

DISCUSSION OF SCIENCE ETHICS IN ISLAM: Reflections on Harun Nasution's Controversial Ethical Thought

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ABSTRAK

This article intends to examine the concept of scientific ethics in Islam with a focus on the thoughts of Harun Nasution. Harun Nasution is a controversial Islamic reformer. His idea was born as a response to and against the traditional ideas that developed at that time, even Harun Nasution dared to go against the flow of traditional thought ethics that had long been rusty and difficult to remove. The emphasis of this paper is on the presentation of Harun Nasution's progressive thinking in various main issues in the study of Islamic ethical thought, such as the idea of progress, coexistence between the Absolute-Textual (qath'i) and relative-contextual (zhanni) regions as a foundation the development of science in Islam, rational and traditional categorization, inclusive attitudes: accepting culture or knowledge from outside, freedom and development mentality: freedom of thought and action, cosmology: belief in causality as a source of success, moral problems and Harun Nasution's criticism of materialistic / hedonistic culture. This paper is presented considering that in a dynamic society, scientific ethics and community education play a role in determining the existence and development of society. Likewise with the role of scientific and educational ethics which is one form of manifestation of the ideals of Islamic life to preserve, transfer and instill (internalization) and transform Islamic values to the personal of the next generation, so that cultural-religious values are aspirated in society over time.

Pre-Discourse: Synergy of Ethics and Science in Islam

Al-Qur'an as a holy book which is a guide and source of inspiration has a decisive influence on the journey of Muslims in living their lives. Although the Koran contains many topics of discussion and scientific disciplines, the most central theme of the entire Qur'an is ethical issues.¹

His messages on ethics touch all of life, in both theoretical, theological-moral terms (*theological morality*) and practical ethics (*applied ethics*). Islamic theology as in the Koran has taught people how they should live their lives both as individuals and socially². Therefore, ethical messages in the Koran need to be developed and translated

¹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 86.

² Mibtadin, "Etika dalam Diskursus Pemikiran Islam: Dari Wacana Menuju Islamologi

Terapan", in *SUHUF*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Mei 2019: 72-85, p. 90.

into legal concepts and praxis actions in the field of life.

On the other hand, ethics and science are two things that cannot be separated from one another. Both of them grow and develop side by side and in line. If ethics and science are separated, there will be a very deep imbalance in the order of human life which is the subject and object of education.

In a dynamic society, scientific ethics and community education play a role in determining the existence and development of that society. Therefore, scientific ethics and public education are efforts to preserve, transfer and transform cultural values in all their aspects and types to future generations. Likewise with the role of scientific and educational ethics which is one form of manifestation of the ideals of Islamic life to preserve, transfer and instill (internalization) and transform Islamic values to the personal of the next generation, so that cultural-religious values are aspirated. - tell me to keep functioning and developing in society from time to time.

Istighfarotur Rahmaniyyah in the book *Ethics Education with a study of the concept of soul and ethics in the perspective of Ibn Miskawaih* explains how important educational activities are based on more substantial, basic and essential goals, namely noble ethics.³ So that the subjects taught are not only limited to the science itself or

academic goals. In other languages, education is not only limited to transferring knowledge, but how to view each discipline from another point of view, for example from an ethical aspect.

Rahmaniyyah further explained that ethics education is a process of guiding humans from darkness, ignorance, to attain enlightenment of knowledge. What is disclosed is one of the definitions and understandings of ethics education. Ethics is an effort to understand humans in terms of behavior based on good and bad rules, while ethics education is a way to make human life better and prosperous. With regard to the moral degradation that afflicts this nation, ethics education is an important matter to be studied and implemented.

The book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariiq al-Ta'allum* by Shaykh al-Zanurji,⁴ In fact, a lot of talk about ethics and character values that should be nurtured, especially in the process of studying. The discussion which is colored with compositions of Arabic poetry makes this little book rich in moral messages. Character values such as humility, respect, *istiqomah*, patience, and sincerity are often described in the book.

However, lately these lofty meanings and ideals have started to look faded and degraded. Scientific and educational ethics, which are ideally expected to shape a person into mentally and spiritually superior

³Istighfarotur Rahmaniyyah, *Pendidikan Etika: Konsep Jiwa dan Etika Perspektif Ibnu Miskawaih dalam Kontribusinya di Bidang Pendidikan* (Malang: UIN-Maliki Press, 2010), p. 40-41.

⁴Syekh al-Zarnuji, *Etika Belajar Bagi Penuntut Ilmu: Terjemah Ta'lim al-Muta'allim Thariiq al-Ta'allum*, ter. A. Ma'ruf Asrori (Surabaya: Pelita Dunia, 1996), p. 18-61.

individuals, are apparently unable to carry out this role, whereas if examined carefully, scientific and educational ethics must be able to form a dignified civilization character. This is stated in the formulation of national education goals as stipulated in the National Education System (SISDIKNAS) RI Law no. 20 of 2003 Chapter II Article 3 which states:

"National education has the function of developing capabilities and shaping the character and civilization of a nation with dignity in order to educate the nation's life, aimed at developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen."⁵

To answer the recent unrest, one form of study that must be done is to re-explore the ethical ethical thoughts that have been expressed by Muslim figures, among these figures are (late) Prof. Harun Nasution.

