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From Living Qur'an to Living *Iman*: Syed Naquib al-Attas' Reception of Theological Verses and the Formulation of New Kalam

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Abstract

*This article examines Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' interpretation and application of Quranic verses as foundational principles for his conception of the Islamization of knowledge, primarily drawing from his work *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*. The study investigates how al-Attas' theological reception of Quranic verses contributes to the development of *kalam jadid* (new *kalam*) within the context of knowledge Islamization. The research employs al-Attas' interpretation of theological verses as its material object, while utilizing the framework of new *kalam* as its formal object. Through the *Living Qur'an* methodology, the study analyzes the significance of al-Attas' engagement with theological verses throughout his scholarly corpus. This qualitative investigation combines observational and library research methods to present a systematic descriptive-analytical discussion. The findings are as follows: First, al-Attas employs at least 14 Quranic verses with theological reception as the basis for formulating new *kalam*, emphasizing three agendas—change, development, and progress—all rooted in divine principles, which frame the discourse of the Islamization of knowledge. Second, in terms of practical reception, al-Attas' interpretations can be observed in the initiatives of one of his ideological successors in Indonesia, Hamid Fahmi Zarkasyi. These include institutionalizing his thought through the establishment of University of Darussalam (UNIDA), the Center for Islamic and Occidental Studies (CIOS), and Program Kaderisasi Ulama (PKU) or cleric cadre program. In the perspective of the *Living Qur'an*, these initiatives represent efforts to enliven the Quran beyond its textual tradition, extending into a civilizational thought of new *kalam* institutionalized for broader impact. This progression begins from Quranic abstraction and reception, leading to the formulation of new *kalam*, and further towards enlivening both the Quran and faith (*iman*) simultaneously. This study makes a significant contribution by integrating Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' theological thought with the concept of new *kalam*, relevant to the Islamization of knowledge. It expands the understanding of how Quranic theological texts can serve as a conceptual basis for advancing progressive Islamic intellectual discourse.*

Keywords: Living Qur'an, living *iman*, *kalam jadid*, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Islamization of knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of globalized information technology has generated an unprecedented proliferation of information sources, effectively dissolving traditional boundaries across religious, social, political, educational, economic, and technological domains. This phenomenon has precipitated a crisis in distinguishing between valid and invalid knowledge claims (Ipandang, 2017: 21). Such developments necessitate a profound reconsideration of human ethics within the context of technological advancement (Djayadin & Fathurrahman, 2020: 32), particularly in reconciling classical Islamic intellectual heritage with contemporary thought to address current global challenges.

The concept of disruption, defined as systematic innovation that replaces established paradigms with emerging frameworks (Kivimaa et al., 2021: 111), has manifested as a structured and pervasive force affecting multiple sectors of human experience, notably impacting religious values and individual faith (Suheri & Nurrahmawati, 2022: 20). A significant consequence has been the erosion of clear ethical distinctions, necessitating a reinforcement of cognitive religious understanding through systematic theological frameworks.

In this context, Islamic theology assumes a foundational role in addressing contemporary challenges. Known in the Islamic tradition as *'ilm al-kalam* (Muarif & Yunus, 2019: 42), this theological discipline systematically examines belief in God through the lens of Islamic doctrinal principles. The field of *'ilm al-kalam* has undergone significant transformations to address contemporary intellectual and spiritual challenges, reflecting the understanding that classical theological frameworks must evolve to engage with modern human conditions and concerns (Muarif & Yunus, 2019: 41).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emerges as a pivotal figure in the development of new *kalam* (*kalam jadid*), contributing substantially to contemporary Islamic thought from his position as a prominent Malaysian Muslim intellectual. His scholarly endeavors, particularly the movement toward the Islamization of knowledge, represent a sophisticated theological and philosophical response to the challenges posed by Westernization and secularization (Nuryanti & Hakim, 2020: 78). Al-Attas' approach, characterized by both

reflective depth and theological rigor, demonstrates remarkable consonance with the paradigm of new *kalam*, offering valuable insights for addressing the disruptive challenges of the contemporary era.

Al-Attas' intellectual movement can be productively analyzed through the framework of the Living Qur'an, an approach that emphasizes the dynamic interpretation of Quranic verses within contemporary social contexts (Waryono, 2016: 4). The Quran, as Islam's sacred text, encompasses multiple layers of meaning, with Muslim understanding and faith significantly shaped by interpretative frameworks (Wijaya & Suwendi, 2021: 177). The reception of Quranic verses extends beyond traditional exegetical works (*tafsir*), manifesting in various social traditions, behavioral patterns, and institutional movements, as exemplified by several religious organizations in Indonesia. Notable examples include Muhammadiyah's social movement grounded in Surah Al-Ma'un, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia's (HTI) conception of *khilafah* derived from Surah Al-Ma'idah: 57, and the Islamic Defenders Front's (FPI) adoption of the principle *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (Waryono, 2016: 49). This approach to engaging with Quranic text as a social paradigm constitutes what Kuntowijoyo (2018: x) terms a "mode of thought."

This research addresses two primary questions: (1) Which theological verses serve as the foundation for al-Attas' reception in his seminal work *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*? (2) How does the practical implementation of al-Attas' new *kalam* reception manifest in contemporary Indonesian social phenomena? The study aims to identify and analyze the key verses underlying al-Attas' theological reception and examine the concrete manifestations of his new *kalam* thought in social contexts.

