Nashar. See I. M. al-Kilani, *Misteri Masa Kelam Islam dan Kemenangan Perang Salib: Refleksi 50 Tahun Gerakan Dakwah Para Ulama Untuk Membangkitkan Umat dan Merebut Palestina (translated)*, (Bekasi: Kalam Aulia Mediatama, 2007).

²⁵ Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi was an expert in fiqh. In the era of his leadership, the phenomenon of humble way of living was close to that of the Nuruddin al-Zanki’s. Until his demise, Shalahuddin always shared his wealth for everyone in needs. Moreover, he was very generous when it comes for the interest of the Muslim Society. For example, he donated 12.000 horses for the mujahidin when they were assaulting Akka city. See I. M. al-Kilani, *Misteri Masa Kelam Islam...*

²⁶ Although there were many poets born in this era, most of their work lacked the paradigm of Qur’an thus rendering the Arabic literature back to the *jahili* era filled with uncontrolled sexual norm and hedonism. However, the development of Islamic poem was very significant for the governance as it became the catalyst for the conflict and revolt. In the late ‘Abbasi period, the poems became more philosophical and theological,

H/767 M),²⁷ Abu 'Amr al-Jahizh (150 H/767 M),²⁸ Abu al-Thayyib al-Mutanabbi (d. 354 H/986 M), Abu Firas al-Hamdani (d. 357 H/969 M), and Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri (d. 449 H/1058 M).²⁹

Areas of Caligraphy: Zaid bin Tsabit, 'Ali bin Abi Thalib, Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali (d. 688),³⁰ Quthbah al-Muharrir, Khalid bin al-Hayyaj, Khalil bin Ahmad (d. 786), ect. Areas of Musics: Al-Khurdadzbih (musical instruments), Al-Farabi (musical theory), Ibn Abi al-Shalt (acoustic science), Al-Mulawi (musical theory in the form of poem), the instigator *Ikhwân Shafâ'* who also discussed the music through the tradition of science and philosophy. Among the Muslim scientist between the 9th century and 19th century, there were 125 renowned scientist who discussed many scientific perspectives such as: art, religion, manner, medical health, historical philosophy, journey and geography, proverb, instrumentation, and many more.

Areas of Medical health: Abdullah bin Sahl Rabban al-Thabari (the author of *Firdaus al-Ḥikmah*, d. 241 H/855 M), Ya'qub al-Kindi (the founder of the philosophy of Muslim Hellenization, d. 241 H/855

which also developed the value of civilization and urban society, history and asceticism. During this era, many poets have the background as the expert in law, medical health, and philosophy. See I. R. al-Faruqi dan L. L. al-Faruqi, L. L. *Atlas Budaya Islam: Menjelajah Khazanah Peradaban Gemilang*, (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2003), Josef W. Meri (ed). *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, (New York: Routledge, 2006) as well as David Deming. *Science and Technology in World History Volume 2: Early Christianity, the Rise of Islam and the Middle Ages*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2010), 95.

²⁷ Abdul Hamid al-Katib (130 H/794 M) was also a corresponding government leader during the leadership of Hisyam bin 'Abdul-Malik. He left more than 1000 pieces of material.

²⁸ Abu 'Amr al-Jahizh (150H/767 M) has written 160 books with varied length that talked about dignity, compassion, fluency and clarity, greed, *i'jâz* of Qur'an, and *h}ujah* (prophetic argumentation).

²⁹ Although al-Ma'arri turned blind due the smallpox he suffered when he was 3 years old, he has written many topics other than poem. His works are; *Al-Luzûmiyyat* and *haqt al-Zand* that includes thousands of poems; and *Al-Rasa'il* that contains 800 poems on various subjects.