Harun Nasution is a controversial Islamic reformer.⁶His idea was born as a response to and against the traditional ideas that developed at that time, even Harun Nasution dared to go against the flow of traditional thought ethics that had long been rusty and difficult to get rid of. Various pros and cons also colored his thought journey. Mukti Ali is one of the figures who defends and supports the ideas and thoughts of Harun Nasution, while those who criticize him for

various scientific reasons are also not uncommon in the class of Prof. M. Rasjidi is one of the figures who claims Harun's idea is an idea that endangers Muslims due to being influenced by orientalist.

The various forms of response to Harun Nasution's ideas seem to make some Muslim scientists interested in re-examining and further examining the building of philosophical thought initiated by Harun Nasution. The study is not limited to explaining the basic building blocks of Harun's thought, but also offers the idea of the need to rejuvenate "Rational Islam" with a humanistic style, which uses existentialism and phenomenological approaches.⁷ This is because the ideas brought by Harun were built from the milieu that surrounded him during the New Order era and in different socio-political-cultural conditions, so that his existence in the following period needed to be reconstructed by sticking to the considerations of *al-muha fazatu 'ala al- qadimi as-shalih, wa al-akhdzu bil jadidil ashlah* or "maintaining good old traditions, and taking new, better traditions".

The author, in this case, tries to trace Harun Nasution's line of ethical thought. This is a form of the author's effort to explain more deeply the views of Harun Nasution in the field of philosophy, especially in the field of

⁵Tim Penulis, *UU RI Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen & UU RI No. 20 Tahun 2003 tentang SISDIKNAS* (Bandung: Citra Umbara, 2006), p. 76.

⁶Nurisman, *Pemikiran Filsafat Islam Harun Nasution: Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia*. (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2012), p. 1

⁷Please analyze his whole mind on *Islam Rasional: Gagasan dan Pemikiran Prof.Dr. Harun Nasution* (Bandung; Penerbit MIZAN, 1996).

ethics and kalam, as well as its relevance to current conditions and problems.

The Reality of Ethics in the Study of Philosophy

1. Ethics in the Discourse of Philosophy
As a person who thinks (philosophy), of course everything requires good and correct thinking, in order to achieve good and correct results.⁸ Having thoughts is like two sides of a coin, good and bad, so that philosophy is known as ethics, namely the rules for distinguishing good and bad.⁹ Apart from that, philosophy also refers to something beautiful so that it can be justified and debated. Therefore, the definition of philosophy can also give rise to various philosophical meanings. However, experts agree that philosophy is a study that examines all phenomena of human life and thought as well as everything that occurs in the universe. Therefore, philosophy can be used as a discipline of reason and logic.

As a scientific and scientific discipline, philosophy contains values such as ethics, morals, norms, and morals. Likewise in its application, a scientist in everyday life seems to be required to apply these values in

his life, both when thinking and acting. Even though a person's knowledge is high, if he does not have values that have become a kind of demanded rule in his life, that person will not be looked up to. In a history it is said "Al adabu fauqal 'ilmi" (adab is higher than knowledge).

Ethics, politics and economics, in the realm of Islamic thought are usually included in what is called practical philosophy (al-hikmah al-'amaliyyah). Praxis philosophy itself talks about everything "as it should be" (*das sollen*), nevertheless ethics is still based on theoretical philosophy (al-hikmah al-nazhariyyah) which talks about everything "as it is" (*das sein*).¹⁰

Ethics is a branch of axiology (philosophy of values) which specifically examines good and bad values in the sense that they are in accordance with the value of morality or not.¹¹ In a broader understanding, ethics implies a meaning bias, as defined as norms or values that a person or society holds in regulating their behavior, such as Javanese ethics, Hindu ethics, and ethics. Protestants, and others. Therefore, ethics is a value system adopted by a community or individual belonging to a nation. Ethics is also

⁸Abdul Fattah and Lestari, *Nalar Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Konsepsi, Tantangan, dan Pemikiran Religius-Nasionalis*, (Mataram: UIN Mataram Press, 2020), p. 13.

⁹It is common in philosophy; philosophy is considered and is often pointed out like a double-edged knife; one can be positive when used for the good and benefit of mankind. But not infrequently, one other dimension is used for badness, even crime, so that it often presents and leaves humanity sorrow. Look at *ibid.*, p. vii.

¹⁰ M. Amin Abdullah, *Antara Al-Ghazali dan Kant: Filsafat Etika Islam* trans. Hamzah (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), p. 15.

¹¹ Term *Ethics* comes from the language *Greek* (Greek) that is *ethikos* which means customs, characters, habits, ways, and attitudes. Peter A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Barnes & Noble Book, 1931), p. 32; See also Dagobert D. Runes, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New Jersey: Littlefield & Adam Co, 1971), p. 98.

understood as a collection of principles or norms known as a code of ethics, such as a journalistic code of ethics, a code of medical ethics, a code of ethics for lawyers, and others.

2. Short Discourse on Scientific Ethics

The term scientific ethics leads us to deep contemplation, both regarding the nature, the process of formation, the institutions that produce environmental science that is conducive to the development of science, as well as morality in obtaining and utilizing that knowledge. Therefore, there are several things that must be explained:

a. The Meaning of Ethics

According to the third edition of the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), ethics is the science of what is good and what is bad and about moral rights and obligations.¹²The moral that is meant here is morals, namely the manners or behavior of living things. Meanwhile, wikipedia.com states that ethics discusses behavior towards a good life, in which there are aspects of truth, responsibility, roles, and so on. It can be seen that ethical issues cannot be separated from the knowledge of humans as perfect living beings. If it goes back to the original word, ethics comes from Greek; "Ethos", which means habit (action), but not custom, but adab.

b. The Meaning of *Moral*

The word moral is identified with a special character of human action, which is based on the notion of good and bad. Talking about

someone's morals is the same as talking about the person's personality in question. Because of that, morality has actually made the position of humans different (respectable) from other God's creatures.

