

## AL-'ASHER SCHOOL: THE PHILOSOPHICAL OF K.H. AHMAD DAHLAN'S CHARACTER EDUCATION

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**Abstract-***This article is a philosophical reflection of KH. Ahmad Dahlan educational practice. Based on the historical fact that KH. Ahmad Dahlan undertook the character education contained in Surah Al-'Ashr to his students for 7-9 months. This educational practice is manifested in the form of "Pengajian Wal-'Ashri" for young women and "Wal-'Ashri Cadre School" for male youth. This makes the spirit and ethos of al-'Ashr embedded in young men and women, thus creating a "theology of pious charity" (amal shaleh). The theology encourages the spirit of praxis and activism of Muhammadiyah followers to perform humanitarian work in the fields of education, health, social, economics, community empowerment, philanthropy and others later known as "al-Ma'un theology" and "Al-'Ashr theology". Using the perspective of the philosophy of reconstructionist education of George Count and Bourdieu's sociology approach to social practice, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah education gave birth to a religious-transformative character inspired by Surah Al-'Ashr.*

**Keywords:** *Theology of Al-'Ashr, KH. Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah Education Philosophy, and Social Reconstruction.*

**Abstrak-***Artikel ini adalah refleksi filosofis dari praktik pendidikan KH. Ahmad Dahlan. Berdasarkan fakta historis bahwa KH. Ahmad Dahlan melakukan pendidikan karakter yang terkandung dalam Surah Al-'Ashr kepada murid-muridnya selama 7-9 bulan. Praktik pendidikan ini dimanifestasikan dalam bentuk Pengajian Wal-'Ashri untuk perempuan muda dan Sekolah Kader Wal-'Ashri untuk pemuda laki-laki. Hal ini menjadikan spirit dan etos al-'Ashr tertanam kepada pemuda dan pemuda, sehingga melahirkan "teologi amal shaleh". Teologi yang mendorong semangat praksis dan aktivisme para pengikut Muhammadiyah untuk melakukan kerja-kerja kemanusiaan dalam bidang pendidikan, kesehatan, sosial, ekonomi, pemberdayaan masyarakat, filantropi dan lain-lain yang kemudian hari dikenal*

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“teologi al-Ma’un” dan “teologi al-‘Ashr”. Dengan menggunakan perspektif filsafat pendidikan rekonstruksionisme George Count dan pendekatan sosiologi Bourdieu tentang praktik sosial, maka dapat disimpulkan bahwa pendidikan Muhammadiyah melahirkan karakter *religious-transformatif* yang diinspirasi dari Surah Al-‘Ashr.

**Kata Kunci:** *Teologi Al-‘Ashr; KH. Ahmad Dahlan, Filsafat Pendidikan Muhammadiyah, dan Rekonstruksi Sosial.*

## **A. Introduction**

Muhammadiyah established by Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan in 1912 is an Islamic social organization that actively devotes its modern movement in the educational sphere. Currently, Muhammadiyah has established a number of Charity and Services including 4,623 kindergartens; 2,604 elementary schools (SD); 1,772 junior secondary schools (SMP); 1,143 high secondary schools (SMA/SMK/MA); 67 boarding schools; 172 higher education institutions; 457 hospitals; 318 orphanages; 54 nursing homes; 82 rehabilitations of disabled; 71 schools for exceptional children (SLB); 6,118 mosques; 5,080 musallas; and 20,945,504 M of land.<sup>1</sup>

The attainment of Muhammadiyah is identified with the spirit of Al-Ma’un revered by the successors, researchers and devotees of Muhammadiyah. Nevertheless, if Al-Ma’un imbued by the partiality to the poor is the foundation of Muhammadiyah educational movement, why are school fees and tuition are so costly? In its second century of establishment, Muhammadiyah educational institutions are increasingly flourishing in urban areas and become the elite ones. Yet the members of Muhammadiyah frequently cannot afford their children to attend those institutions. Thus, is it true that Muhammadiyah is solely established to eradicate poverty with the spirit of al-Maun?

The claim of Al-Ma’un as the spirit of Muhammadiyah is actually based on a history about the determination of K.H.A. Dahlan in emphasizing Surah Al-Ma’un to his students, in which after three months, they successfully realized the essence of Al-Ma’un through social acts. In fact, his students also learned a surah much longer than Al-Ma’un, which was Al-‘Asr for eight months. On that basis, this study aims to reflect on the practice of Al-‘Asr as taught by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan as a basis of character education to his students. The questions

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<sup>1</sup>M. Raihan Febriansyah, *Muhammadiyah 100 Tahun Menyinari Negeri*, (Yogyakarta, Majelis Pustaka dan Informasi Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2013).

are: Why K.H. Ahmad Dahlan taught Surah Al-'Asr for eight months? To what extent Surah Al-'Asr was entrenched into the character of his students?

Furthermore, what is the philosophy as the basis of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in carrying out education, which able to generate education that stimulates social practices? Although the public has recognized the endeavours made by Muhammadiyah in the national educational realm for more than a century, so far, there has been no study about the philosophy of Muhammadiyah education that links the historical and praxical reflection of K.H. Dahlan. Most studies of Muhammadiyah's ethos identify this organization with the theology of Al-Ma'un, while Al-'Asr is less acknowledged despite of its role as in the Muhammadiyah's education. Therefore, this paper proposes a thesis that the theology of Al-'Asr is the real philosophical foundation of Muhammadiyah's educational practice as has been done by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan.

## **B. Theoretical Framework:**

### **1. The Philosophy of Muhammadiyah Education**

Muhammadiyah education is addressed to uphold faith and adapt religious institutions to social change. Kuntowijoyo in "Muhammadiyah dalam Perspektif Sejarah"<sup>2</sup> claimed that Muhammadiyah had been successful in promoting "faith and progress" at the same time. He asserted that, "without Muhammadiyah, the presence of a large educated community that can maintain both characters and faith amid the modern civilization is inconceivable." He also mentioned the rationalization and purification of religion seems to be a new ideology in Indonesia. Similarly, Ahmad Syafii Maarif in "Islam Dalam Bingkai Ke-Indonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan"<sup>3</sup> stated that Muhammadiyah education had been united the power of *fikr* and *dzikr* that generated *ulul albab* or people with intelligence (*ulun nuha*) and sharp vision and perception (*ulul abshar*).

The typological studies of the philosophy of Muhammadiyah education using modern (Western) educational philosophy have been done among others by M. Amin Abdullah, Mohamad Ali and Mu'arif. In "Filosofi dan Paradigma Pendidikan Muhammadiyah,"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Kuntowijoyo, "Muhammadiyah dalam Perspektif Sejarah", in Amin Rais et al., (ed), *Pendidikan Muhammadiyah dan Perubahan Sosial* (Yogyakarta: PLP2M, 1985).

<sup>3</sup>Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan: Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2009).

<sup>4</sup>M. Amin Abdullah, "Filosofi dan Paradigma Pendidikan Muhammadiyah" in Said Tuhuleley, *Reformasi Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Suatu Keniscayaan*

M. Amin Abdullah elaborated Muhammadiyah education based on 4 (four) typologies. *First*, Critical hermeneutics explains that in addition to the Qur'an and Sunnah, Muhammadiyah education includes the dimension of *ijtihad* or renewal of social-religion. *Second*, Essentialism-perennialism in which Muhammadiyah education emphasizes the literal aspect of “*al-ruju ila al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah*” (to return to the authentic Qur'an and -Sunnah) without considering the historicity of a culture. *Third*, Reconstructionism in which Muhammadiyah education is oriented toward individual/personal and collective social salvation simultaneously. *Fourth*, Progressivism in which Muhammadiyah education is free, critical and open to actual social problems based on the universal values of the Qur'an.

In contrast to M. Amin Abdullah, Mu'arif and Mohamad Ali incorporated Muhammadiyah education into the typology of John Dewey's Educational Progressivism. In “Filsafat Pendidikan K.H.A. Ahmad Dahlan”,<sup>5</sup> Muarif propounded the basic ideas made up the Philosophy of Education, namely: the religion of rationality, the Progressive Islam and the teaching of Islam. Mohamad Ali in a dissertation “Pendidikan Berkemajuan: Refleksi Praksis Pendidikan K.H. Ahmad Dahlan”<sup>6</sup> explicated the praxis of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's notion, which implies the unification of theory and practice. He employed the conceptual framework of John Dewey's progressivism to reconstruct K.H. Ahmad Dahlan's philosophy of progressive-religiosity in education. Progressive education is built on three pillars, namely religion, education, and way of life that encourage people from zero to hero.