³⁰ Al-Du'aliwas believed to be the inventor of the colorful big dot system used during the early Islam period as a vocal mark. By the command of Al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Thaqafi, the successful development of Islam in Damascus (the main center of the kingdom of Byzantine), Arabia, West Asia, North Africa, Bukhara, Afganistan, Balkh, Samarqand, Mongolia, China, and other countries in the central Asia demanded a new necessity for the *muallaf* to improve the Arabic writing. Until the beginning of the 7th century, the Arabic alphabet was created separately just like the writing in Ibrani and other Semite language. Slowly but sure, a rule was set to combine many Arabic character. The dot was added to distinguish the letter represented with one form (for example: *bâ, tâ', tsâ' jim, hâ, khâ', dâl, dzal*) as well as the vocal mark of which was developed to complement the vocal consonant *fathah*}, *dhammah*, *kasrah*.

M), Khalaf Abul Qasim al-Zahrawi (d. 414 H/ 1013 M),³¹ Abu Bakar Muhammad al-Razi (d. 311 H/ 932 M),³² Ibnu Sina (d. 428 H/1037 M),³³ Khalaf bin 'Abbas al-Zahrawi (d. 414 H/ 1013 M),³⁴ etc. During the era of Al-Ma'mun, Hunayn bin Ishaq (d. 260 H/ 873 M) appointed as the head of along with his *Bayt al-Hikmah* disciple to obtain and translate all of the legacy of medical science into Arabic.

Areas of Pharmacology and chemistry: Jabir bin Hayyan (Sufi adherent, d. 193/ 808),³⁵ Shabur bin Sahl (d. 255 H/ 868 M), Ibnu al-Tilmidz (d. 560 H/ 1164 M), Al-Biruni (d. 443 H/ 1051 M),³⁶ Ya'qub al-Kindi (d. 241 H/ 855 M), Ibnu al-Baythar, Rasyid al-Din bin al-Shuri, Al-Razi, 'Izz al-Din al-Jaldaki (d. 762 H/ 1360). The Muslim registered more than 1400 kind of medicine which some of them were discovered through the collection of herbs and substances.

³¹ Khalaf Abul Qasim Al-Zahrawi (w. 414/ 1013) a renowned surgeon in his era, wrote the book *Al-Tashrif Liman 'Ajiza'am al-Ta'lif* of that explains the science of surgery, the required tools, and the handling but, it was Abul Qasim who invented the method to crush and extract the kidney stone from the bladder.

³² Abu Bakar Muhammad al-Razi (w. 311/ 932), a musician and a philosopher became the one of the world's foremost doctor during the middle age. He wrote the book of *Al-Thibb al-Ruhani*, a book about the psychiatry and *Al-Hawif al-Thibb*, an encyclopedia about medical science during his era. These books were then translated to Latin language and printed in 1486 as the first medical book ever printed in Europe. Abu Bakar Muhammad al-Razi was also the first person who utilized music in healing a patient.

³³ Ibnu Sina (w. 428/1037) a foremost chemist, philosopher, and doctor. His work, *Al-Qanun fi al-Thibb*, has become the standard text book for medical science for over 700 years. Which was irreplaceable until the 19th century. He was also the person who proved the impact of music towards the healing.

³⁴ Khalaf bin 'Abbas al-Zahrawi (d. 414/ 1013), a doctor who have provided more than 200 pictures of medical and surgical equipment. His name was often quoted by the surgeon in Europe until the end of the 16th century. Then, Ibnu Rusyd, a famous philosopher and doctor for the first time invented the effect of physical exercise toward our health.

³⁵ Jabir bin Hayyan (d. 193/ 808), A Sufi has written more than 200 books. 80 of them are about chemistry. He was the one who created the accurate measurement that can balance an object which weight is 6.480 lighter than rathl (about 1 kg). He was also the one who defined the chemical compound as a set of elements in small particle which is discovered by John Dalton 10 century later.

³⁶ Al-Biruni (d. 443 H/ 1051 M), a chemist, psychologist, geologist, astronomers, and physics. He has written and defined this discipline, its method and principal, and writing them down in detail. He was also the one who proposed the idea that the earth rotate on its axis 500 years prior to Galileo. Furthermore, he attempted to calculate the speed of light. Although his effort was not sufficient, he realized that the speed of light is faster than the speed of sound. Moreover, his claim on the rotating earth was no less than Newton's first gravitational law.

