Revolutionizing Islamic Religious Education: Transforming Paradigms from Al-Azharin Anticipation of the Future

Maftuhah*, Khozin, Moh. Nurhakim

Muhammadiyah University Malang, Indonesia
*Corresponding Author: kireina1704@webmail.umm.ac.id

Abstract

Islamic religious education has undergone a substantial metamorphosis over time, reflecting the dynamics of societal development and the changing demands of the era. This article delineates the journey of the Islamic religious education revolution through paradigm shifts that occurred at Al-Azhar, a prominent institution of higher education in the Islamic world. Through a deep historical analysis, this article explores the significant steps taken by figures such as Muhammad Ali Pasha, Muhammad Abduh, and Muhammad Rashid Rida in bringing about changes to the Al-Azhar curriculum. The process of renewal not only encompasses the integration of modern elements from the West but also involves responding to the challenges of the times. This article details the role of Al-Azhar in creating a new foundation that enables Islamic religious education to face the future more dynamically and relevantly.

Keywords:
Metamorphosis, Revolution, and Paradigm Transformation

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education, from the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the Rashidun Caliphs, to the formation of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates up to the present, has made a significant contribution to the progress of the world, especially for the Muslim community. One notable example is the Fatimid Dynasty in Egypt. Before 850 AD, North Africa was dominated by the Aghlabids, covering the regions of Ifriqiya (Tunisia) and parts of the island of Sicily, as part of the Abbasid Caliphate. To the west, the Rustamidids ruled in Algeria and the Idrisids in Morocco, while Spain was under the rule of the Umayyad II. All these dynasties ruled until 909 AD. After that year, new dynamics emerged with the formation of the Fatimid Dynasty in Tunisia. (Musyrifah Sunanto 2007).

The Fatimid Dynasty, a Shia dynasty that ruled from 909 AD to 1171 AD, was founded based on the claim of descent from the Prophet through Fatimah and Hazrat Ali, from the lineage of Ismail, the sixth descendant of Ali (Thohir and Sahidin 2019). This dynasty emerged as an alternative to the Muslim world's central power in Baghdad, namely the Abbasid Caliphate. The Fatimids controlled the regions of North Africa, Egypt, and Syria, formed as a result of the weakening of the Abbasid Dynasty. Ubaidillah al-Mahdi established the Fatimid Dynasty as an independent entity from Abbasid rule.(Humam et al. 2018)

The golden age of the Fatimid Dynasty was characterized by the transfer of the administrative center to Cairo, with the establishment of various facilities, including the Al-Azhar Mosque, later designated as the center of the Islamic Higher Education by the Fatimid caliph Al-Aziz (975 AD-996 AD). Jauhar also founded Dar al-Hikmah in 1005 AD. With a vast sphere of influence, the Fatimid Dynasty was able to stimulate various scientific, trade, and religious activities. Since the 10th century during the Fatimid Dynasty, they established educational institutions known as Al-Azhar University. Egypt became a center of civilization and the

development of Islamic knowledge. As an additional note, for thousands of years before the Common Era, this country has been a center of world civilization along with Mesopotamia and Byzantium. Advanced civilizations have always been supported by the lofty knowledge of individuals who developed these civilizations, indicating that only nations with high knowledge can achieve noble civilizations (Arsiati Amaliyah, 2013).

Basically, Islamic education is the most important means to lead humans to achieve their life goals. Through education, an individual's life can become someone who can stand alone and interact with others constructively. Education can shape and build a great civilization in its time. During the Fatimid Dynasty in Egypt (Setiawati 2017), Islamic education developed rapidly and advanced. During that time, Al-Azhar under the Fatimid Dynasty was an Islamic educational institution that made a real contribution to the world of Islamic education at that time. At that time, Al-Azhar was able to produce Islamic education figures who became leaders at Al-Azhar and in the world, providing thought constructions that are still relevant today (Amaliyah, 2013).

History records various important stages in the development of Islamic education, and one period that radiates its brilliant light is the era of the Fatimid Dynasty in Egypt. This period is not only a witness to political and cultural glory but also marks tremendous progress in the world of Islamic education. In this context, Al-Azhar, as the center of Islamic education firmly established under the auspices of the Fatimid Dynasty, becomes the center of attention as an institution that made monumental contributions to the development of Islamic knowledge and thought. As the birthplace of several Islamic education figures who were pioneers in their time, Al-Azhar is not just an educational institution but also a center of intellectual continuity that produces thought constructions that remain relevant to this day.

