

The Development of Islamic Thought in Historical Perspective

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ABSTRACT: *The decline of the Moslem world is caused by the internal factors, followed by the emergence of new problems that come from outside. At the beginning of seventeenth century, many Islamic territories – which have already felt the impact of economic and military pressure of Western countries to the Islamic world – gradually shifted from offensive to defensive matters. This paper aims to reveal the development of Islamic thought in historical perspective, with a view refuted the opinion of Western scholars that what the West world today is solely the result of its own product of Renaissance. The thought in Renaissance itself is a product of science and art obtained as a result of imitating the scientific progress generated by Islamic civilization in its heyday. Finally, Moslems should not reject Western modernism as well as postmodernism, but trying to walk side by side to achieve the glory that has been lost. Moslems also need to be ashamed to God for not being able to do the good maximally and do not complete an amazing “sunnatullah” (natural law created by God) such as actions that are carried out continuously.*

KEY WORDS: *World civilizations, Islamic thought, Moslem scholars, Renaissance in the West, and historical perspective.*

INTRODUCTION

The fall of Baghdad in the mid-thirteenth century, which also marked the termination of Abbassiyah dynasty, did not mean ending the heyday of the Islamic world. As a result of the incident, only the impact on the loss of Caliphate which reflected the central and single leadership for the whole Islamic world, an institution that authorities have long turned into a nominal thing, though Islamic world remained strong, growing, and even still able to expand the territory under the leadership of local rulers who held the Sultan and the like.

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In the sixteenth century, came the three great kingdoms, which each of a large area, namely the Ottomans (*Sunni* ideologically), a territory covering the Middle East region and the Eastern part of the Continent; Safawi (*Syiah* ideologically) in Persia; and Mughal (*Sunni* ideologically) in the Indian sub-continent (Sjadzali, 1993:111).

In the seventeenth century, the power, prestige, and prosperity of the three great kingdoms were down and out, which were caused by political disintegration and the weakening of central government authority followed with the emergence of semi-autonomous authorities in various regions and provinces in those countries. It was also accompanied by local dislocation, deterioration of economic situation, due to the trade competition with European countries or losing in the war, and the decline of society spirituality and morality, especially to the rulers.

As a result, then, the opinion and belief are born and developed in the wider society, that: (1) these things happen because Islam practiced and lived by Moslems is no longer a pure Islamic teachings, but the teachings that have been contaminated by elements from outside which are essentially diametrical opposite of the Islam teachings, with special allegations to Sufis syncretism as responsible for the entry of outside elements into the creed and the Islam teachings and the emergence of innovations that are not Islamic; and (2) to achieve greatness as in the golden era, Moslems must recover their vitality back to the pure teachings of Islam as exemplified by the Prophet of Muhammad SAW, *Salallahu 'Alaihi Wassalam* or Peace be Upon Him, or then lived by his companions, especially during periods *Khulafaur Rasyidin* in Medina (Nasution, 1975:12).

The decline of Moslem world is caused by the internal factors, followed by the emergence of new problems that come from outside. At the beginning of seventeenth century, many Islamic territories – which had already felt the impact of economic and military pressure of Western countries to the Islamic world – gradually shifted from offensive to defensive matters.

In short, there are three things that became the background for the birth of contemporary Islamic thought in the late of nineteenth century. *First*, the setbacks and fragility of Moslem world caused by internal factors resulted in the emergence of movements of purification and reformation. *Second*, Western attack to the integrity of territory power and political of Islamic world ended in domination of the occupation of large parts of the Islamic world that resulted in the destruction of good relationship between Islam and the West, and the growing spirit of hostility or anti-Westernization. And finally, *third*, the Western superiority in the fields of science, technology, and information.

THOUGHT AS UNDERSTANDING EFFORT

According to Adonis @ Ali Ahmad Said (2009:9), it is impossible that we can correctly understand the thought of Moslem thinkers in Renaissance era, or so-called Reformer era, which in turn we can understand how to restore these thoughts on the underlying roots. The roots in Islam, as a revelation and tradition, must be understood in which thinkers like Muhammad Rasyid Ridha do not place these roots in the questionable position, nor do they review the fundamental issues of concern to earlier thinkers. This means that, in dealing with the Renaissance and change, it must depart from the a priori of those roots in which it is a perfect and absolute truth and the only truth; so, the idea that birth is an attempt to solve and understand the existing problems because dealing with the West ultimately raises the question: externally, how is the relationship with the West?; and internally, what efforts to do to Renaissance?