Areas of Physics: Ibnu al-Haitsam (d. 431 H/ 1039),³⁷ Ibnu Firnas, etc. The Muslim scientist who invented the instrument to measure the specific weight and gravitation of the elements. The Muslim also invented the clock pendulum, magnetic compass, and astrolab (a tool to measure the height of a star). Areas of Mathematics and astronomy: Tsabit bin Qurrah,³⁸ Umar Khayyam (w. 525 H/ 1130 M), Nashir al-Din al-Thusi (d. 645 H/ 1247 M),³⁹ Al-Battani, Abu' al-Hasan, Muhammad bin Musa al-Khawarizmi (d. 236 H/ 850 M),⁴⁰ Abu al-Wafa, Fargani (860 M),⁴¹ Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606 H/ 1209 M),⁴² Al-Biruni (d. 443 H/ 1051 M), Abu al-Wafa' al-Buzajani (d. 338 H/998 M)⁴³ Al-Baththani, etc. It was the Muslim who invented the symbol to represent the unidentified quantity with X (or S). In Astronomy, the Muslim has conducted the observation, test, and measurement. The Muslim was the first one to draw and measure the spherical surface they considered as the earth. They measure the length of oblong and longitudinal degree.

Areas of Geography: Muhammad bin Musa al-Khawarizmi (d. 236 H/850 M), Abu al-Qasim 'Abdullah bin Khurdadzbih (d. 300 H/912 M),⁴⁴ Ishaw al-Itstharfi (d. 322 H/934 M), Ahmad al-Bakhi (d. 322 H/934 M), Muhammad bin Hawqal, Muhammad al-Maqqdisi (d. 493

³⁷ Ibnu al-Haitsam (d. 431 H/ 1039 M), a Muslim scientist has written about 200 books, 47 of them are on Mathematics, and 58 of them are on engineering. His famous achievement was in optical which crowned him as the founder of optical science. Ibnu al-Haitsam created the basic explanation of the rainbow of camera obscura, which later was explained by Kamaluddin al-Farisi.

³⁸ Regarding the numeral theory, Tsabit bin Qurrah started his legacy of unlimited numeral as the part of the other unlimited numeral.

³⁹ Umar Khayyam (d. 525 H/ 1130 M) and Nashir Al-Din al-Thusi (d. 546 H/ 1247 M) managed to create a formula that represents the distance as number.

⁴⁰ Muhammad bin al-Khawarizmi (d. 236 H/ 850 M), a mathematician who introduced the symbolical system that refers to nine numeral. He invented the *shifr* or 'zero' to represent the blank. He was also the first one who expressed the numerical value with digital position. This system was then spread to Europe. Al-Khawarizmi, the inventor of *al-jabr* (algebra). He also invented the famous *zīj* (the table of position calculation index of astro objects).

⁴¹ Farghani (860 M) created a writing presented as the top law toward the astronomical issue in Europe and West Asia for 700 years.

⁴² In his study on Quran's verse (QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 258), Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi (w. 606 H/ 1209 M) emphasizes that the actual movement of astro object is different from what is observed with naked eyes. However, this classic astatement was expressed by al-Biruni," in this matter, one must conducted a test and accept the result".

⁴³ Abu al-Wafa' al-Buzajani (w. 338 H/ 998 M), a Muslim astronomer who found the anomaly in the moon's movement for the first time.

⁴⁴ Abu al-Qasim 'Abdullah bin Khurdadzbih (d. 300 H/ 912 M) created a complete map and description on the Muslim trading route in *Al-Masâlik wal-Mamâlik*.

