

BOOK REVIEW/ ULASAN BUKU

**Islam, the Civilization of Tomorrow by Yusuf al-Qardhawi.
Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1995, 208 pages.**

(Islam, Tamadun Hari Esok Yusuf al-Qardhawi.
Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah)

Reviewed by Othman Talib*

This book is about the characteristics of civilization with which both Islam and Western civilization are marked. The book is an attempt to prove that Western civilization is about to collapse and it was time for Islam to emerge as a leading master to the whole world. In this book, Dr. Al-Qardhawi divides the discussion into four major parts; the first is on the spirit of modern civilization and the characteristics of its ideology (pp. 9-26). The second is on the ills of modern civilization and their effects to human life (pp. 27-92) and the third is on how Western intellectuals themselves strike alarm bells (pp. 93-116). The fourth part deals with what is the civilization the world is looking for.

Exactly like a human being, each civilization, according to al-Qardhawi has a body (physical aspect), such as its material achievements, like buildings, factories, machines etc. and spiritual aspect, like doctrines, concepts, values and traditions that are embodied in the behavior of individuals and groups. Western Countries are only concerned with materialism without giving due attention to spiritual aspect. This is why we can say that the West is the body of an elephant with the spirit of a mouse.

The Ideological Roots of Western Civilization

The contemporary **Western civilization** is based upon the deeply rooted pillars: logical evidence in logic (*burhan*). Empirical evidence in tangibles and historical evidence in traditional. English people they worship English Banks six days per week and head for the church on the seventh day. Romanians in

fact knew no religion. It was the soil in which modern western civilization has grown. Western civilization doesn't deny Allah absolutely and frankly, but it sees neither use nor room for Allah in its present ideological system. Thus, the modern European tends to attribute practical importance only to the ideas that are placed into the scope of empirical sciences or any other science that is likely to influence the social relationships in a remarkable manner. The existence of Allah is perhaps not placed into that or this aspect. The European mind tends to drop Allah from the circle of practical aspects.

Materialism: It believes in matter alone and uses it to interpret the universe, knowledge and behavior. It also denies metaphysics. The Western mind is a materialistic one that holds spiritual aspects with contempt. It is also a tangible one that doesn't care about morals and a realistic one that doesn't believe in the idealistic. The real religion of West is materialism. France regards itself the champion of Catholics. English used to consider itself as the champion of Protestants. There are big Catholic parties in Germany, France, Italy, and Belgium. Some held power more than once. British Conservative Party aims to establish a Christian civilization. But Christianity is not a set of values to believe. Modern West knows only materialism as religion and opportunism (taking advantage of opportunities without regard for the consequence for others) as a sect. Naturally religious tendency is always based upon belief that there's a comprehensive absolute moral law. We are required to subjugate ourselves to its requirements, but modern western civilization only consents to be subject to national, economical or social requirements. Its deity is not of some spiritual kind but material prosperity. Romanians in fact knew no religion. Rome was the soil in which modern western civilization has grown. European civilization is antagonistic to religion mainly because it inherited The Roman Civilization, while it is completely materialistic in terms of human life and its self-value. Secondly, because human nature has revolted against the Christian attitude where the worldly life is held with contempt and natural desires and human legal efforts are suppressed or inhibited. "The structures of this religion - its temples and churches - are big factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, night clubs and electricity-generating stations! As for the priests of this religion they are bankers, engineers, film stars, corporate figures and pilots. Its inevitable implication is a struggle to get pleasure. This situation creates heavily armed warring factions who are determined to destroy each other when they are in clash.

Secularism: Among the features and characteristics of western thought is secularism which was resulted from the two previous characteristics. The tendency that separates between religion and state, and in another word between

religion and social life. Religion in the eye of Western people is the relationship of human and his lord that is placed in conscience. If this conscience is to go out it cannot go beyond the walls of temples or churches. It cannot use legislation and enforcement to guide the life and impose its teachings and rules upon institutions that are at the helm steering social activities. The West has believed in this concept after its bitter conflict with religious institution, such as church, clergy men and priests who claim that they are representing the willingness of God in the heaven. Their opinion is a religion. Obeying them is a worship and opposing them is a satanic act. Unfortunately their opinion which they considered as a religion from Allah used to favor superstition against intellect, ignorance against knowledge, rigidity against flexibility, injustice against justice and darkness against light.

Conflict

Western civilization is also marked by conflict. It knows no peace, nor love. A conflict between one and himself, between human and nature, between human and human. It is even a conflict between human and God! Western man is in conflict with his nature created by Allah if he wants to lead the ideal life designated by his religion. The ideal situation to him is to abhor sex, reject money and deny himself worldly pleasures. If he fails to do that he will keep suffering from the complex of conflict between the idealism he believes and the reality he goes through.

Crime And Fear

A materialistic and egoistic society like this is likely to be exposed to moral decay, family disorganization, psychological anxiety and mental disorder. Crime must reign such a society. Crime creates fear. Fear is the worst to inflict human in life.

