THE RELEVANCE OF SAYYID JAMALUDDIN AL-AFGHANI'S THOUGHTS FOR INDONESIA IN FACING THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION

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Abstract

This article discusses the life journey of Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1938-1897), his thoughts and teachings on Islamic modernisation and their relevance for Indonesia in facing today's free trade. Using the historical narrative writing method, this article describes the history of Afghani's life and works. Furthermore, the author analyses the main points of Afghani's thoughts, especially in terms of rationalism, the six
principles of truth (Arkan al-Sittah) in dealing with materialism, Qadha and Qadar, and the role of government, and writes down their relevance for Indonesia in facing competition in the era of globalisation. In the face of global competition, the author argues that Afghani’s thinking can be applied to Indonesia at two levels. At the country level, Indonesia can use it to improve its economic diplomacy strategy. Meanwhile, at the community level, the Indonesian people can apply it in determining the choice of social and economic activities to be more in favour of domestic products. With the collective strength of the community, it is hoped that Indonesia can be economically independent.

Keywords: al-Radd ’ala al-Dahriyyin, Arkan al-Sittah, Globalisation, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Qadha and Qadar

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INTRODUCTION

Sayyid Jamaluddin Al-Afghani is recognised as a figure of Islamic modernisation who has had a great influence on many Islamic figures around the world in dealing with European colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries. According to Afghani, the cause of the decline of Islam is the imperialism of European countries in cooperation with corrupt Muslim rulers who cooperate with imperialists (Nasution, 1984).

As a result, almost all countries with a majority Muslim population were controlled by Europe. Britain controlled Egypt, India, Afghanistan, and Sudan. France occupied Algeria, and other territories and Italy controlled Libya. Meanwhile, Southeast Asia was controlled by Britain and the Netherlands (Maryam, 2014). In order to free himself from Western colonialism and governments in coalition with the colonialists, Afghani- stressed the importance of cultivating a sense of nationalism-
by returning to the true teachings of Islam. Afghani’s thoughts were heavily influenced by Socrates, Aristotle, Ibn Khaldun, and Guizot (Kohn 2009), as well as Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Mulla Sadra (Keddie 2014). His student, Muhammad Abduh, is the successor of his thought who has translated and published many of his works (Keddie 2014). In his book named "al-Radd 'ala al-Dahriyyin" or "Refutation of the Materialists" he taught six principles of truth (Arkan al-Sittah) to fortify Muslims from materialism (Kohn, 2009; Asrul, 2019).

Three thoughts are aqidah consisting of the understanding that 1) humans are the noblest creatures; 2) every religion must think that its people are the best people, and 3) the life of the world is a medium to the afterlife. While the other three thoughts are moral (akhlaq) which teach shame, trust (amanah), and honesty (Asrul, 2019).

In that book, Afghani introduced the concept of civilisation that combines Islamic teachings and the advancement of European science. He argued that religion provides the basis for achieving justice. Secular power will not suffice because it does not provide a mechanism for the rulers and the people to follow the law together. According to Afghani, Islam is a unifying source, identity, mobilising power against imperialism (Kohn, 2009).

During his life, Afghani developed thought and was active in political movements in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Turkey, Russia, and Iran. He also published his thoughts in the form of books and tabloids in Arabic, Persian, English, and French (Keddie, 2014). From his political activities and ideas, Afghani is considered to be the first person in the modern Islamic era to recognise the dangers of western penetration and disunity of the Islamic world. Afghani is seen as the father of Islamic modernity because he advocated that civilisation could advance without always having to adopt the European model (Kohn, 2009).

According to Afghani, modernisation and imperialism are interrelated; therefore that science, military power, and economic development of western countries have been aimed at weakening state sovereignty and cultural identity of Islamic countries (Kohn, 2009). Military domination and economic exploitation of western countries have not only taken up geographical areas, but have also disrupted the system of religion, history, and moral values. There is a dualism in viewing western civilisation.
The first view perceives that western civilisation is negative, namely materialism, hedonism, secularism, and individualism. The second view is that western civilization is closely related to science, rationality, critical thinking, and the accumulation of wealth. Afghani argued that understanding religion must be accompanied by rationality and critical thinking (Kohn, 2009).

Afghani was also the pioneer of the Pan Islamism movement, in his efforts to unite the Islamic world to unite against foreign powers in the Pan Islamism forum (Noer, 1996). He argued that the source of the weakness of the Islamic world is the weakness of Muslim solidarity. This weakness was exploited by European countries to pit leaders and Muslims against each other (Maryam, 2014). Afghani believed that if Islamic countries are united, they can defeat the invaders. The movement and its ideas have inspired Islamic countries to rise from adversity, including in Indonesia with the establishment of Muhammadiyah, Syarikat Islam, and Nahdatul Ulama (Noer, 1996).

