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**Islamization of Science and the Application of Axiology Related  
to the Science of Naquib Al-Attas Perspective**

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**ABSTRACT**

Since its inception, the concept of Islamization of science has attracted the attention of many scholars to discuss. Muslim scholars who support this idea argue that science needs to be reintegrated with Islamic values. This is due to the view that current science has been influenced by western ideologies and philosophies that are contrary to Islamic teachings. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas is one of the main figures who consistently promotes this idea. He seeks to return science to its axiological framework, namely as a means that is not only oriented towards material progress, but also to moral and spiritual benefits. According to him, science that develops without the guidance of religious values risks bringing damage, rather than benefit, to humanity.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The discussion of the Islamization of science often causes debate, both among Muslim and western scientists, which is divided into two camps: pros and cons. Those who oppose it argue that science is neutral and value-free, while those who support it have a different view. This article will outline the various reasons underlying both views. One of the central figures in the discussion of the Islamization of science is Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. The idea of Islamization was first explicitly conveyed by al-Attas in 1977, at the First International Conference on Islamic Education in Makkah. His thinking was then clarified through several of his works, such as the book *Islam and Secularism* published in 1978 .

According to al-Attas, the Islamization of science is not just about integrating general science with Islamic science. Moreover, this process involves an ontological and epistemological reconstruction of general science that is not in line with Islamic values, so that it can be adjusted to Islamic

principles. Through this reconstruction, it is hoped that new disciplines will be born that are in harmony with the teachings of Islam.

This idea was later strengthened and developed by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (hereinafter referred to as Syed al-Attas) through a number of his works, including *Islam and Secularism* published in 1978. According to Syed al-Attas, Islamization is not just about uniting or bringing together general science with Islamic science, but rather an effort to reconstruct the ontological and epistemological aspects of general science that are not in line with Islamic values, in line with Islamic principles. This reconstruction process then gave birth to various new disciplines.

In the construction of Islamic science, science works within the framework of the Islamic paradigm itself, where science is sourced directly from the revelation text of the Qur'an. Therefore, the ethical values contained in Islamic science are in a very close ethical-moral framework. Because the prophetic mission of Muhammad PBUH is to build ethics and morals. Kuntowijoyo calls ethics and morals prophetic ethics. The prophetic ethical value itself comes from the *ahklak* of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and its source is the revelation of Allah SWT .

Another thing is that when science is so rigid and tied to values, science must be open to its context. Religion is the context. Religion directs science to its essential goal, which is to understand the reality of nature, and understand the existence of Allah SWT. Understanding the existence of Allah SWT is expected for humans to be aware of the essence of self-creation and where it comes from. The solution given by the Qur'an to science that is bound by value is to return science to its proper path, so that science becomes a blessing and grace to humans and nature, not the other way around bringing *mudharat*, destruction, and disaster.

Philosophy and science are about knowledge, while religion is about beliefs or beliefs. Knowledge is not the same as belief, but the two have a close relationship. Beliefs can animate or influence science, therefore science is not neutral or value-free. One of the truths contained in the history of philosophy is religious truth, which means truth that can be accepted by humans based on a clear source and comes from the creator. The truth of religion cannot be violated and its truth is accepted by humans .

This paper is compiled to explore the concept of Islamization of science and its application of axiology within the framework of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' thought. This approach is important because al-Attas offers a unique perspective that emphasizes that science is not only neutral, but has an ontological and epistemological dimension that must be aligned with Islamic

values. Through this analysis, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of how science can be directed to achieve ethical and moral goals according to Islamic teachings.

So specifically what is the formulation of the problem in writing this journal is how is the biography of Naquib al-Attas? And what is the Islamization of science meant by Naquib al-Attas? And how is the application of axiology related to the science of Naquib Al-Attas' perspective?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a literature study that focuses on Naquib al-Attas' thoughts related to the concept of Islamization of contemporary science. This research uses a philosophical approach, namely analysis that relies on arguments, thoughts, and logic. In addition, the *historical approach* is used to understand the development of al-Attas' thoughts and character in the context of his life (Dr. Jonaedi Efendi & Prof. Dr. Johnny Ibrahim, 2018).