Methodologically, this study employs qualitative research methods, specifically utilizing library research techniques and the Living Qur'an approach. The material object comprises the Quranic verses analyzed in al-Attas' work, while the formal object is the discipline of new *kalam*. Through descriptive-analytical-interpretive analysis, this study contextualizes these verses within the framework of contemporary disruptive issues.

Scholarly discourse has extensively examined both the development of new *kalam* and the intellectual contributions of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Notable contributions include Muslih et al.'s (2023: 256) critical analysis of Western pragmatism through the epistemological framework of new *kalam*, and Hasib and Abidin's (2023: 113) examination of al-Attas' conceptualization of nature through theological principles. The theoretical foundations and methodological approaches of new *kalam* have been systematically explored by Farichah (2011: 173) and Ahmad (2014: 145). However, there remains a significant gap in scholarship regarding the integration of the Living Qur'an approach with al-Attas' formulation of new *kalam*. Contemporary scholarship has primarily employed the Living Qur'an approach to analyze Islamic traditions, cultural practices, and

modern ideological movements. This study advances the field by extending the analytical scope of the Living Qur'an methodology to examine al-Attas' theological reception and articulation of new *kalam*. This novel theoretical synthesis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Quranic reception as a theological-intellectual paradigm, while simultaneously illuminating the contemporary relevance of classical Islamic theological discourse.

DISCUSSION

A. Finding Common Ground between Living Qur'an and Living Faith; A Theoretical Offering

Living Qur'an in Indonesia began with Ahmad Rafiq's dissertation and was developed in his article entitled "The Living Qur'an: Its Text and Practice in the Function of the Scripture". He initiated the concept of living Qur'an as a study of the Qur'an that focuses not only on its textual existence, but also on social phenomena related to the presence of the Qur'an in certain Muslim communities. He traces the relationship between the Qur'an and its community and the patterns of transmission and transformation of knowledge, practices, and discourses that shape the reception of the Qur'an among these communities (Rafiq, 2021: 741). More broadly, Muhammad Ali in his study of the manuscript and Living Qur'an and Hadith explored how the Qur'an and Hadith live in everyday practice (Ali, 2015: 150).

Hamam Faizin in his article entitled "Living Qur'an: An Offer" in the Jawa Post (2005) also discusses the concept of Living Qur'an as an offer to bring the Qur'an to life in everyday practice (Dozan & Rahman, 2021: 196). Asma Asfaruddin, in her book "The First Muslim: History and Memory," explores the history and memory of early Islam by indirectly about Living Qur'an that a deep understanding of the early history of Islam can help us connect the teachings of the Qur'an with the historical context and everyday practice . All these views provide valuable insights into how we can bring the Qur'an to life in our lives and relate it to our social and spiritual realities.

Uniquely, in the context of Al-Attas himself, the practice of living Qur'an involves understanding and applying the teachings of the Qur'an in every aspect of life, including ethics, morals, social, and spiritual. It involves reflection, contemplation, and action based on the values of the Qur'an. Al-Attas also emphasizes the importance of understanding the Qur'an holistically, not only the literal text, but also the meaning and message contained therein. This involves the study of interpretation, Arabic language, and historical context in combining modern understanding with traditional roots, including theology, philosophy, metaphysics, and literature. All of this leads to the main goal of Islamizing our mind, body,

and soul in order to achieve harmony with the teachings of the Qur'an and improve our lives and the surrounding environment (Schimmel & al-Attas, 1973: 231).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, a Muslim scholar playing an important role in the thought of the Islamization of knowledge, linked spiritual life to the practice of the Qur'an. Al-Attas viewed that the practice of the Qur'an should encompass all aspects of life, including spirituality. He emphasized the importance of practicing the values of the Qur'an in daily actions, both in social relationships, work, and worship (Dozan & Rahman, 2021: 197). The Islamization of knowledge, according to Al-Attas, involves the integration of science and Islamic spiritual values. The practice of the Qur'an is not only about reading, but also applying its teachings in every aspect of our lives.

Integration between spirituality and science is an important step to achieve harmony in everyday life. Some ways that can be taken are through the process of reflection and contemplation, application of ethical values, development of spiritual intelligence, observation of nature, and enrichment of literary and intellectual treasures. This shows that the integration between spirituality and science is an ongoing journey. With awareness and good intentions, we can combine the two to enrich our lives (Hasan et al., 2024: 81). The process and aspects of bringing thoughts to life that originate from Al-Qur'an verses can be considered as part of bringing the Al-Qur'an to life. When someone ponders, understands and practices the thoughts contained in the verses of the Koran, it means actively living out His teachings in everyday life. Thus, this practice is an integral part of the Living Qur'an concept fought for by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas.

With this development concept, the author borrows the term suggested by Mohammad Kholid Muslih - an intellectual from the University of Darussalam Gontor Indonesia, the term *living Iman*. The author himself first found this term from an academic forum in mid-2024. At that time he explained that *living iman* (living faith) is an effort to make a theoretical theological basis the practical application realm that can be observed and studied through a social approach. In this case, the author argues that the concept of *living iman* refers to an understanding and experience of faith that is active, continues to develop, and integrated into everyday life. At the same time, he confirms the connection with the Qur'an: The Qur'an is a source of light and guidance for the heart (Isnaini, 2021: 211). In other words, the Qur'anic tradition is essentially formed by two sides of the coin, namely theological acceptance and practical acceptance of the verses of the Qur'an (Barir, 2017: xiii). So, *living iman* is not only about theoretical belief, but also about real actions that reflect spiritual values in practical life.