Through the role of Al-Azhar, we can concretely understand how Islamic education not only experienced rapid progress but also had a measurable positive impact on the world of Islamic education. Leaders from the ranks of Islamic education figures who emerged from Al-Azhar at that time made significant contributions in shaping the direction and substance of Islamic education. They were not only pioneers in the past but also thought architects who laid a strong foundation for the development of Islamic knowledge and education into the modern era. By delving deeper into the era of the Fatimid Dynasty and the role of Al-Azhar, we can gain profound insights into how Islamic education became a strong pillar in shaping civilization and inspiring thought in various eras.

The concept of Islamic education fundamentally seeks to make humans achieve overall personal balance, and this is done through specific stages. The formulation of Islamic education must be associated with the philosophical and social history of Islamic education. Islamic education is built on the construction of the Quranic revelation and Sunnah as its main sources. Islamic education also has principles and legal foundations that remain built from these two main sources. Islamic education from time to time, from the era of Prophet Muhammad SAW, the Rashidun Caliphs to the formation of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates until now, has made a real contribution to the development of the world, especially for the Muslim community itself. North Africa until 850 AD was ruled by the Aghlabids, covering the regions of Ifriqiya (Tunisia) and part of the island of Sicily, as a state of the Abbasid Caliphate. To the west, the Rustamidids ruled in Algeria and the Idrisids in Morocco, while Spain was under the rule of the Umayyads. However, after 909, a new dynamic emerged, the formation of a Fatimid state in Tunisia (Musyrifah Sunanto 2007)

Advancements in science and modern technology entered the Islamic

world, especially after the opening of the 19th century, which in Islamic history is seen as the beginning of the modern period. Contacts with the Western world then brought new ideas to the Islamic world such as rationalism, nationalism, democracy, and so on. All of these raised new issues, and Islamic leaders began to think about how to overcome these issues.

This brief article specifically highlights a review of; The background of the reforms at Al-Azhar; and the figures and ideas of reform at the Al-Azhar educational institution. The study of these three issues is expected to provide a small contribution to the understanding of the social history of Islamic education regarding the Al-Azhar educational institution in the era of modernization in the Islamic world.

B. METHODOLOGY

The research method applied in this article is descriptive qualitative research with a literature study approach. The literature study approach is a strategy used to accumulate information and research data using literature references as the main source, where the object of study involves literary data (Thoifah 2015) The literature study is able to investigate various book references and relevant previous research results, forming the conceptual basis for the Influence of Egyptian Islamic Education on Indonesian Islamic Education.

In order to obtain completeness and validity of data, the author applies various data collection methods in this research. The data collection technique used is documentation. Documentation is defined as a method of mining historical data involving the investigation of written objects such as books, magazines, documentation, regulations, diaries, and so on (Pakpahan and Habibah 2021) In the context of this research, the author collects ontetic data with a higher level of truth assurance through recording and copying important documents as the main support for the research.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Background of the Emergence of Modernization of Islamic Education at Al-Azhar, Egypt

Due to the lagging progress of the Islamic community in Egypt, there emerged a spiritto break free and progress parallel to Europe and the West. The modernization at Al-Azhar did not happen abruptly but was rooted in the social history, where various factors played a role (Cece Wijaya 2013). The presence of Al-Azhar in Egypt was crucial for the rulers of the time, as it symbolized the strengthening of the ruling ideology.

After a period of intellectual stagnation at Al-Azhar in Egypt, Islamic thinkers made strenuous efforts to revive Islam, including the idea of education. This revival emerged as a reaction to blind conformity (taqlid) and stagnation, which were attributed to the retreat of independent reasoning (ijtihad) and the closure of its doors, leading to the decline of the Islamicworld as a whole. Consequently, new movements arose to spearhead urgent changes among Muslims, reflecting a consciousness of the revival of Islamic education (M. Taufik 2013)

For the majority of observers, the history of the revival of the Islamic world in general,and Islamic education in particular, occurred as a response to Western influences. Islam was seen as a somewhat dormant mass subjected to destructive blows or formative influences from the West. The urgent modernization of education at Al-Azhar in Egypt during that time can be observed based on several underlying factors.

Firstly, there was a shift from the rational theology of Shia to the orthodox ideology of Sunni. The main focus of the social history of modernization at Al-Azhar was the shift in thinking from the rationalist theology of Shia to the orthodox theology of Sunni (M. Taufik, 2013) In this context, each theological school was employed to control the state as a whole. During that era, rulers had an official ideology that the entire society had

to follow, and effortswere made to preserve and perpetuate this ideology by establishing specific rules. The Fatimid and Ayyubid dynasties in Egypt had different ideologies adopted as the state's official doctrine. The Fatimid Dynasty, which followed the rationalist Shia school from Persia, emphasized rationalism in their culture, creating an environment conducive to rational thinking. Therefore, the Fatimid Dynasty produced many Islamic figures and thinkers who contributed to the advancement of knowledge. Al-Azhar, as an important institution, became a place to teach the rationalist Shia doctrine through the education process (M. Taufik 2013).

