

## CHAPTER III

### BIOGRAPHY OF SYED MUHAMMAD NAQUIB AL-ATTAS AND HIS THOUGHT TOWARD ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

#### A. The Biography of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

Syed Muhammad Naquib ibn Ali bin Abdullah ibn Muhsin al-Attas<sup>1</sup> was born on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1931 in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. Based on pedigree, al-Attas is the 37<sup>th</sup> descendant of the Prophet Muhammad through genealogy of *sayyid*, from Ba'Awali originating from Hadramaut until coming to Imam Hussain, Prophet's grandson. He dwelt in a religious family, evidenced by the existence of his ancestors. Many of them are astounding scholars and Sufis, for example; Muhammad al-Aydarus (maternal), Sufi scholar Syed Abu Hafs Umar ba Syaiban (from Hadramaut) who brought Nur Al-Din al-Raniri, one of Malay leading scholars to *tarīqah Rifa'iyyah*<sup>2</sup>. Al-Attas' mother name is Syarifah Raquan Al-'Aydarus nobility descendant of Sunda in Sukapura. While from his father family, his grandfather name is Syed Muhsin ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al-Attas, an Islamic holy man who has great influence not only in Indonesia, but also in Arab. Ruqoyah Harun, his paternal grandmother is an aristocrat in Turkey who ever married with Ungku Abdul Majid, the sister of Abu Bakar, the Sultan of Johor. After the

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<sup>1</sup>There are several versions about the writing of the name. In his book entitled *Some Aspects of Sufism* (1963), written as Syed Naquib al-Attas (without Muhammad). In his book *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (1970) written as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. In the book *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* (1972), *Islam and Secularism* (1978) and the works thereafter, written under the name of Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas. Those names may be from al-Attas his self, but there are others who called him "Najib" (not Naquib or Naguib). For efficiency and facilitating the arrangements of the thesis, the researcher will call it al-Attas then. See footnote no. 2 in Aminullah el-Hady, "Naquib al-Attas: Islamisasi Ilmu", in A. Khudori Sholeh (ed), *Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer*, Yogyakarta:Jendela, 2003), p.349-350

<sup>2</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, trans. Hamid Fahmy dkk., *Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan Islam Syed M. Naquib al-Attas*, Bandung:Mizan, 2003, p.45

sultan's death, Ruqoyah remarried with Syed Abdullah Al-Attas and gave birth to the father of al-Attas, Syed Ali Al-Attas<sup>3</sup>.

Al-Attas got his basic education at Ngee Heng Primary School (1936-1941). After that, he returned to Java to continue his study at Madrasah Al-Urwatu Al-Wutsqa, Sukabumi (1941-1945), an institution which used Arabic as the instructional language. After World War II in 1946, he completed his education in Johor, first at Bukit Zahrah School and then at the English College (1946-1951). At the time in Johor, he had the opportunity to read important manuscripts of Malay, mainly manuscripts of history and literature in the library of Ungku Abdul Aziz, Sultan's nephew who later became the 6th Chief Minister of Johor Modern<sup>4</sup>. Starting from there, he mastered the literature, Malayan and culture well, which then influenced his intellectual view. Next, in 1952-1955 General Sir Gerald Templer chose al-Attas to follow the first military education at Eron Hall, Chester, Wales and at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, England. Since in Britain, al-Attas was studying many aspects which affecting the spirit and lifestyle of people in UK. Since in Sandhurst, he began to impress and eventually studied Sufi metaphysics, particularly the opus of a famous Sufi poet Nur al-Din Abd ar-Rahman bin Ahmad al-Jami.

When he was studying as undergraduate student at the University of Malaya, he could make a book entitled "Rangkaian Ruba'iyat" in 1959. While his second book titled *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised Among the Malays* in 1963. After publishing of his second book, the government of Canada provided scholarships to al-Attas to study at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal starting from 1960. He obtained MA degree after writing a thesis titled *Raniri and the Wujūdiyyah of 17th Century Aceh* in 1962. One year later, he continued his doctoral education in SOAO (School of Oriental and African Studies),

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.46

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.47-48

University of London. In 1965, he earned a Ph.D after writing a two-volume dissertation entitled *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fanshuri*. Upon his returning to Malaysia (1965), he was immediately occupied as the chairman of Literature and Culture Department of University of Malaya and subsequently became Dean of the Faculty of Literature from 1968 to 1970<sup>5</sup>.

When he was a Dean, al-Attas tried to develop the integral Islamic studies based on his view about integral Islamic knowledge. This can be seen by the construction of the University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 1970. Not only that, but he also built the basic concepts of philosophy of UKM and established the faculty of science and Islamic studies faculty within his framework of thought<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, he established and headed IBKKM (Institut Bahasa, Sastra dan Kebudayaan) in order to realize his concept of assessment of role and influence of Islam and its relationship to language and local and international culture in 1973 at UKM<sup>7</sup>.

In accordance with his capacity, he was appointed to be Tun Abdul Razak (Chair of Southeast Asian Studies) which headquartered at Ohio University in 1980-1982. Al-Attas also founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and be a rector there since 1987. The establishment of ISTAC (inaugurated on Friday, October 4, 1991) was started because of the anxiety of Islamic education which eroded by Western science. ISTAC aims to create the perfect man under the capacity and personality in accordance with the teachings of Islam<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.50

<sup>6</sup>Maimun Syamsudin, *Integrasi Multidimensi Agama dan Sains*, Jogjakarta:IRCiSoD, 2012, p.111

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.112

<sup>8</sup>Al Attas formulates the basics interest of ISTAC as follows: (1). Formulating, researching, defining and outlining the basic concepts of Islam relating to the issues of culture, education, science, manner and style as well as sources of knowledge faced by Muslims today. (2) Resulting and providing the answers based on Islam on many challenges of intellectual and modern culture and various schools of thought, religion, and ideology. (3). Assessing the meaning and philosophy of art and art of Islamic development, and giving form and guidance toward Islamizing fields of literature and education of arts. (4). investigating, reviewing and writing about

His intellectual career is shown from various invitations and positions related to his field such as a Visiting Professor for Islamic Studies at Temple University (1976-1977), member of the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy with Henry Corbin, SH Nasr and Toshihiko Izutsu, and being the leader of a meeting of Islamic history experts in Aleppo, Syria under UNESCO's command. He also made more than 400 times papers such as USA, Japan, Far East and other Islamic countries<sup>9</sup>.

