



M. AMIN ABDULLAH'S CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC STUDIES THROUGH THE PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAMIC SCIENCES



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Abstract

This article aims to determine M. Amin Abdullah's contribution to contemporary Indonesian Islamic studies through the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences. This is motivated by the fact that Islamic studies in Indonesia have experienced stagnation and rigidity, so it is necessary to provide the right solution through new methods and approaches. This article uses qualitative methods, library research, and descriptive-analytical data analysis techniques. Thus, this article concludes that Amin Abdullah has succeeded in providing a new paradigm for developing contemporary Indonesian Islamic studies. He presents the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences to deconstruct the reconstruction of Islamic studies by linking classical sciences with contemporary sciences. By offering various concepts of thought from intellectual figures, he produces a framework for Islamic studies that is progressive, new, transformative, fresh, not static, and relevant to the times' demands and science's development. He contributes his thoughts on Islamic studies in Indonesia using multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary methods based on the integration-interconnection scientific paradigm. The results of his thinking can foster a broader foundation for Muslim thinking, and contemporary Islamic studies can face the challenges of a more complex era.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan mengetahui kontribusi M. Amin Abdullah dalam studi Islam kontemporer Indonesia melalui Filsafat Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman. Hal ini dilatarbelakangi oleh suatu kenyataan bahwa studi Islam di Indonesia telah mengalami kemandekan dan rigid, sehingga perlu untuk memberikan solusi tepat berupa metode dan pendekatan baru. Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, jenis penelitian kepustakaan, dan teknik analisis data secara deskriptif-analitis. Dengan demikian, artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa Amin Abdullah telah berhasil memberikan paradigma baru bagi perkembangan studi Islam kontemporer Indonesia. Ia menghadirkan Filsafat Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman untuk mendekonstruksi-konstruksi-rekonstruksi studi Islam dengan mempertautkan ilmu-ilmu klasik dengan ilmu-ilmu kontemporer. Dengan menawarkan berbagai konsep pemikiran dari tokoh intelektualis, ia menghasilkan suatu kerangka kerja studi Islam yang progresif, baru dan transformatif, fresh, tidak jumud, dan relevan dengan tuntutan zaman dan perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan. Bahkan, ia memberikan sumbangsih pemikirannya dalam studi Islam di Indonesia dengan metode multidisiplin, interdisiplin, dan transdisiplin berbasis paradigma keilmuan integrasi-interkoneksi. Hasil pemikirannya ini dapat menumbuhkan landasan berpikir umat Islam lebih luas dan inklusif, serta studi Islam kontemporer dapat menghadapi tantangan zaman yang lebih kompleks.



INTRODUCTION

The epistemological problem of Islamic Studies during the early development of Islam rests on the study of religion, which is seen as out of human reach and only relies on sacred texts as a form of truth (Sihotang, 2023). The implication is that the textual authority considered valid by religious people will appear weak when dealing with religious texts owned by other religious communities, cultures, nations and societies (Abdullah, 2012a). In fact, religion cannot be separated from human intervention when understanding sacred texts; it refers to the socio-cultural conditions and behaviour of its adherents (Basid, 2015). Various understandings of Islamic studies eventually gained a foothold, which has developed in contemporary times by offering various methods and approaches (Ghazali, 2015).

The above statement is reinforced by various views of Prof. M. Amin Abdullah, an Indonesian Muslim scholar, who provides enlightenment to deconstruction-construction-reconstruction of the mindset that has become a habit of mind which then crystallizes into belief, in every academic meeting, both in lectures and national and international seminars. Developing an established scientific tradition is insufficient to rely only on the intellectual tradition of classical religious sciences and the Islamic intellectual tradition of modernity. However, it requires the renewal of paradigms, models and strategies adapted to the contemporary development of Islamic discourse, both theoretical and practical, through intelligent dialogue with various readings and Islamic religious worldviews (Abdullah, 2014b).

Prof. Amin Abdullah's presence in the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences has given many deep impressions of his most significant contribution to reconstructing the scientific insights of students. In particular, Amin Abdullah has presented various thoughts of contemporary intellectual figures that lead Muslims to find new knowledge about Islamic Studies, knowledge that is transformative-progressive and different from before. Amin Abdullah's enlightenment efforts against Muslims due to the hegemony of habit of mind in thinking-behaviour have become a benchmark for moving forward (progressive) to think about changes or shifts in worldview. He became a refresher of "intellectual thirst" and offered various approaches and perspectives to understanding contemporary humanitarian and Islamic problems.