KBBI makes two views on the notion of morality. First, as a teaching about good and bad that is received as a result of actions, attitudes, obligations, and so on by humans. Second, mental conditions that make people courageous, passionate, disciplined, and so on, which originate in the heart's contents or feelings as expressed in actions.¹³

c. The Meaning of *Norm*

Norms are rules or provisions that bind group members in society, are used as a guide, order, and control of behavior that is appropriate and acceptable. Norms can also be mentioned as measures or methods that are used as benchmarks for judging or comparing something.¹⁴ For example, every society must obey the rules and regulations.

d. The Meaning of *Decency*

Decency or morality is a small part of norms so that we know the name moral norms, namely rules that govern human actions in everyday social interactions, such as the relationship between men and women. Decency can also be a part of manners and manners.¹⁵

In addition to the four things above, a philosophical review must also have aesthetics, namely regarding beauty and its implementation in life. From aesthetics,

¹²Tim Penyusun Kamus Pusat Bahasa, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2005, p. 309.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 607.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 787.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 787 and 1110.

various theories about art or aspects of art from various cultural outcomes were born. Human ability to think is the source of all perfection and the pinnacle of all glory and height above other creatures. Knowledge of things that occur outside of themselves is also owned by animals because they have the power of *al-mudrikah* (knowing) but it does not reach the power of *al-nathiqah* (thinking).¹⁶

Animals are aware of something outside themselves by means of their five senses that have been bestowed by Allah such as hearing, sight, smell, feeling through the tongue and through touch. Man understands the situation outside himself-with the power of understanding through the mediation of his thoughts that are beyond his senses. The mind works with the power that is in the middle of the brain which gives the ability to grasp images of various objects normally received by the five senses, and then returns these objects to memory while developing them again with other images from the images of those objects.

Thinking is the explanation that is behind feelings, and the application of reason in it to make analysis and synthesis, so that in the activity of thinking continuously to solve various problems wisely.¹⁷ This is the meaning of the word *al-af'idah* (plural of *fuad*) in the Qur'an:

قل هو الذي أنشأكم وجعل لكم السمع والأبصار والأفئدة
قليلًا ما تشكرون (المالك: 23)

"Say: He Who created you and made for you hearing, sight, and heart (but) you are very little grateful". (Surah Al Mulk: 23).¹⁸

"Fuad" is the power of deep thinking which is one of the activities of the heart. The ability to think has several levels: First, is man's intellectual understanding of everything that is outside the universe in a natural or changing order, with the intention that he can make a selection with his own ability. This kind of thinking takes the form of perceptions. This is the reason of the defender (*al'aql al-tamyizi*) which helps people obtain everything that is beneficial to themselves, obtain their livelihoods, and reject those that are not beneficial to themselves.

Second, is the mind that equips humans with the ideas and behaviors needed in associating with other people and is able to organize themselves in communicating. Most of this kind of thinking is in the form of perceptions, (*tashdiqat*), which are achieved one by one through experience, and carried out so that they feel the benefits. This is what is called experimental reason, "*al 'aql at tajribi*".

Third, the mind which equips man with knowledge (*ilm*) or hypothetical knowledge (*dzann*) knows something that is behind sense perception without the practical action that accompanies it. This is speculative

¹⁶Harun Nasution, *Filsafat Islam dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1973). p. 29.

¹⁷Abdul Fattah, *Fajar Gemilang Filsafat Islam*, (Malang: Misykat, 2020), p. 20.

¹⁸Mujamma al-Malik, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*. (Madinah: As-Syarif, 1999), p.1012.

reason (al aql an-nadzari). It is perception and perception, tasawwur and tashdiq, which are arranged in a special order, thus forming other knowledge of the same kind, either perceptive or perceptive. Then they combine with other things and form yet another knowledge. The end of this process is complete perception of existence as it really is, with various genera, differences, causes and effects. By thinking about these things, man attains perfection in his reality and becomes a pure intellect with a perceptive soul. This is the meaning of human reality (al haqiqah al insaniyah).¹⁹ Human reality with science which is systematically arranged according to certain methods, can be used to explain certain phenomena in the field (knowledge). Thus a science must be systemic and systematic so that it seems that there is something that binds it as a value.

Discussion Scientific Ethics in Islam

As previously stated, ethics discusses behavior towards a good life, in which there are aspects of truth, responsibility, and role. Scientists talk about people and institutions about certain disciplines. So scientific ethics leads us to deep contemplation, both regarding the essence, the process of formation, the institutions that produce environmental science that is conducive to the development of science, as well as morality in obtaining and utilizing that knowledge.

Attitudes and behavior are very important in life. Attitudes and behavior of a

person will be a measure of that person's personality. Therefore, a scientist must have a scientific attitude that reflects himself as a scientist. This attitude can be in the form of being inferior, not being arrogant or arrogant, and always respecting others. Therefore, a person who has knowledge with a good attitude tends to be associated with rice or to someone who has knowledge, being asked to have "knowledge of rice" is getting ducked more and more. This means that a scientist in everyday life is required to apply ethical and moral values in his life, both when thinking and acting. Even though a person's knowledge is high, if he does not have values that have become a certain kind of rule in his life, the person will not be looked up to. "Al adabu fauq al 'ilmi" (Adab is above knowledge).