## B. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' Works

According to the note of biography written by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, al-Attas has written 26 books and monographs, both in English and Malay. Not only that, his works had been translated into other languages, such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Malay, Indonesia, France, Germany, Russia, Bosnia, Japan, India, Korea, and Albania. His works are as follows<sup>10</sup>: *Rangkaian Ruba'iyat*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), Kuala Lumpur, 1959, *Some Aspect of Shufism as Understood and Practised Among the Malays*, Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, Singapura, 1963, *Raniri and the Wujūdiyyah of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Aceh*, Monograph of the Royal Asiatic Society, Cabang Malaysia, No. 111, Singapura, 1966, *The Origin of Malay Sya'ir*, DBP, Kuala Lumpur, 1968, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the*

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Islamic *tamaddun* in Malay. (5). Formulating Islamic education philosophy including definitions, goals and educational guidance in Islam. (6). Formulating and planning the philosophy of Islamic science. (7). Investigating and studying which led to the formulation of ways and content of disciplines and academic courses to be implemented at the University to integrate the various fields of science in all of faculty and University (8). Providing guidance for university to assess, investigate, and train scholars and intellectual leaders playing creative roles in restoring original Islamic *tamaddun* at a reasonable place in the modern world. (9). Publishing the results of the investigation and assessment which will be used all the time to be distributed to Islamic world. (10). Establishing libraries of prime books in university which envisages intellectual and religious traditions of Islamic *tamaddun* and the West as a way to achieve those goals and guidance. (11). Shaping and treating the Institute building which will has more than 120,000 volumes of books, including manuscripts produced by previous Islamic scientists. See Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam in History and Malay culture*.

<sup>9</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, trans. Hamid Fahmy dkk., *Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan Islam Syed M. Naquib al-Attas*, Bandung:Mizan, 2003, p.53

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.55

*Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*, DBP, Kuala Lumpur, 1969, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fanshuri*, University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, *Concluding Postscript to the Origin of the Malay Sya'ir*, DBP, Kuala Lumpur, 1971, *The Correct Date of the Terengganu Inscription*, Museums Department, Kuala Lumpur, 1971, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1972.

Most of his book has been translated into French, Russian and has been present in Indonesian. His works including *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin*, monographs which have not been published, 286 p., Written between February-March 1973, *Comments on the Re-examination of Al-Raniri's Hujjat Al-Siddiq: A Refutation*, Museums Department, Kuala Lumpur, 1975, *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), Kuala Lumpur, 1976. It has been translated into Korean, Japanese, Turkish, *Islam: Islam: Paham Agama dan Asas Akhlak*, ABIM, Kuala Lumpur, in 1977, *Islam and Secularism*, ABIM, Kuala Lumpur, 1978. It has been translated into Malayan, Indian, Persian, Urdu, Indonesian, Turkish, Arabic, and Russian, (Ed.) *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education: Islamic Education Series*, Hodder and Stoughton and King Abdulaziz University, London: 1979, translated into Turkish, *The Concept of Education in Islam*, ABIM, Kuala Lumpur, 1980.

*Islam, Secularism, and the Philosophy of the Future*, Mansell, London and New York, 1985, *A Commentary on the Hujjat Al-Shiddiq of Nur Al-Din Al-Raniri*, Ministry of Culture, Kuala Lumpur, 1986, *The Oldest Known Malay Manuscript: A 16<sup>th</sup> Century Malay Translation of the 'Aqa'id of Al-Nasafi*, publishing departement of Universitas Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1988, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1989. It has been translated into Indonesian, Bosnia, Perisin, and Turkish, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1990, *The Intuition of Existence*, ISTAC, Kuala

Lumpur, 1990, *On Quidity and Essence*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1990, *The meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1993, *The Degrees of Existence*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1994, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1995.

Besides those books, al-Attas wrote more than 400 articles the middle year from 1960 to 1970, both in Malaysia or abroad. The title of the article mentioned does not include scientific lectures delivered to public. These are 27 articles compiled by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud; "Note on the Opening of Relations between Malaka and Cina, 1403-5", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS), vol. 38, pt. 1, Singapura, 1965, "Islamic Culture in Malaysia", *Malaysian Society of Orientalist*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966, "New Light on the Life of Hamzah Fanshuri", JMBRAS, vol. 40, pt.1, Singapura, 1967, "Rampaian Sajak", *Bahasa*, Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya no. 9, Kuala Lumpur, 1968, "Hamzah Fanshuri", *The Penguin Companion to Literature, Classical and Byzantium, Oriental, and African*, vol. 4, London, 1969, "Indonesia: 4 (a) History: The Islamic Period", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971, "Comparative Philosophy: A Southeast Asian Islamic Viewpoint", in *Acts of the V International Congress of Medieval Philosophy*, Madrid-Cordova-Granada, 5-12 September 1971, "Konsep Baru mengenai Rencana serta Cara-gaya Penelitian Ilmiah Pengkajian Bahasa, Kesustraan, dan Kebudayaan Melayu", *Buku Panduan Jabatan Bahasa dan Kesustraan Melayu*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, "The Art of Writing, Dept. Museum", Kuala Lumpur, t.t, "Perkembangan Tulisan Jawi Sepintas Lalu", *Pameran Khat*, Kuala Lumpur, 14-21 Oktober 1973, "Nilai-nilai Kebudayaan, Bahasa dan Kesustraan Melayu", *Asas Kebudayaan Kebangsaan*, the Ministry of culture Belia and Sukan, Kuala Lumpur, 1973<sup>11</sup>, "Islam in Malaysia", Jerman, 1974, "Islam in Malaysia", *Malaysia Panorama*, Edition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia,

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<sup>11</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *op.cit.*, p.57

Kuala Lumpur, 1974, "Islam dan Kebudayaan Malaysia", *Syarah Tun Sri Lanang*, the second series, the Ministry of culture, Belia and Sukan, Kuala Lumpur, 1974, "Pidato Penghargaan terhadap ZAABA", *Zainal Abidin ibn Ahmad*, the Ministry of culture, Kuala Lumpur, 1976, "A General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago", *Profile of Malay Culture, Historiography, Religion, and Politics*, Sartono Kartodirdjo (ed.), the Ministry of education and culture, Jakarta, 1976.

"Preliminary Thoughts on Nature of Knowledge and the Definition and Aims of Education", *First World Conference on Muslim Education*, Makkah, 1977, "Some Reflections on the Philosophical Aspects of Iqbal's Thought", *International Congress on the Centenary of Muhammad Iqbal*, Lahore, 1977, "The Concept of Education in Islam: Its Form, Method, and System of Implementation", *World Symposium of Al-Isra'*, Amman, 1979, "ASEAN-Kemana Haluan Gagasan Kebudayaan Mau Diarahkan?", *Discussion*, vol. 4, no. 11-12, November-December, 1979, "Hijrah: Apa Artinya?", *Panji Masyarakat*, 1979, "Knowledge and Non-Knowledge", *Readings in Islam*, no. 8, first quarter, Kuala Lumpur, 1980, "Islam dan Alam Melayu", *Budiman*, Special Edition Commemorating the 15th century Hijri, Universiti Malaya, December, 1979, "The Concept of Education in Islam", *Second World Conference on Muslim Education*, Islamabad, 1980, "Preliminary Thoughts on an Islamic Philosophy of Science", *Zarrouq Festival*, Misrata, Libia: 1980, published also in Arabic edition<sup>12</sup>, "Religion and Secularity", *Congress of the World's Religions*, New York, 1985, "The Corruption of Knowledge", *Congress of the World's Religions*, Istanbul, 1985.

