



ACHIEVING HARMONY THROUGH PROGRESSIVE ISLAMIC DIMENSIONS IN THE THINKING OF ABDULLAH SAEED

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Abstract

This article aims at describing the Progressive Islam; an Islam that offers a contextualization of the interpretation of Islam that is open, friendly, fresh, and responsive to every humanitarian issue according to Abdullah Saeed's thinking. Progressive Islam is a trend as a continuation of the Liberal Islamic Movement which emerged since approximately one hundred and fifty years ago. This trend emerged as a form of the expression of their dissatisfaction towards the Liberal Islamic Movement which emphasises more on internal criticism of the views and behaviours of Muslims that are deemed not or less in accordance with humanist values. This research was included in the literature research (library research method) which examines the researches and concepts of Progressive Islam in the perspective of Abdullah Saeed's thinking. Therefore, the final results of this study present that Abdullah Saeed offers a concept of understanding Islam that can answer the needs of the Contemporary Muslim communities so that it can be applied as lasting doctrine throughout the space of time and place.

Keywords: Abdullah Saeed, Progressive Islam, Humanist.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mendeskripsikan tentang Islam Progresif, bahwa Islam Progresif adalah Islam yang menawarkan sebuah kontekstualisasi penafsiran Islam yang terbuka, ramah, segar, dan responsif terhadap setiap persoalan kemanusiaan menurut pemikiran Abdullah Saeed. Islam Progresif merupakan sebuah tren sebagai kelanjutan dari gerakan Islam liberal yang muncul sejak kurang lebih seratus lima puluh tahun yang lalu. Tren ini muncul sebagai bentuk ungkapan ketidakpuasan mereka terhadap gerakan Islam liberal yang lebih menekankan pada kritik internal terhadap pandangan dan perilaku umat Islam yang dianggap tidak atau kurang sesuai dengan nilai humanis. Penelitian ini termasuk dalam penelitian kepustakaan (library research) yaitu menelaah penelitian dan konsep Islam Progresif dalam perspektif pemikiran Abdullah Saeed. Hasil Akhir dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Abdullah Saeed menawarkan sebuah konsep pemahaman Islam yang dapat menjawab kebutuhan masyarakat muslim kontemporer sehingga dapat diaplikasikan sebagai ajaran yang abadi di sepanjang kurun waktu dan tempat.

Kata Kunci: Abdullah Saeed, Islam progresif, Humanis.

Background

In principle, Islam tries to provide solutions to every problem faced by humans. Islam offers a perfect solution that is considered to provide justice and benefit to all humans. The teachings of Islam have been

considered capable of bridging the reality of life which is always developing with limited idealistic texts. Barriers and distances between the teachings of text and reality divide Muslims themselves into several groups. Some consider the text to be a way out of any



developments and changes that occur in this world, some are trying to make the text as a basis for interacting with reality even though sometimes the application happens very far from the text itself. There are also those who try to be moderate by not neglecting the text, but also not making the text too sacred so that all life must be in accordance with the limited text.

As Muslims, in carrying out the teachings of Islam, there is one principle taught by the prophet Muhammad SAW as an apostle of Allah, namely the nature of iqtishad (moderate) or often known as at-tawassuth (middle way), in the sense of not extreme or excessive (*at-tatharuf*) so that the basic concept of Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* can be felt by all humans.¹

However, while modernity in the heat of the current globalization and the sophistication of its technology. It has led to the lifestyle and style of human relations that differ from the past. This brings about the gap between Islam and Reality. Islam seems to be a heavenly religion that is not down to earth and loses energy to answer every problem that exists. This fact awakens the awareness of contemporary Muslim thinkers to try to undermine stagnation and to rebuild the face of responsive Islam in dealing with the problems of the times. This is where