As is known, the challenges of globalization and modernization faced by Muslims in all parts of the world today are arguably more complicated and more significant than those faced by Muslims in classical times. The advances in science and technology that have revolutionized everything cannot be ignored (Situmeang, 2021). It must be aligned with the religious sciences (Islam), which are central to human life. Therefore, it is essential to eliminate the problem of the dichotomy between religious sciences and science that has more or less affected the Indonesian people and nation, especially Muslims themselves (Sufratman, 2022). The Philosophy of Islamic Sciences offered by Amin Abdullah is the proper scientific strategy that can take part in and contribute to global competition.

Amin Abdullah is one of the many leading Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia. He is recognized as the most dynamic fusionist thinker in the postmodernist generation (Abbas, 2021), who succeeded in systematically constructing the concept of philosophy of Islamic sciences concerning the problems of contemporary Islamic studies in Indonesia. Amin Abdullah has presented a new paradigm in the study of Islam, which distances the study from rigid, dogmatic understanding and provides unrestricted space for more open and dynamic interpretations than previously rigid and static. This article examines Amin

Abdullah's contribution to contemporary Indonesian Islamic studies through the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences. Throughout the author's search, there have been quite a number of studies conducted by experts on Amin Abdullah's actions in Islamic Studies, but specifically on his contribution through the study of Philosophy of Islamic Sciences, it seems that no one has done it systematically. One question posed in this article is: how does Amin Abdullah contribute to contemporary Indonesian Islamic studies through the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences? This article is expected to complement previous studies and show that Amin Abdullah's contribution to the development of Indonesian Islamic studies has a significant impact, namely a new paradigm in the form of progressive Islamic studies that are in line with the demands of the times and the development of science.

To get a comprehensive understanding, this article uses a qualitative method with a pure type of library research. The primary data are Amin Abdullah's works. At the same time, the author uses several other references supporting the discussion theme, such as books, articles, websites, and others, as secondary data. In analyzing the data collected, the author uses descriptive-analytical techniques, namely explaining Amin Abdullah's ideas by describing the data to be critically analyzed. In addition, considering that this article uses a pure type of library research, the data collection technique uses documentation.

BIOGRAPHY OF M. AMIN ABDULLAH

Prof. Dr. H. Muhammad Amin Abdullah, MA, commonly called Prof. Amin, was born in Margomulyo, Tayu, Pati, Central Java, on July 28, 1953. He is the eldest of eight children of H. Ahmad Abdullah and Siti 'Aisyah. Amin Abdullah was the most prominent of the eight siblings, both intellectually and spiritually. He not only inherited the intellectual gene of his parents, but he also inherited the gene of spirituality, especially from his mother, who only received a standard education and continued to Mu'allimat Yogyakarta. This makes his mother look more "modernist" than his father, who graduated from a traditional Islamic boarding school but spent 18 years in Makkah (Abdullah, 2000).

After graduating from elementary school in 1966, Amin Abdullah continued his education at Pondok Modern Gontor, Ponorogo. He completed his secondary school level at Kulliyatul-Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyah (KMI) Pondok Modern Gontor in 1972. After that, he continued his studies at the baccalaureate program of the Darussalam Institute of Education, which is now called Darussalam University, Gontor, and obtained his Bachelor's degree in 1977 (Abdullah, 2005). Amin Abdullah then continued his undergraduate program at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Department of Comparative Religion, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta 1982. Furthermore, he had the opportunity to continue his Masters and Doctoral studies at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Art and Sciences, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey (1990) by taking the Ph.D program in Islamic Philosophy (Abdullah, 2003).

In 1993, Amin Abdullah was appointed a permanent lecturer at the Postgraduate Program of UIN Sunan Kalijaga and was assigned the material of Islamic Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion. The same year, he was also assigned as Assistant Director of the Postgraduate Program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga. A few years later, he began teaching at several well-known campuses in Indonesia, such as UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Muhammadiyah University of Malang, UGM, UII, UMS, IAIN Walisongo Semarang and UNISBA Bandung. Amid his busy schedule, in 1997 and 1998, he participated in a Post-Doctoral program at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. Upon his return from McGill, Amin Abdullah was entrusted to become Vice Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

and the Head of the Department of Religion and Philosophy in the Postgraduate Program. 2002, he was appointed Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, even for two terms.

