

THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLATFORM OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Every religion or ideology seems to be providing something a foundation, including the concept of development which refers to the perspective which belongs to a person or people. It is not surprising to say that the concept of development is so different nowadays as it is a reflection of the worldview that he has. In this context, the development which is founded by the Islamic worldview is no doubt is differ to the others. Even though, these terms '*tanmiyyah*, *taqaddum*, *taghayyur*', can mean to the meaning of 'development', but the true meaning of the word 'development' which refers the perspective of the Islamic worldview is not to refer to the aspect of material side but it is also to refer to spiritual side. If it means both sides, then we have to define the concept of man. From this context, we also have to find how and what kind of developments that have relationship with the concept of happiness. Therefore, the concept of happiness in relation to the meaning of development is very significant. Thus, this article will be written to discuss and talk about the principles of Islamic worldview as the platform in formulating the meaning of the concept of development.

Keywords: Worldview, Islamic Worldview, elements of the Islamic worldview, development, happiness.

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Islam as a religion for all mankind is a monotheistic religion based on revelation which received by the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him in the 7th Century and later recorded in the Quran. It was began in the Arabian Peninsula then has spread rapidly to various nations in the world throughout the centuries. And among the reasons for the rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was the simplicity of its doctrine-Islam calls for faith in only one God worthy of worship. It also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation. As indicated above, the new Muslims who were islamized and made to understand the Islamic *weltanschauung*, the worldview of *Tauhid*. This includes the concept of happiness, the culture of knowledge, the development of a nation, the civilized of Muslim society, social justice, epistemology, the cultural values, cosmology, psychology, etc. These impact of Islamic worldview can be seen in the spiritual environment, when the Muslims have plan to build the mosque, city, school, etc. and as well their understanding of Islam in the surrounding of Islamic worldview.

That means Islam is not referring to a form of culture, and its system of thought projecting its vision of reality and truth and the system of value derived from it are not merely derived from cultural and philosophical element aided by science, but one whose original source is Revelation, which confirmed by religion and affirmed by intellectual and intuitive principles. In other word, there is no idea of so called 'development' in the religious traditions of mankind cannot be applied to Islam, for what is assumed to be developmental process is in the case of Islam only a process of interpretation and elaboration which must of necessity occur in alternating generations of believer of different nations, and which refers back to the unchanging source.¹ Thus Islam was revealed to this world in order to replace the pre-Islamic worldview was that of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*), which reflected in the culture of tribalism, absence of guided rationalism, and the dominance of a materialistic concept of God, as indicated in the Qur'an (39/al-Zumar, 7) where Allah (SWT) says: "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah."

Then, the various basic concepts and terms of keywords which derived from the Qur'an are very significant to attract all kind of challenges in relation to how Muslim face to all kind of problems because these keywords are likewise the spirit (*rûh*), intellect (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), lust (*nafs*), understanding (*fahm*), body (*jasad*), inspiration (*ilham*), thought (*fikr*), proof (*hujjah*), remembrance (*dhikr*), knowledge (*'ilm*), doubt (*shakk*), ignorance (*jahl*), charity (*'amal*), nature (*'âlam*), wisdom (*hikmah*), manners (*adab*), ethics (*adab*), topic (*mawdâ'*), justice (*'adl*),

1 Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 4.

injustice (*zulm*), gnosis (*ma'rifah*), definition (*ta'rif*), reality (*haqiqah*), explanation (*sharh*), discuss (*bahth*), law, judges, court (from Arabic: *hukm*), students (murid), date (*tarikh*), history (*shajarah*), time (*waqt*), human (*insan*), etc. have reflection of the Islamic worldview.

Therefore, the basic concepts and terms which are indicated to the worldview of Islam will lead to the mind of Muslims in understanding what Islam is, and provide the foundation to think, understand and plan when they are facing the real challenge, especially the problem of the corruption of knowledge. This has come and influences to the meaning of key terms that project the worldview derived from Revelation. Meanwhile the key terms are very important to make explanation, especially in relation to the concept of development from the Islamic perspective.