### **C. The Islamization of Knowledge According to S.H Nasr, Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi and Ziauddin Sardar**

Since 1970s until about the early 1990s, a discourse on Islam and Science had developed by appearing the idea of Islamic Science (Science

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<sup>12</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *op.cit.*, p.59

Islam) or the Islamization of knowledge (Islamization of Science). Basically, the discourse of Islamization of knowledge had emerged since the 19th century. The trailblazer of this discourse preceded it from the premise that science is not value-free. Zainal Abidin Bagir depicted that an Islamic term used to mention two things at once, the first is as a historical period, such the term modern, medieval, classical or Greece.

The second is an activity that is inserted by Islamic values<sup>13</sup>. Besides that, Sardar Ziaudin portrays the Islamization of knowledge discourse based on the recognition that all social science disciplines are the construction of Western civilization and have no relevance to the Muslims. The purpose of that discourse -which now becomes an international movement-is to create a variety of disciplines from view and Islamic civilization. Therefore, category and Islamic idea are used to depict the ideals, behaviors, ideas, problems and solutions of Muslim<sup>14</sup>. This thesis will explain the understanding of the Islamization of knowledge from three contemporary Muslim scholars in order to determine the position of al-Attas on the theory of Islamization of knowledge.

### **Syed Hosein Nasr**

Nasr used the term of science as a system of knowledge inserted by Islamic metaphysics. He criticized that the meaning of modern science had digressed so far from what it actually mentions as the science before. Nasr still use the term *Scientia sacra* (sacred science) to indicate that the wisdom aspect is more critical than technology which characterized as modern science-in the science. He critiqued the modernists, who try to reconstruct Islamic thought to be proper with modern period. For him, the modernists have distorted the Islamic intellectual tradition to be merely

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<sup>13</sup><http://ahmadsamantho.wordpress.com/2008/03/31/islam-dan-ilmu-pengetahuan/>,

Accessed on 15 December 2015

<sup>14</sup>Ziaudin Sardar, *Kembali ke Masa Depan*, Jakarta:Serambi,2005, p.279



looked more update, not "left behind" than the West. But, behind the advance of the modern world, it is in deterioration, losing the spiritual aspect. The other major issues are the translation of the word *'ilm* meant by science in modern term. Science is used to describe experimental sciences and as distinction of philosophy considered speculative. While the meaning of *'ilm* shows certainty and wraps up various types of knowledge and methods for its achievement.

He highlighted the notorious environmental damages in the last few decades. Nasr argues, the damages are resulted from the development of modern technology simply compiled with modern values like efficiency, effectiveness, economic value-without thinking of human needs, physical, or spiritual and does not consider the spiritual relationship between man and the earth, and creatures and other organisms. As a traditionalist, certainly mystical tendency is very strong. Nasr presumes that there is a spirit in the development of Islamic science, namely the belief in monotheism (particularly on the mystical interpretation). He wants the ideas and system of Islamic science established by Muslim figures to be reappeared as the previous golden era, when the development of Islamic science backwards in any measurement. This is what is meant by the idea of Islamization of knowledge Nasr. However, keep in mind that in this framework, a mystical-philosophical interpretation of nature is dominating.

### **Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi**

The problem overcome by the Muslims according to Faruqi's view is the education system which is not in line with Islamic vision. This is because the education system alienates Muslims from their own religion. Then, al-Faruqi provides solutions by combining and integrating religion and non-religion knowledge. Because according to him, the education system should consist of Islamic spirit functioned as an integral part of its ideological program. The goal is to bring back the identity of Muslim

students<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore Faruqi explained that another problem encountered by Muslims which is taught by non-Muslims is using books by non-Muslims to develop branches of non-Muslims thoughts in Muslim universities. Thus, the Islamization of knowledge according to al-Faruqi is Islamization into various disciplines, precisely by publishing books formed by the Islamic vision<sup>16</sup>.

Al-Faruqi made a design work for Islamization of knowledge. The first working is by mastering modern sciences, and then balanced by mastering of Islamic literatures. After having mastered both of them, the third step is establishing the Islamic relevance in every field of modern science. The fourth is synthesizing modern science with Islamic treasures and modern science. The last working is directing the Islamic thought to be able to restore its contribution to the advance of human civilization and giving meaning and direction in accordance with the values and goals of Islam<sup>17</sup>. Henceforth, according to al-Faruqi, it is needed to add three branches of *tawhīd* (unity) in running the Islamization of knowledge. The first is unity of knowledge. With it, there is no statement that a half of science is rational (*'aqli*) and others are irrational (*naqli*). The second is unity of life. That is, all disciplines must serve and realize about the purpose of creation. Thus, there is no more value-laden and value-free science. The third is unity of history. All disciplines will receive all humanist human activity, and serve the interest of people in history<sup>18</sup>.

There are 12 steps needed to achieve the Islamization process of knowledge. The first is mastering modern scientific disciplines: decomposing category. The second is reviewing the disciplines. It should be understood about the origin, development of modern science,

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<sup>15</sup>Ziaudin Sardar, *Jihad Intelektual:Merumuskan Parameter-parameter Sains Islam*, Surabaya:Risalah Gusti, 1998, p.44-45

<sup>16</sup><http://ahmadsamantho.wordpress.com/2008/03/31/islam-dan-ilmu-pengetahuan/>, Accessed on 15 December 2015

<sup>17</sup>Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan*, trans. Anas Mahyudin, Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan, Bandung:Penerbit Pustaka,2003, p.98

<sup>18</sup><http://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-digest/14/09/29/ncn7we-al-faruqi-islamisasi-ilmu-pengetahuan-bersumber-tauhid#> Accessed on 15 December 2016

methodology and main characters. The third is mastering Islamic science: ontology. The fourth is mastering Islamic science: an analysis<sup>19</sup>. The fifth is arranging Islamic particular relevance for each discipline. The sixth is critical appraising of modern science: the essence of present position analyzed from Islamic standpoint. The seventh is critical appraising of Islamic science. The eighth step is examining the biggest problems of Muslims, for example, political, cultural, intellectual, moral, social, economic, and spiritual problem of Muslims. The ninth step is studying the problems of mankind (broader scope). The tenth is doing creative analyzing and synthesizing between modern science and Islamic literatures. The eleventh step is redefining the disciplines within Islamic framework: university text books. And the last step is the deploying the Islamization of knowledge<sup>20</sup>.