Meanwhile, the living Qur'an method is a research approach that examines how the Qur'an lives in society (community). Different from the study of the text of the Qur'an which focuses on meaning and interpretation, the living Qur'an involves social phenomena

as objects of research (Murtadlo et al., 2023: 113). Method This rooted in phenomenology, paying attention to implementation and application the meaning of the Qur'an in everyday life (Ghoni & Saloom, 2021: 413). So it can be said that *living iman* is an effort to bring to life the conformity of faith and individual and community reception to theological verses that they understand and can be seen applicatively in the actions and social phenomena they carry out. In this case, he no longer needs a method but the deductive intellectual work process.

Nevertheless, it can be seen from one of the various social points of view that are often used in the living Qur'an. They are, among others: a) acculturation or diffusion perspective that sees How Qur'an interacts with culture and how culture influences understanding and practice related to the Qur'an (Ahimsa-Putra, 2012: 235) . b) functional Perspective considering the function of Qur'an within society and how public enliven the meaning of the Qur'an in everyday life (Rafiq, 2021: 269). c) structural perspective understanding the connection between the text of Qur'an and its community, as well as How structure social influences interpretation and practice². d) phenomenological perspective studying individuals and groups' experience related to the Qur'an, including How they respond to and enliven the message of Qur'an. e) Hermeneutic or interpretative perspective that digs the meaning of the Qur'an through text and context analyses, as well as How interpretation influences practice and understanding. All these approaches provide valuable insights into how the Qur'an functions in people's lives.

Out of the many perspectives, *living iman* as the embodiment of the living Qur'an is possible using two of the various perspectives: structural and phenomenological perspectives. This is because both of these perspectives contain slices of reception or understanding of the verses to be responded to in the form of thought, mainly philosophically and theologically. Another similarity is that, in the contemporary theological realm, it is also marked by the birth of a new awareness of the existence of tradition on the one hand and the existence of modernity on the other (M. Muslih, 2012: 349), so that the two need to be placed proportionally.

B. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and the Interpretation of Theological Verses

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas was born on **September 5, 1931** in **Bogor, West Java, Indonesia**. He is a **Muslim scholar and philosopher** from **Malaysia**. His thoughts cover theology, philosophy, metaphysics, history, and literature. **Early Education:** Al-Attas received his primary education in **Johor, Malaysia**, but studied Arabic at **Madrasah Al-'Urwatu'l-wuthqa** in **Sukabumi, Java** during the Japanese occupation. Post-World War II, he continued his studies at the **Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, United Kingdom**. He

then completed his postgraduate studies at **McGill University, Canada**, and then at the **School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (Nuryanti & Hakim, 2020: 73)**. Some of Al-Attas' **works and contributions** include writing various books on Islamic thought and civilization, especially on **Sufism, cosmology, philosophy, and Malaysian literature**. He was also a central figure in the idea of **the Islamization of science**, which aimed to integrate Islamic values with modern science.

Some other important works are: "The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education" (1980) which discusses education within the framework of Islamic philosophy. There is also a book entitled "Islam and Secularism" (1978) where Al-Attas describes the differences between Islam and secularism. Then, there is a book entitled "Islam and the Philosophy of Science" (1989) which explores the relationship between Islam and science. Next there is the title "Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education" (1979) which was written together with seven people, including Al-Attas, and discusses the goals of Islamic education (Hanifah, 2018). In addition, he also wrote about Sufism, cosmology, philosophy, and Malaysian literature.

One of his monumental works is "Islam; The Concept of Religion and The Foundation of Ethics and Morality" which can be viewed from the perspective of his formulation of understanding of certain verses as well as the substantive content of his *kalam jaded*. Although it consists of 50 pages, in it he analyzes several verses that lead him in elaborating useful contributions to the development of Islamic thought. Specifically, the author views this as a form of reception or understanding of SMNA in treating these verses so that they are manifested in the form of living thought.

Some of the verses referred to are as follows:

1) QS. Al-Mu'minūn verses 12-14:

"Indeed, We have created man from essence (which originates) from the earth. [12] Then, We made him semen in a strong place (the womb) [13] Then, We made the semen into something that hangs (blood). Then, We convert something hanging into a lump of flesh. Then, We made that lump of flesh into bones. Then, We covered the bones with flesh. Then We made it the creature with (other) shape. Holy Allah is the best of creators" [14]

The citation of this verse is based on the significance of the meaning of 'din' which can be elaborated into at least four meanings. They are, among others: debt of gratitude, submission, judicial power, and or natural tendencies. The concept of the meaning of debt in this case is the existence of a mutually binding relationship of obedience between the debtor and the lender. This kind of relation will not be realized except in a civilized and responsible society. A civilized society is identical to the dwellers of a city which in Arabic is pronounced 'Medinah', while the atmosphere uses the phrase

'*tamaddun*' (Al-Attas, 1985: 2). From here al-Attas offered an interpretation encouraging humans to explore both aspects of experience towards reality and understanding of religion as an object of truth, belief, and practice that is manifested in the life of the Muslim community, the part of the entire human community (Al-Attas, 1985: 2).

- 2) Next, he elaborates on the second verse of another surrah, Al-A'raf; 172; "*(Remember) when your Lord brought out from the backbones of the children of Adam, their descendants and Allah took their testimony against themselves (saying), "I am your Lord, am not?" They said, "Yes (You are our Lord), we bear witness." (We did so) so that on the Day of Resurrection you (will not) say, "Indeed we were unaware of this;"*]

He uses this verse to interpret the spiritual aspect of the concept of debt to human existence. That humans start from nothing until they come into existence and with increasing age it must be the result of something outside themselves, namely God Who Created (Al-Attas, 1985: 5). Thus, something that is inherent in humans essentially belongs to God who is a debt to humans (Al-Attas, 1985: 6).