Furthermore, Hamsah F. in a thesis entitled “Dasar Pemikiran Islam Berkemajuan Muhammadiyah 1912-1923,”<sup>7</sup> argued that religious teachings have implications on Muhammadiyah education. Based on the perspective of the relationship between values and movements, Hamsah suggested Muhammadiyah educational institutions promote the values of down-to-earth and progressive Islamic morality. Three main features of progressive Islam in Muhammadiyah are: rationalism, pragmatism, and

(Yogyakarta: Pustaka SM, 2003).

<sup>5</sup>Muarif, “Filsafat Pendidikan KHA. Ahmad Dahlan” in Mukhrizal Arif et al., *Pendidikan Postmodernisme; Telaah Kritis Pemikiran Tokoh Pendidikan* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2014). See also *Suara Muhammadiyah* 20/98|11-26 Zulhijjah 1434 H.

<sup>6</sup>Mohamad Ali, *Pendidikan Berkemajuan: Refleksi Praksi Pendidikan KH Ahmad Dahlan*. Dissertation (Yogyakarta: UNY, 2015).

<sup>7</sup>Hamsah F, “Dasar Pemikiran Islam Berkemajuan Muhammadiyah 1912-1923”. Thesis (Makasar: UIN Alauddin, 2016).

vernacularization. Rationalism is characterized by an open, critical, and dialectical spirit. Essentially, Muhammadiyah acknowledges a particular religious view after two conditions are fulfilled. *First*, deliberating various opinions and, *second*, considering minds and pure heart. Pragmatism is characterized by the courage to adopt the goodness and wisdom from various sources. It is shown by the courage of Muhammadiyah to establish a school by adopting a Dutch educational model. Furthermore, vernacularization is a phase of transforming tradition into function, as shown by the ability of Muhammadiyah in extracting the authentic Islamic teachings from Javanese tradition.

## **2. Pragmatism: the Foundation of the Educational Philosophy of Social Reconstructionism**

Social Reconstructionism was introduced by George Count in 1930.<sup>8</sup> Basically, Reconstructionism agrees with perennialism in the context of the orientation to address the “crisis of modern life.” In Reconstructionism, the educational process is directed to “overhaul the old, and replace it with a completely new culture.”<sup>9</sup>

Based on the ontological perspective, Reconstructionism views that reality is universal. We perceive and face reality that cannot be separated from a system. It contains substances and each of the objects can be chosen through mind. As a substance, each reality tends to move and develop from potentiality to actuality (technology). Furthermore, the epistemological study of this school refers more to pragmatism and perennialism. Based on the view that it requires a principle of knowledge to understand the reality of the real world, it is impossible to understand a reality without undergoing the experience and the relationship with reality through the discovery of the gate of science. Thus, both the senses and the ratio work together to form knowledge, and mind are carried by the five senses into real knowledge. Finally, in the **axiological** dimension, Reconstructionism views the values based on the supernatural principles, namely by accepting universal, eternal natural values in accordance with the theological principle. Human nature is a potential emanation that comes from and is guided by God. Hence, mankind as a subject has the potential of both good and evil.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Teguh Wangsa Gandhi HW, *Filsafat Pendidikan Madzhab-Madzhab Filsafat Pendidikan* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2013), p. 189.

<sup>9</sup>Zuhairini, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1995), p. 29.

<sup>10</sup>Jalaluddin & Abdullah Idi, *Filsafat Pendidikan: Manusia, Filsafat dan Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama, 1997), p. 98.

### C. Research Methodology

The present study is a qualitative research. It is focused on the teachings and ideas of Kyai Dahlan in the context of character education for the younger generation with Al-'Asr as the spirit. Nevertheless, Kyai Dahlan was not a writer, but rather 'a man of action'. Hence, using Pierre Bourdieu's social practice: "(habitus x modal) + field = practice,"<sup>11</sup> by modifying the creative-imaginative relationship of the triadic pillar = (knowledge x person) + institution. In Bourdieu's perspective, *habitus* is a set of knowledge. In the present research, *habitus* is the worldview, beliefs, and values in the daily life of Kyai Dahlan. Furthermore, knowledge—in this study that specifically discusses "the theology of Al-'Asr"—is shaped by habitus rather than by memory.<sup>12</sup> This approach is effective to understand Kyai Dahlan's idea as a man of action. As for Bourdieu, the principle of "capital" is the social relationship. Among the capitals employed in the battle in the arena are cultural capital, economic capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Including cultural capital is one's inborn skills, way of speak, characteristics, etiquette, and so on. Furthermore, Waryani conceptualized Bourdieu's capital pillar into person pillar. Bourdieu divided the field into two: the field of restricted production and the field of large-scale production. Meanwhile, Waryani divided the field into little field (little community) and great field (global community).<sup>13</sup> Thus in the context of this study, Muhammadiyah organization is perceived as the little field, while other organizations (read: Muslims) including the nation and the international world are perceived as the great field.

The Bourdieurian's generative formula "(habitus x capital) + field = practices" is used to propose an approach in understanding the social reality of Muhammadiyah, dialectically. It is an approach that is designed to escape from subjectivism and objectivism. The authors devised the formulation as follows:

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<sup>11</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of The Judgment of Taste*, trans. Ricard Nice (UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1984), p. 101

<sup>12</sup>Jen Webb, Tony Schirato, & Geof Danaher, *Understanding Bourdieu* (London: SAGE Publication, 2002), p. 38–42.

<sup>13</sup>Waryani Fajar Riyanto, *Integrasi-Interkoneksi Keilmuan Birografi Intelektual M. Amin Abdullah (1953-...) Person, Knowledge, and Institution*, (Yogyakarta: Suka-Press, 2013), p. 78.

Pierre Bourdieu	Capital x	Habitus +	Arena =	Practice
Approach	Kyai Dahlan	Theology of <i>Al-'Asr</i>	Muhammadiyah	Character education
Type	Subjective	Objective	Inter-objective	Inter-subjective

In general, there are three backgrounds and benefits of this research, namely pragmatic background (person), historical background (institution), and academic background (knowledge). *First*, the pragmatic background is to revive the idea of Kyai Dahlan that has not been discussed previously. *Second*, the historical background of Muhammadiyah education—which has been carried out over a century. *Third*, the academic background of investigating the genealogy of the historical evolution and involution of Kyai Dahlan's notion, particularly the theology of Al-'Asr and its relation to character education. Hence, the present study integrates and interconnects Kyai Ahmad Dahlan (person), Muhammadiyah Educational institution (institution), and the theology of Al-'Asr (knowledge).

Amongst the pupils of Kyai Dahlan, K.R.H. Hadjid and Kyai Soedja' are the most informed sources for Kyai Dahlan's thoughts and aspirations. In fact, K.R.H. Hadjid wrote a book entitled "K.H.A. Dahlan: 7 Falsafah Ajaran dan 17 Kelompok ayat al-Qur'an" as the description of Kyai Dahlan's theological views. Likewise, Kyai Soedja' published "Islam Berkemajuan" where he explicated the attitudes and behaviours of Kyai Dahlan. Yet there is a manuscript allegedly came directly from Kyai Dahlan. *First*, a manuscript entitled "Tali Pengikat Hidup Manusia"<sup>14</sup> of the Almanac in 1923. *Second*, a manuscript entitled "Peringatan bagi sekalian Muslimin (Muhammadiyahin)" that was presented in the 1921 Islamic Congress in Cirebon and documented in the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Report (1922). These manuscripts are also attached in the appendix of Abdul Munir Mulkhan's "Pemikiran K.H.A. Dahlan dan Muhammadiyah," published by Bumi Aksara in 1990.

