

Al-Attas on Tafsir and Ta'wil as Legacy of Islamic Sciences

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Abstract Definition of Al-Attas on Islam as the true based on his affirmation of the relationship between science and religion; then Islamic science can be clearly defined. *Khabar Sadiq* (al-Qur'an and hadith) are very authoritative as a source of Islamic catalysts of the ever great Islamic civilization. Both are verified sources through a process of *tafsir* and *ta'wil*; using unique scientific transition scheme, namely sanad. The Islamic scientific transmissions have increasingly developed without interruption; to give birth to various kinds of interpretations also *ta'wil*. In fact both of them are catalysts for the emergence of Islamic-style science and technology. For this reason, al-Attas emphasized that the development of Islamic science and technology cannot be separated from the roots of interpretation and *ta'wil*, because both of them have taken root as a method of scientific transmission both *fardhu 'ain* and *fardhu kifayah*.

Keywords: *tafsir*, *ta'wil*, philosophy of Islamic science, *fardhu 'ain*, *fardhu kifayah*

1. Introduction

Al-Attas's thoughts about Islam are quite innovative. Labeling Islam as such is certainly very typical of the majority of the West, whose study approach is indeed anthropological, sociological and psychological based. [1][2] But now there is a new methodological awareness; shifting paradigm, big data analysis, and others. The characteristics of Islamic scholars with 'secular' Western methods and frameworks usually disregard the authority of previous Muslim scientists; both from *mufassir*, *muhaddits* to *fuqoha* and *muarrikh* (historian). The Islamic labeled science is also doubtful; like their doubts about Islamic philosophy, Islamic law, to Islamic science. All of these are considered to be limited to copy paste from previous cultures[3]. The Qur'an is not just a revelation that came down and was immediately read by Muslims at that time; but some verses go through a process called *asbabun nuzul*[4],[5]. Thus, the source of Islam is inseparable from the Koran and the Hadith. Later, after the Prophet's death; all the hadiths and verses of the Koran have been collected and distributed in line with the *da'wah* of the Companions (*shahabat*) to the *Tabi'in* and later generations[6], [7].

The so-called science in Islam, is not the same as the Western intellectual tradition which merely emphasizes the phenomenological approach and because of that, al-Attas felt the need

to reaffirm the tradition of *tafsir* and *ta'wil* as a legacy which is the foundation of Islamic science philosophy which indeed reflects the metaphysical identity and Islamic civilization itself; especially the fields of science and technology which according to al-Attas are classified as *fardhu 'ain* and *fardhu kifayah*[8],[9].

2. Development Of Islamic Scientific Traditions

2.1 Comparative Scientific aspects of *tafsir* and *ta'wil*

The reasoning of Muslim scholars (more commonly called '*ulama*') actually proved to be creative; they do an analysis of the historical aspects of primary sources (read: sources epistemology) Islam that is as *asbab al-nuzul* [10], [11] and *asbabul wurud* [12]. Not only this, the scholars performed *tasabbut* (scrutization) on the history (*riwayat*) which involved *matan* from both sources; following the pathway of transmission and comments on the integrity and loyalty ('*adalah*') of the narrator [13], [14]; then the methodology, definition, and technical terminology have been recorded in various works with *Ulumul Qur'an* and *Ulumul Hadith* as well as their respective derivatives[15].

The integrity and predicate of Muhammad as *al-Amin* before the prophetic period and the miracles of language and the content of the Qur'an are sufficient proof[16]. Correspondingly, the activities of interpreting the Qur'an also do not stop; even encourage scientific activities such mastering the Arabic language, comparative documentation about Quranic semantical meaning by old Arabic, until the birth of the various style of *Ulumul Qur'an*[17].

In addition to the Qur'an, the *hadith* as the primary source of Islam had been reviewed and criticized by early scholars (*muhaddits*) such as Malik ibn Anas (d. 179 H) [18], Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 H), al-Darimi (w 255 H), al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) [19], Muslim al-Naisaburi (d. 261 H), Ibn Majah (d. 273 H), Abu Da'ud (d. 275 H), al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H), al-Nasa'I (d. 303 H), al-Darqutni (d. 385 H), and al-Bayhaqi (d. 457 H); and classified in a discipline that is a branch of the science of *hadith* itself[13][20], [21]. Differences occur because the validity of the *hadith* of the things about '*adalah*', *dhabi*, and '*illah*' of which are summarized in the discipline of science which is called *Jarh wa ta'dil*[22]. Attention of scholars on the urgency of the hadith, based on the position of the hadith in the teachings of Islam; among them are *tafsir*, *bayan* (explanatory), to *mufasssil* (detailed explanation) of the Koran [23].