- 3) QS. Al-'Asr verse 2: "*Indeed, man is truly in loss,*"

In this context, he understands this verse to warn the position of humans that they are obliged to fulfill what is their debt obligation naturally. This can be accomplished by means of worshipping Allah SWT through carrying out His commands and on the other hand avoiding His prohibitions (Al-Attas, 1985: 7) so as not to become a real loss.

- 4) QS. Al -Tāriq verse 11: "*By the sky that contains rain*".

In this case, according to al-Attas, humans will receive a reward for the benefits of their service after they serve God by humbling themselves before Him (Al-Attas, 1985: 8) as the parable he understands from the verse above.

- 5) QS. Al-Baqarah verse 164:

"...What Allah sent down from the sky in the form of water, then with it He revived the earth after it had died (dry),..."

That humbling human being is like a position that is watered by rain from the sky so that it is able to grow the dead earth like a living religion (Al-Attas, 1985: 9).

- 6) QS. Al-Baqarah verse 245 is a representation of the next reception reading

"Who wants to give a good loan to Allah? He will multiply (payment of the loan) for him many times over. Allah narrows and expands (the sustenance). To Him you belong returned.

The observance or service given to God here is not called a servant or *khadim*, but *'abd* or slave. In the context of religion, the behavior is called 'worship because it requires the return of the loan of goodness from the All-Rich God. This means that this transaction is human who needs God as the All-Rich Being (Al-Attas, 1985: 11) or a consciousness in the context of humans themselves.

- 7) QS. Az-Zariyat verse 56 is a continuation of the SMNA reception in its explanation:
"I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me".
 That if referring to the initial explanation, the natural tendency is part of 'din' linguistically meaning customs, habits, and true character. In the context of religion, it is called 'fitrah', the pattern of relationship to God as the Creator of all things.
- 8) That is QS. Al-Nisa 125 and Ali-Imran 85 which emphasize that the best religion is to submit to Allah because there is no other religion than Islam (Al-Attas, 1985: 13). In linguistic meaning, any form of payment of agreement other than through the Islamic "counter" then the transaction is not accepted. Because at this stage, the meaning of "din" becomes diverse between one religion and another so that religious morals and ethics are enforced that are able to distinguish between Islam and other religions
- 9) QS. Al-Nisa' verse 83 which has the following translation:
"Why do they look for a religion other than the religion of Allah? In fact, only to Him is everything in the heavens and on earth surrendered, whether willingly or unwillingly, and only to Him will they be returned" (Al-Attas, 1985: 14).
 So, he continued, those following the law of Prophet Ibrahim are called to hold on to the straight religion in the way of 'hanif' (straight). Meanwhile, those who experience evolution with existing traditions and cultures claim to be the religion of the People of the Book based on their version of revelation and practically become a people who are reluctant to submit to the *millah* of Ibrahim (Al-Attas, 1985: 15). In the last four verses above, al-Attas wants to emphasize Islam as a valid basis of sharia among its predecessors.
- 10) QS. An-Nisa' verse 125 which he quoted reads:
"Who has a better religion than the person who surrenders himself to Allah, even though he is a muhsin (one who does good) and follows the religion of Abraham who is hanif? Allah has made Abraham (His) lover."
- 11) Also QS. Ali 'Imran verse 85 reading:
"Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, (his religion) will never be accepted from him and in the afterlife he will be among the losers."
- 12) Then, it is confirmed with QS. 'Ali 'Imran verse 19 that:
"Indeed, the religion (that is accepted) by Allah is Islam".
 At the world level, according to SMNA, Islam becomes a social guide for almost all aspects of physical, material, and spiritual existence in one good way that applies everywhere with the principle of justice. It regulates both individual and community aspects of society to achieve a common goal (Al-Attas, 1985: 16). Then with the next three verses, al-Attas intends to position Islam functionally in all aspects of human life.

- 13) QS. At-Taubah 111 (Al-Attas, 1985: 18) also becomes a progressive foundation: *"Indeed Allah has bought from the believers"*. So, a Muslim is required not only to be Allah's caliph on earth, but also to be a servant *'abd* to his Lord to worship (Al-Attas, 1985: 17). So that the concept of 'din' is manifested into the figure of a Muslim to create harmony on earth as contained in the verse. Therefore, according to SMNA, Islam as the epistemology of the Divine cosmic order places Muslim humans to realize their own destiny. On the one hand, it plays a role as a microcosmic representation, *the shaghir realm*, and at the same time in the macrocosmic order, *the kabir realm*.
- 14) QS. Al-Fajr verse 27-30: *"O calm soul. Return to your Lord with pleasure and pleasure. Enter the ranks of My servants. And enter My heaven!"*.

The implications of the operationalization of the self, according to SMNA, lead humans to the stage of freedom. That is when he is able to fulfill the purpose and will for which he was created and understand his own existence, then in essence he has found the supremacy of peace so that the soul becomes calm in freedom and free from all the shackles of unavoidable fate (Al-Attas, 1985: 20).

From the explanation of the reception of these verses, the author can at least summarize several key words of understanding, namely starting from the values of the mortality of creatures, human civilization, devotion to God, morality, self-nature, and individual freedom to practice Islam functionally and fairly in the physical and spiritual aspects in the application of daily life.