Judges now impose upon women the same laws imposed upon men in the case they support woman. If wife's income is bigger in the company of marriage then why doesn't she support man or spend for him in his new life later? The word used socially and legally is (to support him). As long as the law in the US allows wife to obtain husband's half wealth, where the husband keeps paying expenditure for her, then why woman with potentials is exempted from it? It is the women who drove to that by opening the door of equality wide. What is done by the American Courts is a practical implementation to

what women advocate. You want equality? Therefore take it...drink from the glass of man!

Family

The most controversial issue that is much talked about is the issue of one-sexed family made up of two men or two women. Like the failure of one-sexed family, which comprise two men or two women family with one member, which is composed of a mother without father has also failed as seen in this model created by western civilization. Dr. Robert Graham, an American millionaire from California set up a bank of some weird kind known as the Nobel Bank for Spermatic Fluid. The bank gathers this substance from Nobel laureates and stores it in order to fertilize women and bear infants with supernatural intelligence! The bank had been setup to help men who are unable to bear, but hedonism among the modern woman leads her to violate this limit. There are women who desire to bear and get children with supernatural mental capabilities without being bound with marriage. Women like this ask the bank for help.

America Lives On Fear

There's a homicide crime to be committed every 24 minutes somewhere in US. In every ten seconds a house is robbed and in every seven minutes a woman is raped. There's a rule of terror reigning American cities. Everyone there then wonders: are not we hostages within the boundaries of our enlightened and civilized country?

The Voice of Faith Unheard Today

Faith has no influence today as it was yesterday. Warning bells are being struck that there are risks threatening human's progress toward civilization. The whole humanity was aware that it is in a dire need of faith plus science, spirit plus matter. Man has made machine to make use of it he then became after a period of time a slave to it. Western scientists themselves were the first to be aware of the danger of this machine that made human's life a word without meaning and a body without spirit.

Warning Statements By Western intellectuals

Alex Carol for example says “modern civilization finds itself in a difficult situation because it is not suited to us. It had been established without any knowledge of its real nature. As it was born from the fiction of scientific discoveries and the whims, fancies, theories and desires of people. Though it was created by our efforts, but it is unfit to our size and shape. The effect of factory on the mental and physiological state of workers has been neglected when industrial life was regulated. This is because modern industry is based upon a principle ‘maximum production with minimum cost’.

In the fourth part that deals with what the civilization the world is looking for, Prof. Dr. al-Qardhawi attempts to prove that Christianity fails to play the role of savior. He summarizes its main causes of its failure as following:

1. The Christianity as an ideal image holds no civilizational message. Its essential teachings are instead not concerned about life nor do they use reason. They also don't conform with the methods used in science as well as they are not human nature- friendly. The ideal Christian is embodied in a priest who adheres to strict religious principles and is opposed to sensual pleasures, including legal marriage;
2. The Christianity is filled of extremely dark history and stained with the bloods of scientists and liberalist thinkers. A history full of barbaric and uncivilized practices. A history during which the church favored rigidity against intellect, superstition against science, dictatorship against freedom and darkness against light;
3. Christianity supremacy refers to the supremacy of clergymen who control people's consciences and claim they are alone the holders of divine keys and connecting link between the heaven and the earth;
4. They monopolize mediation between Allah and His servants; and
5. Many people believe that the western civilization is entirely based upon the teachings of Christianity and try to attach it to Jesus Christ, while it is the civilization of Antichrist, not the civilization of Christ the son of Marry. This is because the Antichrist is one-eyed and western civilization is one-eyed civilization Looking at life with one eye, which is materialistic eye.

This is why the western thinkers themselves rule out the possibility of Christianity being a source of salvation for humanity (pp. 144-146).

Balanced And Integrated Civilization

Islam is the only message that offers a balanced and integrated method to humanity. This is the so-called *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* or the straight path. It is also called *al-Mizan* or balance. Islam balances between divinity and humanity, between revelation and intellect, between spiritualism and materialism, between the Hereafter and worldly life, between individualism and socialism, between idealism and realism, between responsibility and freedom, between duties and rights, between constancy and variability. In the integrated Islam, science is not opposite to faith. Doctrine is not opposite to action nor education is opposite to legislation. They are, instead values that complement each other. The life sought by Islam will only become proper and integrated through all these things. Islamic method satisfies the whole needs of human, his body, mind and spirit. It is concerned with human in all his conditions as an individual, as a member in a family and a member in a society. It channels its legislative concern to human in all his stages and situations, human as a child, as a young, as an old person, human as a man and as a woman, human as a ruler and as a ruled, as a rich or a poor who lives in sky scrapers or in jungles.

The Integration of Science And Faith In Islam

In Islam, science and faith move side by side. Scientific advancement and the facilities it produce, which make human's life easy and save his physical and mental effort are considered a worship for Muslim. They are -in relation to society- considered as *fardhu kifayah*. This means that Islam respects the intellect and calls for the use of mind. Islam also encourages science and knowledge and lauds scholars and scientists. In short, in this book Prof. Dr. Yusuf al-Qardhawi who always advocates a balanced and integrated Islam has successfully projected the positive aspects of Islamic civilization that is potential to steer the civilization of tomorrow.

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