As a literature study, this research is qualitative, collecting data from various written sources such as books, journals, and other publications. According to Sugiyono, the research method is a scientific way to obtain data with a specific purpose (Sugiyono, 2016). Literature research aims to investigate events or writings to uncover facts and origins (Amir Hamzah, 2020). Zed explained that this research involves activities such as collecting library data, reading, taking notes, and processing research materials (Zed, 2008). Bungin added that the qualitative approach is based on a variety of philosophies, including phenomenology, humanism, empiricism, idealism, and rationalism (Moleong, 2019). This approach is also considered a critique of postpositivism. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words, as well as observable behaviors (Moleong, 2019).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Biography of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' full name is Syed Muhammad Naquib Ibn Ali Ibn Abdullah Muhsin al-Attas (in this writing, it is referred to as Syed al-Attas). He was born in Bogor, West Java, on September 5, 1931. His father, Syed Ali bin Abdullah al-Attas, and his mother, Syarifah Raquan Al-'Aydarus, were descendants of Sundanese nobles from Sukapura, West Java. His lineage can be traced back to thousands of years through the Sayyid lineage in the Ba'Alawi family in Hadramaut, which led to Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Syed al-Aydarus also played a role in guiding

Nur ad-Din ar-Rânîrî, a prominent scholar in the Malay world (Aceh), into the Rifa'iyah order (Gani, 2021).

Syed al-Attas is the second of three children, the eldest of whom is Syed Hussein al-Attas, a scientist and sociologist and former vice-rector at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Meanwhile, the youngest is named Syed Zaid, a chemical engineer and former lecturer at the MARA Institute of Technology.

From this description, it can be concluded that Syed al-Attas' family background does not come from ordinary sociocultural circles, but from the nobility, who are often referred to as "*superior seeds*". In him flows not only blue blood, but also pure religious fervor. His family background played an important role in his early education. Families in Bogor provide a foundation in Islamic sciences, while families in Johor equip them with education that contributes greatly to the mastery of the Malay language, literature, and culture.

During the Japanese occupation, Syed al-Attas continued his education at Madrasah al-'Urwatu al-Wutsqa, Sukabumi (1941-1945), which used Arabic as the language of instruction. After World War II, in 1946, when he was 15 years old, he returned to Johor to continue his education. He studied at Bukit Zahrah School, then at the English College (1946-1951). During this period, he lived with his uncle, Ungku Abdul Aziz ibn Ungku Abdul Majid, a nephew of the Sultan who later became the sixth Chief Minister of Modern Johor. His uncle had a rich collection of Malay manuscripts, especially in the fields of literature and history.

After completing secondary school in 1951, at the age of 20, Syed al-Attas had the opportunity to attend military education, first at Eton Hall, Chester, Wales, and then at the *Royal Military Academy*, Sandhurst, England (1952-1955). While in England, he delved into various aspects of the culture and lifestyle of the local community. After graduating from Sandhurst, his interest in science prompted him to abandon his military career. He then continued his studies at the University of Malaya, which was then located in Singapore, in 1957-1959 (Sa'diyah, 2013).

At the age of 29, in 1960, Syed al-Attas received a scholarship to continue his studies at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, founded by Wilfred Cantwell Smith. There, he interacted with a number of prominent scholars such as Sir Hamilton Gibb (UK), Fazlur Rahman (Pakistan), Toshihiko Izutsu (Japan), and Sayyed Hussein Nasr (Iran). He earned a Master of Arts (M.A.) from McGill University in 1962, with a thesis entitled *Ranîrî and the Wujûdiyyah of 17th Century Aceh*, which yielded very satisfactory results.

### Islamization of Science: Syed al-Attas Perspective

Throughout its history, humans have faced many challenges and chaos. However, they have never faced a more serious challenge than that posed by Western civilization today (Muslem, 2019). Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, a thinker who is quite well known to the world of Western thought and Islam, views the most difficult problem facing humanity today is the hegemony and domination of Western secular science that leads to the destruction of mankind. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, stated;

*"Many challenges have arisen in the midst of man's confusion throughout the ages, but none perhaps more serious and deconstructive to man than today's challenge posed by Western civilization"* (Damyati, 2010)

Current scientific theories show that there is a separation between science and religion. Along with various scientific discoveries and the spirit of progress of the times, religion in the West no longer has a relationship with science. The hegemony of Western civilization has made science secular. In the Islamic perspective, science is seen as a form of worship and an integral part of religion (Husaini, 2020). Another thing is that when science is so rigid and tied to values, science must be open to its context. Religion is the context. Religion directs science to its essential goal, which is to understand the reality of nature, and understand the existence of Allah SWT. Understanding the existence of Allah SWT is expected for humans to be aware of the essence of self-creation and where it comes from. The solution given by the Qur'an to science that is bound by value is to return science to its proper path, so that science becomes a blessing and mercy to humans and nature, not the other way around, bringing harm to destruction and disasters (Mahmudin et al., 2021).

Naquib al-Attas's idea of Islamization of science departs from his view, that science cannot be separated from value or free of value as understood by some Western scientists. According to al-Attas, the science that is developing today is not neutral or value-free, but a value *laden* (S. M. al-N. Al-Attas, 1979). Based on this understanding, al-Attas concluded that the science that is developing today has been mixed with Western culture and secularism.