I. THE WORLDVIEW OF ISLAM

When the economic backwardness and political weaknesses of the Muslims particularly from the times of their direct or indirect suppression by the Western colonial powers in the 18th century, the Muslim leaders have encouraged to request for internal changes to close the humiliating gap between them and the West. Various ideas have been put forward and institutions established causing masses of changes in the religious views and understanding of the Muslim that have left most of them confused and weakened.²

These changing masses in Muslims world are not only in the aspect of military, economic and political side, but also in the understanding of religious side as mentioned by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. He says that that the main problem that causes as mentioned above are the problem of the content of education. This problem is rooted in the confusion concerning the nature and scope of knowledge, also the meaning of religion in Islam, its basic key terms and components as well as concerning the spirit and sciences and institutions of other civilizational entities, especially those of the West.³ In fact, as he says that "the changes and restrictions in the meaning of such key terms occur due to the spread of secularization as a philosophical program, which holds sway over hearts and minds enmeshed in the crisis of truth and the crisis of identity."⁴

2 Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1998), 33.

3 See for further information, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, First Impression (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1991).

4 Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, op. cit., 15.

Being responded to the spread of secularization as a philosophical program above, then the worldview of Islam must be signified more than just the physical world surrounding us but also includes the hereafter, as it is related to the purpose of man's existence is to worship God and to get rewarded in the hereafter. So that, the Islamic worldview covers beyond the present life to involve belief in God, the Prophets, the Angels, and all the scriptures revealed by God to various Prophets. In the same way, the life and action of the Prophet must be carefully followed and implemented in the day-to-day life of all human being.⁵ Similarly, if the notion of the meaning of worldview should be limited on the basis that such a formulation reflects observation and data derived from existing realities then must be rejected because in Islam covers the seen-world and the unseen-world, these are in line with the concept of Islamic worldview which is defined by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas that is:

Islam does not concede to the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane; the worldview of Islam encompasses both *al-dunya* and *al-akhirah*, in which the *dunya*-aspect must be related in a profound and inseparable way to the *akhirah*-aspect, and in which the *akhirah*-aspect has ultimate and final significance. The *dunya*-aspect is seen as a preparation for the *akhirah*-aspect. Everything in Islam is ultimately focused on the *akhirah*-aspect without thereby implying any attitude of neglect or being unmindful of the *dunya*-aspect.⁶

As a result, the worldview of Islam will be characterized by an authenticity and a finality that points to what is ultimate, and the vision of reality and truth that appears before our mind's eye revealing what existence is all about is the worldview of Islam, aimed at its world of existence in its totality that Islam is projecting. In other word, it is *ru'yah al- islam li al-wujud*.⁷ From the above definition, there are three important points that can be used as the identity of the Islamic worldview, namely that first is the worldview is an engine for social change, second is the principle for the understanding of reality and third is the principles for scientific activities. Hence, the three points above are in line with what were written by Alparslan Acikgenc, as follows, namely "that vision of reality and truth, which, as an architectonic

mental unity, acts as the non-observable foundation of all human conduct, including scientific and technological activities," or "the foundation of all human conduct, including scientific and technological activities".⁸

From that perspective, then happiness and well-being are two important factors in the development of an individual and society, there are the kinds of goodness that every human being seeks to achieve in this world and in the hereafter, although the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that created the Human Development Index as the important indicator of developed nation does not consider these two as the real indicators.⁹

II. THE ELEMENTS AND CHARACTERS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW

As a concept of the Islamic worldview is already very clear. Its vision of reality and truth, which is a metaphysical survey of the visible as well as the invisible worlds including the perspective of life as a whole, is not a worldview that is formed merely by gathering together of various cultural objects, values, and phenomena into artificial coherence.¹⁰ Its character becomes the principle of distinction to other worldview, for other worldviews do not have any kind of dealing to religion, religious teaching that cover both the seen-world and the unseen-world, which are related to the nature of universe. Nevertheless, in determining the elements that reflect the fundamental of the Islamic worldview, as proposed by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas are as follow, namely; the nature of God, of Revelation, of His creation, of religion, of freedom, of values and virtues, of happiness, of man and the psychology of the human soul, of knowledge, the nature of manners, and the nature of happiness, etc.¹¹

However in this paper is only a few that are going to be elaborated, the first is the nature of God. From the Islamic worldview about the nature of God is very clear, either in His name, His nature or His properties. So the conception of the nature of God in Islam is the consummation of what was revealed to the Prophets according to the Qur'an. Here is what Qur'an says about Him, as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas explains that is:

⁸ Alparslan Acikgenc, *Islamic Science* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1996), 68.

