

THE CONCEPT OF RENEWAL OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE MODERN ERA ACCORDING TO THE PERSPECTIVE OF SYED MUHAMMAD NAQUIB AL-ATTAS

Rifki Setiawan¹, Nanda Nur Hanifa², LP. Nurjannah³

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Nurussalam

[1rifkisetiawan200303@gmail.com](mailto:rifkisetiawan200303@gmail.com), [2hanifanda05@gmail.com](mailto:hanifanda05@gmail.com), [3lpnurjannah619@gmail.com](mailto:lpnurjannah619@gmail.com)

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam pada era modern dihadapkan pada banyak tantangan di segala aspek. Segala bentuk kemajuan di era modern menuntut munculnya berbagai bentuk pembaruan konsep pendidikan Islam untuk menjaga eksistensinya di tengah masyarakat. Syed Naquib Al Attas sebagai salah satu pelopor pendidikan Islam lewat pemikirannya telah mengemukakan gagasan mengenai konsep pembaruan pendidikan Islam dengan berupaya mengintegrasikan ilmu ketauhidan dan sains. Konsep pembaruan ini nampaknya memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan dikalangan masyarakat dalam menghadapi perubahan zaman yang semakin pesat, sehingga perlu adanya kajian yang lebih detail mengenai konsep yang dipelopori Al Attas sebagai bentuk kontribusinya dalam dunia pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini merupakan kajian pustaka (library research) dan studi literatur dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan secara sistematis dan holistik dari beberapa referensi berupa buku, dokumen, jurnal ilmiah dan sumber lainnya serta dianalisis dengan merujuk pada beberapa argumen, pemikiran dan logika terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konsep pembaruan pendidikan Islam di era modern oleh Syed Muhammad Naquib Al Attas mencakup tiga hal, yakni; mengadakan islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan, menghilangkan dikotomi pendidikan, dan menanamkan nilai-nilai agama disetiap ilmu pengetahuan.

Kata Kunci: Pembaruan pendidikan Islam, era modern, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al Attas, Islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan.

ABSTRACT

Islamic education in the modern era faces many challenges in all aspects. All forms of progress in the modern era demand the emergence of various forms of renewal of Islamic educational concepts to maintain their existence in society. Syed Naquib Al Attas, as one of the pioneers of Islamic education through his thinking, has put forward ideas about the concept of renewing Islamic education by attempting to integrate religious knowledge and science. This concept of renewal seems to have a significant influence among the community in facing the increasingly rapid changes of the times, thus requiring a more detailed study of the concepts pioneered by Al Attas as a form of his contribution to the world of Islamic education. This research is a literature review (library research) and literature study using a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques were carried out systematically and holistically from several references such as books, documents, scientific

journals, and other sources, and analyzed by referring to several related arguments, thoughts, and logics. The results show that the concept of renewal of Islamic education in the modern era by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al Attas covers three things; Islamizing knowledge, eliminating the dichotomy of education, and instilling religious values in every branch of knowledge.

Keywords: *Renewal of Islamic education, modern era, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al Attas, Islamization of knowledge.*

INTRODUCTION

Today, the Islamic community is faced with various problems causing setbacks for Muslims in various aspects of life, especially in education and the development of knowledge. Previously, Muslims experienced rapid progress and advancement in education and teaching in Islamic countries. Thus, many schools were established widely in cities and villages. Many children and young people went to educational centers to seek knowledge (Wira Kurnia & Alimni, 2023). After experiencing five centuries of glory, the Islamic community experienced setbacks and declines due to internal and external conflicts as well as conquests and attacks by Western nations. As a result, all aspects of life, including education, are dominated by Westerners, and even today, the concept of education is still dominated by Western philosophy (Dr. Komaruddin Sassi, 2019).

Therefore, there is a need for change and renewal, especially in Islamic education, which is now heavily influenced by Western philosophies, thus reducing the existence of Islamic values themselves. According to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, one of the causes of the decline of Muslims in terms of education is due to the negligence of Muslims themselves in formulating and developing systematic Islamic education plans in accordance with integrated Islamic principles. (Nanu, n.d, 2021)

In addition, with the rapid growth and development of the modern era and the numerous challenges facing the Islamic community in the modern era today, one of the main problems faced by Muslims today is the rapid development of science, which erodes moral and religious values, and not only is science developing according to human needs, but humans must also adapt to science. According to

Al-Attas, the development of science is now mixed with Western culture, which slowly removes religious values from science, causing the role of religion in science itself to be lost. For example, science is now viewed from the perspective of science itself by denying the perspective of divinity.(Nuryanti & Hakim, 2020)

Therefore, with various problems and challenges faced by the Islamic community, especially in the field of education, contemporary Islamic philosopher figures emerged who advocated their views and ideas in an effort to improve the re-establishment of Islamic education, which is slowly beginning to fade. One of the contemporary figures who had a great impact on the civilization of Islamic education was Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, whose ideas are very relevant to the current situation, namely what is meant by Islamic education because Islamic education has undergone many shifts in meaning and therefore needs to be refreshed.