<sup>14</sup>*Tali Pengikat Hidup Manusia* is the transcript of Kyai Dahlan's speech in the Annual Congress of Muhammadiyah in December 1922. It was included in a book entitled *Pesan-Pesan Dua Pemimpin Besar Islam Indonesia; Kyai Ahmad Dahlan dan Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari* in 1986 by Penerbit Persatuan Yogyakarta with the author of Abdul Munir Mulkhan. Similar manuscript was also included in Charles Kurzman's work entitled *Modernist Islam: A sourcebook* (2002) with sub-title *The Humanity of Human Life*, p. 344-348.

## **D. Discussion**

Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan and Muhammadiyah are two sides of the same coin. They become a single “artefact” of the history of Kyai Dahlan as the founder of Muhammadiyah and initiator of the early movement of Muhammadiyah. This section will discuss the genealogy of Al-'Asr as the theological spirit behind the praxis of Kyai Dahlan's character education.

### **1. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan: a Religious Scholar**

Muhammad Darwisy<sup>15</sup> (the birth name of Kyai Dahlan) was born on Saturday, 19 November 1870. His father, Kyai Haji Abu Bakar, was the main sermon giver (*Khatib imam*) of the Kauman Great Mosque, Yogyakarta. His mother is Siti Aminah.<sup>16</sup> During his childhood, Kyai Dahlan was directly taught by his father in his own house. When he was eight years-old, he had completely recited the Qur'an and fluently read it. He continued to study jurisprudence to Kyai Haji Muhammad Saleh, and syntax to Kyai Haji Muchsin. His teachers are actually his brothers-in-law. His other teachers were K.H. Abdul Hamid and K.H. Muhammad Nur. Furthermore, he also learned astronomy to Kyai Raden H. Dahlan (Son of Kyai Termas).<sup>17</sup>

In 1889, Muhammad Darwis married Siti Walidah and after several months of the marriage, he went to Mecca to perform Hajj for eight months.<sup>18</sup> After the pilgrimage, Darwis met Imam Syafi'i Sayyid Bakri Syatha and gained the name of “Haji Ahmad Dahlan.” In 1892, a year after he returned home from Mecca, he was given a capital of 500 guilders to start his business as a merchant. Instead, he used it to buy books.

The turning point of young Ahmad Dahlan became a Kyai was when his father passed away in 1896. Traditionally, if a royal servant

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<sup>15</sup>Muhammad Darwisy bin Kyai Haji Abu Bakar bin Kyai Haji Muhammad Sulaiman bin Kyai Murtadla bin Kyai Ilyas, bin Demang Jurang Juru Kapindo bin Demang Jurang Juru Kapisan bin Maulana Sulaiman (Ki Ageng Gribig) bin Maulana Fadlullah bin Maulana Ainul Yakin bin Maulana Ishak bin Maulana Malik Ibrahim.

<sup>16</sup>Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan* (Yogyakarta, Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010), p. 109–111.

<sup>17</sup>M. Yusron Asrofie, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan: Pemikiran dan Kepemimpinannya* (Yogyakarta: MPKSDI PPM, 2005)

<sup>18</sup>In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, approximately 2,000 people went to Mecca for hajj every year. In 1886, the number increased to 5,000 and 7,000 in 1890, and 7,300 people in 1899-1909. In addition to the hajj, some went there to study religion, including Kyai Dahlan. See M. Yusron Asrofie, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan: Pemikiran dan Kepemimpinannya* (Yogyakarta: MPKSDI PPM, 2005).



of the Yogyakarta Sultanate passes away, the position will be replaced by the eldest son. Hence, Ahmad Dahlan became a *khatib* with new full name Khatib Amin Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan. His tasks were: (1) performing as Friday sermon preacher interchangeably with 8 sermon givers; (2) performing picket in the mosque porch jointly with 6 companions once a week; (3) becoming a member of the Advisory Board (*Raad*) of *Kraton* Islamic Law

In 1897, Kyai Dahlan claimed the urgency to conduct a deliberation on the direction of Qiblah since he recognized many mosques were not facing the Kaaba. Finally, the deliberation was carried out in 1898. Moreover, in 1899, Kyai Dahlan decided to renovate his family's mosque because it had been too small, narrow and shabby, and he also directed the new mosque with the correct Qibla direction. Nevertheless, a few months later, *Kyai Penghulu* M. Khalil Kamaludiningrat instructed the local community to destroy the new mosque.

In 1903, his eagerness for intellectuals triggered Kyai Dahlan to visit Mecca for the second Hajj. He stayed there for one year and a half. He learned many materials from several teachers, including jurisprudence to Kyai Makhful Termas, hadith studies to Mufti Syafii and Sa'id Babusyel, astronomy to Kyai Baceyan, and *qira'ah* to Shaykh Ali Mishri Makkah. He also had close relationship with Indonesian companions such as Shaykh Muhammad Khatib Al-Minangkabawy, Kyai Nawari from Banten, Kyai Mas Abdullah from Surabaya, and Kyai Fakhri Maskumambang from Gresik. After returning to Indonesia, he established a boarding school for his students who came from Pekalongan, Batang, Magelang, Solo, Semarang, Bantul Srandakan, Brosot and Kulonprogo.

In 1909, Kyai Dahlan was increasingly popular with broader association when he joined Budi Utomo—which was founded by Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo on 20 May 20, 1908. Kyai Dahlan was a member who frequently provided and infiltrated Islamic teachings to the board of Budi Utomo. In addition, he was also an Islamic religious teacher at Kweekschool (Kings School) in Jetis, Yogyakarta.

In 1911, Kyai Dahlan established *Sekolah Rakyat* called Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah. Furthermore, he founded Muhammadiyah on 12 November 1912 in Yogyakarta. The proposal for establishment of Muhammadiyah to the Dutch East Indies government was assisted by Budi Utomo. On 23 February 1923, Kyai Dahlan passed away in a relatively young age, around 54 or 55 years-old.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Haedar Nashir, *Muhammadiyah Gerakan Pembaruan* (Yogyakarta, Suara

K.R.H. Hadjid testified that Kyai Dahlan rarely argued about theology or classical kalam science. Kyai Dahlan never negated the current theological streams, for instance between *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah* and *Muktazilah*. He concentrated more on the functionalization of religion in public life.<sup>20</sup> Kyai Dahlan emphasized and reasserted the Qur'an and Sunnah as the only authentic sources of Islamic teachings, and which contain teachings based on the nature of humanity.<sup>21</sup>

In explaining the methodology of Qur'anic study, he once described, "Read one, two, or three verses in proper order (*tarteel*) and with contemplation (*tadabbur*): What is the meaning? What is the interpretation? What does it imply? Is it a prohibition and have you abandon it? Is it a mandatory command? Have we practiced the command?"<sup>22</sup> Essentially, Kyai Dahlan invited Muslims to return to the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as other relevant references. Ahmad Dahlan is a man of action, since he practiced more rather than promoting theories.

Nevertheless, it is bold that Kyai Dahlan was very concerned with Philosophy or *al-Mantiq*. It is implied from his words:

"The endless science of logic is *al-Mantiq*, while all sciences require the process of learning since no one understands names and languages without teachers. Likewise, these teachers can understand (the materials) from their teachers, and so forth. It indicates that human is powerless to know the origin of knowledge, except those who are guided by God, the All-knowing and All-wise."<sup>23</sup>

Kyai Dahlan learned knowledge through direct teachers. Moreover, he read a lot of books and Scriptures, ranging from astronomy to *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah*—which contains philosophical thought. He read Imam Syafi'i's Jurisprudence, Imam Ghazali's Sufism and Muhammad Abduh's and Ibn Taymiyyah's works. In the field of Islamic creed, Kyai Dahlan had similar outlook with the Salaf scholars.<sup>24</sup>

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Muhammadiyah, 2010), p. 109-111

<sup>20</sup>KRH. Hadjid, *Pelajaran KHA Dahlan: 7 Falsafah dan 17 Kelompok Ayat Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: MPI PPM, 2013), p. 20-21

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid*, p. 15-17.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid*, p. 65.

<sup>23</sup>KH. Ahmad Dahlan, "Tali Pengikat Hidup Manusia" issued in Album Muhammadiyah in 1923 (Yogyakarta: Hoofdbestuur Muhammadiyah Bagian Taman Pustaka, 1923).

<sup>24</sup>Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Warisan Intelektual K.H. Ahmad dahlan dan Amal Muhammadiyah*. (Yogyakarta: PT. Percetakan Persatuan, 1990), p. 64.