In the contemporary context, the author argues that Afghani’s thinking can be developed and applied to Muslim countries such as Indonesia in facing globalisation. One of the biggest challenges for Muslims today is competition for markets and resources between countries with free market pressure, where trade in services and goods, investment, knowledge and technology can occur between countries without barriers (Cavusgil, Knight and Riesenberger, 2016).

Globalisation and liberalisation will be used as an excuse for Islamic countries to open their markets and also make it easier for developed countries to invest, which gives developed countries a way to colonise in new ways. Without having the courage and commitment to unite, it will be difficult for Indonesia to compete against economic forces and technological advances, as well as strategies from other countries, not just western countries.

Communities and natural resource wealth owned by Islamic countries will be used as markets and production facilities that are drained and exploited for the benefit of other countries. Furthermore, using the historical narrative writing method (Public Schools NSW, 2014), the author presents the life journey, work and context of Al-Afghani’s thoughts and struggles, as well as their relevance for Indonesia in facing today’s free trade.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Life History of Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani

The milestones of Afghani’s life and the elaboration from his birth in 1938 to his death in 1897 are shown in table 1 and visually depicted in figure 1. Meanwhile, a list of Afghani’s writings and speeches are summarised in table 2 below.

Table 1. Afghani’s Life History

| Year   | Country/City                  | Happenings/Career/Records                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1838   | Assadabad, Afghanistan or    | Year of Afghani’s birth. Sayyid Jamaluddin Al-Afghani was born in 1838, his hometown is still under debate, whether in Assabad Afghanistan or Iran. According to Nasution (1980), Afghani was born in Afghanistan. However, other supporting documents show Afghani was born in Iran (Keddie, 2014). His father's name is Sayyid Syafdar, a follower of the Hanafi school, and is still a descendant of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Maryam, 2014). |
|        | Assadabad, Iran (still under |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1838 - | Kabul Afghanistan or Qazvin,  | Childhood and learning. By his father, Afghani was educated in Qazvin, Tehran, Iran and Atabat, Iraq. In 1856 moved to India (Keddie, 2014). Other documents show that he studied in Afghanistan and entered Kabul university with Islamic, philosophy, and exact sciences (Kurdi, 2015). |
| 1856   | Tehran, Iran and Atabat, Iraq |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|        | (still under debate)         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1857   | Mecca, Saudi Arabia           | Performing Hajj for the first time (Maryam, 2014; Kurdi, 2015).                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1858 - | Kabul, Afghanistan            | Became a civil servant in the government service of Amir dost Muhammad Khan.                                                                                                                                         |
| 1864   | Afghanistan                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|        | 1867                          | Became an advisor to Amir Syir Ali, then Prime Minister in the                                                                                            |
government of Muhammad A’zam Khan (Kurdi, 2015; Wulandari, 2020b)

