



KHA Dahlan's Progressive and Transformative Religious Thought for Progressive Indonesia: A Hermeneutical Approach

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ABSTRACT:

One of the similarities between KHA Dahlan's thinking and that of sociologist Max Weber is that his study is based on religious spirituality. In contrast, the former is based on the Qur'an and the social transformation movement. The second is based on Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism. In contrast to Max Weber, KHA Dahlan is a figure whose thinking is based on a progressive attitude and faithful patriotism (forward-looking, patriotic, and religiously devout). In mapping the problems of society and Indonesia, he found three major issues at that time, namely the conditions of society and Indonesia, which were overwhelmed by ignorance, poverty and backwardness, and the lives of the people and the nation still bear the burden as a result of colonization experienced over a long period (at least 3 centuries). KHA Dahlan carried out a socio-religious transformation and intelligently offered a solution instead of a political movement against the colonizers, but came up with a movement to dynamize the people through education, provision of cheap health care and social assistance (food, clothing) to the oppressed/poor around Yogyakarta. Muslim business people, intellectuals, ulama and movement leaders welcomed this social movement. Later, the social movement was followed by establishing a modern organization called Muhammadiyah. It is inconceivable that the Dutch colonial government legitimized the establishment of this modern organization. Undeniably, Muhammadiyah has demonstrated its commitment through tangible works, with the establishment of orphanages, hospitals, and educational institutions serving as concrete examples of their movement. Today, Muhammadiyah is recognized as the most critical non-governmental actor in education and health. The study uses the hermeneutic approach as the primary theoretical basis, primarily exploring the most profound aspects of KHA Dahlan's progressive, patriotic, and religious beliefs

Keywords: progressive, faithful patriotic, muhammadiyah, motherhood and indonesianness

INTRODUCTION

Contained in his monumental work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", Max Weber argued that religious teachings, especially the Protestant doctrine of Calvinism, have a

major influence on the economic and social behavior of society. Calvinism teaches that hard work is not just a worldly obligation, but a form of devotion to God. The concept of “vocation of life” (Beruf) makes people believe that success and discipline in work are signs of divine grace. This teaching encourages the formation of a community character that is diligent, frugal, not wasteful, and has a strong drive to continue to develop wealth not for personal luxury, but as a mandate and moral responsibility. The accumulation of capital that emerged from this habit of saving and investing later became the seed of the modern capitalist system. Through a historical process, this work ethic flourished in Western Europe and underpinned industrial and economic progress. European countries that adopted this ethic became pioneers in the industrial revolution, strengthening their position in the global arena and driving the development of science, technology and modern civilization at large (Carr, 2003; Ghosh, 2022; Gorski, 2003; Malik, 2013; Mocombe, 2017; Weber, 1958; Yu & Wang, 2021).

Theology is the main foundation that determines one's actions, especially in religious spirituality. According to Kuntowijoyo, all human actions are driven by thoughts that are believed. In daily life, humans cannot be separated from the ways of thinking and considerations that guide their decisions and behavior. Therefore, a person's spiritual and social piety is closely related to the theological ideas he embraces. These ideas are referred to as theological assumptions, which are basic beliefs that shape the way a person sees the world and acts in it.

Among Indonesian modernists, especially those affiliated with the Muhammadiyah organization, a distinctive theological paradigm has developed. This mindset cannot be separated from the history and identity of the organization. The roots of this thinking stem from the teachings of al-Ma'un theology, which emphasizes the importance of social concern as part of faith. This teaching is known as al-Ma'unism, a form of theology that encourages the practice of religious values through concrete actions that defend the weak and empower the community (to use A. Syafii Maarif's term).

Surat al-Ma'un became the main theological basis for K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's social thinking in building Muhammadiyah. The teachings contained in this letter inspired the movement to defend the weak and marginalized groups in society. Figures such as Deliar Noer and Achmad Jainuri assess that Muhammadiyah citizens have succeeded in realizing this spirit in progressive and consistent concrete actions. The real form of this spirit can be seen in the construction of various social facilities such as orphanages for orphans, hospitals for health services, and educational institutions as a means of educating the community. Mustad'afin theology, which has recently become a popular term in theological discourse, is actually not a new idea in terms of content. It is simply a new term that refers to a thought that has long lived within Muhammadiyah through the inspiration of Q.S. al-Ma'un [107] and characterizes Muhammadiyah's ideology.