A scientific attitude is expected to be possessed by a scientist because it is in accordance with the understanding that a scientist is an expert or a lot of knowledge about a science. Scientists can also be said to people who are involved in the field of science.²⁰ The connection in this discussion is that the scientific attitude intended for a scientist is to have and understand ethics, morals, norms, and morals. In Islam, a scientist is called عالم (knowledgeable person). In the Qur'an surah al-Mujadalah verse 11 states:

يرفع الله الذين امنونكم والذين أتوا العلم درجات
(المجادلة: 11)

"Allah will raise the ranks of those who believe among you and those who have

¹⁹ Ibnu Khaldun, *Mukaddimah Ibn Khaldun*, (Jakarta: Firdaus, 2000, p. 523.

²⁰Tim Penyusun Kamus Pusat Bahasa, *Kamus Besar Bahasa,,* p. 425.

knowledge in different levels." (Qs.al-Mujadilah: 11)²¹

When someone already has knowledge, then he should have a behavior that is in accordance with someone who is knowledgeable, namely doing an activity based on common sense considerations and being able to account for his knowledge in a spiritual individual and social morals. Taking responsibility spiritually individually means that a person is responsible for his knowledge to Allah SWT, because spiritually he has used the potential given by Allah in the form of reason and other potentials, so that he has the opportunity to gain various knowledge. The individual spiritual responsibility that must be accounted for is practicing knowledge in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. And that is one of the meanings contained in Surat al-Zumar verse 9,

قل هل يستوى الذين يعلمون والذين لا يعلمون
(الزمر: 9)

"Are the same people who are knowledgeable and people who are not knowledgeable?"²²

Social moral responsibility implies that the knowledge that is possessed is required to be able to sort and select activities that are useful and contain benefits for others. When someone is able to implement their knowledge for the benefit and peace of themselves and others, it means that they have been able to position themselves as

khalifatullah fi al-ardh, namely the ability to lead and manage nature for social benefit.

ولا تفسدوا في الأرض بعد إصلاحها وادعوه خوفاً
وطمئناً إن رحمت الله قريب من المحسنين (الأعراف:
(56)

"And do not make mafsadat (damage) on the face of the earth after (Allah) has arranged it well, and pray to Him with fear and hope. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is very close to those who do good" (Surah al-A'raf: 56).²³

If you look at verse 11 of al-Mujadilah that believers and knowledgeable people have the same opportunity to be elevated by Allah. The words believe and have knowledge in the verse have the conjunction *و* (wau) which indicates the existence of the same position before Allah. Beliman and knowledgeable when viewed from the point of view of the opportunity to be elevated, it really depends on each person to act out their faith and knowledge. Faith and knowledge are active words that require creative efforts to be implemented. Therefore, scientific ethics in Islam is the implementation of knowledge from those who have knowledge.

Science: Value Free and Not Value Free

Science that is said to be value-free is based on the view that science develops without reference to a particular law or system. Unlike technology. Because technology is born on the basis of human creation, it is bound by a rule or system, also tied to market tastes and legislation. However, how to know about

²¹Mujamma al-Malik, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*. (Madinah: As-Syarif, 1999), p. 910.

²²Mujamma al-Malik, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*. (Madinah: As-Syarif, 1999), p.584.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 746.

technology is not bound by any laws. Allah SWT. Himself said to provide freedom for His servants to explore the entire universe, on earth and in the sky, all of which can only be done with knowledge.

However, if we refer to the meaning written in the Big Indonesian Dictionary, what science says is: "Knowledge of a field which is systematically arranged according to certain methods, which can be used to explain certain phenomena in that field (knowledge)."²⁴

With the meaning given by KBBI, it is reflected that a science must have a system and a systematic way so that it seems that there are things that add to it as a value. Perhaps that is why in science the terms value-free and value-bound are found. Value-free is the view that science develops without referring to a particular law or system. It is different from technology because technology is born on the basis of human creation, it is bound by a rule or system, and is also bound by market tastes and laws. However, how to know about technology, is not bound by any laws Allah swt. give freedom as freely as possible to anyone even the jinn to explore the entire universe, on earth and in the sky, all of which can only be done with scientific knowledge.

يامعشر الجن والإنس ان استطعتم أن تنفذوا من
أقطار السموات والأرض فانفذوا لاينفذون الا
بسلطان (الرحمن: 33)

Meaning: "O congregation of jinn and humans, if you are able to penetrate (cross) the corners of the heavens and the earth, then pass, you will not be able to cross it except

with power (knowledge)" (Surah al-Rahman: 33).²⁵

Analysis of Scientific Problems

The branch of science that includes knowledge of good and bad and knowledge of beauty is a combination of two categories of knowledge, namely science based on logic and ethics or morality that questions good and bad. Talking scientifically means talking about people and institutions, about certain disciplines. This institution can generally be seen in universities and other risert institutions.

It has long been recognized that the existence of tertiary institutions and risert institutions occupies a strategic position to act as producers of knowledge. However, in the course of time it is known that the complexity of science and scholarship is not only in touch with institutions of higher education (institute of higher educations). Previously, the processes and predictions after the reformation era made us aware that scientific problems, with all their complexities, would come into contact directly and indirectly with large buildings, namely elements of core values or democracy index (indices of democracy).

Experience in various countries that have experienced authoritarian rule also proves that the development of science and scholarship is unlikely to be able to form and grow properly when political life is not conducive, academic freedom is suppressed,

²⁴Tim Penyusun Kamus Pusat Bahasa, *Kamus Besar Bahasa*,,p. 423.