From this perspective, question of the result of the existing thinking, in this case by Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, as one of thinkers in the Renaissance era, not as a reformer in Islam, the format in creed charged or reviewed partially or in whole, but how to understand the problems in the Islamic perspective as it is and take action on the basis of Islam; thus, Renaissance into something simple and obvious is back to the true Islam.

According to Muhammad Rasyid Ridha (1931), Renaissance was started from teaching reform, both religious and social matters. This is because the reforms are not actually possible without including the reform of religion in social reconstruction. Herewith, it is clear that political reform is deferred, or rather political reform is not a direct purpose, because political reform is a goal that will arise as a consequence of religious and social reforms. So, Muhammad Rasyid Ridha was very careful in calling the Renaissance in politics and against anything that smells of politics. Those attitudes were adopted from his teacher, *Al-Imam* Muhammad Abduh, who was, by the end of the age, determined to perform only religion, social, and language reforms (Nasution, 1984; and Su'ud, 2003).

Cautious attitude might also be derived from the experiences, especially the attitude that arose in him to see the consequences arising from the activities of Jamaluddin al-Afghani who aspired to realize the unity of Islam in an evocative way of Islamic governments to come together. But, unfortunately, this effort did not succeed and this idea was challenged and even hatred of some rulers; because the unity of means reduced or even eliminated their power, partly because they did not know its benefit. Based on this fact, Muhammad Rasyid Ridha interpreted his teacher's behavior that distracted the religious reform efforts as a result of direct political

mission failure. Through the mass media, magazine of *Al-Manar* that aimed to continue the mission of *Al-Urwa al-Wutsqa*, he had emphasized that the teachings and social norms should be created by Islam unifier (Rasyid Ridha, 1899:377).

The purpose of *Al-Manar* itself was talking about *bid'ah* (heresy), explained in detail the false teachings, false creeds and education that was useful for society. Later, it was confirmed that *Al-Manar* moved on the road *Al-Urwa al-Wutsqa* except those dealing with political issues related to Egypt, which was related to the propaganda against the British. Thereby, Muhammad Rasyid Ridha (1899) ignored political reform in the belief that political problems would be resolved through religious and educational reform, because political reform was a consequence of these reforms.

Reformation of religion, according to Muhammad Rasyid Ridha (1899), was not the kind of effort to review Islam as a religion, but the point was a thing that could defend religion, run it, and unite the Moslems. These reforms had the means and methods that should be implemented, but all this could not be run if only to enliven the mosques and assemblies, nor with mere welfare of a number of teachers.

Therefore, according to him, the program could run properly, if programs associated with the rulers were held; the programs were also directed to the clergy and religious figures such as priests and teachers. The main support of this reform was to unite the Moslems in a single word faith, the same of literature basics, the same of *syara'* (Islamic law) and language (Arabic) law, and to realize it, an Islamic institution under the authority of Caliph should be established in which people are around Islamic territory, capital city of Mecca *al-Mukarramah* to be the center of the Moslems throughout the world, and they become brothers in various holy places. Then, this institution should bear three main burdens, namely: (1) Reducing all forms of heresy and all false teaching before it spreads; (2) Reforming *khutbah*; and (3) Calling upon religion (Rasyid Ridha, 1898:765).

Among the tasks of this institution is to conduct relationship between the Islamic government in which Islamic brotherhood becomes apparent in this institution, and all unions to face the European attack and inhibit its greedy tradition. Thus, Reformation or Renaissance can only occur through right and just religious instruction and education based on the teachings of Islamic unity (Rasyid Ridha, 1899:345). However, in order to be more complete, reform must meet three requirements associated with the patterns of power, the readiness of people, and methods of reform itself.