K.H. Ahmad Dahlan used Surat Al-Ma'un as an ideological basis to encourage social change in the community. This letter not only served as spiritual inspiration, but was also translated concretely into three main forms of action: education, economy and health. This idea was then realized by his disciples through the establishment of schools as centers of people's intelligence, orphanages to protect and care for orphans, and hospitals as a form of public health services. But their struggle did not stop at building formal institutions. Kiai Dahlan's disciples actively took to the field, walking the streets of Yogyakarta, looking for neglected, orphaned or homeless children. They were not only physically rescued, but also given shelter, clothing, food, and proper care, as a tangible form of Islamic teachings that favored the weak. This is a form of grounded and sustainable Islamic social movement, which continues to live in the tradition of the Muhammadiyah movement (Baidhaw, 2017a).

After pioneering concrete actions in the fields of education, economics, and health as a form of implementation of down-to-earth Islamic teachings, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan also started a movement to purify the faith through efforts to eradicate superstition, heresy, and khurafat (TBK). This movement was born from the spirit of rationalization, namely cleaning religious practices from elements that are considered incompatible with pure and rational Islamic teachings. Kiai Dahlan realized that this whole movement was not enough if it was only incidental or done individually. It needed a system and a forum that could manage all these efforts so that they could run in a structured, sustainable and far-reaching manner. For this reason, he and his followers formed a modern organization as a means of struggle. At the suggestion of K.H. Sangidu, this organization was named Muhammadiyah, which literally means followers of the Prophet Muhammad. The establishment of this organization was motivated by deep concern for the condition of Muslims who at that time experienced backwardness in various fields-low education, weak economic conditions, neglected health, and religious practices that were mixed with misleading mystical elements (Huda, 2011).

Syahrudin El-Fikri's view raises the reality that Muslims, especially in Indonesia, are still facing backwardness in the field of civilization. This condition is characterized by the high rates of poverty, ignorance, and social marginalization experienced by most of the ummah. Education, which should be a way to free people from these conditions, has actually started since the Dutch colonial period and was continued by the Japanese. However, the education system that was built at that time was not designed to advance the Indonesian people, but for colonial political and economic interests alone. As a result, education became a tool of colonization, not liberation. Indonesians remained in ignorance and did not have widespread access to quality education. The situation was worsened by frequent rebellions and social tensions during the colonial period. These conflicts meant that education was increasingly neglected, both by the colonial government and by the people who were busier struggling to survive. This condition became one

of the main causes of the underdevelopment of the people, which is still a major challenge in nation building.

Based on this, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, as one of the founders of Muhammadiyah as well as a pioneer of the amar ma'ruf nahi munkar da'wah movement, endeavored with all his heart and responsibility to free the Indonesian people to gain access to better and quality education. As the foundation of his struggle, Kiai Dahlan made Surat al-Ma'un (107) in the Qur'an a strong theological foundation. This verse emphasizes the importance of caring for the mustad'afin or the weak and oppressed. From here, the concept of Mustad'afin theology was born, which provides direction that social solutions must begin with the development of an education system that is not only formal, but also rooted in religious values that encourage social justice and care for others. Thus, Muhammadiyah develops teaching methods that are not only aimed at transferring knowledge, but also forming character and social awareness that can lift the quality of life of the people.

RESEARCH METHODS

This paper will further trace the thoughts of KHA Dahlan and his ideas in the Muhammadiyah Movement. In this study, a suitable research method is needed so that it can describe and explore his thoughts. According to the object of study, the author believes this type of research can be classified as library research. Library research has descriptive and historical characteristics. Descriptively trying to describe a thought. The research is historical in nature because it delves into a historical dimension. This library research can include criticism of thought, historical research on the thoughts of figures, and research related to specific works or particular texts. Furthermore, to get maximum results, this research will use hermeneutic research by trying to understand KHA Dahlan's hermeneutic circle as a way of examining all elements and conceptions by tracing social and historical roots so that it does not only present a thought but succeeds in making praxis in the form of social movements and practices that can raise the dignity of Muslims and the people of Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Biography of KHA Dahlan

Ahmad Dahlan, who was born Muhammad Darwis in 1868, came from an influential family of ulama in Yogyakarta. His father was a preacher at the Sulthan Mosque, while his mother also came from a lineage of scholars with a father who was a high priest (Mustapa, 2017). In addition, Dahlan was a direct descendant of Maulana Malik Ibrahim, one of the Walisongo figures famous in the history of the spread of Islam in the archipelago. The Kauman neighborhood where he grew up was a center of religious activity, so from childhood Dahlan was already in a strong religious atmosphere. His marriage to Siti Walidah, the daughter of a

headman, further strengthened his clerical family ties and added to his religious social network.