²⁵Mujamma' al-Malik, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*,, p. 876.

and / or an academic culture that longs for truth is threatened.

The Scientific Attitude Scientists Must Have

Attitudes and behavior are very important in life. Every person's behavior, attitude, and behavior will be a measure of that person's personality. Therefore, a scientist must have a scientific attitude that reflects himself as a scientist. This attitude can be in the form of being inferior, not being arrogant or arrogant, and always respecting others. Therefore, a person who has knowledge and a good attitude tends to be associated with rice or to someone who has knowledge will be asked to have "knowledge of rice", the more ducking is more and more content.

A scientific attitude is expected to be possessed by a scientist because in accordance with his understanding that a scientist is an expert or a lot of knowledge about a science. Scientists can also be said to people who are involved in the field of science.²⁶

The connection in this discussion is that the scientific attitude intended for a scientist is to have and understand ethics, morals, norms, and morals. In Islam, it is also stated that every scientist (alim - knowledgeable person) must have faith. This is in line with Allah's Word. In the Koran, the letter of Al-Mujadalah: 11, which means:

"Allah elevates the ranks of those who believe among you and those who are knowledgeable in stages."

²⁶Tim Penyusun Kamus Pusat Bahasa, *Kamus Besar Bahasa,,,*p. 425.

Meanwhile, in other religions it is said that the most important thing a human being (including scientists) has is morality. "Being careful without decency will make people afraid. Dare without decency, will make people like to mess up. And being honest without decency will make people behave rudely," (Holy Word: VIII: 2). Furthermore, in the Scriptures XX: 3: 2, it says that "who knows no morality, he cannot stand firm." Regardless of the views of the various religions above, every scientist is expected to have a scientific attitude in applying any knowledge he has.

Harun Nasution's Ethical Progressive Thought

1. Educational History of Harun Nasution

Harun Nasution came from a family against tradition, surnamed Nasution. In the Batak traditional perspective, marriage with an exogamous system is a marriage that is forbidden to do. The seeds of rationality had been implanted from his family since he was a child who had blood as a merchant.

Harun Nasution's father was named Abdul Jabbar Ahmad Nasution, a traditional fiqh scholar of his time. Meanwhile, her mother was named Maemunah Nasution, the daughter of a cleric.²⁷

From the theological point of view, the theological view of Harun's family was

²⁷Nurisman, *Pemikiran Filsafat Islam Harun Nasution: Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2012), p. 34-35.

fatalistic Ash'ariyah theology which was the general theological view of Indonesian Islamic society at that time. However, it is interesting to note that Harun's family had a background as a trader which indirectly had an impact on his religious ways. The progressive thinking model and proactive nature of predicting and responding to the future are the characteristics of the Harun family.

The economic base of the Harun family comes from middle to upper class families so that it is possible for Harun to get a good education. Harun, started his basic education in 1927 at the Dutch school HIS (Hollands Inlands School) The Bumiputra Dutch school in Pematang Siantar.²⁸In 1934 he continued his studies at MIK (Moderne Islamietische Kweekschool), namely the Private Middle School Teacher in Bukit Tinggi, Minang realm. The school was founded in the spirit of Islamic reform.²⁹

After completing school, Harun continued his studies in Mecca, but only one and a half years studied there. After that, Harun left for Egypt in 1938. Here Harun began to experience socialization in both the Islamic and political movements and entered the Fakulas Ushuluddin at al-Azhar University.³⁰ However, when the final year / candidate program, Harun decided to leave al-Azhar and continue to the Faculty of Education, American University located in Cairo.

Harun's educational background and career experience after completing education also colored his way of thinking in answering any problems around him, especially in the context of Indonesian society which was very thick with traditionalism at that time.

2. Harun Nasution's Frame of Thought or Ethical Philosophy

The idea of renewal offered by Harun Nasution did not come from a vacuum. The ideas offered are based on their anxiety seeing the decline of Muslims, especially the ethics of thinking of Muslims who are far from Islamic teachings and tend to maintain traditional thoughts and teachings that have been proven to have failed to advance the civilization of the ummah. So that Harun Nasution tried to revive or bring back the lost glory of Muslims through rational thinking ethics and leaving traditional thinking ethics.

Axiologically, the functional direction of thought ethics offered by Harun Nasution is a paradigm shift, from the "Traditional Islam" paradigm to the "Rational Islam" paradigm, which offers rational principles or Islamic rationality that have been tested in Islamic history.

Rational Islam is the grand concept offered by Harun Nasution for the empowerment of Muslims in Indonesia. There are three things called Harun Nasution's trilogy which are the basic principles or basic philosophy in Harun Nasution's thinking

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 44.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 48.

model, namely: the idea of progress (idea of progress), absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) coexistence, as well as entity resistance. binary opposition between rational and traditional.³¹

Methodologically, the Harun Nasution trilogy is a struggle of several thought structures inspired by Mu'tazilah theological thoughts, Muslim philosophers' thoughts, and the thoughts of Islamic reformers such as Muhammad Abduh.

a. His thoughts on Ideas of Progress

The metaphysical assumption developed by Harun Nasution is change (being as process-being as progress), which Iqbal knows as "the principle of movement".³² The metaphysics developed by Harun departs from the belief that everything is dynamic. Society is always changing and developing according to the times. Harun uses this metaphysics of movement to explain the issue of ijihad as a necessity.