¹ Under the pretext of combating common problems such as poverty, ignorance, greed and so on, some believers even attack each other and even engage in religious conflicts. In short, they are no longer on the "Way of God", no longer using reason as a differentiator between them as humans from animals, many of them who prioritize lust, pursue physical life rather than spirituality, thus failing to bring justice to the earth and happiness for every one. Here is where the location of Islam as *Rahmatan Lil- 'Alamin*, which is to deliver all humanity to the "Way of God". Maufur, 'Islam Sebagai *Rahmatan Lil- 'Alamin*', *Jurnal Kawistara*, 2.1 (2012), 100 <<https://doi.org/10.22146/kawistara.55>>. As the main mission of the teachings of Islam is to liberate humans from various forms of anarchy and injustice. Because Allah is just. Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, 'Visi Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*: Dialektika Islam dan Peradaban', *Akademika Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 16.1 (2011), 149–70.

progressive Islam comes as a trend rather than a movement that tries to give a new interpretation so that Islam can be appropriate and in line with the times (*shalih li kulli zaman wa makan*).

The use of the word "Islam" coupled with the word "Progressive" began in 1983 when Suroosh Irfani tried to popularize it in his writings titled *Islamic Revolutionaries in Iran: Popular Liberation or religious dictatorship*, in which case, he stated that the Progressive term had been widely used by the left Islamic figures such as Sayeed Ahmad Khan and Jamaluddin Al-Afghani. In 1999, an organization called Progressive Muslim Network (PMN) was established in Toronto, Canada in 2003. In this year also Omid Safi wrote a paper titled "What is progressive Islam?" "In the ISIM bulletin in the field of activism Ideas submitted are Muslim liberation, exciting traditions, Islamic reformism, globalisation and progressive Muslim networks."²

Progressive Islam is Islam that offers a contextualization of the interpretation of Islam that is open, friendly, and fresh, and responsive to a variety of humanitarian issues. and this of course in contrast to militant Islam and extremists who remain in their efforts to present discourses on past interpretations and close themselves to new ideas from outside the group. In fact, often to confirm their beliefs they act by claiming themselves as the owner of the true authority to act authoritatively against other ideologies and religions.

In this decade, progressive Islam can be said to be a new term in contemporary Islamic studies that has been used by academics and activists for several years to label Islamic understanding and action in the struggle for human values, such as civil society; development, democratic action, justice,

² Subhan Subhan, 'Pemikiran Omid Safi: Humanisme dan Sufisme', *Journal Al-Manar*, 6.2 (2017), 214–25.



gender equality, defense of the oppressed and pluralism.

Progressive labels are given to those who revive the dynamics of the social revolution of society and do not hold on to old ideas or concepts blindly. This fact has tapped the awareness of contemporary Muslim thinkers to demolish stagnation and to rebuild the face of Islam that is responsive to the development and progress of the times. According to Farid Esack, the task of this generation is to seek critical and selective reinterpretation of traditional understanding as a way to reconstruct society and make positive changes in the future.³

Islamic law is often regarded as the cause of the emergence of the image of Islam as a normative and traditional religion, with the perceived stagnation of the development of Islamic law after the codification phase,⁴ has positioned Islam far behind the development of human civilization in general. The issue of the closure of the door to *ijtihad* which has dominated so much for centuries has made Muslims truly dependent on medieval intellectual references accompanied by the inability to engage in active dialogue with the ever-evolving reality.

In the legal sociology approach, law should move along with the development of society and this still does not apply to Islamic law today. The existence of the *ushuli* tool that requires submission and obedience to the

dominance of the "sacredness" of the text has been interpreted by early generations of Muslims. So, it is appropriate to say what Khaled Aboe El-Fadl stated that Islamic law is actually still alive but methodological tools and epistemological basis are dead. This is what makes Islamic law stagnant and helpless in dialogue with a growing reality.