### **Ziaudin Sardar**

Sardar emphasized his discussion on contemporary science system, namely a system of knowledge that is based on Islamic values. He criticized the views of Muslim who regarded that the negative impact of modern science can be solved by incorporating Islamic ethics. For him, this argument is not valid due to the modern science impact which involving a cognitive problems, so that it is necessary to formulate Islamic epistemology. Sardar criticized several scholars like philosophers; historians of Western science, environmentalist, and leftists in the West since the 1960s. He criticized the statement of neutrality of modern science, the influence of modern Western culture, and the impact of Western science.

Systematically, he revealed four arguments about the need of Islamization of knowledge. Firstly, in every major civilization history

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<sup>19</sup>Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi, *op.cit.*, p.99-102

<sup>20</sup>Rosynani Hasyim dan Imron Rosydi, *Islamization of Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of the Conceptions of al-Attas and al-Faruqi*, Intellectual Discourse Vol. 8, No. (2000), p.31-21

always creates different knowledge systems. Secondly, Islam has a unique knowledge. Thirdly, Western science is destructive to the Muslim. Fourthly, Western knowledge cannot fulfill cultural, material and spiritual aspects of Muslim. Thus, Sardar formed a radical reorientation of science-epistemology and worldview-which is then filled with the values of Islam, so that formed an Islamic science relates to physical and spiritual needs of Muslims. This effort was called contemporaryzation of Islamic science. He wanted to rebuild Islamic civilization from all aspects. Because in civilization, there is a worldview reflected in *Sharī'ah* and Islamic epistemology, which is also a source of value to all civilization aspects.

When discussing about Islamic civilization, it must be begun with worldview and epistemology. It means that there must be a conceptual order to be workable in creating social systems, economics, science, politics, and so on. It has eight levels of work to rebuild Islamic science. Those levels of employment are formulating Islamic epistemology, organizing the novel science methodology, examining analytically in the history of science and Islamic technology, organizing science policy in many of Muslim countries, conducting empirical research, building research institute, integrating this system into the education system, and conducting the dissemination of awareness of science problem in society<sup>21</sup>.

#### **D. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' thought toward Islamization of Knowledge**

The idea of Islamization of knowledge of al-Attas comes from an assumption that the crucial trouble of Muslims is about science<sup>22</sup>. According to him, Muslims are still a consumer of Western science about realities which are dualism, secularistic, evolutioneristic, and essentially relativistic and nihilistic. Other science issues, such as economy, politics,

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<sup>21</sup><http://ahmadsamantho.wordpress.com/2008/03/31/islam-dan-ilmu-pengetahuan/>

Accessed on 15 December 2015

<sup>22</sup>Ziaudin Sardar, *Jihad Intelektual:Merumuskan Parameter-parameter Sains Islam*, Surabaya:Risalah Gusti, 1998, p. 35

and etc are the consequence of science. Furthermore, the critical dilemma on the basis of modern science, that is about reality and worldview has spread to epistemological problems, such as the source of knowledge, the relationships between concept and reality, the truth, the language and other issues relating to science<sup>23</sup>.

Al-Attas wants to liberate the view of reality from Western subjectivity contained in the inhumane sciences and technologies, for example, the exploitation of nature, to make society as a political economy of camouflage object of elite society, and to make men as guinea pigs of psychobiologic<sup>24</sup>. In addition, al-Attas explains other two matters; the first is that modern science is not value-free (neutral) because of the influence of cultural, religious, and philosophical views which reflect the awareness and experience of Western. The second, Muslims need to Islamize the current knowledge by Islamizing linguistic symbols of reality and truth<sup>25</sup>.

Adnin Armas clarifies that the mastery of science on life, culture and civilization of the West, according to al-Attas is affected by five factors. The first is relying on reason as the supervisor of human life. The second is becoming dualistic towards reality and truth. The third is confirming the existence aspect projecting secular life. The fourth is accepting humanism doctrine. The fifth is making the drama and tragedy as dominant elements in nature and human existence<sup>26</sup>. Modern science adopts a philosophical rationalism, secular and philosophical empiricism ideology cannot be applied on Islamic science because it denies the reality and presence of God<sup>27</sup>. As a solution, al-Attas forms the Islamization of

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<sup>23</sup>Tsuwaibah, *Epistemologi Unity of Sciences Ibn Sina:Kajian Integrasi Keilmuan Ibn Sina dalam kitab Al-Syifa' Juz 1 dan Relevansinya dengan Unity of Sciences UIN Walisongo*, Laporan Penelitian Individual, UIN Walisongo, 2014, p.18

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 19

<sup>25</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, trans. Hamid Fahmy dkk, Bandung:Mizan, 2003, p.317

<sup>26</sup>M. Mochlis Solichin, *Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Aplikasinya dalam Pendidikan*, Tadris. Volume 3. Nomor 1. 2008, p. 22. See also Adnin Armas' article, *Westernisasi dan Islamisasi Ilmu* dalam *Islamia* Vol. 1 No. 6, 2005, p.12

<sup>27</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1989), trans. Syaiful Muzani, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, Bandung:IKAPI, 1995, p.27-28

knowledge that is not only a solution for the Muslims, but also as a response to Western science which according to him adopts secular.

### 1. The Definition of Science According to al-Attas

The knowledge, according to al-Attas is from God which is interpreted by human faculties (mind, reason, *qalb*). Therefore, human knowledge is the interpretation of the God's knowledge<sup>28</sup>. In defining science, al-Attas divide it into two categories. The first is *ḥadd's* category, which specifies main characteristics of an object with another. For example, humans are intelligent animals. The intelligent clearly becomes the distinction among others in the same genus. The second is *rasm's* category. This category describes the characteristics of the grand categories. As an example, human is an animal which laughs. Laughter explains an aspect of the human being. But, it is impossible if the science is defined *ḥadd*. Because science said al-Attas, is limitless and does not has specific character and special distinction<sup>29</sup>.

Additionally, al-Attas describes that science is the presence of meaning in life and the presence of life on meaning. The presence of meaning in life means God as the source of knowledge, while the presence of life on the meaning shows the soul as interpreter<sup>30</sup>. Science according to al-Attas is also a science among people who know the meaning, not among the knowing subject (science subject) and the known (science object). Then, these elements of meaning are constructed by soul from

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<sup>28</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1989), *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, trans. Saiful Muzani, Bandung : Mizan, 1989, p. 42

<sup>29</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed M. Naquib al-Attas*, trans. Hamid Fahmy dkk, Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan dalam Islam Syed M. Naquib al-Attas, Bandung:Mizan, 2003, p.143-144

<sup>30</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:International Institute of Islam Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 2001, p.133

captured object by the senses when the soul receives illumination from God, then this means that these elements do not exist on the object<sup>31</sup>.