Related to the first aspect, the government must be democratic (deliberation) that can ensure justice and equality, as well as solving the

problems of state and society. Then, the system must choose decent and sincere people who will be servants, not the host or a tyrannical ruler. The second aspect is the thought and morality of the people must be changed through teaching and education in order to emerge by themselves people's readiness to accept the reforms and to be deliberate a reflection or extension of the development of people, not just the implementation of religious orders. Government deliberation in a society should be at peak levels associated with the knowledge and morality. Then, on the third aspect, it all can happen if the course is correct; there are two levels in this course, namely level of birth and forms of surface. It can be seen that the reform will happen in the world only through the people having the experience and distant views in the future, accuracy of thought, spirit, and desire to advance a high and strong who can lead the other.

Calling for reform of Muhammad Rasyid Ridha is not a destination but a suggestion to keep the truth and strengthen it by means of state; attention to the politics is a result of the assumption that there is a strong Islamic state and ability to protect and defend the religion of Islam. In other words, a strong state can be born through the effort of learning the true religion and the people should be brought back to the true teachings, pure from all heresy (*bid'ah*), due to the pure Islam, simple, its simple worship and its simple *muamalah* (social relation).

Worship looks heavy and cumbersome because an obligatory thing in the worship has added non-obligatory things, or mostly just be the nature of circumcision or additional local culture. They should be advised about the attitude toward the fanatics so that there is tolerance among schools that exist in community life. It is not only because such matters need to be maintained their similarities, but also in terms of details rather than freedom for everyone to run where they wants. Besides, progress is absolutely a gift from God to man; He is God who gives us guidance in every stage of social life that makes man ready for a change to adapt to space and time.

Therefore, reformation is not on the basis of revelation and religion, but the reform is aimed at the human mind to return to the base or root, as mentioned previously. Thus, the parameters of reform are the estrangement and intimacy; it means that the reform is just a reform from the deviated road of the base, namely the misguided thinking and reasoning and bad character actions. In other words, reform of thought here is to connect what is lost or has been tenuous between man and religious basis, which are *Al-Qur'an* and *Al-Sunnah*. They deal with reformation on the theoretical level of faith and religion.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that reform is a reform of religious understanding, new science, new arts, new government, new weapons, and appropriate financial management, cooperation with the means of distributing the work and the use of natural resources both good and true. Besides that the reform and renewal are needed in the Islamic world and it is an autonomy reform that includes economic, education, military, and politics that will create an increase in the life of Moslems.

Above all, the Moslems will be a noble mankind, have a strong state while maintaining support poles, religion, culture, *syariah*, language, and national identity. This reform is called "autonomy reform" and it is a legal matter including science, finance, arts, industry, and all that can change the standard of living of the people. In Islam, those, including *kifayah* obligation, means that all people will be guilty if the obligation is not executed; while the *syariat* does not provide an explanation to the various requirements, the exception should avoid things that are not in accordance with the religion, so that it can lead to disaster and injustice in people's lives.

THOUGHT AS A REFORM

There are two questions arise when we discuss this issue: (1) Why do we suffer?; and (2) What is the best means to rise up? From such questions, the ideas are emerged for change to be the better.

Adversity is like a disease. Its source is a political arbitrariness. However, the disease is actually like an accidental disability, especially in relation to the patterns of life, behavior, and ways of thinking; for example a tree, the disease occurs in the branches and twigs, not on the stem and roots. Religion, as root with its ability, is an absolute and perfect faith, because the abilities owned is the only factor that can still preserve the greatness of religion throughout the centuries. From here, Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi had confidence that disease of this adversity could be cured and very likely increased to the advance way (cited by Adonis @ Ali Ahmad Said, 2009).

In order to realize the belief, Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi traced the path of criticism that was reflected in three phases closely and interrelated as following: (1) Explaining the present condition and describing its symptoms and means to diagnose carefully the disease; (2) Explaining that the cause of disability is ignorance in life is widespread and circumcision; and (3) Directing the responsibility and blame to the authorities, scholars, and all those who do not want to use the power and their intelligence to make changes (cited by Adonis @ Ali Ahmad Said, 2009:118).

With this method, Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi established the causes of adversity into five basic things: (1) the political changes from the socialist-

democratic representatives to the semi-absolute monarchy, they tried to make this change more likely to fit things with the trend remains of paganism; (2) changed people to be the military nation in education and morality, which were far from religion, science, arts, and crafts; (3) the Moslems among each other used their own strength so that they lived in a way to outdo and deceive each other, not cooperate each other; (4) the existence of ignorance in the Islamic rulers who loved to live luxuriously and did not aware that they undermined their own country; and (5) the loss of freedom, but people should be freed to speak and act and there should be no barrier of wrongdoers (cited by Adonis @ Ali Ahmad Said, 2009:119).