Omid Safi explains that progressive Islam is a continuation and result of the liberal Islamic movement that had emerged since about 150 years ago. This tendency also arises as a form of extortion from their sense of dissatisfaction with the liberal Islamic Movement which emphasizes internal criticism of the views and behaviour of Muslims who are not or less compatible with the humanist values. While the aspects of modernity, colonialism, and imperialism were assessed to lack considerable attention from the liberal Islamic Movement.

The fact above explains that there is a progressive understanding of Islam to be able to give balanced attention to internal criticism and external criticism. Internal criticism of some Muslims' thought traditions that do not focus on the aspect of humanist life are positioned as progressive Islamic acts in the Modernist movement, but at the same time, this act is also a movement of Post-modernist as this act is a critique of things contrary to the value of justice and humanity. So that it can be concluded that the difference between progressive Islam and liberal Islam only moves at the discourse level, whereas progressive Islam does not only move on the discourse level but also take action to ground its ideas so that what happens is not just liberalization of thought but also social liberation.

Progressive Islam in the Cross of History

Everything must have historical value and stories in their respective journeys as well as this Progressive Islamic action—an action that reaps the pros and cons in society.

³ Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation & Pluralism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), p. 50.

⁴ Muhammad Abid al-Jabiry, *Takwin al-'Aql al-'Arabi* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihdah al-'Arabiyah, 1980), p. 21. Compare it with Wael B. Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunni Ushul al-Fiqh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1-36. According to Hallaq, the dominance of the four schools in the formative period was due to the founding ability of this school of thought to offer a clear order that replaced a previously unorganized system. This view was actually built by Joseph Schacht in his book *An Introduction to Islamic Law* which was published for the first time in 1964. And this opinion was criticized by Hallaq in his dissertation stating that the door of *ijtihad* was not closed.



Progressive Islam aims at forming Islam which can be a reference that is always appropriate for the creation of a fair society namely people who are able to uphold the values of humanity, the prevalence of nuances of religion and wisdom and the realisation of benefit for all humanity.⁵ Historically, it is a form of sustainability and an extension of the liberal Islamic Movement. So, it can be said that this action is originated from a sense of dissatisfaction with the liberal Islamic movement that put the attention more on the emphasis of internal criticism of the view and behaviour of Muslims who are not or less in accordance with humanist values. Meanwhile, criticism of modernity, colonialism, and imperialism did not gain enough attention from that movement.

Alparsalan Acikgenc, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Fatih of Turkey's University, stated that progressive Islam is Islam that offers a balance between mysterious and the rational aspects of human nature. Whereas Syed Husain Alatas explained that the term progressive Islam does not imply abstraction or reduction of the totality of Islam but rather a term which indicates that Islam is indeed progressive. Mawardi explained that in this case, Abdullah Saeed defines progressive Islam as one of the many schools of contemporary Islamic thought that seeks to incorporate the context and the needs of modern Muslims which eventually lead to want to act to preserve the vibrancy and variety of the Islamic tradition.⁶

From some of the definitions above, it can be seen that each expert has their own opinions in defining progressive Islam so that it appears that the use of this term is still reaping criticism because some of them agreed

and some did not relate to the use of progressive Islamic terms themselves. However, they agreed that the dimension of progressive Islam is crucial to be raised and socialised. In the process of socialisation, Abdullah Saeed saw a number of obstacles, namely the assumption that there was only one set of the Islamic law that could be accepted as a single truth while the other was a mistake that occurred in the internal community.

The above phenomenon implies that there will be obstacles but even so the idea of progressive Islam continues to reach harmony in the midst of challenges namely by creating Islamic thought equilibrium. The notion of progressive Islam is not only related to universal value such as justice and freedom which is a leading discourse of modernity, but also in the field of Islamic law that raises a progressive *ijtihad* term requiring the reinterpretation of legal texts and Re-framing of legal methods so that flexibility and the elasticity of Islamic law proclaimed by the previous *Mujtabid* is not only written in the classical yellow book but becoming a reality. In this case, Abdullah Saeed is one of the many scholars who gives concern to this issue⁷

Abdullah Saeed's Biography, Career Sketches, and Works

Abdullah Saeed is a professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at Melbourne University, Australia. He was born in the Maldives, an island which later formed itself into the Republic of Indonesia. This country is located in the northern part of the Indian Ocean. The

⁵ YUSDANI YUSDANI, 'Pemikiran dan Gerakan Muslim Progresif', *EL-Tarbawi*, 8.2 (2015), 146-60 <<https://doi.org/10.20885/tarbawi.vol8.iss2.art3>>..