Al-Attas firmly hold the fundamental principle which is the dimension of science, namely the soul, meaning and usefulness of science itself. The soul is an essential dimension in defining science. Due to the soul becomes an important position in science as an active spiritual entity to prepare ourselves accepting the meaning which is intelligible. Because Islam as a religion from God, is not only notice on the physical dimension, but also the soul<sup>32</sup>. The definition offered by al-Attas signaled that the attainment of knowledge and ideas, which is referred to the journey of soul on meaning, is a spiritual process<sup>33</sup>.

Al-Attas divided soul into two forms, those are the effect giver and effect receiver. When receiving effect, the soul related to object whose degree is lower than itself. At this moment, the soul will take the role as the effect giver which will then present ethical principles as body guidance to determine the good and the bad. The soul acts as a receiver when relating to reality which is higher than itself. In this time, the soul will receive knowledge<sup>34</sup>. The second dimension is the meaning. Meaning (*ma'na*) is an intelligible form associating with words, expressions, and symbols, applied to show the object of science. The meaning is an independent thing of subject, mental image displays by words or phrases. Afterwards, when it becomes an idea or vision in mind, it is called the understanding. This understood thing turns to an essence (*māhiyyah*). If the meaning is regarded as something outside the mind or objectively, then

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<sup>31</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *op.cit.*, p. 149

<sup>32</sup>In Islamic tradition, the soul is known as *ruh*, *nafs*, *'aql*, *qalb*. In essence, these four terms are a single reality with different circumstances (*ahwal/modes*), and each of them is involved in cognitive, empirical, intuitive, and spiritual.

<sup>33</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed M. Naquib al-Attas*, trans. Hamid Fahmy dkk, Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan dalam Islam Syed M. Naquib al-Attas, Bandung:Mizan, 2003, p. 148

<sup>34</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:International Institute of Islam Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 2001, p.156

it is called as reality (*ḥaqīqah*). And if it meant to be a reality which distinguishes one and another, it is called by individuality or individual existence (*huwaiyyah*).

The true knowledge is consisted of recognition of the right place for God in the sequence of being and existence. Al-Attas asserts "the place" referring to the system of ideas of the Qur'an which has been elaborated systematically through the Prophet tradition and revealed by religion as a worldview, which is then delivered to the Lord of the Worlds. Thus, science without knowing the existence of God is not real science. Another aspect which is substantially covered by al-Attas is character and science usage, which is clearly different from the West's view. Indeed, the real science can give conviction and understanding in a real and it is a character which will dispel doubts and ignorance and doubt and conjecture. In addition, true knowledge recognizes the limitations of truth in every object through the wisdom which will set down human as a civilized mankind. Human beings will acquire this knowledge through guidance and not the doubts as epistemology of the West.

Muslim scholars ordinarily divide science into two categories; eternal (*Qadīm*) and novel (*ḥādīth*). The eternal science is determined by God, while the novel science is consisted of three categories; self-evident (*badīhī, self-evidence*), primary (*ḍarūrī, Necessary*), and demonstrative (*istidlālī*)<sup>35</sup>. Al-Attas asserted that all knowledge comes from God, and he also received the classification of sciences whether from philosophers, experts<sup>36</sup>. But, what al-Attas is concerned is the essence of unity behind the entire hierarchy of science. In addition, al-Attas also categorized

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<sup>35</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud in *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed M. Naquib al-Attas* cited the view of Al-Syarif Ali bin Muhammad Al-Jurjani in *Kitab Al-Ta'rifat* about chapter 'ilm.

<sup>36</sup>In *Konsep Pendidikan dalam Islam*, p. 92, footnote 47, al-Attas asserted the truth of science classification given by al-Kindi, Ikhwan al-Shafa, Ibnu Sina, Al-Ghazali, Ibnu Rusyd and Ibnu Khaldun. While, in *Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan dalam Islam*, in chapter 2, footnote 123, al-Attas said that sciences is come from God. The sufi argued that science can be recieved by every human has different ways.



science into two categories; the science illumination (*ma'rifah*) and science. In Malay, *ma'rifah* is known by the science of introduction and science as knowledge<sup>37</sup>. The science illumination involves people who know (*knower*) and object to be known (*known*) by words or others which can be clearly understood, but previously the sense of knowing and trusting each other must exist. The science illumination (*ma'rifah*) is the nutrition of human soul. In the context of Prophet, the science is directly given by God in the Qur'an to be understood and taught as *sunnah*. In the perspective of law, al-Qur'an and Sunnah are understood as Shari'a, while in the spiritual perspective, this science is called Laduni (*'ilm ladunni*) and wisdom. Al-Attas categorized the science illumination (*ma'rifah*) as *farḍu 'ain* which can and should be learned by every Muslim.

Whereas science relates to physic and object which has a relationship with it and can be attained through intellectual and physical power. The knowledge of God as the Supreme *Qadīm* is not limited, difficult or impossible for al-Attas if human want to acquire all science. Therefore, mankind must organize the education system so that people can learn, develop, and implement all the science needed to capture and disseminate the Islamic values and teachings. Al-Attas categorized science as *farḍu kifāyah* required to be learned by a few people<sup>38</sup>. The science illumination (*ma'rifah*) which operates to uncover Being and Existence, explains the relationship between human and God and depicts the real purpose of life. Therefore, the science illumination should lead science, if not science will confuse and trap people on finding purpose and meaning of life which is dubious and wrong.

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<sup>37</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas* (Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC,1998), trans. Hamid Fahmy dkk, Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan dalam Islam Syed M. Naquib al-Attas, Bandung:Mizan, 2003, p. 154

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p.157-158

Al-Attas admits that there are similarities between Islamic science and modern science on the sources and methods of science<sup>39</sup>. For him, modern science and Islamic science use ratio and senses, starting from the observation of natural phenomena and the collecting data, followed by experimentation and giving conclusions which have to involve ratio. However, in Islam there is a revelation, as the only source of knowledge about reality and final truth. Because the revelation provides foundation for metaphysical framework and this framework will be developed in Islamic sciences in order to elaborate reality and truth and being a different way from the modern scientific method. Islam considers all knowledge comes from God and is obtained through several means. The first is the sense which is divided into two; the sense of birth (*external sense*) and the inner sense (*internal sense*). The sense of birth is consisted of seeing, hearing, feeling of body, smelling and tasting of tongue. While the inner sense is *common sense* consisted of representation, estimation, retention and recollection and imagination. The second is the true news (*khabar ṣādiq*), rested on the absolute authority and relative authority. The third is ratio and the last is intuition<sup>40</sup>.