The concept of Islam, in the context of the problems facing, means a return to the basics of Islam. What should be done here is to cope with all different sects, hold the clear texts of the Scripture, *Shahih al-Sunnah*, and right consensus. That is not to get caught in a clash of ideas. This assumes the absence of an attitude to impose personal opinion, which in this case is more than just a mere thought. It may be right and also wrong so that we become seekers rather than fighter.

This means that the truth taught to us does not lie in the existing opinion or a weapon that is ready for use, but lies in the assessment and dialogue. From this, truth emerges and becomes clear. This is confirmed by the *Al-Qur'an al-Karim* that people who contemplated the Qur'an correctly, they will be seen as people without a burden at all men to submit something that is on the ability of reasoning.

Instead, *Al-Qur'an* warning would prohibit the faithfulness by following the others' opinion or emulating the ancestors. This means that reasoning in Islam requires avoiding those opinions that may damage the belief; common in Islam also requires that all problems are encountered by the objective. In turn, this will strengthen the basic rules of reasoning and improve the progress of life. The basic rule is a compromise on the Moslems' problems based on the demands of the times.

From the explanation above, Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi's thought is not limited to problems of determination and demands for freedom, but more than that it has already led to the views of humanism, namely economic, social, and cultural rights. These views come from *Al-Qur'an* as the mean to reconstruct attitude containing two matters: (1) considering the open text and can be harmonized with the reality of life that is growing in line with changing demands; and (2) transcending and eliminating sectarianism that bind the text only in its perspective and oppose other views (cited by Adonis @ Ali Ahmad Said, 2009:128).

From this, it appears that religion is not an ideological justification of progressive reformist ideas, but it is rather a source for these ideas. This causes the religion is seen as a series of history, especially as critically understood sects. The goal is to free religion from the blemishes of mind and wrong actions attached to it or associated with it.

Moreover, Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi talked about the identity and Islamic originality. According to him, the “originality” does not mean rejecting the other, or did not interact with it, or was covered by the other. The “originality” does not also mean not to take advantage of others or perhaps replicate. The “originality” is not inherited, but created. It is not a fixed substance, but the moving power so that the originality of certain communities in the past is certainly not their originality at present and future. The criteria would be different from time to time (cited by Adonis @ Ali Ahmad Said, 2009).

Here, we can see clearly that originality currently requires the following things: (1) separating themselves from the adversity of the past and of all associated with it; (2) merging to the humanity-oriented great minds at this time creatively; and (3) two contexts above were based on the original principles of *Al-Qur'an*.

ISLAM, CHALLENGES, AND POSTMODERNISM

Information about postmodernism is an overview about fluctuation that once the Islamic struggled in intellectualism thought. Its presentation is very limited and clear. A fulfillment of this charge merely uncovers a major project in the recent behavior of Western civilization (Europe). Islamic thought is seemingly not able to avoid the fight with the currents of modernism in all frames of its footing. Moreover, this discussion is not only as a complement and the syllabus, but also less likely associated with the discourse of contemporary Islamic thought. And, then, inevitably postmodernism for the Islamic world is a challenge, which is expected to weave a common thread of Islamic ideas into the nuances of Islamic values it has.

There is no reason for Islam and Moslems to reject much less hostile to the new wave of postmodernism phase of Western civilization with a wide range of payload instruments. Once again, the importance for Moslems to see a ray of civilization should not be dazzled, but also must not close eyes, because whatever its form changes this world must be a partner to step on the future. In other words, it is how to proceed, avert, and, at the same time, restoring the civilization and philosophical framework of postmodernism to trigger the progress of Islam.

Postmodernism term is not something new, but it is very popular in all fields of scientific disciplines in general. This term also penetrates the field of Islamic thought, which is originally simply the art of architecture on insight, but its progress experiences wider horizons, even now this term is not only unrealistic but seems to be philosophical and abstract. Postmodernism is actually very broad in its study so that appropriate boundaries and definitions are very difficult to be determined. Besides that, the lines of insight are naturally brimless, they are so long that the claim of postmodernism is out of reach.