On his spiritual journey, Ahmad Dahlan performed the hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, which was not only a ritual service, but also an opportunity for him to learn and deepen religious knowledge. In Makkah, he studied with Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, a renowned scholar who played an important role in shaping Dahlan's religious insights and thoughts. Muhammad Darwis broadened his horizons by learning from a number of great teachers during his education. One of the important teachers in his life was Sayyid Bakri Syatha, who gave him a new name, Ahmad Dahlan. Ahmad Dahlan grew up in Kauman, Yogyakarta, an area known as a center of religious activity, which formed a religious environment from his childhood. As an adult, around 1890, he made the pilgrimage to Makkah, which became an important experience in his life. There, apart from performing worship, he learned from great scholars such as Shaykh Ahmad Khatib as well as Indonesian scholars living in Makkah. The education and spiritual experience he gained while in the holy land became a strong basis in shaping his thoughts and movements in da'wah and Islamic renewal in Indonesia

After performing the hajj pilgrimage, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan immediately sought to bring about changes in the practice of Muslim worship, starting with ensuring that the direction of prayer was done in accordance with the correct qibla, an important matter in Islamic teachings. The strong religious education he received as a child came from the guidance of his father, K.H. Abubakar. The ability to read the Qur'an fluently at the age of 8 indicates that his religious learning had started early and was intensive. At that time, formal education managed by the Dutch colonial government was not yet accessible to Muhammad Darwis, so his main education came from his family environment and his father's religious tradition.

In the 19th century, the tradition of education in the community was still very dependent on the informal learning system carried out directly to teachers or scholars. There were several types of teachers that were widely recognized at that time, ranging from recitation teachers who taught reading the Qur'an, kitab teachers who taught more in-depth religious knowledge, tarekat teachers who guided in the spiritual aspects of Sufism, to occult teachers and amulet sellers who also played a role in community beliefs. In addition, there are teachers who move around and do not settle in one location. Muhammad Darwis received his Quranic education directly from his father, which is certainly the main foundation in religious teaching. As for more complex scriptural knowledge, he learned from other teachers who were experts in the field.

2. Understanding the Hermeneutical Circle of KHA Dahlan

Throughout the history of KHA Dahlan's struggle, we can find ideas of social transformation based on strong religious views, concern for existing social conditions, and,

most importantly, a strong drive in himself always to realize his great ideas, which, of course, after being believed, are the way out of the problems of the people and the future of Indonesia.

It is undeniable that in the struggle with the dynamics of the people and Indonesia, essential points can be found that are factors and determinants of KHA Dahlan's success in realizing ideas, namely, first, religious ability and other supporting knowledge, such as logic, language, history and philosophy. Second, enthusiastically following the development of the condition of the Muslim community, both locally, regionally and nationally. Third, concern for the rights of national independence and the dynamics of the struggle against colonialism. Fourth is the ability to expand social networks among Muslims and figures of other religions who share the same ideals. This social network was also expanded to include other religious organizations, modern movement organizations, and political organizations in Indonesia.

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From the above points, KHA Dahlan's idea of carrying out social transformation always starts with a social and historical analysis of the conditions experienced by society and then seeks the root of the problem. From the main issues that have been believed (context), he seeks the support of revelation (Qur'an) as the primary source for moving. From this basis of the Qur'an, ideas are born to realize religious-based social transformation. This process and flow is called the hermeneutic circle. And below is the author's view of KHA Dahlan's hermeneutic circle.