Science that is spread all over the world, including in the Islamic world, is actually a science influenced by Western culture and secularism. The science introduced by the West carries the values and characteristics of Western civilization. Science developed by the West is basically knowledge that seems as if authentic, when in fact it contains secular Western values. Without realizing it, the Islamic community also takes advantage of this knowledge, considering it as authentic knowledge, even though it contains a secular Western worldview.

Responding to this condition, al-Attas assessed the importance of making a selection of Western science before applying it in Islamic society. Secular life in the West has an effect on the development of science that only acknowledges empirical scientific truths and ignores substantive truths. In the Western approach, scientific truth is determined more by ratio than by revelation (Bistara, 2021).

Al-Attas views the Islamization of language as the first thing that must be done before the Islamization of science. According to him, the Islamization of language was shown by the Qur'an when it was first revealed among the Arabs, namely language, thought, and reason are closely interrelated. So the Islamization of language leads to the Islamization of reason or thought. The elevation of Arabic as a language in which God reveals the holy book of the Qur'an to humans makes the language preserved without change, still alive and eternal as a noble standard Arabic. Therefore, the meaning of terms related to Islam, there is no social change, so that for all ages and every generation a complete knowledge of Islam is possible, because such knowledge including its norms is something that has been established, and does not belong to something that develops as is the case with man and history that is said to be developing (W. M. N. W. Daud & Fahmi, 2003).

The methodology used by S.M.N. al-Attas in the process of Islamization of *present-day knowledge*, consists of two interrelated steps or processes. They are as follows:

- a. Isolate the key elements and concepts that make up culture and civilization, and every field of modern science today, especially in the humanities. However, the natural sciences, physics and applications must also be Islamized, especially in the interpretation of facts and the formulation of theories. According to al-Attas, if it is not in accordance with the Islamic view of life, then the facts are not true (W. M. W. Daud, 1998).
- b. Include Islamic elements along with key concepts in every relevant field and current science. If this process is completed, then Islamization will free humanity from magic, mythology, animism, national cultural traditions that are contrary to Islam, and then from secular control over reason and language. Islamization will free the human intellect from doubt (*syakk*), conjecture (*dzann*) and empty arguments (*mira'*) to the belief in the truth regarding spiritual, intellectual and material reality (W. M. W. Daud, 1998). Islamization will bring out interpretations of contemporary science and ideology, secular meanings and expressions (S. M. N. Al-Attas, n.d.).

Therefore, the Islamization of science is nothing but the Islamization of contemporary science or the Islamization of modern science, which is because contemporary and modern sciences are considered to have undergone secularization, because these sciences were discovered and developed by Western civilization. It is not true to say that these sciences are guaranteed to be universal and value-free. The Islamization of science is clearly explained by al-Attas, namely the liberation of human reason and language from magical, mythological, animistic, blind nationalism, and the mastery of secularism. This means that Muslims should have reason and language that is free from magical influences, myths, animism, nationalism, blindness and secularism. Islamization also frees human beings from the attitude of submission to their physical needs which tend to oppress themselves, the point because the physical nature is that they tend to be negligent towards the essence and origin of human beings, thus Islamization is nothing but a process of returning to nature (Ummah, 2019).

Naquib al-Attas's version of the Islamization of science does explicitly state that the sources come from the thoughts of Sufis who are able to provide adequate metaphysical explanations. Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian world for al-Attas is considered to have succeeded in changing the *worldview* of the people in this region which was full of mythology, both due to the influence of old beliefs and the influence of Hindu-Buddhist teachings that came later, into an *Islamic worldview* (Muttaqien, 2019).

### **The Application of Axiology Related to the Science of Naquib Al-Attas Perspective**

Al-Attas defines science (*'ilm*) with reference to the Islamic intellectual tradition. According to al-Attas, science cannot be defined because knowledge is not limited. However, it can be defined descriptively (*rasm*). However, there is a limit to the truth in each object of knowledge (Zarkasyi, 2018). Knowledge means the arrival of the soul, as well as the arrival of the soul to meaning. In the context of the arrival of meaning in the soul, it does not mean that the soul is passive, but it is making active efforts (T. A. Al-Attas et al., 2019).

Therefore, knowledge is about meaning (Sinuraya et al., 2020). Al-Attas classifies knowledge into two types, namely *fardhu 'ain* and *fardhu kifayah*; as well as *'ilm* and *ma'rifah*. The science of *fardhu 'ain* is the basis for the science of *fardhu kifayah* (Al-Daghri et al., 2011). The knowledge of *ma'rifah* is achieved by the guidance of revelation and the tradition of the Prophet (*sunnah*), obtained through the heart and intuition, while *'ilm* is obtained through common sense, sensory experience, intuition, and the right news (*khobar shadiq*) (Zarkasyi, 2018).