His name is even more well-known among Indonesian Muslim academics because he was once Chairman of the Tarjih Council of Muhammadiyah (1995–2000), Member of the Consultative Council, Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (2000–2002), Deputy Chairman of the Muhammadiyah National Council (2000–2005) and a Member of the Journal Accreditation Board (2003–2004). This is an added value for him. Moreover, Amin Abdullah is very creative, and his ideas never seem to dry up, especially in the world of education (Juhana, 2022).

THEMES OF PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

The study of the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences offered by Amin Abdullah has succeeded in providing convenience and enlightenment for Muslims (Sadewa, 2022). The theme of the study he offers is quite diverse, related to the methods and approaches in studying the study of religion and Islamic studies from intellectualists. The development of the study of religions that requires various methods and approaches, according to Amin Abdullah, has passed through four phases, namely: (1) local: *'Ulumddin, al-Fikr al-Islamy*, and *Dirasat Islamiyyah*, (2) Canonical or Proportional: scripture as the final and absolute truth, (3) Critical: doubt that gave birth to research: insider–outsider, faith–tradition, and essence–manifestation, and (4) Global: local traditions move towards global, Muslim diaspora, Muslim immigrants in Europe, and trans–nationalism movements (Aziz, 2013).

The thoughts of intellectual figures, as outlined in the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences study, have been presented holistically and comprehensively. Many offer methods and approaches to understanding religion (Islam) so that they can dialogue with various contemporary Islamic issues without leaving the primary sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an and hadith. The offer refers to *maqashid al-syariah* by using a fresh approach that is fresh *ijtihad*, not only dwelling on the text and classical interpretations so that it becomes relevant to the contextualization of the times. The following are offers from various intellectual figures, both Muslim and non–Muslim, which generally illustrate the grand design of the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences. Amin Abdullah offers various approaches to understanding contemporary humanitarian and Islamic problems.

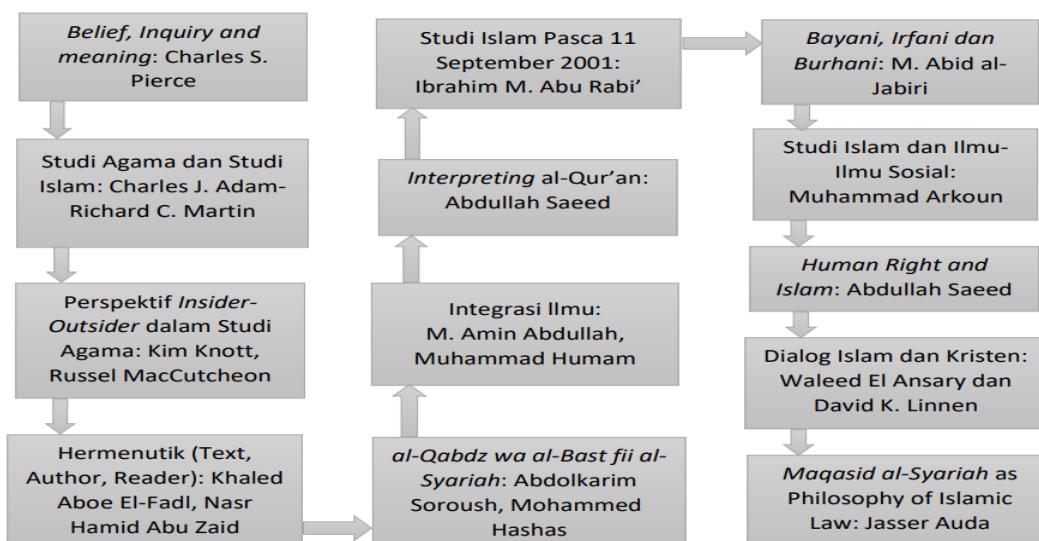


Figure 1. Philosophy Study of Islamic Sciences

The theme of the study above has the value of interconnectedness between the themes of discussion. According to Amin Abdullah, this interconnectedness is fundamental because it will build a network of thinking patterns that form a whole worldview, namely a comprehensive religious (Islamic) worldview (Abdullah, 2023). The theme of the study above also indirectly shapes the shifting paradigm of students, getting progressive, fresh, new and transformative Islamic religious insights, not *jumud*, responsive, and relevant to the challenges of changing times and the development of science (Abdullah, 2014). By applying methods and approaches from the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences in contemporary life, we can at least contribute to the development of scientific traditions, can answer all the problems of globalization, uphold the values of harmonization of the dominant role of history and western civilization, especially in the field of science and technology, and can become a stepping stone to build relations and dialogue between religious communities.