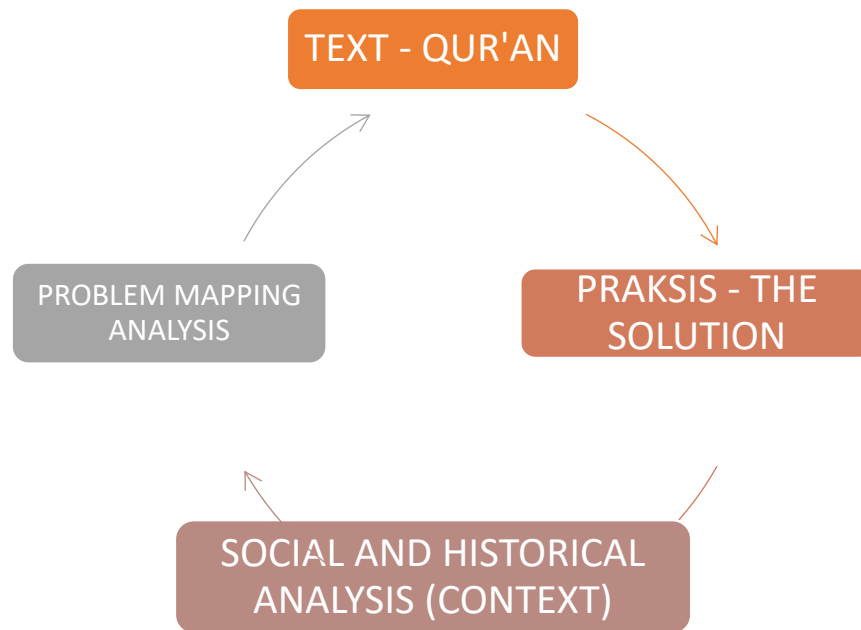


Figure 1. KHA Dahlan's hermeneutic circle

Source : Author

3. Challenges of the Ummah and Indonesianness under Colonialism

In the early nineteenth century, Muslims in Indonesia faced enormous challenges covering many aspects of life. Dutch colonization brought heavy political and economic pressures, as well as social tensions and serious cultural damage. This left Muslims in a very vulnerable and unstable state, with internal conflicts and divisions weakening their power. Within the country itself, there was no leadership figure or organization capable of effectively coordinating the ummah's struggle to achieve progress and a decent life. Although there were various actions and groups that tried to resist Dutch colonialism in various ways, both cooperative and confrontational, the struggle has not succeeded in bringing significant changes or happy results for Muslims at that time. Here is a general description of the main challenges and problems of the Ummah and Indonesia:

a. Socio-Economic Conditions

The condition of Muslims and Indonesian society at that time was deplorable and far from a humane standard of living. Many people lived in severe poverty and did not have proper access to education and health services. Ignorance and backwardness were common problems due to the lack of equitable educational facilities. The existing education system was limited to Islamic boarding schools, which although important as religious educational institutions, were still very limited in scope and access. Only certain groups,

usually from among the native elite, had the opportunity to attend formal education organized by the colonial government or other institutions. This created a huge gap in education and the welfare of the community.

b. Religious Conditions

The social and economic hardships experienced by Javanese people also impact on the way they view and practice religious life. When facing limitations and helplessness, most people tend to be fatalistic or believe that fate is predetermined and difficult to change. This attitude makes people easily dependent on mystical beliefs, myths and supernatural practices as a way out of life's difficulties. As a result, religious teachings that should encourage rational understanding and practice are instead mixed with superstition and various deviant heresy practices.

c. Political conditions under Dutch colonialism

The Dutch colonization had a major impact on the political structure in Indonesia, especially in Java and other regions. Kingdoms that were previously sovereign and had strong power gradually lost their authority because they were used as puppets or lackeys by the colonizers. This happened because the Dutch implemented a divisive political strategy that succeeded in breaking the unity between kingdoms, thus weakening the potential for joint resistance. Even kingdoms that were previously united were forced to split up and compete or conflict with each other, which further strengthened Dutch domination. By the early 19th century, history records that most of these kingdoms no longer had any meaningful ability to resist the colonizers, showing the weakness of local power under colonial pressure.

In the early 19th century, political and social consciousness began to grow among Javanese people, especially in the Yogyakarta and Central Java regions. This awareness emerged as a response to the unfair and very burdensome conditions of the indigenous people under Dutch colonialism. They began to realize the importance of fighting for basic rights such as a decent life, equality, and independence from colonialism. Various organizations were established as a forum for struggle, both those that prioritized cooperation and diplomacy and those that were more confrontational. Organizations such as Budi Utomo, Syarikat Dagang Islam and Syarikat Islam became pioneers in mobilizing the power of society to demand change.