The collapse of the Fatimid Dynasty, which followed the Shia school, and its replacement by the Ayyubid Dynasty, which followed the Sunni school in Egypt, significantly influenced the thinking and orientation of Al-Azhar. After being used for almost two centuriesby the Fatimids as a base for education and the spread of Shia teachings, Al-Azhar was taken over by Salahuddin al-Ayyubi to be transformed into a Sunni-oriented madrasah-mosque.

Unlike the Fatimids, who focused on teaching philosophy and theology, the AyyubidDynasty prioritized the teaching of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) in the madrasah, including Al- Azhar. Although this change reduced the position of Al-Azhar, which was previously oriented supra-locally, to an institution with a narrower perspective due to the local political influence of the Ayyubid Dynasty.

The analysis indicates that the Sunni ideological character held by the Ayyubid Dynasty aimed to symbolically strengthen Islamic ideology, emphasizing ritualistic aspects that are symbolic rather than rationality (Marjuni et al. 2022). This Sunni ideology also aimed to reinforce the identity of Islam as something different and distinct from the West. Consequently, rational and scientific thinking experienced a decline in Islamic education at Al-Azhar, leadingto antipathy towards the Mu'tazilite group advocating rationalistic teachings.

(Zuhairini et al. 2018).

As a result, society was no longer interested in the study of science and philosophy, and rational thinking shifted towards tradition influenced by spiritual teachings, superstition, and stagnation. The symptoms of the decline of Islamic education seem to have emerged after the 13th century AD, with the weakening of Islamic thought continuing until the 18th century AD. The decline of Mu'tazilite thought elevated conservative groups, and scholars took control of the curriculum in educational institutions to restore Sunni beliefs and strengthen the societal foundation. During this period, the subjects taught were limited to specific sciences (Suwito 2019).

Second, the invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte from France that swiftly defeated the Ottoman Empire in Egypt. When Napoleon Bonaparte arrived in Egypt in 1798, the country was in a dire state. Politically, Egypt was divided by two conflicting powers: the Mamluks, who had been in powersince the 13th century, and a faction supported by the Ottoman government in Istanbul (Gunawan 2019)

The political and governmental situation in Egypt was unstable, with upheavals and social decline in a region continually sought after and coveted by powerful Islamic states, causing fear among the Egyptian people. At a time when Egypt desperately needed attention for recovery, Napoleon's forces emerged, expanding their imperial influence to other regions rich in natural resources, civilization, and historical heritage that could serve as a foundation for their ambitions in establishing global dominance (Gunawan 2019).

Egypt, as a nation with a society highly valuing religious values, considered religion an integral element of its culture, customs, and social structure. Islamic groups consistently resisted Western cultural influence, believing that Islam was superior to Western culture. Theyidealized the early Islamic period, believing that only by returning to this golden age could

modern Egypt recover from all its ailments. Arguing that Western influence, starting with Napoleon's invasion, was seen as the root cause of all deterioration, they supported their writings and declarations by interpreting the Qur'an literally. They rejected all interpretations, philosophies, and accompanying texts, referring to the teachings of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taimiyah.

b. Third, the impact of French civilization introduced by Napoleon on education at Al-Azhar.

Napoleon's arrival in Egypt not only involved military forces but also brought along one hundred and sixty individuals, including scholars, two sets of printing presses with Latin, Arabic, and Greek letters, as well as experimental equipment such as telescopes, microscopes, cameras, and more, along with a thousand civilians. He also established the Institute of Egypt, a research institution that introduced modern science and the history of Egypt to Europe through its produced works. This institute consisted of four main elements: natural sciences, exact sciences, economics and politics, and literature and the arts. The institution's task was to provide input to Napoleon in governing Egypt and was open to the public, especially Islamic scholars.

Although Napoleon ruled Egypt for only about three years, the impact he left on Egyptian society was enormous. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Egypt, creating a new momentum in the history of Islam, particularly in Egypt, triggering awareness of their weaknesses and backwardness. Napoleon's arrival not only brought a powerful military but also scientists with scientific equipment for research. This marked the first time Islamic scholars had direct contact with European civilization, including Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, who found Napoleon's library impressive for its information on Islam in various world languages(Marjuni et al. 2022)

Napoleon made significant efforts to introduce technology and modern thinking to Egypt, transferring French high culture to the local population. In a short time, many Egyptian scholars learned about taxation, agriculture, health, administration, and archaeology. The Institute of Egypt became a place visited by Egyptians, especially scholars, in the hope that it would increase their knowledge about Egypt, including its customs, language, and religion. This marked the first time Egyptians and the Islamic community had direct contact with the new and foreign European civilization.