H/1101 M),⁴⁵ Ibnu Jubair (d. 614 H/1217 M), Yaquta al-Hamawi (d. 626 H/1229 M), 'Abdul Lathif al-Bagdadi (d. 629 H/1231 M), Al-Qazwini (d. 682 H/ 1283 M), Abu al-Fida' (d. 732 H/1331 M), Ibnu Bathuthah (d. 779 H/1377 M), Al-Syarif al-Idrisi (d. 562 H/1166),⁴⁶ etc. Later, the Muslim created the atlas of their homeland for public and professional use. The pinnacle of Muslim's achievement in geography was in the 6th century when they have discovered that correct measurement of Earth's surface.

Ever since Islamic Society emergence in the 7th century, the Muslim has been examined as strong civilization for hundreds of years while the Muslim scholars were able to develop many scientific aspects which portrayed in Qur'an, such as; cosmography, cosmology, medicine, physics, natural history, astronomy, philosophy, as well as social sciences- and learned, developed, as well as revisited numerous knowledges and intellectual traditions from the ancient Greek, Persia, India, as well as China. In the end, the Muslim scholars were able to adjust their newly obtained knowledge with Qur'an.⁴⁷

During Europe long slumber for a thousand year, the Rome was conquered by the Barbarian. Resulting the lost of significant amount of knowledge stored in the library by the hand of the invader. The science was not developed in Europe from 7th to 13th century as the European society degraded significantly. While public libraries were closed or dissolved under Constantine's leadership and Bishop Gregory disposed the scientific note in Rome and prohibited the study on Greek writing, the Muslim raised to the pinnacle of civilization.

Furthermore, Islam also caused the end of the Dark Age in Europe. The 12th and 13th century became the era where the work of Muslim scholars on various field have been massively translated into Latin, which is also the lingua franca for religion and science until the 18th century. It was the result of Constantinus Aphicanes who

⁴⁵ Muhammad al-Maqdisi (d. 493 H/ 1101 M) is the first person who created the map in natural color that provided better understanding on human's geographical understanding.

⁴⁶ Al-Syarif al-Idrisi (w. 562 H/ 1166 M) invited by Roger II, King of Norman Sisilia, to create the more sophisticated world map. Al-Idrisi asked for 400 bottle of silver balls (400 kg of total weight) and drew the seven continents, the rivers and lakes, cities, routes, mountains, plains and trade routes on them. He also provided the distance, height, and length of each continent he drew.

⁴⁷ See S. H. Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam*, (Chicago: ABC International Groups, 2001).

transported dozens of scientific books from Islam region to Europe to be translated into Latin. On the other hand, Gerard of Ceremona who was known as the “Great Master”, have translated more than 70 books written by Aristoteles, Al-Kindi *Ikhwân Shafa’*, and Al-Farabi from Arabic into Latin. Avendauth Dominicus Gundissalinus and Johanes Hispanus have translated the book of *al-Syifâ’* written by Ibnu Sina which it leading medical authority for six centuries, and it was used as a textbook at “The Universities of Louvain and Montpellier” up to the year A.D. 1650.⁴⁸ Adelard of Bath, a young man from England traveled to Arab and moved from one city to another until he was astonished with the current Arab world. He finally discovered the secret buried for six centuries as the result of the chaos created by the western Christianity.⁴⁹

Conclusion

According to the realities above, the paradigm of Qur’an is a fundament aspect for Islamic civilization. Furthermore, the paradigm of Qur’an should be functioned as an epistemology, framework of thinking, and praxis for every single person for understanding, interpreting, formulizing, constructing the reality as well as shaping civilization, as taught by the Qur’an itself. Hereafter, according to the data of Muslim intelligentsia above, Qur’an should be perceived according to its truly meaning and contextualized it by religio-scientific method so that the glory of Islamic civilization can be restored, as Allah said: *never lose hope from Allah.* []

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⁴⁸ David Deming, *Science and Technology in World History Volume 2: Early Christianity, the Rise of Islam and the Middle Ages*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2010), 95.

⁴⁹ See Jonathan Lyons, *The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization*, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009).

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