C. Integration of Islamic Basis and Science Perspective of Syed Naquib al-Attas

Based on the mapping of the verses of the Qur'an used by SMNA above, the author can underline that this step is an effort to Qur'anize his thoughts which culminates in the mission of ideologizing Islam through the basis of theological reception. Theology as a field of science that discusses the basics and beliefs of religion such as divinity, justice, good-evil, eschatology, and so on in the corridor of belief is increasingly questioned along with the times (Giling, 2019: 227). This is closely related to the problems of civilization and society which are empirical and factual in nature. So that it always experiences dynamics that are beyond expectations because of its multi-dimensional and multi-effect character. This phenomenon is reminiscent of a quote from Ali Syariati, a thought reformer coming from Iran, who stated that true belief grows from true knowledge. True knowledge arises from the right way of thinking. Meanwhile, the right way of thinking comes from the right method (Soleh, 2013: x). The point of this statement is none other than the importance of understanding methodology, especially in the field of scientific development, in order to be

in accordance with the changing times, as the jargon of the Qur'an says, *'ṣāliḥ li kulli z̄amān wa makān'*.

The need for *kalam jadid* also plays two important roles. Firstly, it strengthens the religious foundation or belief. Secondly, it protects religious beliefs from all forms of misunderstanding (Zarkasyi, 2019: 10). The topic discussed in the classic work of *'Ilm Kalām* is religious belief by utilizing dialectical methodology. According to Amal F. Zarkasyi, the challenge of the *kalam jadid* movement if carried out carelessly is the same as elaborating religion to harmonize Islam with Western thought. The potential for negative impacts like this must be prevented by using a deductive approach to traditional scientific knowledge to the development of the times appropriately (Fathullah Zarkasyi et al., 2019: 12). This is because the purpose of the science of *kalam* itself is to defend doctrine, and defend it from all external elements that attack it. Researchers must treat these weaknesses as a basis for self-criticism that encourages them to build a new *'ilm kalam* (Fathullah Zarkasyi et al., 2019: 13).

The need for a new theological renewal in Islam as offered by Wahiduddin Khan, a prominent Muslim scholar and Indian scholar, who presents an important study in new Islamic theology. Sheikh Wahiduddin Khan understands *'Ilm Kalām* as “an instrument of Islamic *da'wah* (proselytization) that aims to inform the facts of religion with the same language and terminology as those of its time” (Fathullah Zarkasyi et al., 2019: 11). Therefore, the main issue in *'ilm kalam* today should be to prove the truth of religion in general, its main problem through two main elements: philosophy and science. *Firstly*, the philosophical method: used to confront the philosophical conclusions used by some who deny religion, with the persistence of methods based on general mental principles. *Secondly*, the Scientific Method: is the most needed method of science to carry out its mission because it is considered the most successful in convincing modern mindsets and is experimental (Fathullah Zarkasyi et al., 2019: 14).

This combination of approaches is called “integrative” and is based on the following characteristics: (i) the Qur'anic foundation and its starting point, (ii) methodology and its application, (iii) modern discourse and mechanisms, (iv) mental and emotional approaches, and (v) the morality of the actors (Fathullah Zarkasyi et al., 2019: 15). Thus, the influence of science makes the discussion of new *kalam* more dynamic and energetic in responding to issues of faith and contemporary thought as well as in religious life (Fathullah Zarkasyi et al., 2019: 16).

In the context of al-Attas' understanding of the verse, he emphasized the importance of the character of cosmic rational power, i.e. human submission to his religion, as a complete devotion to his God in the process of worship so that it can then be called the stage of *ma'rifat* (Al-Attas, 1985: 21). This implies in an exposition that Islam is an

agreement between the heart and mind which is shown by the tongue and manifested in attitudes and actions. It is able to produce obedience and loyalty both to God and to His Messenger as bound in the two sentences of the *shabada* (Al-Attas, 1985: 22). The implication is that there is no total obedience to Allah without obedience to His Messenger as well as a unity of monotheism (*taubid*) formulation (Al-Attas, 1985: 23).

After humans are able to control the microcosmic aspects within themselves, according to al-Attas, it can be ascertained that they are then able to establish relations with other fellow Muslims from various dimensions of space and time with a common awareness, namely realizing brotherhood among fellow religious adherents and nations (Al-Attas, 1985: 24). In Islamic politics and social organizations, the similarity of agreements becomes the foundation of their principles. Thus, the nation and society are only fields of charity to realize their loyalty and obedience. At other times, if he finds something that is not in accordance with his ethical concept, he will correct and improve society to the right path (Al-Attas, 1985: 25).

Happiness over the process is practically not a matter of entity or based on personal satisfaction let alone collective satisfaction, but rather an action that is carried out on something that is his responsibility for his spiritual drive in the consciousness of the heart (*qalb*). This is what is meant by '*adl*' or justice (Al-Attas, 1985: 26). That is a harmonious condition where a person is right in the right place and not only related to the factors external to himself, but especially closely related to internal factors within himself (Al-Attas, 1985: 27).

On the contrary, the nature of the Qur'an mentioning the term "*kadzaba*" (lying) is important to understand how belief in strengthening harmony between actions and body organs is fundamental in Islam (Al-Attas, 1985: 28). The urgency of this justice also has an impact on knowledge (*al-'ilm; al-ma'rifah al-'ilm*) because it holds most of the important positions in Islam. It is not only about how he acts fairly but also he must know when he should continue or stop his actions, what wisdom can be taken, and then how he integrates with other disciplines to avoid injustice.