The impression of an Islamic scholar at that time regarding the progress of Western culture illustrates the state of backwardness of the Islamic community at that time. In the classical period, the West admired Islamic culture and civilization, but in the modern period, Muslims were amazed at Western progress. In addition to material progress, Napoleon also brought new ideas from the French Revolution, as expressed by Jaih Mubarak:

First, the republican form of government where the head of state is elected for a certain period, subject to the Constitution, and can be removed by parliament, is entirely different from the absolute rule of Islamic kings. The king retains power for life and is succeeded by his son, without being subject to a constitution or parliament, as the monarchy system does not recognize the concept of constitution and parliament. The meaning of the word "republic" was still difficult to grasp, and so was finding its translation into Arabic. In Napoleon's proclamations, the French Republic was translated as Al-Jumhur al-Faransawi. Jumhur essentially refers to the public, so what can be understood from the word "republic" is the unity of the public or public participation. However, it was only in the early 20th century that a more accurate translation, "jumhuriyah," appeared.

Second, the concept of equality (egalitarianism) in terms of equal status and people's participation in governance affairs. Previously, the people of Egypt were

not involved in the governance of their country, but Napoleon established a state body consisting of scholars from Al-Azhar and prominent merchants from Cairo to the regions. The function of this body involved the making of laws, maintaining public order, and acting as an intermediary between the French rulers and the people of Egypt. In addition, a body called Diwan al-Ummah was established, which periodically held meetings to discuss issues of national interest. Each region sent nine representatives to the Diwan session, including three from among the scholars, three from among the merchants, and one each from the farmers, village heads, and tribal leaders of the Arab nations.

Third, the idea of nationalism contained in Napoleon's proclamation that the French people constitute a nation, while the Mamluks are considered foreigners who came to Egypt from the Caucasus. Although they were Muslims, they were considered a different nation from the people of Egypt. The proclamation also included the term "Ummat Mesir" (the Egyptian nation). At that time, for Muslims, there was only the Islamic nation, and every individual Muslim was considered a brother regardless of tribal and national differences, which were more understood as religious differences. Therefore, translating the word "nation" into Arabic was also difficult. The Arabic word used was "millah," as in "al-Millah al-Faransiah" to refer to the French nation. Millah carries a religious meaning. The Arabic words later used to replace "nation" were "qaum," "sya'b," and "ummah."

Napoleon's expedition created significant changes in Egypt's development, especially regarding the reform and modernization of Islamic education there (Stanton, 1998: 254). The progress of science and technology from France provided great inspiration to Egyptian leaders, urging them to fundamentally change the patterns of the education system and curriculum, which were previously conventional. However, the impact of reforms on Al-Azhar was only truly felt in the reorganization, examination system, and introduction of new subjects, not in the essence of Islamic sciences such as theology and philosophy. For example, Egyptian figures like Rifa'ah al-Tahtawi and Muhammad Abduh, who served as members of the Higher Council of Al-Azhar, proposed changes to Al-Azhar by integrating subjects such as mathematics, algebra, measurement science, and earth science into the curriculum.

c. **Figures and Ideas of Reform and Their Influence on the Progress of Education at Al-Azhar, Egypt**

After experiencing a period of intellectual stagnation that lasted for centuries, Islamic scholars in Egypt made strenuous efforts to revive the spirit of Islam through the education sector. This revival emerged as a response to the adherence to taqlid (imitation) and stagnation, considered as outcomes of reduced ijtihad (independent reasoning) activities and even the closure of the doors of ijtihad (M. Taufik 2013)

This situation led to the decline of the Islamic community as a whole. In response to these conditions, new movements emerged, leading urgent change efforts among Muslims as a form of awareness of the importance of revitalizing Islamic education. Many observers see the general history of the Islamic world's revival, including Islamic education, as a consequence of interaction with the West. Islam is seen as a semi-dead entity, accepting destructive or formative impacts from the West. This revival period began in the 19th century, referred to as the era of Islamic renewal, distinct from the previous period (Madjid 2013)

It can be illustrated that reformers at that time aimed to revive the spirit among Muslims, especially at al-Azhar and in Egypt, which had long experienced stagnation and decline compared to Europe and the West. Muslims were expected to rise again, and this change began with the reform of the education system at al-Azhar, Egypt. The Islamic revival was an active effort to rebuild the entire social order in

line with an ideologically inspired vision of reality. In other words, according to Kuntowijoyo, the Islamic revival is not just a reaction to modernization but an effort to assert identity and actualize universal beliefs in the temporal world.