The stark disparity between the lives of the suffering natives in terms of economy, education and health and the comfortable lives of the Dutch colonizers fueled the spirit of struggle. The independence leaders used these organizations as a means to advocate and

reclaim the rights that had been taken away from the indigenous people, so the struggle was both social and economic.

d. Influence of the International Islamic World

The Islamic renewal movement that took place in Middle Eastern countries became an important source of inspiration for K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in developing ideas and strategies for Islamic struggle in Indonesia. Great figures such as Djamiludin Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rasyid Ridla introduced modern thinking that emphasized the importance of Muslim progress in various aspects of life so as not to fall behind the more advanced Western world. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, while studying in Mecca, took advantage of the opportunity to study these reform ideas in depth through interaction with scholars and reading important works such as tafsir Al Manar. This understanding was then translated by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan into a real social movement, namely by developing community empowerment programs that focus on education, economic strengthening, and improving public health. This movement was then centralized in a large organization, Muhammadiyah, which became a forum for the struggle and development of Muslims in Indonesia.

4. Method of Understanding Quranic Verses According to KHA Dahlan

KH. Ahmad Dahlan developed a unique method of understanding the Quran that consisted of several important stages. First of all, he emphasized the importance of understanding the meaning of the verse in depth, not just reading the text literally. After that, he tried to explore the interpretation and intent contained in the verse in order to capture a broader and more relevant message. When encountering a prohibition in the Quran, KH. Ahmad Dahlan encouraged each individual to reflect on whether the prohibition had been avoided in everyday life. Similarly, when he found an order or recommendation in the Quran, he invited him to honestly assess whether the order had actually been practiced or not. In fact, he emphasized not to continue reading the next verse if the previous command has not been carried out, as a form of emphasis that understanding the Quran must be manifested in real action, not just theory.

In interpreting Surah Al-Maun or other letters, KH. Ahmad Dahlan did not stick to normative and rigid textual understanding. Instead, he dared to go beyond conventional perspectives by prioritizing interpretations that were action or social practice. Thus, the interpretation he developed did not stop at the language aspect or formal rules, but was directed to support the goals of Islamic da'wah oriented towards social change and the application of Islamic values in everyday life.

KH. Ahmad Dahlan not only understood theology as a concept that exists in the mind, but also as a principle that must be applied in everyday life. Compassion became the core value underlying all his actions, especially in social and religious contexts. In his interpretation of Surat al-Taubah verses 34-35, he emphasized that the obligation of zakat is not only a matter of paying, but also a matter of preventing greed and hoarding of wealth that harms society. For Ahmad Dahlan, religion is charity - a teaching that must be realized in the form of real work and social action based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, Muhammadiyah's da'wah does not limit its target to certain groups, but includes all levels of society without exception. All people, both the underprivileged and the rich and educated, are considered part of the community that must be assisted and empowered through an inclusive and social change-oriented da'wah movement.

5. KHA Dahlan's Educational Philosophy and Methods

KH Ahmad Dahlan uses the following philosophy and methods in educating his students to achieve maximum results: First, "We human beings live in this world only once, to bet: After death, will you get happiness or misery? And the scholars were in confusion, except those who did good deeds (Prof. Dr. A. M. Mulkhan, 2013a). And those who give alms are all worried, except those who are sincere or pure. Second, "Most people are arrogant and conceited; they make their own decisions. Third, it becomes a habit when people do something once, twice, over and over again. If it has become a pleasure to be loved, then the habit of being loved is challenging to change. It has become a habit that most people defend the customs they have accepted, whether from the perspective of faith or tired, feelings of will or deeds. If someone changes, he can protect it by sacrificing his body and soul. This is because he assumes that what he has is accurate. Fourth, do you think most people like to listen or believe in search of actual knowledge? (Al-Furqon: 44). Fifth, humans do not obey or care about something already clear. This means that they, their minds, have said that it is true. Still, they do not want to obey the truth because they are afraid of hardship, fear of weight and various things that are feared because their desires and hearts have already been damaged, have moral diseases (good character), are carried away and attracted to bad habits". Seventh, Most of the people's leaders have not dared to sacrifice their wealth and souls to try to include humanity in the truth. These leaders usually only play around, exploit stupid and weak humans". Eighth, Lessons are divided into two parts: (1). Learning science (knowledge and theory)". (2). Learning charity (doing and practising). All lessons must be done gradually, level by level; likewise, learning charity must be done in stages. If you can't do one level, adding more is unnecessary".