In this case, there are two types of knowledge: gift from God to humans and knowledge obtained from human efforts themselves based on experience and observation. The first type can be achieved through the process of worship depending on the level of spiritual obedience to God. In this process he receives direct spiritual inspiration or commonly called '*dzauq*' and the revelation of spiritual views as the process of '*kasyf*' (Nuryanti & Hakim, 2020: 75). His knowledge (*ma'rifah*) then includes two aspects, namely the microcosmic and macrocosmic given by God as the highest knowledge. This includes essential Islamic knowledge, namely the pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith, the meaning and purpose of which provide understanding in the implementation of daily life practices

after knowledge of monotheism and science until it is manifested in good deeds (*ihsan*). Meanwhile, the second type of knowledge is discursive and deductive by referring to pragmatic value objects (Al-Attas, 1985: 30).

With a simple illustration, al-Attas came to the conclusion that knowledge can be gained from certain conditions in the first knowledge process. The certain conditions are, among others: a) one person's desire to provide knowledge about himself so that it is known; b) providing related knowledge to others at the same level through communicating ideas and feelings that may be understood; c) allowing to the person seeking information to approach and know it by complying with the rules and attitudes that are acceptable to the person who wants to be known; and d) giving his knowledge about himself based on trust after a certain period of time being tested in his loyalty and capacity. All of this knowledge are inseparable from Islamic ethics and morality (Al-Attas, 1985: 33) as something abstract and visible in the eyes of other humans as a benchmark for his material and spiritual practices.

Regarding the level of knowledge it is explained that the mastery of the first type of knowledge is important to continue to the second type of knowledge that only relies on humans themselves. Without the Creator's help, he actually cannot lead humans in their lives, even falling into endless confusion and without a goal in the search. Thus, it is determined that the first type of knowledge is *fardhu 'ain* which must be possessed by each individual, while the second type of knowledge is *fardhu kifayah* in the sense that it can be assisted by others in its understanding.

Meanwhile, in Western civilization in general, because the conception of justice is based on a secular foundation, it adheres to the understanding that the conception of knowledge is also based on the same foundation or complements the foundation that putting humans to be physical entities and the rational use of animals which in this category belongs to the second type of knowledge as a measure of the validity of knowledge that may occur (Al-Attas, 1985: 34). Consequently, the objective to seek for knowledge from the bottom to a higher level for Western civilization is to produce seekers of good citizens. Whereas, Islam somehow aims to seek knowledge to produce seekers of good human beings in their entirety.

The connotation of a good human being in Islam is not only good in social aspects in general, but also being good for oneself firstly and then truly good for others. So the difference lies in the concept of Islamic knowledge, including: a) knowledge includes belief and faith, and b) the purpose of searching for knowledge is to instill goodness or justice for humans, both individually and socially (Al-Attas, 1985: 35).

So, Islam itself seems to be an Object in emulating its natural ontology as an unchanging substitute and is completely and perfectly affirmed by the confirmation of *From Living Qur'an to 103-124 (Cholid Ma'arif, et al)*

God's word (*kalam*) in Qur'an scripture. Thus, it rejects the possibility of a process of becoming that requires perfection or evolution towards perfection like the concept of development and progress if applied to life, history and human destiny in Islam (Al-Attas, 1985: 36). Based on this, the discussion of change as well as social and technological disruption becomes relevant.

D. From Reception of Qur'anic Verses to Formulation of *New Kalam*

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas is a central figure in the idea of the Islamization of science. This concept emerged in the 1970s and aimed to restore science that was considered to have gone beyond its axiological framework. Al-Attas tried to synchronize ethical and religious values with modern science, without rejecting existing knowledge (Rahmawati et al., 2020: 78). His thinking builds on the Islamic intellectual tradition including philosophy, *kalam*, and Sufism (Aristya et al., 2022: 192).

In relation to the work of Al-Attas' living Qur'an, he gained the foundation of previous literature by touching different dimensions of the three possibilities respectively. This was accomplished by "bringing the Qur'an to life" through the theological character of its connotation, talking about the efforts of Muslims to enliven the Qur'an through observing Islamic teachings (Rafiq, 2021: 472). The methodological attention of this approach begins with exploring the meaning of Qur'an which is better known as *tafsir*. Next, *tafsir* becomes the basis of certain practices. Viewed from a theological point of view, it must be determined whether the practice is right or wrong to be considered a correct interpretation. The form and variety of practices are determined by the extent to which *tafsir* - with all its epistemological instruments - allows them to further explain the problem based on the availability in the rich and extensive literature.

Tafsir and '*ulūm al-Qur'an*' at first glance are somewhat contradictory to the effort to "bring Qur'an to life," both with the other two terms: the phrase "the living Qur'an" and "the living Qur'an". Both have similarities related to the humanistic aspect of scripture, i.e. the Qur'an, rather than theological aspect. So, it is not about what Muslims believe in the Qur'an, but how Muslims believe in the Qur'an (Rafiq, 2021: 472).. From this point of view, *tafsir* (interpretation) is not considered the only determinant that makes the Qur'an alive. Instead, interpretation is positioned as one of humans' actions as a whole, both individually and in the community.