M. AMIN ABDULLAH'S CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC STUDIES

Amin Abdullah is one of the many dynamic – progressive – visionary Islamic thinkers at the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Alim Roswantoro wrote that Amin Abdullah successfully linked classical and contemporary Islamic understanding to answer current problems and global challenges:

"He (Amin Abdullah), so to speak, is one of the prominent Indonesian Islamic thinkers with progressive Islamic ideas. Amin Abdullah's encounter with Islamic studies of Pesantren (Gontor) and Muhammadiyah, Islamic studies of European tradition, Indonesian Islamic studies, and various pluralistic religious experiences led him to an understanding of Islam that tried to embrace classical and contemporary methods of understanding, and led him to an understanding of Islam that was able to answer various global problems, such as issues of humanitarian violations, religious pluralism, multiculturalism, poverty, gender bias, security and peace issues, and so on." (Roswantoro, 2013).

Roswantoro's statement is manifested – one of them – in the study of the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences offered by Amin Abdullah. At first, the academic anxiety experienced by Amin Abdullah was due to the absence of contemporary Muslim thinkers who tried to include the Philosophy of Science in the body of Islamic Religious Science, so it was necessary to reconstruct through three dimensions, namely: linguistic – historical, theological – philosophical, and socio – anthropological (Abdullah, 1998). Through the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences, Amin Abdullah wants a form of deconstruction to bring Islamic Studies into the contemporary context. This is because Islamic Studies – so far – is arguably static and experiencing a dullness, so it feels necessary to provide methods and approaches that are dynamic and open to the development and demands of the times (Kartini, 2023).

The deconstruction efforts offered by Amin Abdullah in the face of static Islamic Studies – among others – can be reached through the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences. For example, referring to texts that are limited while the events of human history are unlimited, Amin Abdullah offers to dialogue what is believed to be a fixed thing (*al-Tsawabit*) and areas that are constantly changing – dynamic (*al-Mutaghayyirat*). From here, Amin Abdullah mentions the development of thought from intellectualists from previously static to dynamic, such as the distinction between revelation and understanding or interpretation of revelation (Abdul Karim Soroush), *Asbab al-Nuzul* macro and micro

(double movement) (Fazlur Rahman), *al-Makna* (search for original meaning) and *al-Maghza* or significance (search for current meaning) (Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid), between *Asbab al-Nuzul 'Qadim'* (understanding the meaning of *Asbab al-Nuzul* classical era) and *Asbab al-Nuzul 'Jadid'* (understanding the meaning of *Asbab al-Nuzul* modern era and present) (Abdullah Saeed) and so on (Abdullah, 2012).

In the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences, there is also a shifting paradigm that can solve the problems that occur regarding religious and humanitarian conditions. Amin Abdullah not only bridges in understanding religious texts by considering the historical, social, and cultural context, paving the way for a more dynamic interpretation (Rahman, 1982), and stretching as well as minimizing the interpretation of Islamic law (Soroush, 2010), but also provides the key to open the pages of history and the tradition of Islamic critical reasoning (Al-Jabiri, 1989). How Amin Abdullah tries to construct a tradition of humanism and peace (Saeed, 2018), promoting inter-religious understanding to uphold the values of tolerance and diversity by dialoguing (Ansary & Linnan, 2010), and linking the Islamic tradition and modern social sciences (Arkoun, 1986). Amin Abdullah introduces these concepts — and of course, there are many more — as a form of endeavour in facing the demands of the times, where the interpretation of religious texts needs to adapt to the dynamics of social society.

In addition, Amin Abdullah also offers his thoughts on exploring the importance of the reconstruction of Islamic Studies to find solutions that align with the Indonesian context. According to him, Islamic studies have now entered the third wave, where the initial wave was the era of the formation of the corn' *Ulumuddin* explored by writers from within (insider), while outsiders explored the second wave — in this case the orientalism scientific movement, as well as the third movement initiated by scientists in studying contemporary Islamic studies in the 20th century. This third generation knows '*Ulumuddin* but also knows the social sciences and humanities that are usually mastered by the orientalist generation who knows social sciences and humanities (Abdullah, 2006).