| Year Range | Location | Events |
|------------|----------|--------|
| 1868 - 1869 | India, Mecca, Cairo | In 1968, A’zam Khan’s government was overthrown by a political opponent (Amir Sir Ali Jamaluddin) who was supported by the British (Keddie, 2014). A’zam Khan fled to Iran, Afghani went to India and made the pilgrimage to Mecca (1869) and stopped in Cairo (Maryam, 2014; Kurdi, 2015; Wulandari, 2020a). |
| 1869 - 1870 | Istanbul, Ottoman (Turkey) | Afghani joined the secular Tanzimat movement. He became a member of the Education Council in Istanbul and taught at Darulfunun. Because of his controversial speech, many clerics were annoyed and asked the Ottoman government to expel him from Istanbul (Keddie, 2014). |
| 1870 - 1879 | Cairo, Egypt | He became a teacher and wrote from home and coffee shops. Some documents mention that he also taught at Al-Azhar. Met Muhammad Abduh. Received financial support from the Egyptian government (Riaz Pasha) (Keddie, 2014). In 1979, the Egyptian leadership changed from Ismail to Taufiq with the support of Britain and France. Afghani was expelled from Egypt for urging the government to refuse cooperation with the British. However, his political views had a great influence on the Egyptian people’s resistance against Britain and France through Muhammad Abduh and Said Zaglul, leaders of the Wafid party (Keddie, 2014; Noorthaibah, 2015). |
| Year      | Location                          | Event Description                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1879 - 1884 | Hyderabad, Calcutta India         | Writing a book refuting materialism “al-Radd ‘ala al-Dahriyyin” this article was also addressed to the pro-British Sayyid Ahmad Khan. In India, the British government continued to spy on Afghani (Keddie, 2014). |
| 1884 - 1885 | Paris, France and London, Britain | Published the Al Orwat al Wotqa newspaper in Paris, France with Abduh, subsidised by the anti-imperialist figure, Wilfrid Blunt. This newspaper, although only published in a few editions, is hugely influential in Muslim countries (Keddie, 2014). |
| 1886      | Busehr and Tehran, Iran           | Assisted the Minister of Education and Media in Tehran, but because of his harsh statements, Afghani was expelled to Russia by the Iranian king, Nasarudin Shah (Keddie, 2014). |
| 1887 - 1889 | Russia                            | Helped Russia’s war against Britain (Keddie, 2014). |
| 1890 - 1891 | Tehran, Iran                      | Anti-government campaign that granted British tobacco concessions. Afghani was expelled from Iran to Iraq. The campaign against tobacco concessions continued to spread in Iran which results in the revocation of concessions to Britain (Keddie, 2014). |
| 1891-1892  | Britain and Turkey                | Joined Iran’s modernizer, Malkom Khan in Britain, then worked in Turkey to support Sultan Abdulhamid. At the same time, Afghani continued to campaign against the Shah of Iran (Keddie, 2014). |
| 1896      | Istanbul, Turkey                  | His student, Mirza Reza had just been released from prison in Iran and came to meet him in Istanbul. Reza, at Afghani’s instigation succeeded Nasuraldin Shah in Tehran. Reza was sentenced to death, the Iranian |
government asked Afghani to be extradited, but the Turkish government refused, and banned Afghani from leaving Istanbul (Keddie, 2014).

| Year | Location | Event |
|------|----------|-------|
| 1897 | Istanbul, Turkey | Afghani died of jaw cancer (Keddie, 2014; Wulandari, 2020b). |

Source: processed from Asrul, 2019; Keddie, 2014; Maryam, 2014; Noorthaibah, 2015; Wulandari, 2020b.

Figure 1. Afghani’s Life Journey Map

As shown in table 1 and figure 1, Afghani during his life travelled to various countries as a politician, teacher, and writer. The countries he visited included Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, India, Russia, Britain, and France. During that time, Afghani also produced written works either in books, newspaper articles, or speeches, as shown in table 2.
Table 2. Al-Afghani’s Writings

| No. | Year                  | Title                                          | Information                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | February 14\(^{th}\), 1879 | *Al Hokumat al-Estebdiya* (Absolute Government) | Afghani articles on the system of government. He preferred a constitutional or republican government to an absolute (autocratic) government (Keddie, 2014). |
| 2   | May 24\(^{th}\), 1879   | *Hakim al-Sarq* (Justice from the East)        | Afghani attacked the governments of Egypt and the east for allowing the west to dominate them. He also suggested the existence of a national party and also supported a greater role for women, because mother is a children’s first school. (Keddie, 2014). |
| 3   | 1879                  | *Tetemmat al Bayan fi Tarikh al-Afghani* (History of Afghanistan) | Published in Egypt during the second Afghanistan war. In this book Afghani inspired Afghan fighters to fight British imperialism; attacking fanaticism and despotism; suggesting modern education and the role of parliament; invites writers to spread the spirit of patriotism (Keddie, 2014). |
| 4   | 1881                  | *Al-Radd ʿala Al-Dahriyyin* (Refutation of Materialism) | It is the most important Afghani’s intellectual work published during his lifetime. It is a scathing critique and total rejection of materialism. This book has been translated into Arabic by Muhammad Abduh (Asrul, 2019). |
| 5   | 1880 – 2              | Wrote six articles in the Journal Moʾallem – *safiq* | Written during his time in Hyderabad. The three main themes raised in the article are: |
which were printed in Urdu and Persian. Also some editions of *Maqalat e Jamaliya*. 

| 6 | May 1883 | Answer to Renan (in French). | The importance of unity between adherents of Islam and Hinduism in India to resist British colonialism.  
2. The importance of philosophy and modern science.  
3. Attacking Sayyid Ahmad Khan as a British supporter.  
The above thought was conveyed in a public lecture in Calcutta with the title “About Learning and Teaching” (Keddie, 2014). |
| 7 | 1884 | *Al ‘Orwaat al Wotqa* (in Arabic). | Discussed about the importance of Pan Islamism. This article attacks British imperialism, particularly in Egypt and Sudan, and praises Sultan Abdulhamid, in Ottoman (Keddie, 2014). |
| 8 | 1884 | *Al Qadha wal Qadar* (Allah SWT’s Will). | Afghani attacks fatalism (one is ruled by destiny) as a wrong interpretation of Islam. He said that military strength, political unity, and protection of Islamic territory were the main principles of Islam. Islam faces setbacks because leaders have departed from these principles (Keddie, 2014). |
Bhinekawati, R., Sitasari, I. and Najib, M.  The Relevance of Sayyid Jamaluddin Al Afghani's Thoughts for Indonesia in Facing The Challenges of Globalisation.