In his works, Al-Attas focuses more on returning Islamic values as a worldview, integrating Islamic sciences, restoring harmony between religion and science, and eliminating the dichotomy between religious knowledge and sciences, which has been a problem in the field of education. In this article, we will discuss in more detail the process and concept of Al-Attas's thinking in changing the structure of Islamic education or integrating Islamic sciences.

This study is a library research and literature study using a qualitative and philosophical approach, namely documentation method through systematic and holistic data collection and using arguments, thoughts, and logic in data analysis. Furthermore, the data collected were analyzed descriptively and critically with the aim of understanding clearly the concept and purpose of Islamic education in the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas.

The sources of this research come from online media such as journals, e-books, and educational articles related to the Concept of Education of Syed Naquib Al-Attas. The data obtained through several stages of data collection. (1) Data reduction is when the researcher analyzes to sharpen, shorten, focus, and eliminate irrelevant things in order to draw conclusions or obtain key findings, (2) Data display is a clear overview of the entire data which ultimately can form a conclusion that is easy

to understand and comprehend, (3) Conclusion drawing is the checking of the accuracy and validity of the data obtained. With the support of valid and consistent evidence, resulting in more reliable conclusions.

DISCUSSION

Biography of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and His Education

Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas was born in Bogor, West Java, on September 5, 1931. His father, Syed Ali bin Abdullah Al-Attas, hailed from Johor, while his mother, Syarifah Raquan Al-Laydrus, was a descendant of the noble Sundanese lineage in Sukapura, West Java. Al-Attas was the second of three siblings, with the eldest being Syed Hussein Al-Attas, a scholar and expert in sociology who later served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The youngest sibling, Syed Zaid, became a Chemical Engineer and a former lecturer at MARA Institute of Technology. (Muslem, 2019) At the age of 5, Al-Attas was sent to Johor to study at Ngee Heng Primary School (1936-1941). After completing his primary education, he returned to Java to continue his education at Madrasah Al-Urwatu Al-Wustqa in Sukabumi, West Java (1941-1945), an educational institution that used Arabic as its medium of instruction. Following World War II in 1946, at the age of 15, Al-Attas returned to Johor to pursue his further education. He attended Bukit Zahrah School and then English College (1946-1951).

Upon completing his education in 1951, Al-Attas enrolled in a military school. He first attended Eaton Hall, Chester Wales, and then proceeded to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, England (1952-1955). After finishing his military education, Al-Attas was assigned as a clerk in the Royal Army Regiment of Malaya, Federation of Malaya. He later resigned from the military in 1957 and devoted himself to developing his potential in the field of knowledge. With dedication, Al-Attas pursued further education at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, entering the Faculty of Social Sciences Studies. During his studies, he successfully completed two books: the first being "Rangkaian Ruba'iyat" and the second "Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised Among the Malaya." Due to his significant achievement in book authorship, the Canadian government, through the

Canada Council Fellowship, awarded Al-Attas a scholarship to study at McGill University, specifically at the Institute of Islamic Studies, from 1960 to 1962. He obtained a Master of Arts (M.A) degree from McGill University with a thesis titled "Raniri and the Wujudiyah of 17th Century Aceh," graduating with high honors. A year after his graduation, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas continued his education at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), where he earned his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) with honors in Islamic Philosophy and Malay Islamic Literature for his dissertation titled "The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri."(Syafa'ati & Muamanah, 2020)

After completing his studies in England, Naquib Al-Attas returned to serve at the University of Malaya. With his brilliance in the field of education, he was appointed as the Head of the Literature Department in the Faculty of Malay Studies. He then served as the Dean of the Faculty of Literature at the same university from 1968 to 1970. In 1970, he became one of the senior founders of the National University of Malaysia (UKM). In 1987, he founded and served as the rector of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Malaysia. Additionally, Naquib Al-Attas frequently participated in various conferences worldwide, including Indonesia. In the First World Conference on Islamic Education held in Mecca in 1977, he emphasized that the most urgent issue facing the Muslim community today is the issue of knowledge.

His contributions to contemporary Islamic education led Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim to appoint Syed Muhammad Al-Naquib Al-Attas as the inaugural holder of the Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali Chair of Islamic Thought at ISTAC in 1993. Furthermore, in 1994, King Hussein bestowed upon him membership in the Royal Academy of Jordan. In 1995, the University of Khartoum in Sudan awarded him an honorary doctorate (D. Litt) in the field of arts.