From a social history perspective, the characteristics of the civilization revival carried out by the reformers at al-Azhar aimed to strengthen and advance Egypt as a nation toward three goals: removing Muslims from fatalism and fanaticism, promoting ideology and action, and emphasizing the ideology of science and its application (Sulthon Mas'ud, 2004)

The movement against fatalism and fanaticism aimed to change the attitude of Muslims from dependence and fanaticism on schools of thought toward ijtihad and rational thinking. The movement of ideology and action involved efforts and determination to resist colonization through actions and resistance, allowing Muslims to be independent and progress. The movement of the ideology of science and application involved the development of scienceby the Islamic community, which was then applied through educational institutions. The reformers at al-Azhar in Egypt made great efforts to free Muslims from fatalism, and these three aspects united in their efforts.

In this context, a social history record will be presented about three reformers at al- Azhar along with their individual ideas and their impact on the development of al-Azhar in Egypt and their influence on Muslims in general. Although they had different characteristics, they shared the same determination to advance al-Azhar, Egypt, and Islam. These figures include Muhammad Ali Pasha, Muhammad Abduh, and Muhammad Rashid Rida.

d. Muhammad Ali Pasha Incorporating Western Educational Patterns at Al-Azhar

Muhammad Ali Pasha recognized the importance of the role of education and knowledge in the progress of a nation. Therefore, he focused on the development of education, including at al-Azhar.

However, al-Azhar, as an autonomous institution inhabited by many scholars, rejected the modernization advocated by Muhammad Ali Pasha. To realize his reform ideas, he established new schools and founded the Ministry of Education and Educational Institutions (M. Taufik 2013). In 1815, he founded the Military School in Cairo and the Maritime Industry Academy, as well as the Navy Officer School in Alexandria. Subsequently, he established the Technical School (1816), Medical School (1827), Pharmacy School (1829), Mining School (1839), Agricultural School (1836), and Translation School (1836). Modern teaching methods with teachers from Europe were applied in these schools alongside local instructors.

To expedite reforms in education, Muhammad Ali Pasha encouraged the translation of European books, especially after the establishment of the Translation School. This translation effort yielded positive results, especially in the fields of exact sciences, medicine, physics, and literature. Although he was persistent in introducing reforms at al-Azhar, it is evident that the Western education model introduced by Muhammad Ali Pasha in Egypt, including at al-Azhar, was considered a solution for the progress of the Muslim people in Egypt. Despite allowing flexibility in overseeing his reformist ideas at al-Azhar, Muhammad Ali Pashadelegated the supervision of his schools to Westerners, including teachers brought in from Europe. Moreover, he sent students to Italy, France, England, and Austria for education. Between 1823 and 1844, around 311 Egyptian students were sent to Europe. The reforms andmodernization introduced by Muhammad Ali Pasha significantly contributed to Egypt's development into a modern state. This reform movement opened the door to the introduction of Western science and technology to Muslims, shaping a generation of knowledgeable Muslim intellectuals with a modern outlook and not confined to narrow views. They, such as Rifa'ah Badawi, Rafi' al-Tahtawi, Muhammad

Abduh, Rashid Rida, and Hasan al-Banna, became pillars for the Muslim people of Egypt and other Islamic regions with broad and modern perspectives and non-exclusive attitudes.

The strong influence of Sunni ideology instilled by the Ayyubid Dynasty had deeply penetrated Egyptian society. Sunni ideology was considered a fundamental Islamic identity thatneeded to be preserved, but it contradicted and did not align with Western educational values. Their theological views were focused only on jurisprudence and mysticism and were in stark contrast to the Western model, so it was deemed necessary to reject the entire Western educational model.

e. **Muhammad Abduh Incorporating Modern Sciences at Al-Azhar**

Muhammad Abduh was one of the reformers who recognized the dualism in Islamic education (M. Taufik 2013) This condition, if left unaddressed, would lead to a lack of response and interest from the community in Islamic education, as well as the failure to produce competent graduates. Therefore, in response to this situation, Muhammad Abduh sought to reform education at al-Azhar (Thoha 2013)

In his view, al-Azhar needed to incorporate modern sciences so that Islamic scholars could understand modern culture and provide effective solutions to contemporary issues (Gunawan 2019) By integrating modern knowledge into al-Azhar as a government educational institution, it was hoped to produce scholars not only knowledgeable in religion but also proficient in general knowledge that could contribute to the development of science and the progress of Islam.