⁶ Ahmad Imam Mawardi, Muslim Progresif dan Ijtihadi Progresif dalam Pandangan Abdullah Saeed. See, Tolhatul Choir, *Islam dalam Berbagai Pembacaan Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009), p. 521.

⁷ The current position of Abdullah Saeed is Director of the Asia Institute at the University of Melbourne, Director of the Center for the Study of Contemporary Islam at University of Melbourne, Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies at University of Melbourne, Adjunct Professor in faculty of Law at University of Melbourne.



majority of the inhabitants come from Sri Lanka and in general, they are Muslim⁸.

In 1977, Saeed moved to Saudi Arabia to study where he studied Arabic and attended several stages of learning in formal school institutions including; Basic Arabic Language Institute (1977-1979) Middle Arabic Language (1979-1982), the Islamic University of Saudi Arabia in Medina (1982-1986). After that, he continued to move to Australia. After studying at Melbourne University, he obtained several academic degrees including in 1993, he was appointed as an assistant lecturer in the department of Asian languages and Anthropology at Melbourne University. In 1996, he became a senior lecturer at the same college and he was also trusted as a member of the professor association in 2000. In 2003, Saeed won a professor's degree in Arabic and Islamic studies⁹.

Abdullah Saeed is a productive Muslim scholar and we can see his productivity from various published scientific works, including; *First*, The Qur'an: Introduction. (Introductory book on how to communicate with the Qur'an) published in London and New York: Routledge, 2008. *Second*, Islamic Thought: An Introduction (a book that gives a portion of the idea of Islamic thought) was published in London and New York: Routledge, 2006. *Third*, Interpreting The Qur'an: Towards A Contemporary Approach (a book that talks a lot about the methodology of interpretation of the Koran) was published in London and New York: Routledge, 2006. *Fourth*, as a book editor about Contemporary Approach to Qur'an in Indonesia published in 2005¹⁰.

⁸ Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Qur'an Abad 21: Tafsir Kontekstual*, trans. Ervan Nurtawab (Bandung: Mizan, 2016), 417

⁹ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 41.

¹⁰ Muhammad Alfatih Suryadilaga, 'Hadis dan Perannya dalam Tafsir Kontekstual Perspektif Abdullah Saeed', *Mutanatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith*, 5.2 (2015), 235-342.

Abdullah Saeed in His Academic Anxiety

As described in the biography of Abdullah Saeed that he is a Muslim scholar who has a background in Arabic language and literacy education as well as good and professional Middle Eastern studies. This has made him a competent figure in objectively assessing the West and East. The qualifications, competencies, and scientific disciplines that he has been doing so far have been able to lead him to become a humanist intellectual in defending the rights of others. In addition, he is also a figure who is able to look critically-dialectically in every religious problem at hand.

As for Abdullah Saeed's academic anxiety is reflected in two things: First, the Qur'an and the hadith revealed to Muslim society in the 14th century are often consumed and interpreted by 21st century Muslim society in a literal-textual manner resulting in a gap and the barrier that is so far away so that Islam is no longer a religion that is right for me to eat. Secondly, there is a very deep phobia among Muslim communities today to refer and consult directly on al-quran and hadith, because in them there has been a doctrine that the product of past scholars' thoughts, especially in the field of jurisprudence is considered final¹¹.