| 9  | 1891 – 1892 | An open letter in the newspaper article *Zia al-Kafeqan*. | Advised the scholars to overthrow the Shah of Iran (Keddie, 2014). |
| 10 | 1892 – 6    | Prohibition of publication. | The Turkish government forbade Afghani to publish his thoughts (Keddie, 2014). |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islam is Rational

Throughout his entire career, Afghani travelled to Turkey, Egypt, France, Afghanistan, England, India (and made the pilgrimage to Mecca), and worked as a political counsellor, teacher, and writer. His thoughts have influenced the reform of Islamic thought. He is the mentor of Mohamad Abduh who is also considered a prominent figure in liberal Islam.

He was strongly supported by supporters of Islamic modernisation because he recognised the superiority of western science. At the same time, he argued that rational thinking and science are not imports from western countries, but are elements of Islamic teachings (Kohn, 2009). According to Afghani, the military domination and economic exploitation of the west have not only taken up geographical areas, but have also disrupted religious systems, history, and moral values.

Therefore, Muslims must be rational in order to be able to take positive things from western influences, namely knowledge, rationality, critical thinking, and accumulation of wealth; and eliminating negative things such as materialism, hedonism, secularism, and individualism (Kohn, 2009).

According to Afghani, philosophy and religion both seek wisdom. But materialism can prevent people from being wise because materialism makes people pursue hedonism. Science from the west, particularly about the military and technological progress is hugely important to make Islamic countries equal to Europe. He argued that wealth and technology are tremendously important, but solely as a way to achieve goals, whilst the main objective of humans is to continue developing in order to achieve wisdom.
The ability to think is a gift from God to humans, and must be utilised seriously to develop themselves and the society. Afghani argued that modernisation can occur without having to fully adopt western thinking (Kohn, 2009; Kurdi, 2015).

**The Six Principles of Truth**

Furthermore, in the book *"al-Radd 'ala al-Dahriyyin"* Afghani formulated six principles of truth (Arkan al-Sittah) therefore that Muslims are free from materialism and are able to rise from the confines of the invaders and leaders who collude with the invaders. The six principles aim to build the spirit of Muslims, uphold social life in society, and become guidelines for legal life for the Muslim community (Asrul, 2019).

This book is intended to satirise Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817 - 1898), the Indian leader who supported cooperation with Britain rather than nationalist and pan-Islamist rejection of western domination (Kohn, 2009). Of the six principles of truth, the first three are aqidah and the next three are moral. The principles of faith are: first, humans are the noblest creatures; secondly, religion strengthens belief in the primacy of a community that practices the same belief; and third, religion teaches that the existence of the earth is a means for humans to perfect themselves in preparing for life in the hereafter.

With these three principles, humans are expected to be able to control their "animalistic" side which can be manifested in the form of passive shepherding sheep, or aggressive lions. It is hoped that humans can develop their capacity to be wise and just. With an increase in individual character, community progress can be achieved (Kohn, 2009; Asrul, 2019).

Meanwhile, the three moral principles are the character of shame (al-hayya), trustworthiness (al-amaha), and honesty (al-sidq) (Asrul, 2019). With shame, humans will stay away from despicable acts and can build civilisation. With the nature of trust, humans are able to work together (muamalah) to be able to realise justice.

Then, honesty makes people trustworthy. These three things are exceptionally distinct from the principle of materialism where the strong desires to dominate the weak, such as the domination of European countries against Muslim countries at that time (Kohn, 2009; Asrul, 2019).
Qadha & Qadar

Moreover, al-Afghani saw that the decline of Muslims was more due to the nature of Muslims themselves having abandoned high morals and were static, fatalistic, and divided because they held taqlid. He argued that Islam has conveyed Islamic teachings that are taught dynamically, continuing to persevere, loving knowledge and to learn a lot, and possess high morals.

During that time Muslims solely followed the ijtihad of the ulama that were set in the era before them, Muslims had abandoned the teachings of Islam which were expected to make Muslims work dynamically, not fatalistic, adhered to high morals, and love knowledge and sciences, and did not just follow the results of the ijtihad of scholars before them, but by continuing to open the door of ijtihad (Kurdi, 2015; Wulandari, 2020a).