Ninth, KH Ahmad Dahlan viewed dialog as the most effective method in educating his students. He always used dialog in preaching to everyone in order to explore the thoughts of

his students and develop active two-way communication. In some stories, KH Ahmad Dahlan also applied the Scientific Charity method, which teaches that no matter how much and how deep the knowledge is, it will not bring benefits and blessings if it does not end with real good deeds that benefit others. KH Ahmad Dahlan was an educator who highly valued intellectual education. He believed that the intellect is the main source of knowledge, but often it does not get the attention it deserves, like a seed buried in the ground without ever being watered. Tenth, to develop intellectual education, KH Ahmad Dahlan recommended that logic be taught in educational institutions. By learning logic, the mind will be honed to be more perfect so that it can understand natural phenomena well. In addition, a mature mind will act as *rahmatan lil alamin*, which brings mercy and benefits to the entire universe. Thus, the education built by KH Ahmad Dahlan does not only emphasize on knowledge alone, but also on holistic intellectual and moral development for the good of humanity at large (A. M. Mulkhan, 2012).

6. Tafsir Al Maun, Al Maun Theological Doctrine and Muhammadiyah Movement, a hermeneutical circle from context to text.

Interpreting Surat al-Maun socially means recognizing and responding to people's everyday needs through simple acts of kindness (Prof. Dr. A. M. Mulkhan, 2013b). Al-Maun in its broadest sense contains the concept of help and assistance in the face of life's difficulties. Surah Al-Maun conveys an important message about the relationship between religious belief and social action. People who neglect the poor and do not care for others are considered to be against the principles of religion. Prayer, as the ultimate act of worship, should not only be performed ritually, but should also be manifested in the form of social concern. Good deeds must be done with sincere intentions, without showing off or pointing fingers. Being selfish and unwilling to help others is considered a form of rejection of religious teachings. This understanding formed the basis of Al-Maun theology which later became an inspiration for KH Ahmad Dahlan's students to carry out real social movements, such as helping homeless people and orphans in Yogyakarta. The Muhammadiyah movement, which was born from this inspiration, aimed to overcome four major problems that Muslims were experiencing at the time, namely damage to faith due to various superstitious and heretical practices, stagnation of Islamic law due to the closing of the door to *ijtihad*, the decline of education, as well as poverty and the weakening of the value of mutual cooperation that previously characterized society.

KH. Ahmad Dahlan was very concerned about the condition of Muslims who experienced a deadlock in terms of religious thought and spirit. He considered it important to revitalize religious teachings with a new fresh and religious spirit, so that people could rise from this stagnation. Not only the spiritual aspect, he also emphasized the need for real social work to improve the welfare and intelligence of the *ummah* as part of the renewal.

On the other hand, the harsh political situation under Dutch colonialism sparked widespread resentment against everything Dutch, including its culture and institutions. Many people considered everything that came from the Netherlands should be rejected as it was synonymous with colonizers. However, KH Ahmad Dahlan realized that there were positive aspects of the Dutch system, especially in the fields of education and health, that the community desperately needed. Therefore, he took these elements and developed them through the establishment of schools and hospitals aimed at helping the community. The Muhammadiyah organization then continued and improved these services professionally. With this view, KH. Ahmad Dahlan emphasized that education was not only a teaching and learning process, but as the main means to build a better, smarter, and independent society, as well as a way to raise the strength of Muslims amid the social and political challenges of the time.

The social movement pioneered by Kyai Ahmad Dahlan is rooted in an understanding of theology that is not only theoretical but must be actualized through concrete actions aimed at meeting the needs and welfare of the community. Kyai Dahlan's compassionate attitude as part of Javanese ethics became a strong basis for his movement, which was different from the Darwinist view that emphasized competition and the struggle for life. Dr. Soetomo, an important figure as well as a Javanese priyayi, was greatly inspired by this compassionate nature and became active in the Muhammadiyah movement, strengthening the movement's foundation with human values and compassion. Muhammadiyah was founded due to the limited education during the colonial period, which only benefited the Dutch colonizers. The curriculum and goals of education at that time were not directed towards the advancement of the Indonesian nation, but rather to serve the interests of the colonizers.

In response to this injustice and limitation, KH Ahmad Dahlan established an elementary school that taught general subjects in the palace environment of the Yogyakarta Palace on December 1, 1911. This initiative became an important step in developing better and more equitable education for the indigenous Indonesian people, as well as part of the struggle to improve the fate of the people and the nation. The school founded by KH Ahmad Dahlan became a pioneer of modern education in a previously very conservative environment such as the Yogyakarta Palace. Muhammadiyah's educational approach combines religious values with the demands of the times, so that the young generation educated not only understands religion deeply but is also able to face the social and technological developments of modern times.