Kasyaf Istilahat al-Funun wa al-Maarif[24], also *al-Ta'rifat*[25], [26]. In the aspect of language alone, it still gave birth to the classification and definitions of the nature of an Arabic word in the form of '*am*', *khas*, *muqayyad*, *muthlaq*, even associated with the rules of Islamic law when deducing it as *Fiqh*[27], [28]. It is not only merely Islamic law that has a physical dimension; Metaphysical 'laws' such as '*ilm 'aqidah*' were deduced from these propositions. So that '*ilm 'aqidah*' is also called *Fiqh al-Akbar* or *Usul al-Din* which had same themes with *Kalam* [29], [30].

Some of them carried out investigations and productive comments based on the pathway of the observation both in terms of *matan*, *sanad*, to the comparative aspects of the 'quality' and 'validity' of the arguments used in *fiqh* so that gave birth to the knowledge of *Usul Fiqh* [31]. That is, in Islamic law, the methodology *istinbath ahkam* is almost similar to the exact science approach method. It is not allowed to use prejudice (*dzann*) or doubt (*shak*) in establishing the law[32], [33]. In this sense the scientific meaning of *ijtihad*; which also comes from *tafsir* and *ta'wil*.

2.2 The development of *tafsir* and *ta'wil* to the al-Qur'an

The tradition does not stop, it even increases as the spread of Islamic *da'wah* to various regions and the introduction of Islam with other civilizations[34], [35].

Al-Kindi even conducted a critical study of Greek philosophy, and produced works which were subsequently criticized by his successors such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Imam Ghazali, and others[36], [37], [38].

The scientific tradition was still carried out and upheld as the country's asset at that time[39], [40], [41]. In line with that, *ta'wil* also developed in line with *ulum kawniyyah* which is more appropriate to be approached by methods such as *qiyas*, *mantiq*, and experiments with Islamic sharia frameworks such as avoiding illicit substances (*haram*), usury (*riba*), or things that are contained of *gharar* and *maysir*[42], [43].

2.3 *Fardhu 'Ain* and *Fardhu Kifayah*: Traditions of '*Tauhidi*' Islamic Science

If since the establishment of the Islamic scientific tradition has been explained in 2.1; so when the various events described in 2.2 contribute to the uniqueness of the Islamic scientific tradition as well. For example, the interaction of Muslim scientists with Greek civilization gave birth to the nomenclature of the discipline of 'Islamic Philosophy' (although, 'epistemology' of Islam has been established in sub 2.1) in which there are *kalam* and *mantiq* which are integrated in it[44], [45].

Some are classified as physics and metaphysics; Imam Ghazali is famous for his classification of the knowledge of being *fardhu 'ain* and *fardhu kifayah*[46], [47]. Al-Farabi is famous for his scientific hierarchy in the form of religious knowledge, rational science, and natural sciences[48], [49] also Ibn Haytham who classify the knowledge based on its integration with Greek [50].

In this classification, al-Attas highlighted that in essence, the division does not presuppose a dichotomy between one part and another. Because of the nature of Islamic sciences that if explored will be able to know the relationship between branches of science which although different[51], [52]. From al-Attas' explanation, we can see that contemporary Muslim scholars also have their respective classifications; like Amin Abdullah with his integration and interconnection (*integrasi-interkoneksi*) [53], [54]; Imam Suprayogo with his Knowledge Tree (*Pohon Ilmu*) [55]; even Kuntowijoyo with his Prophetic Paradigm[56], [57]. Even though they look different, the three examples of the classification model are actually a representation that there is knowledge that is classified as the core of Islamic sciences; and some are derivatives or sciences, although not from Islam, but can have links with Islamic science as well. For this reason, the wisdom aspects of the pre Muhammad's prophetic civilization (Islam) that are not in conflict with the Qur'an and the hadith can be accepted as '*dhalatul mu'min*' (lost wisdom) which is indeed a Muslim's right[58]. Al-Attas also state that Aristotle had reach a part of *hikmah*; evidenced by his logic as part of his philosophy which can be islamized.