Al-Attas does not limit the sense of birth (*external sense*) because those five senses cannot work effectively without their inner sense (*internal sense*). The sense of birth works as an early catcher of knowledge like data which then enter to *common sense*<sup>41</sup> which is then abstracted into forms as representations of external objects. Afterwards, the result of abstraction is saved by the power of representation, because without this power the data captured by the senses will be lost. These datum are received by estimation and its meaning is perceived based on an instinctive interpretation and linked to previous experiences. The work

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p.33

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p.34-35. See also in *Prolegomena*, p.118

<sup>41</sup>*Common sense* is not defined as healthy mind in such Indonesian translation, but 'ilm al-nafs used by Muslim philosophers means the inner senses associated with five senses of born. Thus, it is called common sense or *his al-al-musyarak* in Arabic term. Al-Attas, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, p.34.

estimate result, which is the meaning stored by memory (*al-hifz al-dhikr*). Imagination is the power connecting the stored meaning in the memory coming in the rational faculties of mankind (ratio) in which the rational faculties, all the data is processed. The final result is knowledge about nature. Basically, the inner sense is part of the reason including the work of abstraction and systematization to obtain a conclusion. When the inner senses process the data from the senses of birth, these datum will be sensed something (*mahsūsāt*) in the form. Then, the potential ratio continues to process to be rational impression (*ma'qūlāt*) by liberating the accidents of realities such as quantity, quality, space and position<sup>42</sup>.

For al-Attas, intuition (ilham) is also a source of knowledge through non-representational mechanism. It contrasts with ratio that is representational. In Islamic philosophical literature, it is known by *al-'ilm al-ḥudūri*, knowledge by present which is different from *al-'ilm al-ḥuṣūli*, which is endeavored, called rational knowledge<sup>43</sup>. Broadly speaking, the intuition as a source of knowledge covers two things. The first is a direct understanding by subject about itself, other conscious states, external world, other selves alike them, universal circumstance, values or truth of ratio<sup>44</sup>. Potential intuitive knowledge is possessed in two forms; partial and comprehensive<sup>45</sup>. The scientists obtain intuitive knowledge by training the ability to process experience and the ratio in the level of sensory awareness. For al-Attas, intuition has taken a part in scientific activity since the beginning, like eliciting hypothesis. Intuitive knowledge appears

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<sup>42</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*, (Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC, 1989), trans. Saiful Muzani, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, Bandung : Mizan, 1989, p.36

<sup>43</sup>Nasr argues that the distinction in *huduri* and *hushuli* comes from al-Suhrawardi Maqul then inherited by Mulla Sadra. See Seyyed Hosein Nasr, “*Mulla Sadr: His Teachings*”, in Seyyed Hosein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (ed.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, vol.I (London and New York Roudledge, 1996), p.645

<sup>44</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*, (Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC, 1989), trans. Saiful Muzani, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, Bandung : Mizan, 1989, p.37

<sup>45</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC, 1995, p.120

simply spontaneously, outside logic, but it does not mean illogic<sup>46</sup>. While the Sufis obtain intuitive knowledge by sharpening the ethical-spiritual faculty constantly until finally the truth can be comprehended directly and thoroughly<sup>47</sup>.

The Second is an immediate understanding on religious truth. This understanding is not limited to the reality of a living thing, but also includes the truth of religious teachings and even the existence of God. This understanding can be got for someone who intensively devotes herself or himself to the Lord and intends sincerely. With the will and power of God, the whole self-awareness and subjectivity will be removed and then inserted to a higher level of consciousness, which is "immortality in the Lord"<sup>48</sup>. At this time, the knowledge of religious teachings is earned without a logical step (*ḥadd*) in the form of an enlightening experience to capture the reality of existence (*wijdan*)<sup>49</sup>. The final source of al-Attas' epistemological formula is an authority which is divided into two; absolute authority and relative authority. The absolute authority is the report (*khobar*) which comes directly from the Prophet in the form of the Qur'an and Hadith. While the relative authority according to al-Attas is the report (*khobar*) submitted by a number of people who disagree to lie. Commonly, this authority is formed by consensus among scientists and can be questioned by reason and experience. Both of this authority becomes the difference between Western science and Islamic science, except that similarity on the source of ratio and senses.

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<sup>46</sup>Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge:Toward a Critical Philosophy*, London:Routledge, 1998, p.130-131 in Ach. Maimun Syamsudin, *Integrasi Multimedimensi Agama dan Sains*, Jogjakarta:IRCiSoD, 2012, h.225

<sup>47</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam:an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, p.120. See also Al-Attas, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, p.39

<sup>48</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*, (Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC, 1989), trans. Syaiful Muzani, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, Bandung:Mizan, 1995, p.38

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p.44

## 2. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' View on Metaphysic

Metaphysical dimension on Islamic science thought is one of the themes which get a lot of attention from its initiators; one of them is al-Attas. The metaphysic is part of philosophy which specifically discusses the essence of ultimate reality. In Islam, the metaphysical-theological is one of the discussed matters. It is exactly fundamental in shaping the basic concepts of people assumptions about the universe, epistemology, ethics and even logic. The metaphysic according to al-Attas is a synthesis of ideas and theories which are traditionally embraced by theologians, philosophers and Sufism experts<sup>50</sup>. It presents a dimension finding on science, in this context is the view of immaterial reality underlying physical-material reality. Al-Attas talks about the comprehensive, multilevel and dynamic realities driving all of the dynamics of physical nature of material to the top of reality system, ie *The Real (al-ḥaq)*. Western metaphysics considers that everything comes from everything else, all of things are progress, the development and evolution of the latent potential in material is eternal. Al-Attas regarded that this view as a basic view of Western society is based on reality underlying his view of nature and later becomes modern science paradigm. Because in the West view, the nature is something independent, eternal and runs according to its own law called natural law<sup>51</sup>.

Furthermore al-Attas argues that the worldview above is the conviction of Western society considered by al-Attas that it will influence attitudes, thinking, and behavior in life<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, al-Attas calls Western culture as secular culture which gives no room for God in the life. The laws of causality become natural in the science and God have no place in the working mechanism of the universe. Al-Attas said:

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p.78-79

<sup>51</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Sciences (Kuala Lumpur, 1989)*, trans. Syaiful Muzani, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, Bandung:Mizan, 1995, p.27

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 29

*“Contemporary science has evolved and developed out of a philosophy that since its earliest periods affirmed the coming into being of things out of each other. Everything existent is a progression, a development or evolution of what seen from this perspective is an independent, eternal universe; a selfsubsistent system evolving according to its own laws”<sup>53</sup>.*

The secular view world grows with the views in line such as rationalism, materialism, naturalism, positivism to pragmatism. Secularism according to al-Attas is a desecration of the universe by releasing the divine element of the nature itself. Whereas materialism regards the matter as the only reality and something out of matter is an illusion. This ideology does not only deny God as absolute reality, but also to deny revelation as the source of truth<sup>54</sup>. This view also claims that science is value-free and neutral. For al-Attas, the implications of secularism for Muslims are that the people will not be able to understand nature as a symbol (verse) guiding to the sacred and cannot deliver them into the ultimate reality<sup>55</sup>.