Another important factor that causes the decline of Muslims is Jabariyah understanding, where many Muslims misunderstand Qadha- (Allah SWT's provisions recorded in Lauh Mahfudz but have not yet occurred) and Qadar (Allah SWT's provisions that have occurred). Afghani believed that the existence of Qadha and Qadar require Muslims to continue to strive because Qadha and Qadar have a causal relationship (Kurdi, 2015). He argued that believing in Allah SWT and praying alone would not solve social problems. Afghani argued again that religion can help social conditions when people persist and help each other (Kohn, 2009).

The Role of the Government

Afghani believed that the success of Islam in the 7th to 11th centuries was due to Islam’s success in establishing a code of ethics that facilitated relations between Arab tribes and people from other cultures. With the guidelines for actions that are commendable and shameful, religion becomes the foundation for the building of a civilization. Afterwards, Afghani taught that punishment will not be effective in building human behaviour surrounded by people who are mentally greedy and corrupt. The dominant values in society can be defeated by the values held by a group of people. Therefore, religion plays a role in providing instructions about good and bad behaviours (Kohn 2009).

Honesty or trustworthiness is a condition taught by religion. Afghani believed that the government plays a role in the welfare of its-
people. Governments make and enforce laws and mediate differences of opinion. The government must collect taxes to build infrastructure projects and benefit the community such as libraries, schools, hospitals, bridges, roads, etc. and pay employees who run the state administration (Wulandari, 2020b, 2020a).

According to Afghani, regardless of the type of government, whether in the form of a republic, a unitary state, or a kingdom, the risk of corruption or achieving personal interests by using state facilities always occurs. This can be overcome by having a mechanism that ensures that the government builds public facilities, not private facilities. Only the morals and honesty taught by religion can provide the conditions and mechanisms that ensure that the government can be trusted. Afghani’s thoughts above are still extremely relevant to the current condition of Muslims, especially in facing the challenges of globalisation, as described below.

The Relevance of Sayyid Jamaluddin Al-Afghani’s Thoughts in Facing the Challenges of Today's Globalisation

With the increasingly intense domination of European countries over eastern countries in dominating trade and the economy since the 18th century, the west has called it the "first wave of globalisation" (Vanham, 2019). This continues with the increasingly free movement of capital and investment, trade and transactions, migration and movement of people (transmigration), and the liberation of knowledge (International Monetary Fund, 2000). This has widened the gap between rich and poor countries.

The UNDP report (2014) showed that the gains from trade, foreign investment and global supply chains benefit the developed countries more than the developing countries. Although developing country governments have allowed foreign investment to enter their country by providing various facilities and incentives, the benefits of globalisation only provide minimal benefits for developing countries, even with the risk of environmental damage that they must face (UNDP, 2014).

Presently, most developing countries are located in Asia and Africa and Indonesia is one of them, although Indonesia has just been categorised as a middle-income country at the lowest level. Seeing this situation, the author argues that Afghani’s thoughts on rationalism, the six principles of truth, Qadha and Qadar, and the role of the government are still hugely relevant.
Developed countries with their materialist understanding will continue to try to dominate the world under the pretext of accelerating world economic development (see International Monetary Fund report, 2000), but what actually happens is that inequality is getting wider, as reported by UNDP in 2014.

To overcome all that, the author supports Afghani’s opinion that Muslims must be rational and not trapped in the consumerism, therefore that they are not consumed by a sense of prestige; adhering to the six principles of truth in terms of faith and morals; believe that Allah will give goodness if Muslims always persevere and work hard (the existence of causality between Qadha and Qadar), and also there is an honest government that puts the interests of the ummah above foreign parties. By adopting teachings of Afghani, it is hoped that Muslim countries in general, and Indonesia in particular, can be more independent both politically and economically.

CONCLUSION

Afghani’s thoughts encourage various parties to think further about the relationship between religion, politics, economics, and relations between countries. He provided views for Muslims to think critically and take the positive side of modernisation and discard the negative side. Afghani’s arguments about religion remind us that religious law has an important political purpose for building a free, just, and civilised society.

Religion can function on several levels: as a code of ethics, as a source of knowledge about the good life, or as an introduction to philosophy. Afghani’s writings remind about the function of religion which can be viewed from two sides. Muslim identity can play an important role in countering imperialism. However, he also made a reminder that the same identity can hinder progress if the positive side of western progress in terms of science and rationalism is not adopted by Muslims for their progress.

Finally, in the current era of globalisation, Afghani’s thoughts on rationality, the six principles of truth, Qadha and Qadar, and the role of the government, are still tremendously relevant to build a Muslim society that is more independent in terms of politics, economy, and culture.
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