It is the totality of these actions or practices that make the Qur'an alive and illustrate the relational aspect of the scripture, that a text becomes a scripture not in and through itself. But a text becomes a Scripture when people relate themselves to the text they consider sacred in various ways: receiving, reciting, reading, interpreting, treating, or using it for various purposes. However, it is noteworthy that the relational character of the

Scripture cannot be formed by individuals who are not related to each other. In other words, these people need to be socially connected, where they produce collective actions or practices through a feature called by Graham as a “community of faith”. This community loves, celebrates, as well as lives with, for, and in the scripture, without intending to weaken the theological stance of a community of faith towards their scripture, including the faith of Muslims in the sanctity of the Qur’an, in humanistic discourse, the relational character of the holy book marks the transition of the sacredness of the text from passive to active. It is passive because it openly accepts various forms of interaction of its adherents that make it a holy text.

In the context of the relational-functional aspect of the text with the practice carried out by al-Attas, he first formulated his reception of certain verses to the following three concepts: change, development and progress referring to the sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly, in the personal aspect and its original role in the environment and religion. Thus, in Islam, the process of changing into pure Islam is driven by Muslims who have changed on their own path to realize the progress of themselves and society. The term progress reflects the definition of direction indicating the final goal to be achieved in life. So, those who are trapped in darkness in the sense of not being finished with themselves are actually not expected to be able to change (Al-Attas, 1985: 37).

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas said that the three concepts have different meanings in his thinking. They are, among others:

1. Change: Al-Attas considers change as a constant part of the universe. However, this change must be in accordance with Islamic principles and not contradict human nature.
2. Development: Development according to Al-Attas is not only limited to material or technological growth, but also involves spiritual and moral aspects. True development must be based on Islamic values.
3. Progress: Al-Attas emphasized that true progress is not only related to material progress, but also to a deeper understanding of the values of truth and spirituality.

All these concepts must be understood in the context of the Islamization of knowledge and holistic self-development (Fauzan, 2021: 120)..

Al-Attas translates the relational-performance of verse as departing from the Islamic worldview towards change and development and self-perfection in the shadow of a single project of the One Reality view confirmed by the Truth. At this stage, the practice of a Muslim's actions lives based on belief without changing it into an error that will disrupt the harmony of Islam and themselves by always referring to the Qur’an and the hadith of the Prophet (Al-Attas, 1985: 39). Furthermore, he emphasized that a Muslim should never be alone when he contemplates, and therefore, he knows intuitively through the ritual of

worship that through reading and reflecting on the Divine word how very close he is to God (Al-Attas, 1985: 40). This role is as carried out by the Prophet Muhammad, as the prototype of his people who feel very close so that they are able to emulate his words, actions and provisions based on the affirmation of the Qur'an.

E. Qur'anic-Faith Actualization and Transformation of Islamization Institutionalization

In further analysis of the living Qur'an, it is known as the term transmission and transformation as a continuation of the information fragment above. These are interrelated around a particular practice referring to the transmission of knowledge and practice from the early Islamic period to the next generation. There are at least three transmission patterns that can be concluded from Islamic texts and traditions. *The first* is the transmission pattern in the form of citations or references to previous literature. *The second* is the transmission pattern that is created through the teacher-student relationship and is manifested in a chain of transmission called *sanad*. *The third* is in the form of a discursive tradition, i.e. in terms of certain practices being adhered to from one generation to another in a society. However, it is noteworthy that in this case, the transmission process does not have to occur through direct replication of certain previous practices. The transmission process is also constructed by discourses that live in society, involving various elements such as texts, religious narratives, authoritative subjects, or existing practices that are already established in society (Rafiq, 2021: 480).

Starting from the process of receiving the verses of the Qur'an to the formulation of *new kalam* proposed by al-Attas, at least it can be read as in the following table:

No.	Verse (QS)	Reception	Transmission	New Kalam
1	QS. Al-Mu'minūn verses 12-14;	Creation/human mortality	the basis of the Qur'an and its starting point	1. Change: change is a constant part of the universe and is in harmony with Islamic principles and does not conflict with human nature.
2	QS. Al-A'raf; 172; QS. Al-'Asr verse 2	Testimony/agreement to al-Baqa'	methodology and its application	2. Development: not only limited to material or technological growth, but also involves spiritual and moral aspects based on
3	QS. Al -Ṭ āriq verse 11; QS. Al-Baqarah verse 164; QS. Al-Baqarah verse 245	Response to service	modern discourse and mechanisms	

4	QS. Az-Zariyat verse 56; QS. Al-Nisa 125; QS. Ali-Imran 85; QS. Al-Nisa' verse 83; QS. An-Nisa' verse 125; QS. Ali 'Imran verse 85; QS. 'Ali 'Imran verse 19;	Affirmation of the nature of 'deen' (Islam) for humans	mental and emotional approach	Islamic values. 3. Progress: true progress is not only related to material progress, but also to a deeper understanding of the values of truth and spirituality.
5	QS. At-Taubah 111; QS. Al-Fajr verses 27-30	Muhsinun / functionalist-applicative Islam	the morality of the actor	

All the transmission patterns mentioned in the reception of the verses require some form of transformation. In fact, certain knowledge and practices around the Qur'an are not only passed down from one generation to another, but throughout this process of transmission and transformation. Various new knowledge and practices through the three transmissions above the pattern: reference, sanad, or discursive tradition. Every time this reception is delivered, in fact it is naturally and continuously reconstructed by different agents carrying different interests. This process of retelling memories is what gives birth to transformation. On the one hand, the genealogy or network of memory preserves religion and religious traditions, so that they continue to exist (Rafiq, 2021: 281). In other words, history, which stands as a source of legitimacy or basis for knowledge and practice, is not only narrative, but also interpretative.