Thought that is touched by postmodernism insight, in addition, provides philosophical, cognitive, abstract and very complex charge. This represents a struggle of advanced and sophisticated thinking. Indeed, postmodernism is considered as a new model even self-polishing that gives birth to a new face; metaphysical struggle between absolutism versus relativism thought, universalism versus particularism, objectivity versus subjectivity, and so on. Ambiguity and contradictory of each other can be one of the characteristics of postmodernism. It could be the meaning of uncertainty in terms of thinking about the abstract projections. It simply gives direction to a proper understanding so that it will be easy to understand these terms.

From simplification of this expression, there are several definitions to understand it easier. As mentioned by Akbar S. Ahmad, the root of postmodernism word was derived from "modernism". The *Oxford Classic Dictionary* defines the "modern" word as modern view or modern method, particularly the tendency to adapt with the tradition; and in the problem of religious beliefs to conform with modern beliefs. Modernism is also interpreted as the latest model in the world history marked by believing in science, planning, secularism, and progress. It is now a contemporary formulation of postmodernism to be a special phase replacing the modernism (Ahmad, 1993:22-23).

The most important is the period of this advance including the completeness of mechanical-electric, although it is different, this expression seems to have firmness of conviction. As being said by Ernest Gellner, post-modernism is no more than relativism that is performed with a new style and face or new forms of relativism (Gellner, 1992:24). The essence is to remember and pay attention that postmodernism will try to oppose everything that seems to be certainty, absoluteness, refuse, and avoid a systematic description or simple problem solving and the schema, and use the values derived from diverse sources (Abdullah, 1995:96-97).

Once the field of postmodernism touches the philosophical abstracts of religious absolute necessity and immovable basis, then postmodernism

may be cynical and mock the ensured values. This shows clearly that all the traces of postmodernism are the new phases of civilization in all fields, be realistic, and even meta-abstractive that are difficult to reach with the formulation of communication language, except in compliance with the highest idioms in the terminology used. But when we are referring to the opinion of Akbar S. Ahmad (1993), the postmodernism brings transformation of science and technology into the most recent values digested by religion and all kinds of civilizations have a tendency to make its own study in the humanities disciplines.

For the Islamic world, postmodernism is just a transition of realistic phenomenon from human mastery to create the new theories of treasures followed by a phase of time. Islam has a “supra-postmodernism” in driving its people; the advantage of Islam is also owns the meaning of relativity. *Sunnatullah* is regarded as a necessity and absoluteness, then, miracles are complementary spices of relativism. God is an idiom of relativism when leaning the words, symbols, and expressions of religious lingo – ALLAH – is a necessity and basic. This is considered as postmodernism. The Prophet of Muhammad’s vision about most advanced technology of ignorance centuries is myths about cleaning germs of dog’s licking with dust, the modern vision is that detergent; or soap in a various packaging is one of the cleaning tools. This is a feature of post-modernism, yet ignoring to recognize the emancipation, but Islam proclaims it. All the meaning is just a bit of the beginning of postmodernism within the framework of Islam.

Al-Qur’an will be a study filled with all scientific disciplines ranging from very classic to the most modern and sophisticated matters. This is essential characteristic of a civilization which is engraved in the reality of things. The language of the *Al-Qur’an* is philosophical matters, but when dealing with human needs, it becomes the reality.

Postmodernism for Islam and Moslems today is a challenge. The intellectual superiority of the Western has now reached the highest point of expansion which has far exceeded the limits of civilization that has existed. The Western is not only as the material teacher, but also may be made as a spiritual void; while Islam and Moslems are still regarded as a spiritual teacher. At present, Western becomes a guide of civilization; but it is also possible that in the coming era, the Moslems will be a professor of civilization and humanity based on world’s ethics and spiritualities of hereafter.

In the field of religious thought, the challenge of postmodernism is very heavy, but otherwise the religion itself becomes a barrier curtain and filter; it is due to the more basic, well-established, and entrenched sociological theory, it will be more easily approached by religious values. From

this point, the religion is still expected as a solution of postmodernism thought. For Islam, it is actually not too shallow to be re-examined its charge. Islam is seen by the Western identical with Moslems for a while is considered detrimental, but the viewpoint of Moslem thought should do more to clean up the stains that block directly Western to visit and review as a whole. Meanwhile, the Moslems are labeled as terrorism, fundamentalism, and so on that related to a lot of bad things. This is a label that is less advantageous from the point of thought, but this is also a prototype of dishonesty that is unilateral and highly subjective.