The above expression became Amin Abdullah's motivation to take part in colouring contemporary Islamic studies in Indonesia. He believes that almost the majority of Indonesian Muslims do not develop Islamic studies because it is beyond their power and considers it as God's destiny (Abdullah, 2017a). The developments and changes that occur in religious sciences, especially Islamic studies, have complicated contemporary Islamic scholars, requiring new methods and approaches (Abdullah, 2003). In addition, Muslims focus more on classical scientific texts based on *Bayani* reasoning and ignore *Irfani* and *Burhani* reasoning. Although these three epistemologies are seen as a family that significantly influences Islamic religious thought, both in classical and contemporary times, *Bayani* reasoning is considered more dominant and has succeeded in shaping the mindset of Muslims to be rigid (Abdullah, 2017).

Based on this, Amin Abdullah raises the idea of an integration—interconnection paradigm or approach as a response to the 'stagnation' of Islamic studies in Indonesia — which only focuses on the study of '*Ulumuddin*', without touching *Fikr al-Islamy* and *Dirasat Islamiyyah*, both in public life and in religious studies in Higher Education in particular. He categorizes this integration—interconnection offer as part of the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences, which tries to link various general disciplines with religious (Islamic) sciences. (Abdullah, 2012). Although Amin Abdullah admits that the construction of the concept of integration—interconnection approach is influenced by previous Islamic thinkers, it greatly contributes to the formation of the mindset of Indonesian Muslims so that it is not always monotonous, rigid, and mono perspective.

Amin Abdullah illustrates the idea of an integration – interconnection approach to Islamic studies by forming a spider web image. He places the Qur'an and Sunnah as the cornerstone of the human religious worldview united in one scientific and religious breath. According to Amin Abdullah, all of them are devoted to collective human welfare regardless of ethnic, religious, racial or class backgrounds.

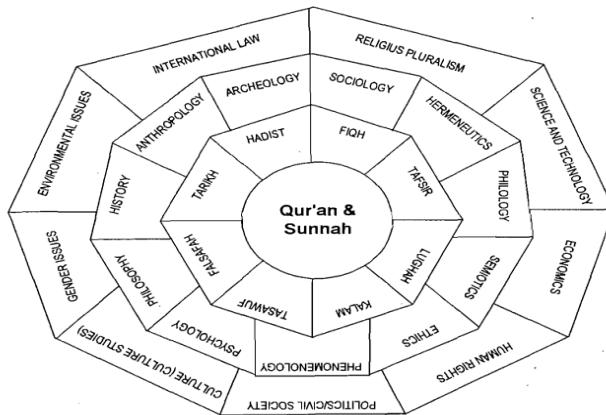


Figure 2. Horizon of the Scientific Spider's Web of Islamic Religion

According to Amin Abdullah, the current study of Islam, especially under Islamic Religious Universities throughout the country, is only focused and limited to the first ring and second ring lines (Kalam, Philosophy, Sufism, Hadith, Tarikh, Fiqh, Tafsir, Lughah). Islamic Religious Universities, in general, have not been able to enter the discussion of contemporary social sciences and humanities and link them with Islamic sciences as illustrated in the second ring path (Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, and Philosophy with the various approaches it offers). According to Amin Abdullah, this has led to a scholarly divide between classical or traditional Islamic sciences and new Islamic sciences that have utilized the analysis of contemporary social sciences and humanities. In addition, the issues of social, political, economic, religious plurality, human rights, gender, environment, post-modern social sciences and contemporary humanities, along with their methods and approaches as illustrated in the ring path of layer 3, are almost entirely untouched by social and Islamic studies in Indonesia, especially in Islamic Religious Universities (Abdullah, n.d.).

Amin Abdullah's anxiety about Islamic Studies is exacerbated by the reality that the sciences of religion (read: Islam) are not designed to be integrated with the sciences of science and technology that give weight to the skills to live more broadly. According to him, the sciences of Kauniyyah (Science and technology) have been separated far from the core of the sciences of Qauliyyah (Texts). Then, each stands independently, without contact and greeting. In fact, as presented today, Islamic religious sciences and Islamic Studies can hardly provide the software needed to guard, maintain, supervise and control public morality and piety. This phenomenon, for Amin Abdullah, is less favourable to students for the life of the nation at large because, from the beginning, it has crossed over from the main pattern of the teachings of the Qur'an, which always integrates the general sciences and religious sciences (Abdullah, n.d.).