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Yusron Asrofie estimated that the early book studied by Kyai Dahlan was *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah* in the science of *aqā'id* (theology, *kalam*), Shafi'i schools in jurisprudence, and al-Ghazali's school of Sufism. After his second hajj from Mecca, Ahmad Dahlan began to read books about renewal movements, including *Risālat al-tawhīd* and *Tafsir juz' 'amma* by Muhammad Abduh, *Fil Bid'ah* by Ibn Taymiyyah, *at-Tawassul wal-Waseela* by Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Islam wal-Nashraniyyah* by Muhammad Abdu, and *Matan al-Hikam* by Atha'illah.<sup>25</sup> Basically, the theology of Kyai Dahlan is inspired by the rationalism of Muhammad Abduh and the Sufism of Ibn Atha'illah.

Kyai Dahlan had a propensity of being an ascetic yet different from the asceticism of Sufi leaders who promote *Tariqa (tarekat)*. In the context of renewal movement, Kyai Dahlan was transformative. Briefly, Kyai Dahlan was ascetic at the level of ideas, but transformative and revolutionary at the level of actions.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Kyai Dahlan had a lofty concern on the purification of Tawhid. Similar to Wahhabi, Kyai Dahlan was unyielding in exterminating all teachings and traditions that contaminate Tawhid. Kyai Dahlan also resembled an outstanding rationalist, *Mu'tazilah*, in which he employed Western education system that underlines intellectuality and ratios.<sup>27</sup>

Dawam Rahadjo suggested that the genealogy of Muhammadiyah thought came from three figures. *First*, Muhammad Abduh who inspires the focus of Muhammadiyah on education and science development. *Second*, M. Abdul Wahab who inspires Muhammadiyah in upholding the purification of Tawhid as the basis of rationality, and at the same time, promoting the materialistic, realistic and pragmatic ethics. Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah is less concerned on the materialistic ethics. In fact, the theology of Wahhabi is often opposed to culture. Consequently, Muhammadiyah has a propensity of 'absence' from the culture. It is distant from the cultural realm. *Third*, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan who constructed Muhammadiyah based on the social justice in *Al-Ma'un* and the social welfare in *Al-'Asr*. Nevertheless, in its advancement, the doctrine of *Al-Ma'un* is developed beyond the doctrine of *Al-'Asr*. Hence, it might be important to discuss the development of social welfare in Muhammadiyah.

Islam functions as social reform. The principle of Islam as a religion of action shall be realized in social and cultural movements.

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<sup>25</sup>M. Yusron Asrofie, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan*, p. 38.

<sup>26</sup>Muarif, *Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam: Sejarah dan Perkembangan Kweekschool Moehammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2015), p. 82-84.

<sup>27</sup>M. Yusron Asrofie, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan*, p. 101.

Theologically, it is grounded on the basis of cohesion between faith and good deeds, as well as the compulsory to preach. Such a notion apparently refers to Muhammad Abduh in “Tafsir juz’ `Amma”, particularly Surah Al-’Asr. It mentions “yamliku iradatahum” as a belief that can dominate one’s will or desire. Thus, the theology advocated by Kyai Dahlan can be referred to as functional theology,<sup>28</sup> cultural theology,<sup>29</sup> inclusive theology,<sup>30</sup> or “theology of good deeds/ *amal salih*” that generates reform, transformation and even social reconstruction.

## **2. Al-’Asher School: The Practices of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan’s Character Education**

K.R.H. Hadjid suggested that Kyai Dahlan contemplated and reflected Surah Al-’Asr for more than eight months. In the Tafsir juz’ `Amma by Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, there are 37 surahs, but Kyai Dahlan focused only on Surah Al-’Asr. It was daily read to the older men at 07:00 am and to the recitation of Aisyiyah at 08:00 am. Moreover, the younger generation was commanded to write and memorize it after the Zuhr prayer.<sup>31</sup>

Kyai Djazuli, a teacher at Madrasah Mu’allimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (1926-1956), narrated that K.H. Ahmad Dahlan taught about and repeated the essence of Surah Al-’Asr anytime and anywhere.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Nyai Walidah requested him to teach about Al-’Asr to women workers in Kauman. This recitation was called *wAl-’Asri* (Mawardi, 1978). In this religious lecture, Al-’Asr was discussed for more than eight months. Due to the determination of Kyai Ahmad Dahlan in examining Surah Al-’Asr, the Muslims of Pekalongan gave Kyai Dahlan the nickname *Kyai wAl-’Asri*. By pointing out the

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<sup>28</sup>Achmadi, *Merajut Pemikiran Cerdas Muhammadiyah: Perspektif Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010), p. 26.

<sup>29</sup>Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Teologi Kebudayaan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995), p. 38.

<sup>30</sup>Achmadi, *Merajut Pemikiran*, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup>KRH Hadjid, *Pelajaran KHA Dahlan*, p. 80.

<sup>32</sup>Information from the leaders of Muhammadiyah Pekajangan/Pekalongan in the 1970s. The Regional Leader of Muhammadiyah Purworejo claimed that KH Djazuli came from Grabag Purworejo and lived in Sangubanyu Kutoarjo. He founded *Poliklinik Muhammadiyah Grabag*—where Sarbini was a former nurse in this polyclinic. Later, Sarbini joined the TNI, became a Commander of the Diponegoro Division and subsequently, the Minister of Veterans RI during the New Order. Lt. Gen. Sarbini was among the initiators of *Universitas Islam Sultan Agung*. His name is enshrined into the name of a famous building in Jakarta.

meaning of Al-'Asr, Kyai Dahlan aimed at encouraging his students to be accustomed in having a disciplined, punctual ethos and always doing good deeds.<sup>33</sup>

The consistency of Kyai Dahlan in reading, reflecting, practicing and repeating Surah Al-'Asr led to rampant discourse and activities of testament, guidance, sermon, *tabligh*, propagation of *amar makruf nahi munkar* and *jihad*. Over time, it became a topic of discussion among the younger generation and the elderly, as well as among women in *Kampung Kauman* and its neighbourhood. Ultimately, it stimulated other movements including religious lectures, courses, madrassas and *langgar* (smaller and privately owned mosque), as well as speeches in public places and events (e.g., wedding ceremony), broadcasts of magazines and associations such as Taqwimuddin, Ikhwanul Muslimin and Fatkhul Asrar Miftahus-Sa'adah.

**a. *Pengajian Wal-'Asri: Character Education for Young Women***

After the establishment of Muhammadiyah, Nyai Dahlan propounded an idea of organizing a special religious lecture for underprivileged women workers and girls in *Kampung Kauman*. Those who used to be unemployed and gossipers were gathered to learn about religious teachings. This recitation was called *Pengajian wAl-'Asri*, which was after 'Asr prayer until Magrib prayer. It was started by examining the substance of Surah Al-'Asr. It was repeated and practiced for about eight months.<sup>34</sup>

Kyai Soedja'<sup>35</sup> claimed that Kyai Dahlan also contributed in establishing *Pengajian wAl-'Asri*. He narrated the recitation as follows:

After so many years the women have been galvanized and ignited (Bung Karno called it "digembleng dan digodog") to worship Allah and have moral characters based on the Islamic teachings, in order

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<sup>33</sup>Sukriyanto, AR., "Menangkap Pesan Surat Al-'Asr", p. 6.

<sup>34</sup>M. Sukriyanto AR., "Gerakan Pencerahan Menuju Indonesia Berkemajuan: Perspektif Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan." Paper presented in *Pengajian Ramadhan 1446 h*, in UMY (Sunday, 21 June 2015).