Similarly, the materialism reduces reality only in material so human cannot find *al-ḥaq* as the aim of finding knowledge. *Al-ḥaq* as reality is the ontological existence as it is. It means that science does not only speak of reality like material reality as itself, but also care to many processes. Moreover, science is also associated with the logical existence stating that the material reality is as a symbol. Because the material reality is not a final destination, but science has to keep track of something beyond as a non-material reality and essential reality<sup>56</sup>. On another occasion, al-Attas did not deny the similarities between modern science

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<sup>53</sup>Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC, 1995, p.114. See also al-Attas, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, p.27

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p.28

<sup>55</sup>Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Sciences (Kuala Lumpur, 1989)*, trans. Syaiful Muzani, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, Bandung:Mizan, 1995, p.28

<sup>56</sup>In this case, al-Attas mentions the material reality as a verse of the Qur'an whose readers do not only dwell on the words and the various relationships, but also reveal and connote them. Tabi' world is another form of revelation which also contains of verses which should be interpreted to reveal its meaning and figure *haq* out. see al-Attas, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, p.58

and Islamic science in the methodology and sources of knowledge. But, the similarity is merely outside of aspect, is not inside of it<sup>57</sup>. That internal aspect is metaphysics or view or knowledge of reality in whole, including non-physical reality that is recognized truth. Al-Attas still connects metaphysic with the physical-material world. Because the empirical world is an external aspect while metaphysic is internal aspect, from which the both basically are the dimensions of absolute existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*)<sup>58</sup>. In Islamic metaphysics view, the physical reality of the material is a part of reality in the whole.

Framework of the unity of being (*Wahdat al-wujūd*) in metaphysical formulation of al-Attas is the unity of existence actualized (*tahaqquq*) in one way. With the concept of *Wahdat al-wujūd*, al-Attas only recognizes the existence of God as a manifestation of absolute existence (*wajib al-wujūd*) and nature as a manifestation of relative (*jā'iz al-wujūd*) which are hanged on and tied to the absolute form. Thus, the absolute existence is called *matbū'* (which followed) and the relative existence is called *tabī'* (which following)<sup>59</sup>. From this framework, Al-Attas wanted to show that the universe is a reality that is dependent and has no independent significance. Al-Attas description of reality is based on the Qur'ani conceptual system<sup>60</sup>. Al-Attas notion of reality is constructed by Sufism philosophical approach by relying on the classification of physical-material reality and metaphysical- immaterial and the concept of *wujūd*: required (absolute) and *mumkin* or *jā'iz* (relative) which are parsed through the theory of hierarchy existence of Ibn al- 'Arabi. That arrangement is unity of the divine (*wāḥidiyyah*), the name and nature (*al-asmā' wa al-ṣifāt*), the permanent archetypes (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*), the

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<sup>57</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of Worldview of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC, 1995, p.38

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p.237 See also p.271

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p.248

<sup>60</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam dan Filsafat Sains*, trans. Saiful Muzani, Bandung:Mizan, 1989, p.60

exterior archetypes (*al-a'yān al-khārijiyyah*) and the sensory of nature (*'ālam al-shahādah*).

### **3. The Method of Tafsir and Ta'wil**

The cosmological view of al-Attas states that the universe is a book containing of many verses or symbols. In Islam, science is a part of efforts to reach the truth by observing the physical world. All sorts of human devices deployed integrally to understand the physical world without excluding one of them. For al-Attas, integral method is used in the interpretation and *ta'wil*. The whole understanding of nature eliciting nature law is the result of interpretation. Here, al-Attas did not holistically explain the steps of interpretation of universe. He simply explained that interpretation methods used to reveal the whole truth about the reality with many sources of knowledge are interrelated. The interpretation method is the initial meanings, not the final, but must be continued into the deeper meaning, *ta'wil*. Understanding the nature with the interpretation is not sufficient and cannot be separated from the efforts to grasp the meaning behind the phenomena, it requires *ta'wil*.

What al-Attas is emphasized in this method is the validity of the physical existence and its dependence on supraphysic things. As the verse, the physical world is not independent, but depends on what behind the verse is. As a word which does not stand alone, its existence depends on the meaning. With this interpretation and *ta'wil* method, al-Attas wanted to show that the reality does not stand alone and is consisted of physical reality only or not a dimension, but it has a hierarchy. The physical universe is one of its levels, and if we want to obtain comprehensive knowledge, the scientists have to enter to the next level. In addition, the scientists must also be aware of the limited ratio which cannot elaborate things beyond reality, they also should receive the correct information (*khabar ṣādiq*) of al-Quran and Hadith by all the humility, faith. In this



method, al-Attas does not reject their modern science methods. He just refuses the restrictions methods on the ratio and sensory in acquiring knowledge holistically.

#### **4. Islamization of knowledge According to al-Attas**

Al-Attas defines that Islamization is the liberation of the human mind from the magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition and free from secular power over reason and language<sup>61</sup>. Al-Attas clarifies the Islamization as liberation processes of human spirit which have influence over the body which tends to forget its true nature and real purpose of life. This exemption is also intended to abandon all secular forms from human soul so that it has to get back to original nature. From this description, to be concluded that the Islamization of knowledge is science liberation of interpretation, meanings and human expression based on secular ideology<sup>62</sup>. Thus, according to al-Attas Islamization is not a process of evolution but a process of returning to the *fiṭrah* (original nature)<sup>63</sup>. In Islamizing Muslims thought, al-Attas began by transforming the terms and critical concepts contained in worldview of Islam. The first step is conducting Islamization of language. Language, thought and reason are intimately interconnected in projecting it to humans in shaping the worldview or vision of reality<sup>64</sup>. This is shown by the Qur'an itself when revealed among Arabs. The role of language according to him intrinsically has an important role in its relation to the process of Islamization. Due to the language usage, particularly in the use of concepts and terms appropriately, could have implications on the Islamic conception of form

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<sup>61</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur:ABIM, 1978, trans.Karsidjo Djojokuswarno, *Islam dan Sekulerisme*, Bandung:Pustaka,1981, p.61

<sup>62</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, Kuala Lumpur:ABIM, 1980, *Konsep Pendidikan dalam Islam*, trans. Haidar Bagir, Bandung:Mizan, 1996, p.90

<sup>63</sup>Acikgenc Alparlan, *Islamic Science an Introduction*, Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1996, p.1-2

<sup>64</sup>Rosnani Hasyim dan Imron Rosydi, "Islamization of Knowledge:A comparative Analysis of the Conceptions of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi", *Intellectual Discourse* Vol , No 1, 2000, p.28

that is the view of reality and truth. Al-Attas has practiced it in the college established, the ISTAC in Malaysia. He stressed that the study of language, history, culture and Malay civilization should not be based on religion and Islamic literature, but must also be analyzed in its relation to Greek philosophy and the Judeo-Christian and classical traditions and medieval<sup>65</sup>.