⁹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. *Knowledge, Culture and the Concept of 1 Malaysia*, trans. Ratwati Mohd Asraf, (Kuala Lumpur: CASIS UTM, 2012), 3.

¹⁰ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 2.

¹¹ Ibid. 5.

⁵ Amer Al-Raubai. "Al-Attas Concept of Happiness: A Reflection on the Contemporary Meaning of Development", in *Knowledge, Language, Thought and the Civilization of Islam*, edited by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud and Muhammad Zainiy Uthman (Kuala Lumpur: UTM Press, 2010), 328.

⁶ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 1.

⁷ Ibid, 2.

He is one God, living, self-subsistent, eternal, and abiding. Existence is His very Essence. He is one in essence, no division in His essence, whether in the imagination, in actuality, or in supposition is possible. He is not a locus of qualities, nor is a thing portioned and divisible into parts, nor is He a thing compounded of constituent elements. His oneness is absolute, with an absoluteness unlike the absoluteness of the natural universal, for while being thus absolute He is yet individuated in the manner of individuation that does not impair the purity of His absoluteness nor the sanctity of His oneness. He is transcendent, with a transcendence that does not make it incompatible for Him to be at once omnipresent, so that He is also immanent, yet not in the sense understood as belonging to any of paradigms of pantheism. He possesses real and eternal attributes which are qualities and perfections which He ascribes to Himself, they are not other than His essence, and yet they are also distinct from His essence and from one another without their reality and distinctness being separate entities subsisting apart from His essence as a plurality of eternal, rather they coalesce with His essence as an unimaginable unity. His unity is then the unity of essence, attributes, and acts, for He is living and powerful, knowing, willing, hearing, and seeing, and speaking through His attributes of life and power, knowledge, will, hearing and sight and speech, and the opposite of these are all impossible in Him.¹²

Even the name Himself, that God is called Allah is not given by the His servants and His apostles or created by any cultures, but that name Allah is given by Himself, as it is written Qur'an at Surah Taha (20): 14, as follow:

١٤ يَرْكَذِبِلْ ءَوَلِّصَلْ مَقَاوِي نِ دَبْ عِآفَ اَنَّا اَلْ اِهْلُ اِلْ هُلْ اِنَّا يَنْبِ اِ

“Verily, I am Allah, there is no god (the right) but Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.”

As mentioned above, it can be concluded that the name Allah is given by God Himself, only Himself knows His own name, and that name is proclaimed to mankind through revelation to His prophets and apostles. This means that the name Allah is not a name that is created

or given by men, prophets and sages, as it is considered by philosophers such as Karl Marx, Durkheim, Friedrich Nietzsche, Foucault, etc. God's name is the name of a very exclusive and inherently, hence the name or *lafaz* Allah is the property of adherents of the religion that has revealed to and shared by all His prophets to mention His name of Allah, including the Prophet Muhammad and his followers themselves, namely Muslims, as it was mentioned in the Qur'an at Surah al-Ikhlās that Allah has said about Himself.

The second is the nature of Revelation. God Himself Almighty has described Himself in the Qur'an as the last revelation or *Kalam*. Al-Quran as the Word of Allah is not a vision, inspiration or a sudden inspiration came from various major poets, the artists, and the apostolic. But this revelation is final that has been revealed to the Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet, and it not only confirms the truth of preceding revelation in their original forms, but includes their substance, separating the truth from cultural creations and ethnic invention. Also the speech of God (*Kalam Allah*) concerns Himself, His creation, the way to salvation communicated to His chosen Prophet and Messenger, not by sound or letter, yet comprising all that He has represented in words, then conveyed by the Prophet to mankind in a linguistic form new in nature yet comprehensible, without confusion with the prophet's own subjectivity and cognitive imagination.¹³ Therefore, the Qur'an as the *kalam Allah* affirming that it is revealed in a new form of Arabic, so it is understood that the description of His nature therein is the description of Himself by Himself in His own words according to that linguistic form.