Ignaz Goldziher stated that every person and group would look for justification and legitimacy in the holy book, both al-quran, hadith and books constructed by the early generation and he would get a certain view from him.¹² However, the problem becomes crucial if what he is looking for does not give a definite answer because of the limitations of the "holy text" to act and negotiate with the times. In this case, Abdullah Saeed as quoted

¹¹ Lenni Lestari, 'Refleksi Abdullah Saeed Tentang Pendekatan Kontekstual Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Ethico-Legal dalam Al-Quran', *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alquran dan Tafsir*, 2.1 (2017), 15-29.

¹² Ignaz Goldziher, *Mazhabib al-Tafsir al-Islami* (Mesir: Maktabah al-Khaniji, 1995), p. 3.



by M. Amin Abdullah¹³ stated that the current major issues are related to globalization, population migration, advances in science and technology, space exploration, archaeological discoveries, evolution and genetics, general education and literacy levels.

Besides that, there is an understanding and awareness of its importance of human dignity (human dignity and dignity), greater inter-faith interaction (inter-active dialogue between religious people), equal citizenship (a concept of nations that affects equality and equal treatment of all its citizens), equipped with issues of struggle and gender equality which tapped the awareness of contemporary Muslim thinkers to demolish stagnation and to rebuild the face of Islam that is responsive to the development and progress of the times as a process to bridge the gap and inconsistency between Islam and the reality. So that it is expected that the religion of Islam is no longer a towering sky religion, but truly becomes a responsive religion with a reality that develops on earth.

Based on the phenomena and expectations that exist, Abdullah Saeed appears by offering a new model and approach in dealing with religious problems called contextualist approaches by paying attention to where the socio-historical context and its relation to the needs of Muslim communities nowadays.

The Dimension of Abdullah Saeed's Progressive Islam

Abdullah Saeed is an Australian Muslim scholar who is very concerned with the world of contemporary Islam. In him, there is a noble spirit, namely how the teachings of Islam can be the teachings that *shalib li kulli*

zaman wa makan. This spirit is what he calls progressive Islam. The subject is known as progressive Muslims.

In the context of this freeze, Abdullah Saeed offers a method of thinking to be used by progressive Muslims which he calls the term Progressive *ijtihadi*, which is dedicated to bridging backwardness "ways of thinking" with "scientific analysis" developed by religious sciences in answering the problems of modernity and contemporary human needs. In this case, Abdullah Saeed said that progressive Islam is a trend of thought not a movement with various coverage in it such as modernist, liberal, feminist and also traditionalist Muslims who have transformed. Progressive Islam is one of the trends of contemporary Islamic thought that always contextualizes the text so that it is in accordance with human needs at this time, making Islamic teachings *shalib li kulli wa makan*. The scientific epistemology used is by dialogue between the ways of thinking and analyzing the science of religion (ulum al-din) with modern social science.

Abdullah Saeed saw and positioned progressive Islam in the current trend of Muslim thought into six different types of think tanks with different religious styles and epistemologies, as he described in chapter Trends in Islamic thought today:

“The modern period has witnessed the emergence of several trends in Islamic thought – However, I have tried to encapsulate, at least at a fairly broad level, the key trends that exist today: legalist traditionalists, theological puritans, political Islamists’ Islamist extremist, secular Muslims, progressive ijtihadists¹⁴

¹³ M. Amin Abdullah, ‘Reaktulisasi Islam yang Berkemajuan: Agenda Strategis Muhammadiyah di Tengah Gerakan Keagamaan Kontemporer’, {unpublished paper was presented in the Study of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Ramadhan 1432 H, on the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta Campus, 7 Ramadan/August, 2011}, p. 21.

¹⁴ Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: an Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 142-150.