Muhammadiyah education is designed to produce cadres who are not only religiously devout but also intelligent, critical, and able to act as leaders (khalifah) who bring benefits to the people and society at large. In its journey for more than a century, Muhammadiyah continues to expand the reach of its education and improve the quality of the human

resources produced. As part of its mission of preaching *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, Muhammadiyah uses theological understanding based on the interpretation of Surah Al-Maun to guide the social practices of Muslims. With integral education that brings together general education in the style of Dutch schools and religious education in the style of *pesantren*, Muhammadiyah seeks to produce intellectual scholars who are able to understand both religious science and modern science, so that they can make a real contribution to the progress of Islam and the Indonesian nation.

7. Theory and Praxis of KHA Dahlan's Thought and Muhammadiyah's Gait towards Muslims and Indonesia in Progress.

The doctrine of Al Maun Theology has historically given birth to a mass action. This action, led by the disciples of KH Ahmad Dahlan, aimed to address homelessness, poverty, and the plight of orphans. It also continued Kyai Dahlan's movement to empower Muslims and establish public schools. Kyai Dahlan believed that adopting the Dutch style of education in these schools would promote progress for the nation and its Muslim population.

KH Ahmad Dahlan's theological doctrine was not just an abstract thought, but a teaching that encouraged real social change. When he and his followers established Muhammadiyah as a modern organization, they faced great obstacles from the Dutch government, which was wary of movements that could potentially disrupt colonial rule. The licensing process for establishing Muhammadiyah was challenging and was only approved one year later. After obtaining official permission, Muhammadiyah developed rapidly because it was supported by the enthusiasm of Muslims who realized the importance of this movement as a way to generate progress for the nation and the people at large. Muhammadiyah's success in attracting public attention and support made it one of the significant social and religious forces in Indonesia. The development of Muhammadiyah with its social charity movement to date and its spread in Indonesia and even abroad can be seen as follows (Prof. Dr. A. M. Mulkhan, 2013c):

- The number of Muhammadiyah Universities spread throughout Indonesia and abroad is 164, with the number of students 554,200 and the number of lecturers 17.117.
- The number of Muhammadiyah high schools and equivalents (including boarding schools) spread throughout Indonesia to as many as 1.600.
- The number of Muhammadiyah junior high schools and equivalent (including boarding schools) spread throughout Indonesia as many as: 1,826
- The number of Muhammadiyah elementary schools and the equivalent (including boarding schools) spread throughout Indonesia is 2.766.
- Muhammadiyah hospitals/clinics spread throughout Indonesia, as many as 365.
- Muhammadiyah Orphanages spread throughout Indonesia, as many as 370.

The rapid development of Muhammadiyah shows that the theological doctrine they espouse, namely Al-Maun Theology, is very relevant and accepted by Indonesian society. This doctrine is considered to bring tangible benefits in the form of enlightenment and social progress. From this doctrine emerge ethical values and a strong spirit, especially in terms of compassion for fellow human beings. The concept of love in question does not only apply to Muslims, but extends regardless of religion or ethnicity, thus underlying the universal humanitarian movement in Muhammadiyah. A special spirit is also directed at helping the underprivileged and orphans, which is one of the characteristics of Muhammadiyah's social movement. In academic discourse, there is a debate regarding whether Muhammadiyah is a form of Protestant-style Islamic renewal, as proposed by some Western writers. However, this view is criticized because Muhammadiyah does not show economic characteristics such as capital accumulation in the Calvinist tradition. Instead, Muhammadiyah is better known as an “al-Ma'unis” community, which emphasizes the values of helping and social solidarity based on the spirit of Surah Al-Maun.

Ahmad Dahlan built social and cultural movements by linking religious teachings with broad human experience and the development of science and technology. He believed that the Qur'an is not only to be understood dogmatically, but must be able to prove its benefits in real life, especially in addressing universal human problems. So, the truth of religious teachings and science is judged based on its ability to provide practical solutions and bring goodness to humans. Munir Mul Khan considers that Ahmad Dahlan's approach and ethos is better described as pragmatism-humanism, a view that emphasizes real results and human values in action rather than associating it with Protestant philosophy. This shows that Ahmad Dahlan's movement was inclusive, adaptive, and oriented towards social benefit rather than rigidly following a particular religious doctrine or philosophy (Gunawan, 2018).