Harun Nasution wanted ijihad to be carried out continuously, because every era requires its own methods and models of ijihad. This is intended so that Islam can still exist and appear on the historical stage in a strong position as it had played during its heyday (golden age).

According to Harun, ijihad is the dynamic of Islam. Harun cultivated the metaphysics of motion with Aristotelian

metaphysics through Muslim philosophers, kalamists, and historical reasoning (historical philosophy). In simple language, Harun built it with Islamic scholastics adapted to the modern atmosphere.³³

Using a historical approach, Harun invites Muslims to look back at how Islam was when it incised glory and progress in all walks of life. Harun's historical methodological mechanism is carried out by dividing Islam into several periods, namely: classical, medieval, and modern periods.³⁴ The aspects of each of these periods are then dismantled and analyzed with this historical approach, as well as comparing the rational Islam of the classical era which was full of progress and the traditional Islam of the medieval era which contained regressions. The results of these thoughts were then served to Muslims.³⁵

An important phenomenon revealed by Harun in his progress idea is the attitude of Muslims who view everything as static or stagnant, especially in the scientific area. The Islamic medieval thinking model took a different view from the Progress idea. Muslims consider that change is not necessary, in fact in some cases it is not permissible for change because it will lead to heresy and shock in society. In a situation like this, there has

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 172.

³²Charles Khurzman, *Wacana Islam Liberal Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer Tentang Isu-Isu Global* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), p. 427-455.

³³Nurisman, *Pemikiran Filsafat...*, p. 173.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 176.

³⁵ Study the work of T.J. De Boer, *History of Philosophy in Islam* (Cairo, n.p. 1957).

been a status quo so that rationalism is needed as a positive response to get out of stagnation.

Harun views that there are two opposing entities, namely the nature or essence of science³⁶ which is developing in accordance with human life vis a vis the traditional understanding of religion which tends to maintain the old and is unable to keep up with the times.³⁷ The existence of dynamic changes on the one hand and maintaining stability on the other, tends to make Muslims static and undeveloped, so that the lagging behind developed countries such as the West is inevitable.

As for the modern era at the end of the twentieth century, it was marked by the rapid development of science and technological advances. Harun called on Muslims to reopen the taps of *ijtihad* which were claimed to have closed in the Middle Ages. This is because the problems that arise around life are very complex, requiring collective *ijtihad*, in the sense of *ijtihad* which is carried out by involving multidisciplinary experts (various expertise and professions).

b. Coexistence between Absolute-Textual (qath'i) and Relative-Contextual (zhanni) as the

Foundation for the Development of Science in Islam

This discussion of absolute and relative areas is aimed in relation to the development of science in Islam. The big logic that we want to confront is Islam and science. So when talking about Islam, Harun tries to discuss Islam at a textual level with what is at a contextual level.

Absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) discourses are very important discourses in Harun's thought as a whole and are schemes in his thinking construction in seeing Islamic teachings. In this way Harun also reconstructs a rational Islamic study.

The concept of absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) has actually been known in the study of *ushul fiqh*, so that its existence is not something foreign to Muslims. Harun also developed the concept of absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) by adopting the division made by Abdul Wahhab Khallaf, but Harun filled it with philosophical content so that the skin was *ushul fiqh* in style but the contents varied so that it produced something different.

Meanwhile, M. Quraish Shihab explains about absolutes (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) by dividing them into two categories, namely (1) *al-tsubut*

³⁶Regarding the nature of science, see Susanto, *Filsafat Ilmu: Suatu Kajian Dalam Dimensi Ontologis, Epistemologis, dan Aksiologis* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2011), p. 76-78; and Jujun

Suriasumantri, *Ilmu Dalam Perspektif* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1989), p. 2-3.

³⁷Nurisman, *Pemikiran Filsafat...*, p. 181.

(source truth) and (2) al-dhalalah (meaning content). All Muslims in discussing the issue of al-Tsubut agree that the editorial of the verses of the Koran compiled in the Mushaf comes from Allah SWT. As for the difference, namely in discussing al-dalalah (meaning content), where there is a definite meaning (qath'i) and has many meanings (zhanni).³⁸

The re-actualization of Islamic teachings promoted by Harun is by looking at the main teachings of Islam as contained in the verses of the Koran. The reform that is meant here is a renewal of the interpretation of the verses of the Koran, by using a cultural approach.³⁹

The cultural approach in understanding absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) discourse is an oriented approach by looking at the influence of a culture on the resulting interpretive style. This of course will affect the implementation of the main teachings which are generally universal. In simple language, the basic teachings contained in Islamic teachings are basically universal but the interpretation and the way of implementing them are local in style according to the locus and tempus. So that this is what is later called Islam as a religion that is in accordance with all places and ages.

Harun in using absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) discourse uses the metaphysical theory of Heraklitos "change" and the "fixed" Parmanides. This absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) theory is then used to see everything related to Islamic teachings, decline, progress, renewal, culture and also the fundamentals of Islamic teachings, namely the Koran and al-Hadith.⁴⁰

The necessity of using absolute (qath'i) and relative (zhanni) discourse is due to the belief that the door to ijtihad has been closed among Muslims since the era of decline, and there has been taqdis al-afkar al-ulama '(sacred thought of ulama), in the sense of teaching. the main thing which is qathi and zhanni is positioned to be the same, namely absolute or dogmatic. The two entities that were originally separated later became one.

c. Rational and Traditional Categorization

Rational and traditional thinking frameworks are important and become one of Harun Nasution's studies. Harun explained that the mode of thinking will affect the mode of knowing, then the method of knowing will also affect the formation of the world view. The world view (world of view) will influence

³⁸M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: PT. Mizan Pustaka, 2013), p. 211-212.