Likewise, postmodernism is not just a subjectivism of civilization which is, then, applied outside its geographic boundaries. And if it becomes a paradigm, then, only creates a simple and unshiny paradigm. Whatever, the form of thought ideologically and intellectually has insight in postmodernism stadium; then, it will only be temporary and full of relativity, and it cannot be recognized as offspring of previous phase, which is the modernism itself.

Postmodernism will only be a history of step-child, or may be foster child, and also will be very hard to find their parents. Step-children greatness has not confirmed the existence of a testament inheritance which must be owned, even postmodernism may just be a symbol or may be strings attached to infectious and endemic later in life. For now, it tries to penetrate into the brain of civilization, but it does not become a deadly poison, because the disease is advanced civilization that has been fully understood by the condition of Moslems today.

For those who are optimistic, postmodernism is the drug of civilization; but for those who are pessimistic, postmodernism is considered a highly lethal disease. For Moslems, postmodernism should be regarded as an achievement of civilization panacea that will trigger a much better for the future. Whatever the result of civilization, it should be called "postmodernism" in social reality so that, for Moslems, it is just dilemma and it still has wide-open of choices to modify these postmodernism.

Further, when the Moslems have to assemble their civilization that is still scattered, like a bamboo tree which grows everywhere, it is still not possible to be rowed and must be cleared first and then assembles them. So, it becomes a raft and it is extinguished to be used for berthing or back and forth depending on needs. It is also likely to occur in the Islamic world, bamboo is still strewn even young, some old but very small, fast growing into large and mature tree depending of rainfall, breeze which shake it and the existing soil moisture underneath, that's the challenge of the times that exists now.

Moslems should assemble thoughts, insights, culture, and civilization into a new force, even need not to be ashamed to use Western methods and solutions. The postmodernism does not reject for partnering with Islam. It is because partnership between Islam and postmodernism which is a Western product is not a taboo subject. The false is our dishonesty to recognize the need for Western methods to facilitate us to create a new Islamic civilization.

For Moslems, it is a certainty to provide the power balance of ideas, sound, material, and spiritual intellectual values in life, because we have to admit that Moslems did not do much. Structural and cultural domination have refined the echo of postmodernism and the rest of world opinion about Islam, even they also do the damping of everything that comes out of Islam.

Moslem identity solution is also one attempt to assemble a new perception of the Western perspective on the Islamic world, because we must not loose identity due to postmodernism. Even if necessary in addition to revealing the identity of Islam, it can also be lent to others. This will foster the essence of Islamic civilization, wherever identity becomes a necessary condition to be more easily recognized. No need of Britain or America, Western or Europe, the important thing is Moslem, this is an identity. For example, Turks posts *Attaturkism*; they would be angry and offended when said *Turkey*, but instead will smile proudly to say *Moslems*, so they always say "I am Moslem" and rarely say "I am Turkey".

Eventually, all the thinking of contemporary figures about Islam and Moslems, both the theoretical and practical, become philosophical, empirical, and realistic needs. It is assembled, glued, and, then, launched into the surface so that there is balance between Islam in the air and the earth, between the *Al-Qur'an* in *Lauh al-Mahfouz* with *Al-Qur'an* in a patch of earth, and between the heaven in hereafter with a heaven on earth. It all also becomes a global characteristic to compensate for Western postmodernism.

Postmodernism of Islam comes from its host, while Western just becomes the oldest brother. So, it needs not to be a teacher that is superior in the field of civilization, because imitating the Western does not have to be teacher fully, but it can be *i'tibar* (moral lesson) of thought, movement, and nuance of sociological reality to a philosophical abstraction. From here, the dangers and challenges of postmodernism will become a capital and model for the development of Islamic postmodernism characteristic.

As having said by Fazlur Rahman, it was only natural that the Moslems study Western in a more objective, proportional way, and analytical matters.

In his opinion, the Western as a whole needs to be explored to get good ideas, civilization, historical of religious spiritual, and complex values; and when this is successful, then, the Western will be a wealth for Moslems (Rahman, 1984).