For Muhammad Abduh, the primary issue that should be the focus of his life and career was the reform of Islamic education. He believed that education played a crucial role, and knowledge was something that must be learned. Abduh always pondered how to find alternatives to escape the stagnation faced by religious schools in Egypt, especially al-Azhar. According to him, the education valued at

that time tended to produce conservative, non- transparent, static, and resistant-to-change graduates and communities. As a result, Muslims became unwilling to accept change. Abduh argued that by improving the quality of Islamic education and reiterating the basic teachings of Islam in a clear and concise language, Muslims could end their decline and achieve progress in the future (Rahman 2017)

Muhammad Abduh stated that the education system to be advocated is functional education, including universal education for all children, both boys and girls. All children should have a foundation in reading, writing, arithmetic, and receive religious education. The content and duration of education should vary, according to the goals and professions desired by the students (Lindawati and Sriyanto 2021)

Abduh believed that children of farmers and craftsmen should receive general education so that they could become scholars in the future. Furthermore, Abduh endeavored to establish the Committee for the Improvement of al-Azhar Administration in 1895 and successfully implemented beneficial administrative reforms. However, his efforts faced resistance from scholars, and he was even accused of reviving Mu'tazilite thinking. In his attempt to change the education system, Muhammad Abduh had ideas that were difficult to implement due to conflicts with conservative groups that did not fully understand the benefits of such reforms. Therefore, he initiated the establishment of the Higher Education Council, an educational institution that could teach both religious and general knowledge simultaneously in Islamic educational institutions (Suwito 2019)

Not only that, Abduh's efforts to reform Islamic education involved spreading renewal ideas to various regions, including to teachers and academics at al-Azhar. These efforts successfully triggered changes in teaching methods and the addition of subjects such as history,

geography, and other branches of knowledge at al-Azhar. The reform measures directed at al-Azhar included: (1) the formation of the al-Azhar Leadership Council consisting of eminent scholars from the four schools of thought; (2) restructuring the administration of al-Azhar by determining honorariums for teachers, constructing a special space for the rector, and appointing deputy rectors; and (3) extending the learning period and reducing vacation time (M. Taufik 2013)

f. Muhammad Rashid Rida Introduces Rational Thought at Al-Azhar

The ideas of reform at Al-Azhar in Egypt, initiated by Muhammad Abduh, were later continued by Rashid Rida (Gunawan 2019) In 1898, Rashid Rida moved to Cairo with the intention of learning and joining Muhammad Abduh. The first step Rashid took in Egypt was to urge Abduh to publish a magazine as their communication channel. Rashid deemed this important because, in his view, education and the dissemination of ideas aligned with opposition to ignorance and harmful thoughts, such as fatalism and superstitions, were effective ways to cure the ailments of the community. Abduh agreed with his student's suggestion, and eventually, the magazine named al-Manar was published, as proposed by Rashid. In the inaugural edition of this magazine, it was explained that al-Manar's objectives were similar to those of al-'Urwah al-Wusqa, serving as a platform for religious, social, and economic renewal, eliminating deviations from Islam, improving the quality of education, and protecting Muslims from Western political policies (Daimah, Tasbi 2023)

Connected to the concept of "jihad" he advocated, Rashid put forth the view that Muslims must possess the strength to face the challenges of the modern era. This strength canonly be attained if Muslims are willing to adopt Western civilization. Rashid believed that the path to Western civilization lies in exploring Western knowledge and technology itself.

According to him, science and technology are not contradictory to Islam; (Gunawan 2019) on the contrary, Muslims are obliged to study and embrace this knowledge and technology if they want to progress (Daimah, Tasbi 2023)

Overall, Rashid Rida presented four key thoughts that he considered crucial for Muslims to overcome stagnation and decline. All these efforts were to commence at Al-Azhar as an educational institution, namely:

First, dispelling the notions of bid'ah (innovation) and fatalism among the Muslim community. Similar to the views of his teacher, Muhammad 'Abduh, and Jamaluddin al- Afghani, Rasyid Ridha's thoughts on the renewal of Islam also include the idea that Muslims have declined because they have not practiced true Islamic teachings. Rasyid observed that the understanding of Islamic teachings among Muslims is often incorrect, and their actions are considered deviating from the original teachings of Islam. In this context, Rasyid Rida sought to change thinking and learning patterns at al-Azhar by eliminating fatalistic understanding among students and professors. This approach explicitly encourages Muslims to think rationally and emphasizes the use of reason to address various issues facing the community (Akerlof 1970)

Rasyid Ridha also suggested applying tolerance among different schools of thought (mazhabs) to overcome fanaticism in his time. In fundamental matters, such as the unity of the Muslim community, he advocated reforms in legal matters and the unification of legal schools. Rasyid Ridha recognized the existence of fatalistic beliefs among Muslims and considered it one of the causes of their decline. According to him, the fatalistic understanding ('aqidah al- jabr) is a factor leading Muslims to decline. Rasyid Ridha also observed that European societies progressed due to the adoption of dynamic ideas prevalent among them. He emphasized that Islam fundamentally views teachings dynamically, where Muslims are directed

to be active. This dynamic concept and active attitude are reflected in the concept of jihad, which implies making a concerted effort and being ready to sacrifice, both in terms of wealth and life. According to Rasyid Ridha, it was this understanding of jihad that led Muslims, during the classical period, to dominate the world.