The transmission and transformation in the context of al-Attas' reception of the verses that underlie the emergence of *Kalam Jadid* in the formulation of Islamization of knowledge can be found in his students and the institutions he founded. In Indonesia, one of his direct students is Hamid Fahmi Zarkasyi, a Muslim intellectual from Gontor, Ponorogo, East Java (Ismunanto, 2016: 154). The grounding of the project of the Islamization of contemporary science is a paradigm that he developed with the discourse of the Islamic worldview. The discourse was then implemented in the Islamic higher education institution based on the Gontor Islamic boarding school, which in 2014 changed its name from the Darussalam Islamic Study Institute to Darussalam University.

Islamic Worldview is an Islamic perspective on reality and truth that originates from key concepts of Islam and faith and its influence on aspects of individual or community life. Its character refers to divinity, physical and metaphysical values and is closely related to epistemology, Islamic paradigms and civilization. In this case, the

challenge of the Islamic worldview is the Western perspective that gives rise to liberalization in various fields such as politics, economics, social, and then to religion. Thus, Islamization becomes an anti-thesis movement against the discourse of liberalization (Interview, 2023). In essence, the conflict in the aspects of insider and outsider is something that absolutely happens, especially when entering the realm of indoctrination of educational institutions (Hery, 2016: 200).

Hamid F. Zarkasyi stated that the discourse of the Islamic worldview which was continued with the Islamization project had been started in Gontor since 2006 until he founded CIOS (Center of Islamic and Occidental Studies), then the implementation of PKU (Ulama Cadre Program) continued with the Postgraduate Masters and Doctoral program AFI (Islamic Creed and Philosophy) in the midst of the transformation from ISID (Institute of Islamic Studies Darussalam) to UNIDA (University of Darussalam). All of these institutions are bound by one goal, namely the Islamization project based on the Islamic worldview. Practically, this requires mastery of the Islamic intellectual tradition as well as contemporary science (Ismunanto, 2016: 151). Through these two masteries, it is possible to discover concepts, theories and methods from the Islamic intellectual tradition, continued with integration and Islamization, and the development of science, technology and art with an Islamic perspective (Nata, 2019: 201).

Similarly, in the *kalam jadid* of al-Attas, according to him, the role of external structures or patterns of Muslim society is not divided by the gap of generation as can be found in Western society. They only affirm the impermanence of reality aspect and its value towards secular, material, and physical existence. They are divided by a gap between three generations: young, middle, and old (Al-Attas, 1985: 42). Each generation among them renews each other without making each other an example and direction so that they lead to their own version of freedom. This condition is called injustice by Al Attas or is tyranny (*zulm*) in religious language.

This is where the role of change, development, and progress in the context of Islam can run in a measurable manner and is not free of values because it grows within the umbrella of the paradigm of the Islamization of knowledge. Thus, it can be seen that the correlation between the verses received by al-Attas was able to lead him to the formulation of *new kalam* which is useful as a principle of integration of Islam and science. This found its actualization at the time of the institutionalization of education and knowledge centers in Indonesia, such as: CIOS, PKU, and UNIDA as an effort to ground the reception of abstract verses and can be manifested in the realm of policy and programs. That starts with the abstraction and reception of verses leading to the formulation of *new kalam* and further leads to efforts to revive the Qur'an and faith simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

The practice of the Living Qur'an is not confined to societal behavior or general practices, which are often the primary focus in Living Qur'an studies. It can also be observed among individuals or groups deeply engaged in religious thought and activism, often intertwined with political and indoctrination activities.

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, known for his Islamization project, represents the relational phenomenon of the Quran's function and performance, manifesting not only in intellectual thought but also in the institutionalization of his community's practices. This differs from certain religious organizations that utilize fragments of Quranic verses as political or ideological motives. In al-Attas' conceptualization, several theological verses serve as the basis for formulating new *kalam*, focusing on the discourse of Islamizing knowledge. This discourse's urgency is underscored by globalization's progress and the disruptive era's impacts. Al-Attas successfully articulated three core concepts—change, development, and progress—all rooted in divine principles for ultimate benefit.

In terms of practical reception, al-Attas' interpretations can be seen in the ideological successors in Indonesia, such as Hamid Fahmi Zarkasyi at Gontor. He implemented educational institutionalization through Islamization projects, such as the establishment of University of Darussalam (UNIDA), Center for Islamic and Occidental Studies (CIOS), and Program Kaderisasi Ulama (PKU) or cleric cadre program. These efforts reflect the adaptation of al-Attas' tangible legacy, akin to International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Malaysia. From the perspective of the Living Qur'an, these initiatives represent efforts to enliven the Quran, not merely as tradition but as a civilizational thought of new *kalam* rooted in institutions and warranting further study. This research contributes significantly by integrating Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' theological thought with the concept of new *kalam* relevant to the Islamization of knowledge. It broadens the understanding of how Quranic theological texts can serve as a conceptual foundation for progressive Islamic intellectual discourse. However, the study has limitations, particularly the lack of empirical data on the application of al-Attas' new *kalam* beyond the representations of UNIDA and CIOS, limiting the generalization of findings. Future research is recommended to explore the implementation of new *kalam* by other individuals or communities in various contexts, such as other educational institutions in Indonesia or religious organizations in Muslim-majority countries. Further exploration would expand the scope and relevance of this research, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the Living Qur'an's implementation in diverse dimensions of life.

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