<sup>35</sup>Muhammad Syoedja' was a pupil and cadre of KHA. Dahlan. Together with brother and companions, including Haji Fakhruddin, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, Haji Muhammad Zain, Haji Muhammad Mokhtar, KHA. Badawi and KRH. Hadjid, he initiated the Charity and Services (*Amal Usaha*) of Muhammadiyah. He was also the formulator and interpreter of the movement, the first leader of *Penolong Kesengsaraan Oemoem* (PKO), initiator of RS PKU Muhammadiyah, founder of house for the poor and orphanage, and pioneer of *Persatuan Djemaah Hadji Indonesia* (PDHI).

to improve the quality and increase one's value in the Sight of Allah, wal-'Ashri Course was established. The students are the members of Aisyiyah who have the solemnity and ability to attend the course and they are required to dress based on Islamic laws particularly when they leave their house and go to the course. They are required to wear veils, either *madawwarah* or *mahramah*, so others cannot see even a hair on their heads. They also dress-up as close as possible so others cannot see their bodies except the palms of their hands. In addition, they must cover their heels by wearing socks and sandals or shoes. Also gargle. The members of Aisyiyah who are aware and possess such abilities may join "wal-'Ashri Course." Since the establishment of "*Pengajian wal-'Ashri*", many members join the recitation. By the establishment of the course, automatically it forms the association with its administrators as a particular division called Aisyiyah division of wal-'Ashri. The course is still held by the K.H.A. Dahlan himself and is submitted to his brother-in-law, K.H. Ibrahim, during his absence or visit to other towns.<sup>36</sup>

Many stories about *Pengajian wal-'Ashri* show the speciality of this recitation, including a narration as follows:

Once, Kyai Dahlan had been sick for several months so he had to get a treatment in Tosari, East Java. During his absence, morning recitation for young women at 08.00 am was led by Kyai Ibrahim (the Second Chairman of Muhammadiyah). After gaining his health, Kyai Dahlan began to give religious lecture for young women in a special recitation which was held once a week, every Monday afternoon. The recitation was called *Pengajian wal-'Ashri*. His students were about 30 young women. In this recitation, Kyai Dahlan discussed more about *tafakkur*, *muhasabah*, and *amaliyah*. As for those who joined this group should accept several requirements, namely to attend the recitation regularly and provide information for an absence as well as to cover all intimate parts of the body by wearing *mahromah*, *mudawwarah* (veil), and socks.<sup>37</sup>

The naming based on Surah Al-'Asr was later enshrined in an institution namely *Pengajian wal-'Ashri*, in which its focus is

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<sup>36</sup>M. Soedja', *Cerita Tentang Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan Catatan Haji Muhammad Syoedja'* (Yogyakarta: Rancang Grafis, 2003), p. 148-149. It was re-published in *Islam Berkemajuan: Kisah Perjuangan K.H. Ahmad Dahlan dan Muhammadiyah Masa Awal* (Jakarta: Al-Wasat, 2009).

<sup>37</sup>KRH. Hadjid, *Pelajaran KHA Dahlan*, p. 152-153.

on fostering the personality or education of female character and empowerment with numerous life skills.<sup>38</sup>

**b. Wal-'Ashri Cadre School: Character Education for Youth**

In addition to *Pengajian wal-'Ashri*, Kyai Dahlan also pioneered “Wal-'Ashri Cadre School,” which was later led by K.R.H. Hadjid. Doctor Kery, an obstetrician who was born in Merauke and now lives in Sidoarjo, testified when he was a student at Muhammadiyah Elementary School, his teacher always started the class with Surah Al-'Asr. Malik Fadjar also confirmed that the students of Standardschool Muhammadiyah Suronatan always read Surah Al-'Asr before going home. The name and ethos of Al-'Asr School were embedded in the young people at that time, hence they named the field where they used to play football with “Lapangan Asri (Asri Field).” The field was also utilized to seek funding for Muhammadiyah activities, in which for several occasions of Muhammadiyah Congress, Muhammadiyah Youth contributed significant financial support.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the field was jointly bought by some people who endowed ½ m<sup>2</sup>, 1 m<sup>2</sup>, 10 m<sup>2</sup>, 100 m<sup>2</sup> and so on. The field was included as the property of the foundation led by H. Abdulgani, and was free for any parties. Nevertheless, it was used by the Muhammadiyah Youth and the Football Association of Hisbul Wathan (PSHW). In 1940, a stadium with high standard completed with complete stands, was built in the field. The architect was Ir. Suratin, one of the founders and chairman of PSII.<sup>40</sup>

Currently, the former *Lapangan Asri* becomes Asri Medical Center (AMC) on Jl. Hos Cokroaminoto No. 10, Yogyakarta. It is also known as the former campus of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) before it is moved to the new campus on Jl. Lingkar Selatan, Kasihan, Bantul Yogyakarta. Moreover, *Lapangan Asri* has its history as the field where Muhammadiyah performed Eid Prayers for the first time,<sup>41</sup> namely at the Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha in 1925. They were

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<sup>38</sup>This group specially organized recitation for women who sympathized with Muhammadiyah. In 1922, it was renamed into Aisyiyah as the first autonomous organization. It was led by Siti Walidah, the wife of Kyai Ahmad Dahlan.

<sup>39</sup>Sukriyanto, AR., “Gerakan Pencerahan,” p. 6.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup>Interview with K.H.M. Djuwaini, Vice-chairman of Majelis Tarjih, in 1984 in PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital, in “Sejarah Organisasi dan Majelis Tarjih”. <http://www.fatwatarjih.com/p/history-of-tarjih.html> (Accessed on 04 April 2009).

actually shocking the public in general and gained strict reaction from the “conservatives” and the Dutch East Indies since they were perceived to bother public order and security.<sup>42</sup>

### **3. Al-Ma’un Movement: Manifestation of Al-’Asr Education**

Basically, the nature of Muhammadiyah movement is good deeds imbued by the spirit of Al-’Asr. Sukriyanta AR suggested this theology motivated the spirit for social movements. One of them is “Al-Ma’un movement” as the realization or actions in accordance with the Qur’an, which ultimately produce social praxis. It might be difficult to put forth in the book of exegesis which gives an explanation of the intent of Surah al-Ma’un as understood by Kyai Dahlan as social actions. Kyai Dahlan interpreted Al-Ma’un (useful thing) profoundly as the basis for the establishment of hospital, orphanage, nursing home and house for the poor, which favour of the marginalised groups, proletariat.<sup>43</sup> Essentially, Al-Ma’un implies that ritual worship is meaningless if the actors ignore social actions. It reaffirms that those who abandon orphans and neglect poverty are religious liars.

The partiality to marginalised groups prompted K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in establishing *Fathul Asrar Miftahus Saadah* or school for street children. In addition to Hizbul Wathan scouting movement, youth recitation association was also established for youth cadre. This association was *Fathul Asrar Miftahus Saadah*. The participants were mostly young people who were strayed. They were lacked of moral and mental education.<sup>44</sup>

The youth association is named *Fathul Asrar Miftahus Saadah*—which means ‘to open the secrets and keys of happiness.’ Kyai Dahlan had special concern on high number of younger generation who were not mediated and nurtured appropriately. Consequently, they were wild and badly behaved. Kyai Dahlan invited them to meet him, yet only half arrived. They guessed Kyai Dahlan would punish them, but on the contrary, Kyai Dahlan charmingly and amusingly invited them to have a meeting and banquet. The meetings were done several times and finally, they were attracted by the teachings of Kyai Dahlan.<sup>45</sup> Currently, such a movement is represented by the school for street children.

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<sup>42</sup>Djarnawi Hadikusumo, *Dari Jamaluddin al-Afghani sampai KHA Dahlan* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Persatuan, n.d.), p. 80.

<sup>43</sup>Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Kyai Ahmad Dahlan: Jejak Pembaruan Sosial dan Kemanusiaan*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), p. 6.

<sup>44</sup>Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Warisan Intelektual*, p. 65.

<sup>45</sup>M. Yusron Asrofie, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan*, p. 93.



The method used by Kyai Dahlan to approach the younger generation in Kauman was constructive for the development of Muhammadiyah. In addition to invite them to his house, he also provided facilities for hobby and sport as well as a place to sleep. During prayer time, he gathered them to pray and later have a dialogue. His house became an enchanting sanctuary. Subsequently, he decided to establish a youth education park called *Fathul Asrar Miftahus Saadah*.<sup>46</sup> It was a medium for the younger generation in supporting Islamic reform movement led by Kyai Dahlan.