Second, developing the concept of ijtihad. Like Muhammad 'Abduh, Rasyid Ridha held a high regard for human reason, although not to the extent of his teacher. For him, reason plays a role in interpreting teachings related to societal life but is not relevant in the context of worship. According to him, ijtihad is no longer needed in matters of worship but can be used to explore verses and hadiths that do not have a clear meaning and respond to issues not directly addressed in the Qur'an and Hadiths. Rasyid Ridha believed that this is where the dynamism of Islam lies. He criticized the fatalistic belief (jabariah) deeply rooted in society, which he considered weakening Muslims. As an alternative, Rasyid Ridha replaced it with the concept of dynamism (progress) so that Muslims would realize that the progress of their lives is determined by their own actions (M. Taufik 2013). According to Rasyid Ridha, the path to achieving this active dynamism is through jihad (M. Taufik 2013)

Therefore, Rasyid Ridha sought to introduce modern thought at al-Azhar, believing that the progress of Muslims must be rooted in the study of the Qur'an to produce modern science and technology. For him, modern Western civilization was built on the foundation of advances in science and technology. Rasyid Ridha believed that science and technology are not contradictory to Islam. For the progress of Muslims, he viewed it as essential for them to be willing to accept and adopt the advanced Western civilization. Rasyid Ridha argued that the West advanced because they were willing to embrace the knowledge developed by Muslims during the classical era. Therefore, adopting modern Western knowledge is, in

fact, reclaiming the intellectual heritage once owned by Muslims (Tajuddin, Sani, and Yeyeng 2017)

Third, Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyyah). Like al-Afghani, Rasyid Ridha also emphasized the importance of reviving the unity of the Muslim community. For him, one of the causes of the decline of Muslims is the division among them. The unity he desired did not stem from linguistic or national similarities but rather from a shared belief. Therefore, he rejected nationalist movements led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Egypt and the Turkish nationalist movement initiated by Young Turks. For Rasyid Ridha, the concept of nationalism contradicts the teachings of Islamic brotherhood. Islamic brotherhood does not consider differences in nationality or language and does not even take into account differences in place of origin.

Muhammad Rasyid Ridha did not desire the adoption of the Western state model but supported a form of government in the form of a caliphate, similar to the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs led by mujtahid and supported by scholars in their government administration. With this caliphate system, he hoped to realize Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyyah) (M. Taufik 2013) Rasyid Ridha did not specify the form of unity he meant, only proposing the adoption of a caliphate system, which also plays the role of head of state (Kamsi 2013). According to him, the caliph, due to having legislative authority, must have the ability of ijtihad. Nevertheless, the caliph should not be absolute.

Fourth, adding modern curriculum at al-Azhar. Rasyid Ridha considered reform in the education sector necessary, proposing the addition of subjects to the al-Azhar curriculum, such as theology, moral education, sociology, earth sciences, history, economics, mathematics, health sciences, foreign languages, and household management, in addition to traditional subjects such as jurisprudence, exegesis, hadith, and others at al-Azhar. Alongside this, he also emphasized the importance of

mastering science and technology to keep up with Western developments (Syakur 2015)

In the education sector, Rasyid Ridha established a school with an Islamic mission named Madrasah al-Dakwah wa al-Irsyad in Cairo in 1912 AD. Graduates from this school were later spread across various regions of the Islamic world. Rasyid Ridha is known as a promoter of Islamic reform with a tendency towards the teachings of Ibn Taimiyah. He supported the Wahhabi movement because it emphasized recognition of the salaf school with the aim of restoring Islamic teachings to the Qur'an and Hadiths (Iswantir M 2017).

D. CONCLUSION

The paradigm of Islamic education in the modern era at Al-Azhar can be summarized through several aspects. Firstly, as a center of governance, the Al-Azhar Mosque was established in Cairo, later evolving into the higher education institution of Al-Azhar. The Fatimid Dynasty designated this mosque as a means of spreading Shi'ite teachings and as a symbol of the spiritual leadership of the Muslim community. Over time, the mosque expanded its functions into a university, serving as a profoundly fundamental foundation in shaping Islamic thought paradigms.

Secondly, reforms at Al-Azhar were triggered by various factors, including the shift from rational Shi'ite doctrines towards orthodox Sunni ideologies, Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt, which swiftly defeated the Ottoman Turkish Empire, and the influence of French civilization brought by Napoleon in the field of education at Al-Azhar.

Thirdly, the reforms at Al-Azhar, Egypt, were led by figures such as Muhammad Ali Pasha, Muhammad Abduh, and Muhammad Rashid Rida. They endeavored to reform and modernize Al-Azhar by integrating Western curricula. Their perspectives asserted that the Muslim community needed to break free

from stagnation by embracing rational thinking and accepting the modern civilization introduced by Napoleon Bonaparte from France. Wallahu a'lam bi al-shawab. (And Allah knows best about the correctness of the statement).