Furthermore, Syed al-Attas explained, from the point of view of this integrated embodiment, he defined science or the process of learning as the presence of meaning to *the soul*. This definition sees God as the source of the active giver and man as the passive receiver. When looking at human beings as active recipients, Syed al-Attas defines knowledge as the *arrival of the soul at meaning*. This is the Islamic view of *illmu*, including natural sciences, which always associate themselves with Allah SWT as the source of knowledge (Yulianto & Baihaki, 2018).

Thus, human seekers of knowledge are always related to active and passive processes. Actively seeking and gaining knowledge, and passively receiving the blessing of knowledge from Him. Furthermore, it can be understood that the human intellect will be able to achieve physical and metaphysical things at the same time, phenomena and nomenclature, symbols and meanings. This is also what then gave birth to the sorting or classification of sciences that are also different from Western science (Yulianto & Baihaki, 2018). Syed al-Attas categorized science into two parts, namely illuminative science (*ma'rifah*) and science. Illuminative science (*ma'rifah*) is food for the human soul.

In the context of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, this knowledge was given by Allah SWT, directly to him in the form of the Qur'an, which was then understood and practiced as *a sunnah*. In the perspective of the Qur'an and *the sunnah* this is called shari'a, while in the perspective of spirituality this is called the science of *laduni* (*'ilm laduni*) and wisdom. However, in another writing, Syed al-Attas considers wisdom as a combination of two types of science, namely illumination and science. Wisdom is given by Allah Swt., to human beings through *kasyaf* or intuition (inspiration) or spiritual experience allows the owner to know the limits of usefulness and superiority of the meaning contained in various problems and sciences that he pursues, which allows him to act justly (El Hakim & Fahyuni, 2020).

In this context, science is categorized as *the science of fardhu 'ain*, which can and must be studied by every Muslim. The second category of science deals with the physical and the objects associated with it, which can be achieved by the use of intellectual and physical power. Of course, it is difficult for man to obtain all science because science as a nature of Allah SWT Almighty Qadim is unlimited, only nature, capacity, time period and human needs are limited, so he must limit himself in seeking knowledge. On this basis, the achievement of this second knowledge is categorized in *fardhu kifayah*. This means that science that must be known by only a few people in society.



In the concept of value-bound science, it is stated that scientists or researchers have certain backgrounds, outlook on life, and values that may unconsciously influence how they develop hypotheses, choose research methods, and even how they interpret the results. Thus, value-bound science assumes that science is not only influenced by rigorous scientific methods, but also by the values that exist in the society in which it is developed.

So from the above explanation, it can be said that Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas views the axiology of science as an inseparable part of the efforts to Islamize science. According to him, science not only aims to understand reality, but also to achieve moral and spiritual goodness that is in line with Islamic values. Al-Attas emphasized that science must contribute to holistic human development, i.e. to improve morals and strengthen faith, not solely for technical or material exploration that can lead to social and environmental damage.

In Al-Attas's view, the axiology of science is closely related to the concept of adab, which is the placement of everything in its place according to its essence. The application of science must pay attention to the ethics of use and its impact on the welfare of mankind. For example, the development of technology that is not directed can create dehumanization, so moral values must be maintained so that science remains a means of worship and a positive contribution to society.

## **CONCLUSION**

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, born in Bogor on September 5, 1931, was a prominent thinker with a strong aristocratic and religious background. His family played an important role in educating him, both in the field of religious science and Malay culture. He was educated at Madrasah al-'Urwatu al-Wutsqa and later in Johor, as well as his military experience in England shaped his deep intellectual thinking.

Al-Attas is known as a major figure in the idea of Islamization of science. He considers that the dominance of Western secular science is the biggest challenge for humanity today. In his view, science is not value-free, but must be seen in the context of religion. The Islamization of knowledge for al-Attas means returning knowledge to a path that is in accordance with Islamic values, which aims to understand the reality of nature and the existence of Allah SWT. He emphasized the importance of selection for Western science that is influenced by secularism, so that science does not contradict Islamic teachings.

The methodology of Islamization of science proposed by al-Attas involves two important steps: first, isolating concepts that contain secular values in

modern science, and second, incorporating appropriate Islamic elements in the science. Thus, the Islamization of science can free humans from cultural influences that are contrary to Islam, as well as improve reason and reason to be more in accordance with religious teachings.

In terms of the axioms of science, al-Attas argues that science should be oriented towards morality and spirituality. Science is not only for technical or material exploration, but must also support holistic human development, by improving morals and strengthening faith. The ethics of using science must be maintained so as not to cause social or environmental damage, and science must remain a means for worship and positive contributions to humanity.

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