The existence of self-development challenges for Moslems will be less apologetic and strong desirability to beat the Western by abolishing it blindly. From here, Fazlur Rahman formulated an accurate, systematic, and logical methodology for the efforts of the soul and spirit content of *Al-Qur'an*. Fazlur Rahman seemed to want to blow the *Al-Qur'an* back's ongoing revelation and be a companion, and guide to the future of Moslems. It is because by this method, the growth of wild and arbitrary *ijtihad* (individual interpretation and judgment) will not happen as it has existed during this time (Rahman, 1984:5-9).

Furthermore, the Western-Islamic or Islamic-Western in contemporary postmodernism will become increasingly honed enlightenment scientific intellectual content in the presentation of humanity aspects, so that Islam will become mega-theological trellis ultimately in knitting thread applying its values. The focus of contemporary postmodernism for Moslems is based on the popularity of spiritual intellectual among the Moslems and rotates continuously and tries to create new waves and bigger. This is to balance the Western tradition that has been packed in such a remarkable bias of its civilization into the framework of informative tradition, clear wave that future nuanced, well-established, beyond the power of science, planning, secularism, progress, multi ideological thinking, and so forth. But in next rotation, it will become a new scene of the world. In other words, Islam will be the center of the most amazing spiritual civilization.

Creating the Islamic postmodernism, that currently can be more accurate, objective, philosophical, and insightful matters, is due to understanding Islam in many ways, methodologies, and ideological perspectives. And its advantages lie in the pure charge of Islamic sources, as well as the core of *Al-Qur'an*, that can be packaged with the ability to reveal the tendency to Allah SWT (*Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala*) for His will is always corresponding precisely to people's behavior. Hence, the glory of the Moslems will certainly be achieved again.

According to Quraish Shihab (2000), postmodern thoughts have entered Islamic society in the 20th century, when Islam itself was increasingly becoming the choice and alternative compliments, grounding the *Al-Qur'an*, not only as a slogan but must be strings attached in actualized in everyday life. It means also that the way of Moslems should personify the *Al-Qur'an* into his flesh and blood, moving continuously to achieve the ranks of the

most advanced in struggling as the *khalifah-fil-ardh* (God representative on the earth).

Taking the essence of Nurcholis Madjid's idea, it is said that modernism is a necessity and God takes part in this activity. Nurcholis Madjid even considered God's symbol that Islam as a modernism, because Islamic doctrines first created a mega project of modernism as a liability and through *Al-Qur'an*, Allah SWT (God) triggers and spurs Moslems to fill modernity of humanity civilization (Madjid, 1994:172).

Sharpening of intellectual embroidery to the base of *Al-Qur'an*, to hold a contextual interpretation, dissect the recesses of hiding the truth, and get the truth, is mega-*ijtihad* (the great individual interpretation and judgment) for a Moslem. Ponder for a moment is better and ritually pure than worship a year. It is in line with the *Hadist* of the Prophet of Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu 'Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) due to the excited voice of thoughts and ideas progress.

The actions will indeed become weak if they are not accompanied by *tafakkur* (reflective and contemplative action); otherwise *tafakkur* also would be worse if it is not resolved by the real work or action. When the Moslems quote and speak with *Al-Qur'an* language, this is a spirit of God's idealism and be implemented by theology action. In other words, between *taffakur* and action is one entity in social realities and, finally, the figure of God will be presented in the mankind movement as caliph of God on the earth (Nasution, 1984).

At this level, it means that the modernity with theology has been creating a discourse in Islamic postmodernism which is certainly surprising that will also bring to *taqarrub* (be close to) and pious to God. Starting with good intention and real work continuously is the process to search the truth, which ultimately leads to the approach without limit to the Most Absolute Truth (God of Allah SWT) in Islamic post-modernism context (Madjid, 1994; and Jainuri, 1995).

In terms of textual arguments in the holly book of *Al-Qur'an*, there are a number of verses, such as: (1) "*Man commanded by God to observe and study the laws of His creation*", according to *Al-Qur'an* verse 10:101; (2) "*God created this universe for interest, welfare, and happiness of human beings as His mercy, but only a few people who want to think and be rational to better understand and even more utilize those gift*", according to *Al-Qur'an* verse 4:13; and (3) "*God also instructed to use the rational mind, otherwise prohibits indiscriminate and fanatical about old traditions; and this way is working procedures of previous generation*", according to *Al-Qur'an* verse 2:170 (Depag RI, 1985). It means that the roots of Islamic postmodernism

are in accordance with theological framework as well as the social action context.