Naquib Al-Attas's Ideas on Islamic Education

In Naquib Al-Attas's view, Islamic education is seen as a process of internalization and instilling noble virtues in individuals. Therefore, according to Naquib Al-Attas, knowledge, action, and ethics are interconnected and form a complete entity. In this regard, for Naquib Al-Attas, education is not merely theoretical but directly relevant

to the activities of human life. Thus, knowledge and action must go hand in hand. Ideally, Naquib Al-Attas envisions Islamic education to produce universally good individuals (al-insan al-kamil).

This goal aims at two dimensions simultaneously: as humans who submit to Allah and as Khalifahs or representatives of Allah on earth. Therefore, the Islamic education system should reflect knowledge and values within Islamic law. In Naquib Al-Attas's concept of renewal, he presents significant ideas to revive the existence of Islamic Educational Philosophy, which has begun to fade amidst the development of educational philosophy itself. Some of Naquib Al-Attas's ideas include:

1. Islamizing Knowledge

The background to Naquib Al-Attas's Islamization efforts stems from the hegemony of Western educational philosophy over global society. Consequently, every field of knowledge is expected to align with Western paradigms. It is from this context that Al-Attas conceived the concept of Islamizing knowledge. Presently, Islam faces challenges within the realm of knowledge, where Western paradigms have eroded Islamic intellectualism. Moreover, the knowledge developed by the West is not neutral, necessitating the Islamization of knowledge to ensure its relevance throughout time.

Islamization encompasses not only modern but also contemporary knowledge, as these fields significantly impact secular values. Al-Attas's concept of Islamization aims to align individuals' worldviews with Islamic perspectives to construct an Islamic knowledge framework, with the foundation of Tawhid strengthening its scholarly constructs.

2. Eliminating Education Dichotomy

The decline of Islam in the field of education has significantly impacted the advancement of knowledge. As scientific knowledge continues to evolve, various philosophical schools of thought emerge, shaping the worldview of societies. The challenge faced by Muslims is the acceptance and development of modern science in Western countries amidst a lack of epistemological awareness among Muslims.

Consequently, modern science has grown from a philosophical tradition that denies the role and existence of God in knowledge development. This perspective views religion as a hindrance to scientific progress, as it seemingly fails to meet the challenges posed by technological advancements.

Al-Attas, through his visionary concepts, rejects the perception that science is devoid of religious connections. He argues that many truths within religion cannot be accessed by science, leading modern science to diverge significantly from religion. Therefore, Al-Attas emphasizes that the pinnacle of Islamic truth encompasses all intellectual and intuitive activities bestowed upon humans by God. In the Islamic paradigm, the attainment of knowledge extends beyond rational and sensory realities, encompassing harmony between intellectual-intuitive and ontological realities.

3. Instilling Religious Values in Every Field of Knowledge

In Naquib Al-Attas's conceptual framework, he envisions Islamic values in education to produce universally good individuals (*al-insan al-kamil*). Al-Attas asserts that educated individuals are inherently virtuous, emphasizing the importance of etiquette encompassing both spiritual and material aspects in instilling received qualities of goodness. His approach to instilling Islamic values in every field of knowledge always references the Quran as the guiding source and Prophet Muhammad as the exemplary figure. Al-Attas's educational philosophy seeks to portray an educational landscape that aims to cultivate universally good individuals, individuals balanced in the quality of their thoughts, *dzikr*, and deeds. (Muslem, 2019)

Implications of Naquib Al-Attas's Epistemology on Islamic Philosophy of Education

The world of education continues to evolve with the changing times. Following the decline of Islamic civilization after the fall of the Abbasid dynasty, Western nations began to dominate the realm of education. Various philosophical schools of education emerged, largely influenced by Western figures such as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey, and other

Western philosophers. Additionally, several educational paradigms have emerged, including rationalism spearheaded by René Descartes, empiricism by John Locke, and progressivism popularized by John Dewey. Alongside these, other schools of thought such as perennialism, existentialism, and pragmatism have developed, with little continuity with Islamic philosophy. (Dewi Kania, 2017)

This situation may create a negative impression among the younger generation, leading them to believe that Islamic civilization did not produce philosophers capable of addressing human issues philosophically. To counter the decline of Islamic educational civilization, efforts are needed to restore the existence of Islamic philosophy. According to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Islam should always serve as the foundation of life, providing direction for Muslims. Muslims should avoid the misleading influences of Western and Orientalist thoughts. Therefore, Al-Attas emphasizes the importance of raising awareness about knowledge and education in the Islamic world. His views on the importance of Islamizing knowledge have been positively received by Muslim scholars worldwide. The aim of Islamizing knowledge is to counter the crisis facing modern knowledge, both conceptually and directly in terms of knowledge sources, truth values, language, and so forth. This crisis significantly impacts the knowledge values produced by society today. (El Hakim & Fahyuni, 2020)