REFERENCES

Akerlof. 1970. "Islam Dan Pembaharuan." *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* 53 (9).

Cece Wijaya, A. Tabrani Rusyan. 2013. *Kemampuan Dasar Guru Dalam Proses Belajar- Mengajar. Bandung : Remaja Rosdakarya*. Vol. 44.

Daimah, Tasbi, Khatu. 2023. "Perkembangan Pemikiran Modern Dalam Islam (PPMDI)."*Demokratisasi Pendidikan Dalam Pendidikan Islam*.

Gunawan, Gunawan. 2019. "PETA KEMUNCULAN PEMIKIRAN MODERN DALAM ISLAM." *Ath Thariq Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 3 (1). https://doi.org/10.32332/ath_thariq.v3i1.1379.

Humam, Laili, Miftahuddin Alumni Pondok, Pesantren Al, and Irsyad Rembang. 2018. "Ulama Dan Media Sosial: Analisis Pesan Dakwah KH Mustofa Bisri Di Twitter." *MUHARRIK: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial* 1 (02).

Iswantir M. 2017. "ALIRAN-ALIRAN FILSAFAT PENDIDIKAN KLASIK DAN MODERN DALAM PERSPEKTIF FILSAFAT PENDIDIKAN ISLAM." *ISLAM TRANSFORMATIF: Journal of Islamic Studies* 01 (02).

Kamsi, Kamsi. 2013. "CITRA GERAKAN POLITIK ISLAM DALAM LINTASAN SEJARAH PERPOLITIKAN BANGSA INDONESIA (Studi Era Pra Kemerdekan Sampai Dengan Era Orde Baru)." *Millah* 12 (3). https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol12.iss3.art6.

Lindawati, Lia, and Sriyanto. 2021. "Tujuh

Ilmuwan Muslim Perintis Laboratorium Modern." *Integrated Lab Journal* 9 (2).

M. Taufik, Ali Nurdin. 2013. "Ensiklopedi Sejarah Islam." *Tim Riset Dan Studi Islam Mesir, Al-Mausu'ah Al-Muyassar Fi Tarikh Al-Islam* Vol 1.

Madjid, Nurcholish. 2013. *Islam Kemodernan Dan Keindonesiaan*. Penerbit Mizan.

Marjuni, Eka Damayanti, Aliman, and Sumarni Susilawati. 2022. "SEJARAH PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DI MESIR." *Al Asma : Journal of Islamic Education* 4 (2). https://doi.org/10.24252/asma.v4i2.29445.

Musyrifah Sunanto. 2007. *Sejarah Peradaban Islam Indonesia. Musyrifah Sunanto, Sejarah Peradaban Islam Indonesia.* Vol. Jakarta: Pakpahan,

Poetri Leharia, and Umi Habibah. 2021. "Manajemen Program Pengembangan Kurikulum PAI Dan Budi Pekerti Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Religius Siswa." *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 2 (1). https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v2i1.19.

Rahman, Bobbi Aidi. 2017. "Modenisme Islam Dalam Pandangan Muhammad Abduh."*Jurnal Kebudayaan* 2 (1).

Setiawati, Siti Mutiah. 2017. "Dilemma

Indonesia Dan Hambatan Asean Untuk Menjalankan Peranan Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Timur Tengah." *Jurnal Hukum UII*.

Sulthon Mas'ud, S.Ag, M.Pd.I. 2004. "4. Sejarah & Peradaban Islam. Malang." *SEJARAH PERADABAN ISLAM Eropa*.

Suwito. 2019. "Sejarah Sosial Pendidikan Islam." *Tadarus: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8 (1). Syakur, Abdus. 2015. "Polemik Harun Nasution-H.M. Rasjidi Dalam Falsafat Dan Teologi."*Ilmu Ushuluddin* 2 (4).

Tajuddin, Muhammad Saleh, Mohd. Azizuddin Mohd. Sani, and Andi Tenri Yeyeng. 2017. "Dunia Islam Dalam Lintasan Sejarah Dan Realitasnya Di Era Kontemporer." *AL-Fikr*20 (2).

Thoha, Mohammad. 2013. "Politik Pendidikan Islam (Potret Sejarah Periode Klasik Sampai Abad Pertengahan)." *Tadris* 8 (1).

Thohir, Ajid, and Ahmad Sahidin. 2019. *Filsafat Sejarah: Profetik, Spekulatif, Dan Kritis.*
        Nucl. Phys. Vol. 13.

Thoifah, I'anatut. 2015. "Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif." *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, no.17.

Zuhairini, Abdul Ghofir, Malik Fadjar, Maksum Umar, Tadjab, and Moh. Kasiram. 2018. "Sejarah Pendidikan Islam." *Diktat* 11 (2).