Kyai Dahlan taught Surah Al-'Asr for many days to the extent his students were bored with the material. When his students questioned why he repeated it over and over instead of moving to the next material, Kyai Dahlan returned the question, "Have you understood the meaning? Have you practiced it?" Such a paradigm becomes an interesting story of Kyai Dahlan in teaching the legend of Al-Ma'un.<sup>47</sup>

It was narrated that one day, Kyai Dahlan provided the commentary course to his students. When it came to Surah Al-Ma'un, it seemed that the discussion was stagnant without any progress. Kyai Dahlan asked his students to repeat it over and over, unlike other surahs. It was Soedja' who protested the material directly to Kyai Dahlan. Soedja' was known for his brave and fearless character. He is the elder brother of K.H. Fakhruddin. He is tall, rigid and stern with fierce eyes and face. Sutrisno Kutoyo equalized Soedja' with a figure in *Wayang*, namely Bratasena or Werkudara whose figure is robust and valiant.<sup>48</sup> The dialogue between young Soedja' and Kyai Dahlan occurred at dawn is as follows:

Young Soedja' : "Kyai, why we keep reading this surah?"

Kyai Dahlan : "Have you understood it entirely?"

Young Soedja' : "Surely, we have memorized it, Kyai"

Kyai Dahlan : "Then, have you practiced it?"

Young Soedja' : "What should we practice? Have we recited Surah Al-Ma'un many times after Surah Al-Fatihah during our prayers?"

Kyai Dahlan : "It is not my point. It means to practice it, do it! I presume all of you have not realized it. Well, starting from this morning, walk around to look for the poor.

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<sup>46</sup>Ahmad Adaby Darban, *Sejarah Kauman: Menguak identitas Kampung Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010), p. 47.

<sup>47</sup>Robert W. Hefner, Sukidi Mulyadi, & Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Api Pembaharuan Kyai Ahmad Dahlan*, (Yogyakarta: Multi Pressindo, 2008), p. 74–75.

<sup>48</sup>Sutrisno Kutoyo, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan dan Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1998), p. 112–113.

If you have done it, take them to your house. Prepare soap for them to have a proper bath, give them clean clothes to wear, serve them meal and later, bed to have a rest. Now, I finish our discussion and all of you shall do what I command”.

The answer given by Kyai Dahlan certainly stunned his students, particularly because they never had religious teacher who interpreted a surah and asked them to implement it for real. Kyai Dahlan then organized a charity for the poor and homeless people. He brought all students to the market to give donation to the poor, homeless and orphaned children. Additionally, they gathered street beggars and taken them the Great Mosque (Yogyakarta) where Kyai Dahlan had supplied soap and proper clothes. Kyai Dahlan and his students began very active in looking after the poor and orphaned children. Furthermore, they also involved the community by distributing their donation in the forms of soaps, clothes, and money.

Considering the intensification of the movement, Muhammadiyah established *Penolong Kesengsaraan Oemoem*/PKO or literally, Assistance for the Relief of Public Suffering, with Kyai Haji Soedja as the leader. In its development, PKO also initiated a hospital called “Rumah Sakit Muhammadiyah,” which had the same facility and infrastructure with other hospitals. It surely reflects the educational paradigm of Kyai Dahlan. As a reformer, he perceived education must change the understanding and character of learners in order to have the critical and creative power, so as to be able to carry out social reforms in the society. Education should not solely deal with cognitive aspect (knowledge transfer), but also with transformation of values and critical awareness thus learners will be able to perform social reconstruction.

#### **4. Pure Heart and Compassion: The Ethical Foundation of Cosmopolitan and Universal Humanity**

For K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, philosophy is the key to the development of the pure mind, in addition to understanding religious diversity (pluralism). Abdul Munir Mul Khan explicated that the aim of Islamic teachings is the salvation of the world, to prevent human from loss and destruction (*khusr*) based on compassion. The realization of this aim is manifested in modern schools, scouting, orphanages, hospitals,

and empowerment of the marginalised group in modern management system and organization.<sup>49</sup>

In “Kesatuan Hidup Manusia,” Kyai Dahlan affirmed the importance of universal humanity and the principles of global ethics and the vision of Islamic cosmopolitanism. He declared the notion as follows:

“Understanding the unity of human life is a magnificent knowledge that covers the Earth and humanity. All mankind shall unite. Despite of their diverse nationalities, they have the same ancestors, the Prophet Adam and Eve. So, all mankind come from one flesh and blood. To be united in heart. By uniting the hearts, mankind can live together in the world peacefully”.<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, the Muhammadiyah movement is designed based on the view that the truth and righteous of Islam is in its benefit to all human beings without boundaries of religion and nation. The Holy Qur’an shall be understood with pure heart and mind and subsequently, practiced with compassion. Briefly, the advancement of civilization and Science, Technology and Art should be aimed for the salvation of the world and universal humanity.<sup>51</sup> The spirit of humanity based on compassion has lucratively united people from diverse nationalities and religions. Social actions carried out by Kyai Dahlan are on the basis that the truth (*al-haqq*) and the righteous of Islam shall be advantageous regardless of one’s nation and religion. The Qur’an is comprehended with pure heart and mind, also compassion. From here, the civilization, and the salvation of the world and humanity will be developed.<sup>52</sup>

Kyai Dahlan understood pure mind as the ability to think based on the facts, accurately and critically situate the relativity of the science so as to be useful and valuable for the life of all mankind. Pure heart and compassion reflect the willingness to control covetousness, to sacrifice, to struggle for righteous and truth and to use the virtue of the world as a path to achieve the virtue of the afterlife.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan: Jejak Pembaruan.*, p. 73.

<sup>50</sup>Kesatuan Hidup Manusia 123.

<sup>51</sup>See Praeadvies Dari Hoofdbestuur Perserikatan Moehammadiyah in Yogyakarta on “Kongres Islam Besar Cirebon dan Kesatuan Hidup Manusia”, published in 1922 and 1924 in Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Warisan Intelektual*, p. 107.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>Robert W. Hefner, Sukidi Mulyadi, & Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Api Pembaharuan*,

Furthermore, Kyai Dahlan emphasized pure heart as the piety of the mind. It is the foundation of spiritual piety. It is also a basis of open, critical, and creative attitudes in seeking knowledge.<sup>54</sup> This concept leads to an inclusive-intersubjectivity in religiosity. Kyai Dahlan stated, “Those who truly find it good for most people and those who think deeply and broadly ... in determining good-evil, right-wrong is only legitimate law and based on a pure heart.” In addition to pure heart, Kyai Dahlan also mentioned the function of pure mind in which he reasserted that science will be useful only if it is realized based on circumstances.

Kyai Dahlan suggested that in case human mind is incapable of resolving a problem, then it has a means to cope with it, namely “pure heart”. The pure heart has its basic nature of not being allured by the profane world. Therefore, those who have intellectuality must keep their minds for not corrupting the pure heart.<sup>55</sup> It will be a grave destruction if the main humanitarian device of any problem is not solved with pure heart or pure mind. Science must be detached from worldly desire as the deity. Such a deity will only lead to distraction for what is right and what is wrong. Those reigned by worldly desire usually fail to control themselves. Finally, they carry out harms and destructions. Therefore, science must be based on pure heart in order to bring goodness instead of evil on the Earth.

Pure mind is common sense. The health of one’s mind can be attained if it is constantly poured with science through logic. Meanwhile, its perfection will be obtained if one can distinguish and balance between right and wrong, good and evil, which do not corrupt the pure heart and not bring sorrow and misery either. Kyai Dahlan stated that the need for education is more important than the need for food.<sup>56</sup>

The ethos of compassion proposed by Kyai Dahlan is based on the standpoint that the Qur’an shall be understood with pure heart and pure mind, and practiced with compassion. Essentially, Islam is a religion of compassion and peace, to promote the development of civilization, the salvation of the world and the universal humanity.<sup>57</sup> Compassion as the basis for the partiality to the oppressed/marginalised groups attracted a Javanese elite, dr. Soetomo, to joining as Muhammadiyah’s medical

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p. 107.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>55</sup>Abdul Munir Mul Khan, *Kyai Ahmad Dahlan: Jejak Pembaruan*, p. 129.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid*, p. 144-145.