The spirit of true religion according to the teachings of al-Ma'un does not intend to consider other religions wrong, but rather invites tolerance and love. However, when facing the conditions of the modern world, these values must be applied in the context of increasingly complex global challenges, especially those related to the environment and the sustainability of natural resources. The ideological battle between libertarianism, which emphasizes individual freedom, and Keynesianism, which prioritizes government intervention in the economy, shows that there is a debate about how humans should manage the earth's resources. However, in reality, modern human consumption is so large and excessive that many natural resources, both non-renewable (such as oil and coal) and renewable (such as forests and fisheries), have been threatened with depletion. This poses a great challenge to the application of the ethos of humanity and the balance of nature taught in the theology of al-Ma'un.

Therefore, resistance to the injustice and oppression of a greedy socio-economic system is not enough with physical or political action alone, but must be rooted in spiritual and religious awareness. The prayer in question is one that is oriented towards social justice, supporting human rights, especially the right to a decent livelihood and a voice in society. People who actively fight for social justice, help the poor, and empower them, are seen as humanitarian heroes whose acts of worship-like prayer-have great significance in saving humanity from injustice. They are called anti-poverty mujahids who dare to fight the neoliberal capitalist system that often oppresses and harms the little people, including its minions who are cynically called “stupid threes”. The concept of the Spirit of Goodness is at the core of the ethos of al-Ma'un which affirms attitudes and actions in favor of the dhuafa (the weak) and mustadh'afin (the oppressed), making social care a fundamental part of faith and the practice of Islamic teachings.

The paradigm of tawhid is evident in Kyai Dahlan's definition of religion. For him, religion is not something that is hard or forcefully imposed. Islam is a religion that is natural and in accordance with human nature. Religion is defined as a spiritual tendency that leads to holy and noble perfection, without being influenced by worldly or material things. A religious person is one who has a strong tendency towards purity of faith in Allah, free from negative influences. According to Kyai Dahlan, believers are those who truly believe in the difference between good and evil and believe that themselves, the universe, and everything is created and maintained by God. They also believe that God will reward good deeds and punish evil deeds.

The first pillar of 'Progressive Islam' is pure monotheism, which establishes principles such as the unity of all creation and humanity. This belief system produces an ethic of good deeds and serves as a roadmap for developing a just and enlightened civilization. This leads to a strong belief in the institutionalization of good deeds, as faith must be backed by action. As Kyai Dahlan powerfully argued, it is not the willingness to sacrifice one's life that is the truest test of faith, but the courage to sacrifice one's wealth.

Islam is considered a religion that not only functions spiritually, but also has an important role in changing society for the better. When Islamic teachings are applied to solve social problems, then the religion performs the function of social transformation. Muhammadiyah as a socio-religious movement tries to realize this principle by prioritizing reason and logic in carrying out its religious activities. Kyai Ahmad Dahlan took inspiration from the interpretation of Surah Al-Ashr which emphasizes that true faith must control one's will so as to produce good deeds (good deeds). In the context of Muhammadiyah, good deeds are understood as concrete actions that have a positive impact on the wider community and the surrounding environment, not just religious rituals that are personal or alienate themselves from social issues.

Seventh, the spirit of dialogue between civilizations is the development of the meaning of the teachings of truth, patience, and perseverance which play an important role in encouraging the advancement of science, technology, and moral strengthening. Science, technology, and moral values are the main assets in conducting dialogue between civilizations. In today's cosmopolitan era, where every human being is part of a global community, the spirit of intercultural dialog is very important. In the encounter between local and global identities, there is often a struggle and complex dynamics between being a devout Muslim and a global citizen. This requires a new synthesis that can serve as a spiritual foundation and guide for those who live in the midst of social change and globalization today (Baidhawry, 2017b).

CONCLUSION

KHA Dahlan's progressive and transformative religious thought rooted in Al-Ma'un theology presents a concrete solution to Indonesia's social challenges, particularly during the colonial era, through integrated movements in education, health, and economic empowerment. These initiatives, manifested institutionally in Muhammadiyah, reflect a deep hermeneutical application of the Qur'an to real-world transformation. His approach not only provided an Islamic alternative to colonial oppression but also built a sustainable socio-religious framework that remains relevant today.

Moving forward, the revitalization of Al-Ma'un theology should be adapted to address contemporary issues such as inequality, access to education and healthcare, and digital-era challenges. It is recommended that policymakers integrate Dahlan's theological framework into civic education and social welfare programming. Future research should focus on how this theology can inform sustainable development goals (SDGs), interfaith cooperation, and resilience against neoliberal economic structures that marginalize the underprivileged.

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