The contemporary science and modern is holistically constructed, interpreted and projected through the worldview, intellectual vision, as well as the psychological perception of Western culture and civilization. Al-Attas summarizes it to five interrelated characteristics<sup>66</sup>. The first is relying on the power of reason to live a human life solely. The second is using the validity of a dualistic view in elucidating the reality and truth. The third is confirming reality of temporary aspects of the existence projecting a secular worldview. The fourth is supporting the doctrine of humanism. And the fifth is mimicking the universality of drama and tragedy which considered as the universal reality in spiritual or transcendental life or inner life of human, by making the drama and tragedy as the dominant element and real in human existence and identity.

These characteristics, according to al-Attas, will form the heart, the soul, the character and the cultural personality and the Western civilization. Otherwise, based on the five characteristics mentioned above, the concept of knowledge is formed systematically, and then spreads throughout the world. This is what al-Attas is pointed by Western secular knowledge because science has been entered by Western character and Western cultural personality which is certainly inappropriate with Islamic view<sup>67</sup>. The presenting aspect of Western philosophy's view to the Muslims thought, results in the emergence of the phenomenon, Muslim

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<sup>65</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan dalam Islam* Syed M. Naquib al-Attas, Bandung:Mizan,2003. p.328

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.333-334

<sup>67</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam:An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC,1995, p.88

thought deislamization<sup>68</sup>. Deislamization occurs through a leveling process of basic categories of knowledge, whether *farḍu 'ain* (religious science) or *farḍu kifāyah* (rational, intellectual and philosophical science), which can cause confusion to the essence of knowledge and approaching methods. While in educational area, it occurs among the traditional Islam, that is the pedagogical relationship between the Qur'an and various local languages disconnected. Otherwise, the emphasized replacement is secular culture, national, ethnic, and traditional<sup>69</sup>.

At the individual level, the Islamization process relates to the confession of the Prophet as the leader and the model for common people. At the collective level, social, and historical, Islamization connects to people's struggle towards the realization of moral perfection and ethics which has been achieved in the Prophet era<sup>70</sup>. Epistemologically, Islamization correlates to the liberation of human mind from all sorts of doubts (*syakk*), prejudice (*ẓann*), and empty argument (*mirā*) going towards attaining of sure (*yaqin*) and truth (*haq*) about spiritual realities, reasoning and materials. In *Islam and Secularism*, al-Attas explains the process of Islamization of contemporary knowledge involving two interrelated processes.

The first is separating the key of elements and concepts which develops the Western culture and civilization, like five characteristics mentioned before, from every contemporary science branch and humanities. Al-Attas added the natural sciences or physics and other applied sciences also which should be Islamize, particularly within the scope of interpretation of facts and formulation theory. In his book,

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<sup>68</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, London/Jeddah:Hodder&Stoughton/Universitas King Abdul Aziz,1979, p.10

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 10-11

<sup>70</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur:ABIM, 1978, trans. Karsidjo Djojosoewarno, *Islam dan Sekulerisme*, Bandung:Pustaka, 1981, p.62-63. See also al-Attas, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, p.336

Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam, he explained:

... We must critically examine the modern science methods, the concepts, the whole theory and its symbols: the empirical and rational aspects and other aspects pertaining to values and ethics; its interpretation of origins; its theory of knowledge; the thought of the real world existence, the consistency of universe, and the rationality of natural processes; the theory of universe; the classification of sciences; boundaries and the relation between a science and other sciences and its social relationships<sup>71</sup>.

The second is inserting Islamic key elements and concepts to each contemporary science branch<sup>72</sup>. Furthermore, al-Attas details some of basic concepts of Islam which should be incorporated into the whole science framework learned by Muslims. Those basic concepts are as the concept of *dīn*, human (*insan*), science (*'ilm* and *ma'rifah*), justice (*'adl*), a true charity (*'aml* as *adab*) and the concept of university (*kulliyah-jāmi'ah*). The concept of the university is considered the most important because it serves as a means to implement all the basic concepts of Islam and become a model education system for elementary level<sup>73</sup>. Thus, the goal of Islamization of knowledge according to al-Attas is to develop the essential knowledge and to make the good and civilized human as the Prophet and to increase the faith in God<sup>74</sup>. In addition, the Islamization of knowledge will produce goodness, security, justice, and power of faith. In addition, the Islamization of knowledge will produce goodness, security,

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<sup>71</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:ISTAC, 1995, p.114

<sup>72</sup> Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, London/Jeddah:Hodder&Stoughton/Universitas King Abdul Aziz,1979, p. 43-44

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p.43. See also al-Attas, *Konsep Pendidikan dalam Islam*, p.84

<sup>74</sup>Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, Kuala Lumpur:ABIM, 1980, trans. Haidar Bagir, *Konsep Pendidikan dalam Islam* Syed M. Naquib al-Attas, Bandung:Mizan, p.84-86

justice, and power of faith<sup>75</sup>. The object of Islamization is not out of the mind, mechanical or physical. But it is stood in soul and mind of human. Due to Islamisation deals with concepts, not physical objects<sup>76</sup>. Al-Attas uses an Islamic approach related to Islamic metaphysical basic structure which is in line with revelation (revelation tradition), intellect (reason), experience and intuition. Because, basically, Islam combines rationalism and empiricism methods, but there are additional, that is revelation as the source of truth which cannot be attained by those two methods. Although in rational aspects and methodology of finding truth, Islam has similarity to Western methods. However, both are distinguished fundamentally by the Islamic worldview.

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<sup>75</sup>Rosnani Hasim, *Gagasan Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan Kontemporer: Sejarah, Perkembangan, dan Arah Tujuan*”, THN II NO.6, July-September, 2005, p. 35

<sup>76</sup>Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Filsafat dan Praktik Pendidikan dalam Islam Syed M. Naquib al-Attas*, Bandung:Mizan,2003. p.338