<sup>57</sup>See Praeadvies Dari Hoofdbestuur Perserikatan Mochammadiyah...

adviser. Along with a Dutch doctor, he managed Muhammadiyah hospital **for free**.<sup>58</sup> For dr. Soetomo as Javanese elite, compassion is a critique toward Darwinism—a modern Western view on the power of natural selection over individual power. Darwinism ignores the power of the weak to become a strong one.<sup>59</sup> Such a critical view is implied on dr. Soetomo's statement as follows:

A new mindset arises among general principles, namely **the principle of compassion**. It certainly neither allows nor provides any opportunity to the benefit of oneself. Nevertheless, it requires sacrifice to achieve **a noble life for the people**.<sup>60</sup>

The management of Muhammadiyah hospital involved several Dutch Christian doctors who **contributed voluntarily**, while Muhammadiyah schools were also devised with modern system to improve the living standard and contribution of Muslims in the modern world. Furthermore, people in general and Muslims in particular began to realize the benefits of working with all components of society regardless of religion and nationality for the growth and prosperity of the people. The target of the pioneers of Muhammadiyah's programs is to change the world view of people toward the profane world through education, propagation of religious teachings, publication, mosque building, translation of the Qur'an, training and education for rural and non-affiliated teachers, health and economic assistance for the poor.

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<sup>58</sup>Initiated from *Penolong Kesengsaraan Oemoem* (PKO) Muhammadiyah, Health Center was officially established on 14 September 1924, on Jl. Sidodadi No. 57 Surabaya. It was attended by KH. Soedja', H. Hadhikusumo, the Director of C.B.Z Simpang dr. Tamm, dr. Soetomo and KH. Mas Mansyur as the host. In the speech conveyed by dr. Soetomo, he expressed his and other doctors' willingness to provide voluntary assistance to PKO Muhammadiyah in this case the Health Center. They included dr. Soetopo, dr. Sardjono, dr. Heerdjan, dr. Soewarno, dr. Soeratman, dr. Soehardjo, dr. Soerjatin, dr. Soekardi, dr. Irsan, dr. Muwaladi, dr. Saleh, dr. Djojohusodo, dr. J.W. Grootings, dr. Aziz, dr. P.H.F. Neynhoff, dr. A.J.F. Tilung and dr. Rabain, who would provide energy based on their schedule and expertise. dr. Soedjono was appointed as a permanent doctor at PKU Muhammadiyah based on their deliberation. Approximately 31.2 months after its establishment, PKU Muhammadiyah had provided medication assistance for 3,975 patients. In 1925, it moved to a more spacious building on Jl. Karangtombok (Pegirian), which was once visited by Governor General J.P. van J.P. van Limburg Stirum. Retrieved from <http://rsmuhammadiyahjatim.com/rs-pku-muhammadiyah-surabaya>.

<sup>59</sup>Robert W. Hefner, Sukidi Mulyadi, Abdul Munir Mulkhan..., p. 115.

<sup>60</sup>Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Kyai Ahmad Dahlan: Jejak Pembaruan*, p. 83–84.

Zakat al mal, Zakat al-Fitr, sacrificial animals and *infaq* were managed systematically in a modern way to enhance the people's standard of living toward a modern and prosperous society. Automatically, people will abandon the tradition of superstition, myth and churafat and move to science and technology.<sup>61</sup>

## **5. Al-'Asr Philosophy and Educational Philosophy of Social Reconstructionism**

Surah Al-'Asr was deliberately chosen by Kyai Dahlan since it has powerful values and character, and encourages the work ethos. They include: *First*, imaginative. This character is the inspiration of the phrase *wAl-'Asr* (for the future or for the time to move forward). Character education should stimulate students to have the ability to think ahead, think beyond the times (progressive) and dream great (imaginative). It is expected that education will equip learners to see opportunities, challenges, threats and strengths to devise strategies to reach the dream. In other words, a winner must dream big. It is in line with the educational philosophy of Social Reconstructionism, the world society is in a serious crisis, if the current practices are not fundamentally changed, the civilization that we know will be ruined.

*Second*, religious. The phrase *alladzina aamanu* (believers) in Surah Al-'Asr implies the guidance that directs human behaviour so as to have a pure heart (*ma'rifat*: knowing God and always be watched over by God) in each step, move and attempt to be a winning generation. Personal learners need strong faith and pure monotheism so that each struggle is helped by God. In Reconstructionism, the instructional methods should be based on democratic principles that are based on a genuine intelligence. If formal education is an integral part of social solutions in the modern world crisis, it must actively advocate social change.<sup>62</sup>

*Third*, creative power. It is a character of a generation which capable of instituting the good deeds as implied in "*wa amilu as-shalihah*" in Surah Al-'Asr. The power of faith and religiosity must be accompanied by creative actions and skills that are advantageous to the society and the universe. Nevertheless, humans are equipped with the intellect that gives birth to creativity. Those who want to survive and be a winner in

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<sup>61</sup>Abdul Munir Mul Khan, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan: Jejak Pembaruan*, p. 216–217. See also *Kompas*, Friday, 4 December 2009.

<sup>62</sup>George R. Knight, *Filsafat Pendidikan* (Yogyakarta: Gama Media, 2007), p. 185-190.

these modern days, the key word is “creative.” In the perspective of the educational philosophy of Social Reconstructionism, the only effective solution to the world crisis is the creation of a universal social order. The formal education can be the main agent in the social reconstruction order (Muhammadiyah).

*Fourth*, collaborative power. In addition to being creative, the most important thing for a winning generation is collaborative power. The spirit for creativity entails the capability to collaborate and share as implied by “*tawasau bil haqq.*” It shows the importance of communicative skills to interact with the global community. Hence, the fluency of foreign languages seems to be crucial. Through collaboration and global interaction, more uniqueness will open further creativity and innovation. Therefore, in Reconstructionism, the adjustment to the social transformation and development is a result of the advance of science and technology. Reconstructionist describes the effect or outcome and the process. Ultimately, experiences and activities that are continually evolving and transforming become part of education.<sup>63</sup>

*Fifth*, Competitive. The last character contained in Surah Al-Asr is “competitive” as the essence of patience. Because life is a struggle, it requires “patience” as implied from “*tawasau bis shabr.*” In other words, learners should be equipped with “Resilience” to face the reality. Therefore, the ethos of patience is the culmination of moral characters. It will guide the learners to be the winner. In addition, it will lead to noble behaviour such as humble, caring, appreciative, peace and be the blessing of the universe.

The spirit for struggle owned by Kyai Dahlan<sup>64</sup> did not occur in a vacuum. He built a civilization in a social episteme and period which required him to reform Islamic teachings. The spirit of Al-‘Asr inspired Kyai Dahlan to think and act visionary beyond his era. The Islamic reform and Islamic modernization from Islamic thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1787) from Saudi Arabia, Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838-1897) from Egypt who wrote *Urwatul Wustqa*, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) with his *Tafsir Al-Manar* and his pupil, Moh. Rosyid Ridha (1856-1935).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Abdur Rachman Assegaf, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Hadhari Berbasis Integratif-Interkonektif* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2011), p. 207-208.

<sup>64</sup>Junus Salam, *Riwayat Hidup K.H.A. Dahlan Amal dan perjoangannya* (Djakarta: Depot Pengadjaran Moehammadijah, 1968).

<sup>65</sup>In 1744, Abdul Wahab with the support of the Kingdom of Su‘ud commenced a renewal movement based on Hambali School and Ibn Taymiyyah’s anti-sufism. Wahhabi

In his era, Kyai Dahlan was confronted with a multidimensional crisis (*laa fii khusrin*) endured by Muslims in Indonesia. Islamic teachings were contaminated by the conservatism, formalism and traditionalism. Muslims experienced backwardness in the aspects of economics, politics, education and culture. It occurred due to several factors, including the widespread practices of mysticism, feudalism, Dutch colonialism, and Hinduism/Buddhism infiltration in Islamic teachings. Saddened by the condition, Kyai Dahlan pioneered Islamic awakening in Indonesia with the basis of Al-‘Asr theology through the establishment of Muhammadiyah.