³⁹Nurisman, *Pemikiran Filsafat...*, h. 202.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 207.

humans in formatting the future (futuristic) and the concrete actions of the perpetrators. So that in order to change the future, what needs to be reformatted is the way of thinking.⁴¹

The rational method of thinking is thought in which reason has a low position. Meanwhile, the rational thinking method is thought in which the mind is given space to explore itself in accordance with the context that is developing at that time. So that this mindset will still be able to respond to contemporary problems it faces. The Koran itself talks a lot about the use of the mind in seeing the existing reality by calling *afala ya'qilun* or *afala tatafakkarun*.

Furthermore, the amalgamation of reason, experience, and revelation in a never-ending dialectical relationship can be called "relational epistemology". Where revelation acts as an illahiyyah response to humanitarian problems, it is born in a certain historical condition. The dialectic or relation between the rational method and the senses is what gives its own meaning, where Islam does not ignore one or the other. In this case, it is interesting what John Lock said, as quoted by Muhammad Abdullah al-Syarqawi who stated, "reason is not everything if it is not in the sense area".⁴²

In presenting this new paradigm, Harun carefully criticized the traditional Islamic system of knowledge that had turned into a belief system. As explained above, some relative Islamic teachings have been elevated to be absolute.

Harun's thoughts are aimed more at the minority elite, namely the government, intellectuals, and students / scholars. The legitimacy of the discourse offered was strong enough because it received government support, because at that time Indonesia was in a transition period from the Old Order to the New Order. Indonesia is carrying out a development program, making changes, and rationalizing the evolution of traditional agrarian societies to a more advanced stage.⁴³

Harun Nasution's Views on Several Issues

1. Inclusive Attitude: Accepting Culture or Knowledge from Outside

Harun necessitated Muslims to see and study the progress achieved by the Western world. This inclusive attitude is needed. Two arguments put forward by Harun with regard to an inclusive attitude, namely, (1) historical arguments, and (2) philosophical arguments, namely thoughts that reflect Islamic philosophy.

The belief above starts from the understanding that there is a harmonious

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁴²Muhammad Abdullah al-Syarqawi, *Sufisme dan Akal*, trans. Halid al-Kaf (Jakarta: Pustaka Hidayah, 2003), p. 55.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 237.

relationship between the truth of reason and the truth of revelation in providing access to knowledge from outside, as has been done by al-Kindi, al-Farabi and other Islamic philosophers, openly accepting Persian Greek thought.⁴⁴This is what Harun hopes can be applied in accepting culture and knowledge from outside. Even if examined from a historical and philosophical perspective, Islamic culture in the Classical Age developed very rapidly and took the form of a very high civilization because philosophical thought developed and was very progressive and at the same time inclusive so that thinking became open, views became broad, attitudes became dynamic and rational thought very well developed.⁴⁵

2. Freedom and the Development Mentality: Freedom of Thought and Action

The basic concept of human thought and action initiated by Harun was adapted to the discourse of the New Order government, namely the era of development. Harun in reconstructing this concept adopted the thoughts of Mu'tazilah, Ibn Rusyd, Muhammad Abduh, although he did not completely take it. The concept of free will Mu'tazilah which was later developed in explaining the relationship of freedom in order to achieve development progress.

As previously explained, the weakness of Muslims is the weakness in the use of reason. So that the traditional mindset must be replaced with a rational mindset.

3. Cosmology: Belief in Causality as a Source of Success

Harun tried to introduce causal thoughts as understood in the Mutazilah's view. In the Mu'tazilah there is a form of naturalism, but according to Harun, naturalism which recognizes the existence of God (religious naturalism) is not atheist naturalism.⁴⁶

The essence of Harun's thought about causality is that he does not absolutely accept the concept of destiny or fatalism that has been developing in society, which is influenced by the teachings of Ash'ariyah theology.

Regarding the reality of destiny (qada' and qadar) in the Koran, it is considered to have a relationship with human actions and attitudes towards life.⁴⁷ This is a general rule that applies in nature, between an action and its consequences. Among the permanent laws is the principle of freedom of choice of action, without coercion and pressure. This freedom will lead to success or progress.

Harun Nasution said, "If you want to be rich, then follow the laws of nature that make you rich. If you want to be healthy, follow the laws of nature that cause health, of course the desired happiness is not only

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 277-278.

⁴⁵Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan dan Pemikiran Prof. Dr. Harun Nasution* (Bandung; Penerbit MIZAN, 1996), p. 98.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁴⁷Furthermore, regarding the concept of destiny (predeterminism) according to traditional and rational circles associated with theological flow in Islam and its influence in life. See Fawaizul Umam, *Reposisi Islam Reformulasi Ajaran* (Mataram: LEPPIM, 2011), p. 66-69.

happiness in the world, but also happiness in the hereafter. ⁴⁸

4. Harun Nasution's Moral Problems and Criticisms Against Materialistic/Hedonistic

The materialistic / hedonistic view is a negative impact arising from the progress made by Western science. The progress, according to Harun, was only in the physical field. While in Islamic teachings, what is very basic (outside of the physical) is morals and especially monotheism. Tawhid acknowledges the existence of one God who is the creator of the universe and the source of everything. Morals and moral teachings in Islam come from God and therefore have a strong and sacred basis. ⁴⁹

On the other hand, Harun advocated studying science in the West, but on the other hand Harun emphasized the need to pay attention to the spirituality of modern society. The negative impact of the secularistic and materialistic life models on the aridity of the spiritual side is increasingly felt, so that Sufism is needed to balance the completely materialistic lifestyle. In the middle ages of Islam, Sufism was considered the cause of backwardness or decline, but in this materialistic era, it was needed. ⁵⁰

Harun further explained that one of the problems related to this problem was the dualism of education in Indonesia, so that it also colored the way people think about the

scientific discipline that was developing in Indonesia.