In introducing the integration – interconnection paradigm in Islamic Studies, Amin Abdullah offers methods to expand the horizons of understanding, namely multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary (MIT). Contemporary Islamic studies in Indonesia require learning with multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary methods based on the integration – interconnection scientific paradigm (Abdullah, 2022). According to Amin Abdullah, the MIT method is intended for learning

that is not monodisciplinary and mono perspective. It seeks to integrate *hadharah al-nash*, *hadharah al-falsafah*, and *hadharah al-'ilm*, especially those related to natural sciences, social – cultural sciences and humanities. Therefore, the integration – interconnection paradigm requires a dialectical relationship between religion, philosophy, and science (Abdullah, 2022).

In simple terms, M. Amin Abdullah's ideas can be easily understood through the summary in the following table:

Table 1. Summary of M. Amin Abdullah's Ideas

Scientific Position	Monodisciplinary	Polydiscipline	Transdisciplinary
<i>Hadharah al-Nash</i>	Knowledge of religious morals (ethics) is sourced from the same religious ethics	Knowledge of morals (ethics) is the philosophical thought of several religions	Knowledge of morals (ethics) is a "superportioned" ethics from various religions
<i>Hadharah al-Falsafah</i>	Religious philosophical knowledge is the result of the same religious philosophical thinking.	Philosophical knowledge of religion is the result of various philosophical knowledge of several disciplines.	The philosophical knowledge of a religion is a "superposition" of philosophical views from several transdisciplinary philosophies.
<i>Hadharah al-'Ilm</i>	Scientific knowledge about natural and social phenomena is a monodisciplinary study.	Some scientists from several scientific disciplines use theories and methods from several disciplines.	Researchers of natural and social phenomena use transdisciplinary approaches for analysis in scientific fields.

According to Amin Abdullah, the scope of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary methods based on the integration – interconnection scientific paradigm is very broad; it can support World – Class Universities and Research Universities, which is currently a hot topic of conversation in Higher Education, government, and society. The MIT method is the best solution for a new approach to learning, lecturing, research, and community service. Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, for Amin Abdullah, ensure that problems can be approached comprehensively so that solutions are more innovative, more precise and reliable and can be pursued by anyone concerned, both the government, the industrial world, the private world and the broader community of science service users (Abdullah, 2018).

The offer of this integration – interconnection paradigm – once again – is included by Amin Abdullah in studying the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences. Amin Abdullah can be classified as a contemporary analytic philosopher because of his contribution to contemporary Islamic studies for his contribution to contemporary Islamic studies (Munitz, 1981). Using communication with words, language, and terms and relying on logical thinking with sharp analysis to identify, investigate, and ensure the existence of meaning in the use of language by Amin Abdullah is a hallmark of contemporary analytic philosophy (Noor, 2019). Amin Abdullah's idea, through the term integration –

interconnection with the MIT method, actually contains concepts that make it easier for readers to find the essence of his thoughts universally. These terms are also not just diction without meaning but wrapped in an analytical framework of thought as a hallmark of contemporary philosophy.

Amin Abdullah's contribution to the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences can be felt by the community, especially in Islamic Universities. The Philosophy of Islamic Sciences not only plays a vital role in forming a complex student personality with a constantly evolving and progressive identity but also makes a significant contribution in order to clarify the direction of the paradigm or worldview and identity that will be revealed to the surface as a reflection of the student's personality after taking an education, namely the awareness of "affective – cognitive – psychomotor" changes. Strictly speaking, the paradigm or worldview obtained through the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences can accommodate global ethical standards and be developed and grounded in the niches of life and daily activities.

CONCLUSION

The brief description of this article concludes that Amin Abdullah, through the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences, has made a major contribution to contemporary Indonesian Islamic studies. Amin Abdullah has succeeded in providing a new paradigm for the development of contemporary Indonesian Islamic studies, which previously could be considered static, rigid, and static.

He presents the Philosophy of Islamic Sciences to deconstruct the reconstruction of Islamic studies by linking classical sciences with contemporary sciences. By offering various concepts of thought from intellectual figures, he produces a framework for Islamic studies that is progressive, new, transformative, fresh, not static, and relevant to the times' demands and science's development.

He contributes his thoughts on Islamic studies in Indonesia using multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary methods based on the integration – interconnection scientific paradigm. The results of his thinking can foster a broader foundation for Muslim thinking, and contemporary Islamic studies can face the challenges of a more complex era. Of course, Amin Abdullah can be classified as a contemporary analytic philosopher for his contribution to contemporary Islamic studies.

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