Moreover, in the context of civilization, there are four prerequisites for building a major civilization as contained in the theology of Al-‘Asr. The first pillar is faith (the paradigm of monotheism, the vision of civilization, worldview and ideology) as a fundamental pillar due to its essence, which is to present Allah in daily life as implied from the word “*amanu*.” According to Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, tawhid or monotheism is the essence of Islamic civilization.<sup>66</sup> It is the first determinant principle in Islam, its culture, and its civilization. Kyai Dahlan perceived that religion is not a raw material that can be processed instantly, but instead Islam is the religion of *fitrah*.<sup>67</sup> Later, the paradigm of Muhammadiyah civilization is institutionalized by the successors of Kyai Dahlan into the ideology and official decision of the organization. It is called the “Manhaj of Muhammadiyah Movement.”<sup>68</sup>

The second pillar is the civilization actions as manifested in Charity and Services (*Amal Usaha*) of Muhammadiyah as implied in the word ‘*amilush saliha* (good deeds). Geertz (2010) outlined culture as a set of ideas and creative process of inherited conceptions that colour the life movement is intended to face the decline of religion and the practice of heresy, and to deeply understand Tawhid. In the mid-19th century, Jamaluddin promoted purification of faith and modernization of education. He wanted to unite Muslims through Pan-Islamism. The attempt was continued by his pupil, Muhammad Abduh. The chain of renewal was followed by Rashid Rida. He led the Salafi movement that was in line with the modernists in refusing Madzabism, but to return to the Qur’an and Sunnah. See Yusron Asrofi, *Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan*, p. 19-20.

<sup>66</sup>Isma’il Raji Al-Faruqi, *Tauhid* (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 1982), p. 16.

<sup>67</sup>KRH. Hadjid, *Pelajaran KHA Dahlan*, p. 85.

<sup>68</sup>The Manhaj of Muhammadiyah Movement: The Five Affairs (*Masalah Lima*), the Preface of Statutes, the Characteristics of Muhammadiyah, Faith Pledge and Aspirations of Muhammadiyah Life (*Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-Cita Hidup Muhammadiyah*), Khittah Muhammadiyah, 12 Steps of Muhammadiyah, The Statement of a Century of Muhammadiyah, *Indonesia Berkemajuan: Rekonstruksi Kehidupan Bernegara yang Bermakna*, and *Guidelines for an Islamic Life for Muhammadiyah Members (Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah)*.



of a society.<sup>69</sup> Kyai Dahlan has initiated the Muhammadiyah civilization movement in the real life. In the early days of Muhammadiyah, Kyai Dahlan focused the movement on four divisions, namely: Education, *Taman Pustaka* (literacy), *Tabligh* (conveyance of the messages of Islam), and *Penolong Kesengsaraan Oemom* (PKO).<sup>70</sup> Subsequently, in its first century, Muhammadiyah concentrated its movement in the realms of education, health, and social services. Furthermore, in its second century, Muhammadiyah expanded its movement as indicated by the new trident of Community Empowerment Assembly (MPM), Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC), and Amil Zakat, Infaq and Shadaqah (LAZISMU). For Muhammadiyah, such civilization actions are the functionality of Islamic theology or teachings.

The third pillar is science, technology and art as implied from “*wa tawashau bil haqq*”, does science question truth? *Al-haqq* is understood as a symbol of science since the truth is not always absolute, but also relative. This relative truth is science and technology. Moreover, history shows the sophisticated culture or civilization is always in line with advanced science and technology. Furthermore, it is increasingly holistic: science (cognitive), technology (skill or psychomotor), and art (affective). Kyai Dahlan often promulgated the religion of reason and progressive Islam. Therefore, in the context of science and technology, Muhammadiyah is committed in promoting *tajdid al-jaari* (continued renewal) movement also sustainable development with meaning. However, the significance of science, technology and art is obvious.

The fourth pillar is a morality or moral characters as interpreted from “*watawasha bi al-shabr*.” Patience is a symbol of morality, the highest moral character which gives the clue that the main civilization must be built on the main morality.<sup>71</sup> Religious intersubjectivity is a support of global ethic. An intersubjective religion is a type of spirituality that is willing to open up, to share with other traditions of religious spirituality that live in the history of humanity in the universe.

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<sup>69</sup>Clifford Geertz, “Biographical Memories,” *Proceedings of the American philosophical society*, 2010, Vol. 154, No. 1.

<sup>70</sup>Al-Maun is the main ethos of PKO division, meanwhile Al-'Asr is the main ethos of School, *Tabligh* and *Taman Pustaka* divisions. Hence, al-Maun as realized in PKO is the practice of knowledge and teachings gained from school, recitals and other sources.

<sup>71</sup>M. Amin Abdullah, “*Ihsan dan Tasawwuf dalam Pemikiran Islam Klasik dan Kontemporer*,” paper presented in *Pengajian Ramadan 1434 H., Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah*, Yogyakarta, 3 Ramadan 1434/11 July 2013.

Similarly, Hans Kung offered global ethic that proposes: a commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life; a commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order; a commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life lived in truthfulness; a commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women; and the principle of humanity.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, he idealizes global ethic as a mutual solution based on the enforcement of universal humanity values. Likewise, Kyai Dahlan suggested the leaders to be united because all mankind come from one flesh and blood. Disputes and conflict between them will only cause loss and destruction (*khusr*, clash of civilization). Without global ethic, public civility will not be realized in a modern society. In the current era of global citizenship and borderless society, believers of any religion<sup>73</sup> and anywhere cannot evade to raise this issue.

The description above indicates that Muhammadiyah is fundamentally the theology of good deeds (*amal salih*)—which becomes the spirit to build a new modern civilization. It is demonstrated by the spirit to move ahead, being critical, corrective-constructive (*tausiyah bil haq* dan *tausiyah bis shabr*). Al-Ma'un movement is a manifestation of Al-'Asr theology or good deeds that will be discussed further. It is the spirit to perform good deeds (*amal salih*) and build civilization in the life of nation and state. The method employed by Kyai Dahlan to reflect Al-'Asr is effective and strategic to enhance the national life and the progress of mankind. Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah elite as the successors of Kyai Dahlan seemed to be less successful in seizing the character of Muhammadiyah as a socio-cultural movement. Kuntowijoyo's critique in his book 'Muhammadiyah Tanpa Masjid,' Muhammadiyah is a cultural movement, but the absence of culture becomes the note for the second century ethos. Therefore, Muhammadiyah education shall generate a new culture and abandon the old culture.

The aim of the Social Reconstructionism in education is that Muhammadiyah educational institutions serve as the center for social, economic and political changes. It is their duty to create 'social engineers' or citizens who have the goal and capacity to radically transforming the face of 'today' society. Thus, the goal of Muhammadiyah education

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<sup>72</sup>Hans Kung, *Islam: Past, Present, & Future*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), p. 502. See also Hans Kung, *Etika Ekonomi-Politik Global: Mencari Visi Baru Bagi Kelangsungan Agama di Abad XXI* (Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2002), p. 187.

<sup>73</sup>In 2007, 139 intellectuals and Islamic scholars from all over the world signed a document to affirm the necessity for a harmonious relationship between Muslims and Christians based on the principles of Love of God and Love of the Neighbour.

is to raise the awareness of learners about the social, economic and political issues faced by mankind on a global scale, and to teach them the skills to solve the problems.<sup>74</sup>

The educational philosophy of Social Reconstructionism has the same spirit with “Progressive Islam” that leads toward “Cosmopolitan Ethos” as a prerequisite for living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, in the cosmopolitan era where learners as “millennial generation” are required to have four competencies: *First*, critical thinking in which learners must have a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research paradigm so as to perform problem solving. *Second*, creativity in which learners must be creative and imaginative to carry out social innovation. *Third*, communication in which learners must be able to initiate relationship with various parties and promote their expertises to a broader network. *Fourth*, collaboration in which learners are able to collaborate with various parties, both interdisciplinary and inter-institutional, community, group, cross country and others.

## **E. Conclusion**

Kyai Ahmad Dahlan establishes Muhammadiyah to support his agenda of the renewal or enlightenment of Muslims and the nation that endure backwardness in many aspects of life. The efforts are carried out based on the principles of compassion and pure heart, which are the result of his understanding to the Qur'an and Sunnah, particularly the ethos of *iqra'* (science). From here, Kyai Dahlan found the theology of Al-'Asr as the basis of the Muhammadiyah civilization movement in the educational sphere. This theology becomes the basis of the good deeds and Al-Maun movement of Muhammadiyah, which have been practiced for more than a century. It is the spirit of Muhammadiyah in realizing progressive Islam so as to bring the spirit of civilization and intellectual tradition.

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<sup>74</sup>Abdur Rachman Assegaf, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Hadhari Berbasis Integratif-Interkonektif* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2011), p. 208-209.

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