Criticism of Rational Islamism to Rational Populist Islam (Considering Humanistic Rational Islam)

As previously explained, the Rational Islamic thought initiated by Harun Nasution was motivated by the socio-political-cultural conditions that surrounded him in the New Order era, so that these thoughts were appropriate in the context of the era he was raised in, but not necessarily appropriate in the modern / contemporary context. .

Based on this, Nurisman reviewed the fundamental foundations of Harun Nasution's philosophical building by examining and criticizing Harun's thoughts that were not in accordance with current developments, and which could still be taken to be rejuvenated in the contemporary context.

In general, there were two waves of criticism against Harun Nasution, namely: first, a wave of criticism that was apologetic in nature, driven by M. Rasjidi and his friends; ⁵¹ second, a wave of criticism that is based on the historical perspective of Islamic philosophy, the foundations of classical Islamic philosophy and transformative thinking. ⁵²

Harun Nasution's thinking on reform was supported by the thoughts of Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and the ideas of the New Order modernization theory.

⁴⁸Nurisman, *Philosophical Thought ...*, p. 329.

⁴⁹Nasution, *Islam Rasional*,, h. 445.

⁵⁰Nurisman, *Pemikiran Filsafat...*, h. 332.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 399.

Therefore Harun was a "scholar" of the New Order. Harun brilliantly delivered the theory of development through theological reform. The weakness of Harun's thinking is the rational nature of his approach and elitism of the theological thinking of society in general.

Harun's rational theology benefits the strong and does not have a vision for the liberation of the oppressed. This was expressed by Mansur Fakhri who criticized the New Order development model by offering Transformative Theology in this Post Modern Era.⁵³

Harun Nasution was also considered to be oversimplifying the problem, because the problem of the decline of the Muslims could not only be found in the nature of Asy'ariyah's fatalism, but there were other variables such as the structure of the ruler that contributed to the suffering of the community. Harun paid less attention to exploring the social philosophy used to understand the decline and progress of society. Harun, who was pro-New Order, used historical analysis, but did not use socio-structural analysis. Not all problems faced by the ummah can be returned to the rationality of the Mutazila model. In other words Aaron's theology does not have a vision of liberation, but only enlightenment.⁵⁴

Liberation Theology is one form of theology that is offered in response to Rational Theology. Transformative thinking in Indonesia is influenced by Asghar Ali Engineer who introduced liberation theology.

Which in essence wants to empower the general public at large.

Concluding Discourse: Towards the Grounding of Emancipatory Populist Rational Islamic Thought

The explanation above confirms that rational theology is a theology that provides legitimacy for a society's production relations. If the interests of the transformation of society towards social justice for an oppressed society, then rational theology is completely irrelevant, because it does not at all reflect the revolutionary character of an oppressed society.

As for the model of Islamic thought in this Multicultural Cultural Era or millennial era, it is necessary to rejuvenate or reconstruct elitist Rational Islamic thought into an Emancipatory Populist Rational Islamic model by considering Existentialism and Phenomenological philosophies. This is done by remembering the situation of the millennial era, so that students or observers of Islamic studies can be more grounded in accordance with the situation of the era which requires creative, rational, progressive and emancipatory reasoning.

The explanation above also wants to underline that Harun Nasution appeared as a controversial figure, even though he originally came from the Nasution clan with a family background of traders. Harun Nasution seeks to revive or bring back the lost glory of Muslims through rational

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 410.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 411.

thinking ethics and leaving traditional thinking ethics.

Rational Islamic construction is built on several systems of thought, namely text (al-Qur'an and al-Hadith), scholastic Aristotelianism (Mu'tazilah and Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd), and modernism (Muhammad Abduh and modernism in a broad sense such as development), which are attached to historical and philosophical approaches.

Rational Islam is an enlightenment for Muslims, so that Muslims want to change traditional thinking ethics to modern thinking ethics or in Harun Nasution's language it is called "rational thinking ethics". But enlightenment must continue, otherwise it will become a myth. So that in Harun Nasution's view, philosophy is an important requirement of Muslims to this day.

Rational Islam emerged as a reaction and criticism of Traditional Islam which has been grounded in Indonesian society, this is due to the strong influence of the text or interpretation of the scholars without criticism. Meanwhile, Rational Islam is built with a critical attitude towards the views of the ulama's thoughts by affirming ijtihad and adapting it to the demands of the times. In Rational Islamic ideas there are anomalies that need to be rejuvenated because there are things that are no longer in accordance with the times. This is also because Harun's ideas and thoughts were raised during the New Order era.

And finally, there are several attitudes that message Harun Nasution's ethical

thinking that a scientist must have, namely ethics, morals, norms, morals, and aesthetics. These attitudes will reflect the personality of a scientist. If the above attitudes are not possessed, even though a person has very high knowledge, his "degree" will be looked down upon by society. This is in line with the word of Allah swt in QS Al-Mujadalah: 11.

"Allah elevates those who believe among you and who have knowledge of several degrees."

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