CONCLUSION

From the review of thought development and reformism movements in Islamic countries, it can be seen that awareness of weakness and the decline of Islam rise from self-leaders after direct contact with the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The contact makes the Islamic society able to make comparisons between Islamic world that being declined and the Western world that being risen. The greater consciousness is also emerged after several Islamic countries can be subjected to the Western supremacy.

This situation encourages leaders and Islamic thinkers to investigate the causes that lead them into decline and weakness of the Moslems and, then, think about a way that must be taken to achieve progress and happiness. Among the important causes which are believed to be the causes of the decline of Islam include the following:

First, the Islam embrace and practice was no longer true. Islam has penetrated the teachings and practices from outside. In other words, the *bid'ah* (heresy) words which are not favorable have been widely adopted into Islam in the middle age.

Second, thought among Moslems had diminished once because the door of *ijtihad* (creative and innovative thinking) had been considered closed. It created the dogmatic attitude to the old opinions so that the Moslems became static, instead change was opposed.

Third, the mysticism or Sufism after the fall of Baghdad widely circulated among Moslems around the world. Piety teaching left this world life and the importance of hereafter living contained in the ideology of Sufism which diverted attention of Moslem from worldly life today to life in the mysterious later. Prayer services were emphasized and Islamic teachings concerning on social life received less attention. It also created the ideology that living world here and now is not for Moslems, but for non-Moslems.

Fourth, the *Jabariyah* or taken for granted ideology which a lot of embraced by Islamic society in the Middle Age was growing. This doctrine eliminated the dynamics of the Moslems and instead arising passive attitude among Moslems.

Fifth, absolute governance existed in Islamic world in Middle Age, in which the Sultan or King acted without reason and without regard to the interests, needs, and progress of the people.

Above things are the factors that bring Moslems to the deterioration and prolonged weakness. The factors that lead to progress, according to Islamic thinkers, among others are:

First, Moslems must return to the teachings of true Islam, as practiced by Moslems on the classical era, everything that seems to be heresy (*bid'ah*), and that is not compatible with Islam and leads to the deterioration and weakness must be discarded.

Second, the dogmatic attitude to the opinions and old interpretations should be abandoned and the doors of *ijtihad* (creative and innovative thinking) should be opened. The guide how to know the teachings of Islam is no longer written by previous scholars, but only the holy books of *Al-Qur'an* and *Al-Hadith*. The basic teachings that are mentioned adjust in the details and ways is implementation with the times progress.

Third, the dynamics among Moslems to be revived by removing and discarding *jabariyah* or taken for granted ideology. Moslems must be brought back to the theology, which contains the dynamics and confidence ratio within the limits of specified revelation; Moslems should also be motivated for more thinking and trying.

Fourth, the orientation of hereafter should be balanced with the world orientation, so that Moslems also concerned with social life and try to achieve progress in the field of world life as well as other peoples.

Fifth, the traditional education should be changed to include the subjects of modern science into the curriculum of religious school; and also to establish the modern schools, in addition to the existing religious school with the aim of creating of Islamic experts in the fields of science and technology, which will bring the progress in all things.

Sixth, in the field of governmental and political matters, it should be changed to the governmental in favor of the people. The Islamic government should be incorporated into the constitutional government system because, then, people will also be responsible for the problems solutions faced by the people, at last people participate and feel responsible for efforts to achieve progress.

Finally, Moslems should not reject Western postmodernism but try to walk side by side to achieve the glory that has been lost. Moslems need not also to be ashamed to God for not being able to do the good maximally, do not complete an amazing *sunnatullah* (natural law created by God) such as actions that are carried out continuously. Moslems are unable to do liberation of self unless always continuously feel dependent on the luck of God's chosen. And, Moslems absolutely aware of making a new terminology about the roots of optimistic theology: theology of proportional, theology

of victory, and theology of liberation with Islamic characteristic which increasingly challenging, quality, and full competition.

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