Table 1. Muslims Thought Trend

No	Thought Trend	Epistemology	Goal
1	The Legalist-Traditionalist	Laws that were developed and interpreted by pre-modern scholars	To find authentic Islam like the early generation
2	The Theological Puritans	Dimensions of Islamic Ethics and Doctrine	Inner Satisfaction
3	The Political Islamists	Political aspects of Islam	Establish an Islamic State
4	The Islamist Extremist	Anarchist ways	Fight against individuals and groups that are opposite and are considered as opponents of both Muslims and non-Muslims
5	The Secular Muslims	Religion is a private matter in every dynamic of life	The aim is to facilitate every action related to public issues, not private matters
6	The Progressive Ijtihadists	Do ijtihad by way of reinterpreting religious teachings	Accommodate and answer the needs and problems of contemporary society

Of the six categories in table 1 above, progressive Muslims initiated by Abdullah Saeed took the last position. The classification above is almost the same as the classification in the thinking of Tariq Ramadan, in his book entitled *Western Muslim and The Future of Islam*. In this case, he divides Muslims into six groups which he calls six major tendencies:

“The six major tendencies refer here to the different tendencies among those for whom Islam is the reference point for their thinking, their discourse, and their engagement. So-called sociological or cultural Muslims, even if we legitimately consider them Muslims, do not enter into this typology, for their reference to Islam, by their own reckoning, does not a particular role in their reflections and

actions¹⁵. Scholastic Traditionalism, Salafi Literalism, Salafi Reformism, Political Literalist Salafism Liberal or Rational Remormism, Sufism”

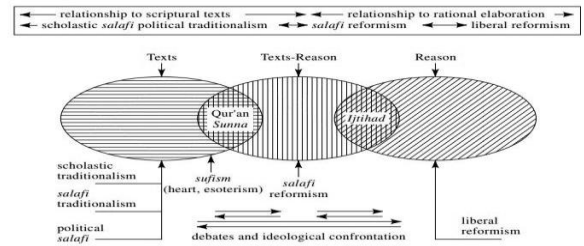


Figure 1.1. The Principal Islamic Tendencies and Their Relationships to Texts and Reason

Picture 1. Muslim Qualifications of Tariq Ramadan

Progressive Muslims are contemporary Muslims who can solve their life problems by using contemporary scientific methodologies while at the same time having the ability to reinterpret the texts or also being able to construct Muslim thought in the past.

In this case, Saeed tried to assert that the old scientific device that had been passed down by the early generation could not be "the antidote" that can solve the problems faced by contemporary Muslims, except by integrating them with modern scientific instruments¹⁶. As it is explained by Amin Abdullah that scientific disciplines are called *ulum al-din* which must be able to be integrated with *al-fikr al-Islami* and *Dirasah Islamiyah*.¹⁷

In this case, Saeed further developed the method of interpreting the Qur'an from his

¹⁵ Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University, 2004), p. 24-28.

¹⁶ Ahmad Suyuthi, 'Islam Progresif Kontemporer: Telaah Pemikiran Abdullah Saeed', *Akademika*, 6.1 (2012), 22–36.

¹⁷ M. Amin Abdullah, 'Linking Ulum al-Din, al-Fikr al-Islamiy and Dirasat Islamiyyah; Islamic Scientific Contribution for Global Civilization' in *Wordpress*, <http://aminabd.wordpress.com> {accessed 25 November, 2017}. Abdullah Saeed does not explicitly mention the use of methods and approaches, but the use of the term "modern western education" is an indication of the entrance that can lead lovers of contemporary Islamic studies in the direction in question such as issues and several humanities issues. The issue of contemporary humanism will not be well understood and concluded, if Islamic scientific epistemology still uses the method and approach of *ulum al-din* without looking at *al-fikr al-Islami* and *dirasah Islamiyah*. See, Saeed.



predecessor Fazlur Rahman into several epistemologies. They are table 2:

Table 2. Method of Interpreting the Qur'an

Epistemology	Ulum al-Din	Al-Fikr al-Islami	Dirasat Islamiyah
Body of Knowledge	Aqidah, Syari'ah, Fiqih, dan Tafsir	The whole history of scientific disciplinary thinking	Full research, as well as historico-empirical observations
Based	Language and Text	Rasio-Intelektual	Ratio and Experience
Role of Intellect	Participatory	Justification	Legitimacy
Approach	Linguistics	History	Psychology, anthropological science, sociological science

Even though, as a whole, Al-Qur'an is absolutely from Allah (*qat'i al-wurud*) however it has a classification for some verses which are clear, absolute and one meaning (*qat'i al-dalalah*), as well as some verses which are a multi interpretation or containing various meaning (*dẓanni al-dalalah*). This last classification enables to open some space of *ijtihad* by functioning ratio optimally.

Emphasis on progressive thinking is to fight for the values of justice, goodness, and beauty as universal values of Islam that are the soul of all legal provisions. So, it is clear that progressive *ijtihadi* is not intended to create a new religion or teaching but rather try to reinterpret traditional religious foundations to accommodate contemporary life. With three models of *ijtihad* which, according to Saeed, were able to influence each of their time throughout the history of Islamic law. Those three models are in table 3:

Table 3. Type of Jihad Classification

No	Type of Classification	Understanding
01	Text-based <i>ijtihad</i>	The <i>ijtihad</i> method is commonly practiced by classical jurists and still has a lot of influence among traditionalist thinkers. In this model the text is in full power, both the <i>qur'ani</i> , <i>hadith</i> and the opinions of the previous cleric; Those are in the form of <i>ijma</i> and <i>qiyas</i> .
02	Eclectic <i>ijtihad</i>	The effort to choose the <i>nash</i> or opinion of the previous cleric who best supported the opinion and position he believed in.
03	Context-based <i>ijtihadi</i>	A new phenomenon that tries to understand legal problems in the context of history and the present (modern) context. Usually, the opinion will eventually refer to the general benefit as <i>maqashid al-shari'ah</i> .

This third model of *Ijtihad* is carried out by progressive *ijihadists*. Classical methodology usually solves legal problems by basing them on the text of the Quran, then understanding it, at the most far by connecting the text with its socio-historical context. Whereas progressive thinkers do even further things, namely by connecting with the present context so that it remains up to date and can be applied. This is exactly what Muqtader Khan, Tariq Ramadan, Bassam Tibi, Aminah Wadud, Farid Esack, Irshad Manji, and Ebrahim Moosa did.

Regarding the progressive *ijtihadi* methodology in interpreting the text of the Quran, Saeed explained seven main approaches; *First*, attention to the context and socio-historical dynamics. *Secondly*, realizing that there were several topics which were not covered by the Quran because the time had not yet arrived when the Quran was revealed. *Third*, realizing that every reading of the holy



text must be guided by the principles of loving, justice and fairness. *Fourth*, knowing that the Qur'an knows the hierarchy of values and principles. *Fifth*, knowing that it is permissible to move from one concrete example to generalization or vice versa. *Sixth*, caution must be exercised when using other texts from the classical tradition, especially those related to their intensity. Seventh, the main focus is on the needs of contemporary Muslims.

Thought Contribution to Islamic Studies

There are several progressive Islamic figures, including; Agus Sali¹⁸, Tjokrominoto¹⁹ (Indonesia), Syed Syaikh al-Hady²⁰ (Malaysia), Abdul Karim Soroush²¹ and Shirin Ebadi²²

¹⁸ Haji Agus Salim's thinking about Islam is that from all dimensions, Islam is positioned as a reference source in response to various things that occur. Moh Qoyyim, 'Pemikiran Haji Agus Salim Tentang Aqidah, Shari'ah, dan Ideologi', *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam*, 3.2 (2013), 503–25..