The third is the nature of man. The position and the nature of man is very clear in the Islamic worldview. It means that man is composed of two elements, namely body and soul, or in other words, it contains a physical and spiritual beings. God taught him the names (*al-asma'*) of everything that means knowledge of everything, which refers to knowledge of accidents and attributes that pertaining to the essences of things sensible and intelligible (*mahsusat* and *ma'qulat*) in order to make known the relations and distinctions existing between them, and to clarify their natures within these domain.¹⁴

Then the dignity of man as a being of the highest and perfect among His creatures has been raised through the prophet Adam as the first human being, when he accepted the mandate to be the Caliph. In order to rule the world, man is also given limited knowledge of the spirit, of his true and real life or soul, and by means of this knowledge he is able to arrive at knowledge

¹³ Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 6.

¹⁴ Ibid. 143.

¹² Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 12.

about God (*al-ma'rifah*) and His absolute oneness, that God is his true Lord (*al-rabb*) and object of worship (*al-ilah*). The knowledge and religion are natural correlates in the nature of man, that is, the original nature in which God has created him (*al-fitrah*).¹⁵

Fourth is the nature of knowledge (*'ilm*). This is a part of fundamental pillars in the Islamic worldview, it deals with something that relate to epistemological discourse in order to recognize about the source and the nature of it. But to give an explanation of this knowledge must be defined precisely in relation to the nature of man. Hence, in the Islamic worldview, as Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas stated that knowledge will be defined as “both the arrival in the soul of the meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge as well as the arrival of the soul at the meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge”.¹⁶ Further in this later explanation, he says that knowledge in relation to the soul which the condition and position of the soul should not merely a passive recipient like the *tabula rasa*, but it is also a dynamic one in the sense of setting itself in readiness to accept and so to intentionally attempt for the arrival at the meaning.¹⁷

In addition, as far as the knowledge concerns that it has two kinds in line to the man that is of dual nature possessed of two souls. The first is food and life for the soul that refers the kind of knowledge which is given by God through direct revelation to man, and this refers to the Holy Qur'an. And the other is providing with which man might prepare himself in the world in his pursuit of pragmatic ends is to refer to the kind of knowledge of the sciences, and acquired through speculation and rational effort of inquiry based on his experience of the sensible and intelligible, and observation and research.¹⁸

In fact that Islam affirms the possibility of knowledge, that knowledge of the realities of things and their ultimate nature can be established with certainty by means of our external and internal senses and faculties, reason, and intuition, and reports of scientific or religious nature, transmitted by their authentic authorities. It is undisputed that Islam has never accepted nor has ever been affected by ethical as well as epistemological relativism that made man the measure of all thing and nor has it ever created the situation for the rise of skepticism, agnosticism, and subjectivism. Its nature has related to the value laden which is in contrary to the other worldview, especially the Western worldview. For the Western View says that the nature of knowledge is value free.

15 Ibid. 143-144.

16 Ibid. 14.

17 Ibid.

18 Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), 144-146.

Therefore, based on the above explanation can be concluded that the objects, events, facts etc. in relation to the soul are becoming meaningful depending to the understanding of their worldview which all these things are already mentioned above that the keyword and terms in Islamic worldview are very important in order to distinguish which one is true and false from something that are influenced by the linguistics, logic, scientific, social and political institution, economic, religion and law, and others. Then, the concept in the key words and terms from the Islamic worldview will provide the foundation to Muslim people to confirm, perfect, consolidate, verify and correct something that they are facing to them.

III. THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE FRAME OF THE WORLDVIEW OF ISLAM

In the modern literature on development studies which is based on the western experience and approach has reflected the things in relation to materialistic and secular worldview which are not compatible with Islamic teachings. The West defines this concept as a process that enables man to acquire material goods to satisfy worldly needs without reference to spiritual requirements.¹⁹ It is in line to what Zainuddin Sardar said that:

The Basic assumption of development, no matter how it is defined, is of a linear teleology vis-à-vis the standard yardstick of measurement: western civilization. The western nations are thus the model of developed states with their industrial policies, free market economies, technological advancement, political, social and cultural institutions providing the best examples of all that constitutes human endeavor; other nations and cultures are simply there to follow this example, progress and develop along a straight incline with the goal of becoming as good as the west.²⁰

Meanwhile, the concept of development from the Islamic perspective is that every man or nation is successfully in meeting the broad purposes of Islamic law (*al-Syari'ah*), which is to uphold the quality of life, religion (*din*), intellect (*'aql*), property, and the protection of one's lineage.²¹ To achieve these goals, the development has to promote social justice by reducing

19 Amer Al-Raubae, op. cit., 323.

20 Ziauddin Sardar, “Beyond Development: An Islamic Perspective”, *The European Journal of Development Research*, 8: 2 (1996), 36-37, in Amer Al-Raubae, Ibid, 323-324.

21 Islamic Development Bank, *Vision 1440 H: A Vision for Human Dignity* (Jeddah: IDB, 2006), 11-15 cited by

market imperfections, eliminating corruptions, instituting good governance, accountability, hard work and sharing of resources. In order to that plan, Islam prohibits illegal activities by disallowing *riba'*, avoiding waste and preventing the existence of monopolies. Thus, the concept of development has to include material and spiritual elements in order to create a balance between the material fulfillment of this life and the spiritual requirements for the hereafter as what in the religion of Islam means. The two elements are indeed helpful for the human being in facing these challenging times where in the current popular definitions always focus on daily life and material wealth while religion and lineage are not given the priority that they deserve, and also in building a new civilization for mankind that is progressive, morally upright, and that would allow the human being to attain a state of happiness.²²

Therefore, the concept of development according to the Islamic perspective, as what Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas said that is “to refer to the return to the genuine Islam enunciated and practiced by the Holy prophet, the members of his sanctified House and his noble companions and their followers, and the faith and practice of genuine Muslim after them, and they are also refer to the self and mean its return to its original nature and religion (Islam).”²³ In order to be achieved to above mentioned, the Muslims need to the so-called the knowledge culture which is not merely emphasize in the love of knowledge and learning and the mastery of the various sciences and skills, but also actively inculcates mature spirituality and ethical qualities, enabling our leaders and citizens to optimally realize our individual and collective potentials. Because in the context on information age that everyone need to select, interpret, and utilize information, ideas and opinions from these various sources meaningfully are a permanently basic which is called a dynamic category of knowledge known as *fardu ain*, comprehensible and architectonic epistemological framework.²⁴

Thus, the knowledge culture aims to produce educated human beings who understand the limits of truth and usefulness of everything, and act accordingly.²⁵ On the other hand, as already mentioned that the Western framework reflects materialistic and secular worldview, hence development is a process that assists man to obtain material goods to fulfil worldly needs without reference to spiritual requirements.

Khatimah

In Islam, development is to satisfy man's basic need by not only providing material goods but also increasing social relation, politic and cultural view, ethical principles, education, true knowledge and equal opportunity. Also its nature is to complete including all aspects of human activities, and to promote *falah* or success in this world and in the hereafter, a notion that goes beyond this life to include the hereafter. In other words, it allows the people to attain happiness and well-being and to complete the purposes of Islamic law (*maqasid al-syari'ah*), then this is so-called the *balдах tayyibah*, a nation that is blessed by Allah the Almighty, as it stated at *Surah Saba'* (34): 15.

قَدْ لَبَّ قُلُّ أوركُشَاوْ كُتْبِرَ قِرْرَ نِمِ أُولُكُلْطَمِ شِرْوِ نِي هِي نَعِ نَاتَنْجَ قِيَاءَ مِهِنِكْ سَمِ ي فِ إِبْسَلِ نَاكَ تَقُلْ
١٥ رَوْفَعُ بُرُو قَبِيَّطُ

“Certainly there was a sign for Saba in their abode; two gardens on the right and the left; eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him: a good land and a Forgiving Lord!”

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, in *Knowledge, Culture*, op. cit., 2.

22 Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Knowledge*, 2.

23 Al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 76.

24 In Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Knowledge*, op. cit., 26-27.

25 Ibid. 28.