The ideas of Al-Attas led to the establishment of a national Islamic conference organization in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to hold the first international conference on Islamic education (First World Conference on Islamic Education). The conference took place in Mecca Al Mukaromah from March 31 to April 8, 1977. During the conference, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas presented his paper titled "Preliminary Thoughts on the Nature of Knowledge and the Definition and Aims of Education." This paper was later published as "Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education" by Hodder & Stoughton, London, and King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah, in 1979. (Terj. Haidar Bagir, 1992) Additionally, the article was republished with revisions and additions as part of Chapter 5 titled "The Dewesternization of Knowledge" in another book by Al-Attas titled "Islam and Secularism," published by ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia) in Kuala Lumpur in 1978. The second edition was released in 1993 with a new introduction by ISTAC. (Wan Mohd Nor

Wan Daud, 1998) The ideas contained in this paper were further elaborated by Al-Attas, developed, and presented at the Second World Conference on Islamic Education in Islamabad on March 15-20, 1980. This event was organized by Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, in collaboration with King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah.(Terj. Haidar Bagir, 1992)

Before discussing the objectives of Islamic education, it is essential to review the concept of educational objectives in general. This includes educational efforts to achieve individual development, personal life, and roles in society and the environment. Education in Islam should aim to shape good individuals, instilling goodness and justice within them as true individuals, not just as citizens or members of society. The importance lies in spiritual values rather than merely physical ones measured for the benefit of the state, society, or the world. (Al-Attas S. M., *Aims and Objectives Of Islamic Educations*, 1997) Al-Attas argues that seeking knowledge should aim to instill goodness and justice within human beings as individuals, not just as citizens or members of society. In the context of education, emphasis should be placed on human values as spiritual entities, not just as physical entities measured in a pragmatic and utilitarian context for the benefit of the state, society, and the world.

The goal of Islamic education is not only to create perfect citizens as desired by Western thinkers like Plato. More than that, its main focus is on nurturing perfect human beings. However, according to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Islam also accepts the idea of forming good citizens within the context of God's kingdom, which can help individuals become good human beings. His thinking emphasizes that full attention to the individual is crucial because, from an Islamic perspective, humans as moral agents will receive reward or punishment on the Day of Judgment, making individuals the primary focus of Islamic ethics.

Thus, discussing the objectives of Islamic education implies a discussion about values based on Islamic principles. Al-Attas, in this context, formulates the objectives of Islamic education with a focus on shaping the personal aspects of individuals while still considering the formation of an ideal society. Given that society consists of individuals, efforts to make everyone or most of them into good

individuals also contribute to the formation of a good society. (Al-Attas S. M., *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, 1997). Al-Attas argues that seeking knowledge should aim to instill goodness and justice within human beings as individuals, not just as citizens or members of society. In the context of education, emphasis should be placed on human values as spiritual entities, not just as physical entities measured in a pragmatic and utilitarian context for the benefit of the state, society, and the world.

CONCLUSION

In exploring the concept of Islamic education reform in the modern era from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, it can be seen that his thinking encompasses various aspects, including Islamic values, the integration of Islamic sciences, and addressing the challenges of scientific development. Al-Attas emphasizes the importance of formulating an Islamic education plan that is systematically aligned with Islamic principles to overcome the decline of the Muslim community.

With the background of Al-Attas's biography and educational experiences, including his formal education in the military and later in the field of science, he presents the ideas of Islamization of knowledge. This concept aims to restore harmony between religion and science and eliminate the dichotomy between religious and scientific knowledge.

From Al-Attas's perspective, the goal of Islamic education is not only to create perfect citizens in the context of the material world but rather emphasizes the formation of morally and spiritually good individuals. Islamic education is directed towards shaping humans focused on the values of goodness, justice, and spirituality, rather than simply creating pragmatically functioning members of society.

In facing the crisis of modern science, Al-Attas plays a significant role through international conferences and the publication of his writings. His ideas about the Islamization of knowledge serve as the foundation for the struggle to understand and apply knowledge within the framework of Islamic values.

In conclusion, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's contribution to the reform of Islamic education lies in his efforts to integrate Islamic values into science, address the challenges of scientific development, and emphasize the formation of morally and spiritually good individuals. His holistic and constructive approach makes him one of the influential figures in responding to the changes of the times and the challenges of Islamic education in the modern era.

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