¹⁹ H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto political thinking about Islamic socialism provides an illustration of the ideology of socialism built on the basis Islamic teachings, which are the core teachings sourced from the Quran and the Sunnah. Firman Manan, 'Sosialisme Islam: Perspektif Pemikiran Politik H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto', *JWP (Jurnal Wacana Politik)*, 1.1 (1985), 24–37.

²⁰ Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi was a figure who tried to socialize the idea of Islamic reform in Malay-Indonesian Muslims who were undergoing changes due to modernization by the colonial side, especially in the aspect of women's empowerment in his work Faridah Hanum. Jajat Burhanudin and Oman Fathurahman, *Tentang Perempuan Islam: Wacana dan Gerakan* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004), p. 14.

²¹ Soroush's idea is a reflection of the political situation in Iran which is controlled by Wilayatul Faqih, they interpret religion as if the interpretation is their own religion. With his theory, Soroush offered the idea of rejecting the ideology of religious understanding of politics and power. Al Mas'udah Al Mas'udah, 'Agama dan Pemikiran Keagamaan (Membedah Teori Abdulkarim Soroush Tentang Qabdh Wa Bast)', *Jurnal Al-Himayah*, 2.1 (2018), 1–16..

²² Shirin Ebadi, a thinker and activist of humanity, always fighting for human rights, especially the rights of women in various fields. This struggle is encouraged by progressive understanding of Islam. Sahiron Syamsuddin, 'Book Review: Beberapa Tema Reformasi dalam Islam', *Al-Jami'ab: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 44.2 (2006), 487–95.

(Iran), Muhammad Shahrur²³ (Syria), Muhammad al-Talibi²⁴ (Tunisia/ France), and Fathullah Gulen²⁵ (Turkey/ USA). Some scholars said that a progressive Muslim must have concern for social injustice Progressive Islam is Islam which offers an open, friendly, fresh, and responsive interpretation of Islam to humanitarian issues. This action is the process of sustainability and expansion of the liberal Islamic Movement as well as the form of dissatisfaction with the liberal Islamic movement that puts more emphasis on internal criticism from the views and behaviours of Muslims considered not or less compatible with the value of humanist. Meanwhile, the criticism of modernity, colonialism and imperialism lacked enough attention from this liberal Islamic Movement.

The emergence of progressive Muslims with progressive *ijtihad* in capturing the fundamental messages expressed in al-qur'an and al-hadith is an attempt to unravel the problem of the dilemma of Muslim positions in relation to tradition and modernity. Such efforts are very much needed by Muslims in Indonesia, specifically and Muslims in the world in general in overcoming various problems that occur today.

²³ Muhammad Shahrur emphasized the plurality of interpretations, as well as an interpretive reality, also as a trigger that every generation of Muslims has the right and demand to always interpret the Qur'an in accordance with the times and science. See, Syamsuddin.

²⁴ Mohammad al-Talibi is a contemporary Muslim thinker who initiated the reading of the meaning of the Koran with a historical perspective. According to his view, the Koran and history always have relevance because of the interaction and dialogue in it's revelation. Maulana Ikhsanun Karim, 'Hermeneutika Historis Humanistik Mohamed Talbi', *Magbza: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, 3.1 (2018), 1–13..

²⁵ Fethullah Güllen is the founder of the reform movement of Islamic education in Turkey. According to him, to achieve life harmonious between Muslims and the West, must use the means education that combines Islamic morals and positive values modernity that has taken root in Europe and America. See, Syamsuddin.



Conclusion

Abdullah Saeed acknowledged that progressive Islamic action was a further development of the modernist trend which later developed into a neo-modernist and later became progressive. As a trend, not a movement, progressive Islam accommodates all groups and circles who have an alignment with the universal values of Islam so that they are expected to be able to answer all the needs of modern society.

Being analyzed more deeply, the progressive mindset of *ijtihad* according to Abdullah Saeed still faces many obstacles, while the biggest obstacle is internal constraints, such as the unpreparedness of Muslims to disagree and their pleasure in *takfir* culture that starts from truth claims.

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