With this theorem, the sciences from the pre-Muhammad prophet civilization can be absorbed, selected, criticized, and eliminated with a scientific framework or methodology in the form of interpretations and *ta'wil* born from the Islamic scientific tradition; so that gave birth to the classification of knowledge which is *fardhu 'ain* and also *fardhu kifayah* as well. The process, also known as 'mastery' (appropriation), which is based on the process of Islamization. From there also, al-Attas divides knowledge based on provenance; namely from God (God-given knowledge) and from the results of the process of human intelligence through

a rational-empirical process; although, the second knowledge is inseparable from the Islamic worldview which is formed from the first knowledge.

3. *Tafsir* And *Ta'wil* As The Basis Of The Islamic Sciences

3.1 *Tafsir* and *Ta'wil* as Scientific Methodology

That is, Greek philosophy is only a stimulus for the development of thought; and is not the core of Islamic philosophy. Here, the tradition of interpretation and *ta'wil* can be called scientific; because of its connectedness and inheritance in other scientific disciplines that are labeled with the nature of 'Islam' in the next classification period.

In fact, furthermore, the purity of tradition is maintained by the '*sanad*' method as unique in the Islamic scientific tradition. With such a transmission system, the validity of the results of *tafsir* and *ta'wil* carried out by Islamic scholars from generation to generation can be held accountable with various perspectives that are interconnected with the division of *farḍhu 'ain* and *kifayah*.

The division, based on the content and discussion contained in the two sections. The *farḍhu 'ain* part covers the basic Islamic sciences relating to *aqeedah* and sharia and Islamic morals; and *farḍhu kifayah* includes derivatives of interpretations and *ta'wil* which have met with more physical and metaphysical dimensions of civilization and sciences which rely on reason-empirical reasoning. Most importantly, all the 'seminal concepts' are refers to the sources of Islamic epistemology.

3.2 The Emergence of 'Seminal Concepts' from *Tafsir* and *Ta'wil*: Islamic ' Science ' Philosophy

The Qur'an and the hadith are the basis of the Islamic worldview. What is indeed also a continuation of the scientific methodology resulting from the above interpretations and *ta'wil*; as well as key concepts such as being (*wujud*), '*ilm*, *ma'rifah*', as well as their derivatives such as *kasyf* and *hads*. In al-Attas' Islamic ontology, an existence (*wujud*) does have its own gradation and hierarchy. They are temporal in the world, there are also aspects of the so-called eternally manifested in *a'yan tsabitah*. In the theorems of Islamic science, all forms in nature are evidence (*ayat*) or signs ('*alamat*) of the existence of God.

The meaning of '*ilm* and *ma'rifah*' is also highlighted comparatively in several meanings. This picture, has been explained by Imam Ghazali, especially in the fields of sciences from civilizations other than Islam; some can be adopted, some are forbidden to learn except by having strong knowledge; some cannot be taken.

The Sufis use several related terms such as *farq*, *sukr*, *jam'*, *khawwas*, and *khawwas al-khawwas*. Through this scheme, the words of the prophets are instructions from God (*huda*); which underlies scientific things, true wisdom can be found; especially the relationship between all beings and their position in the right place in a system that affirms God as its center. The scientific implications that arise from such reasoning are the birth of Islamic science such as Islamic Economics, Islamic Business, Islamic Education, even to Islamic Medicine and Islamic Ethics for the natural environment or applied technology.

4. Conclusion

A very basic conclusion; that is, Islam already has a scientific tradition that is reflected in the validity of its methodology in *tafsir* and *ta'wil*. Both of these have an important role in the process of Islamization of view of life, which in turn builds a framework for thinking, saying, and even scientific activities for humans. In this scheme, what is called 'Islamic science' is explained; which is also with the Islamic science, the position of God can be affirmed and proven not to conflict with science; because God is the cause of the arrival of that knowledge. However, God's Power and Actions are not arbitrary and undermine the concept of science; in fact, in Islam, God is described as the Fairest Judge; so, because of God's Justice, knowledge can be obtained by humans through all the potential that is given by Him.

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