

# **Azyumardi Azra's Islamic Education Thoughts**

**Nur Ridwan**

Fakultas Ilmu Keislaman, Universitas Islam Raden Rahmat, Malang

*Email: nurridwan87@gmail.com*

**Sutomo**

Pasca Sarjana, Universitas Islam Raden Rahmat, Malang

*Email: sutomo@uniramalang.ac.id*

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## **Abstrak**

Education's primary objective is to develop pupils who comprehend and apply Islamic sciences in daily life. In other words, the realization of human beings, namely people who reconnect with their nature and the goal of their lives, as he pledged to be a human who came from Allah and would return to Allah. Azyumardi Azra's opinions on Islamic education are the product of his efforts to improve the quality of Islam's education. The issue at hand is the aim and curriculum of Islamic education. Regarding Azyumardi Azra's views on Islamic education, he emphasizes the importance of democratizing and modernizing Islamic education in order to elevate the dignity of Islamic educational institutions that generate high-quality education. Azyumardi Azra focuses on the intake and output of Islamic education for society when it comes to updating. By fusing traditional and forward-thinking ideals.

*Kata Kunci: Islamic, Education, and Thoughts.*

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## **1. Introduction**

According to researchers, the growth of the educational world may serve as a barometer of the advancement of society, and a chaotic educational world can also serve as a barometer of the state of its society, which is likewise fraught with issues. Mulyana claimed that education contributes significantly to a nation's growth and serves as a channel for communicating constitutional messages as well as a way of developing national character .

As we enter the twenty-first century, the topic of upgrading the education sector in Indonesia has become a priority, not just in general

education, but in all fields and degrees of education, including Islamic education. Because the educational process and its consequences have an effect on the overall educational success index

It seems unusual that among the world's biggest Muslim community, Islamic education should be able to play a significant part in this nation's educational system. However, Islamic education in Indonesia continues to encounter several challenges in a variety of areas. Islamic educational institutions have yet to discover the optimum shape capable of developing Muslims' potential for catching up to the modern West. As a result, every effort should be made to develop an education system that is responsive to the requirements of society and Muslims.

Azyumardi Azra, as a leading figure in the realm of Indonesian education, has exposed several shortcomings in Islamic education. This book provides a historical reflection on Islamic education in the millennium's first decade. In terms of organization, this article opens with a biography of the book's author. The discussion chapter contains the substance of the book "Tradition and Modernization in the New Millennium," by Azyumardi Azra., and the next chapter contains the reviewers' comments/analysis

## **2. Biography**

March 4, 1955, at Lubuk Alung, West Sumatra. They have four children: Raushanfikri Usada, Firman El-Amny Azra, Muhammad Subhan Azra, and Emily Sakina Azra. They are married to Ipah Farihah. His education includes a Bachelor of Arts (BA) from the Faculty of Tarbiyah IAIN Jakarta in 1982, a Master of Art (MA) from Columbia University's Middle East Language and Culture Department in 1998, a Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) from Columbia University's History Department in 1990, and a Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Columbia University in 1992, with a dissertation titled *The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Network of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian Ulama*. The updated dissertation was concurrently published in 2004 in Canberra (Allen Unwin and AAAS), Honolulu (Hawaii University Press), and Leiden, Netherlands (Hawaii University Press) (KITLV Press).

He is currently (since December 2006) the Director of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah's Graduate School in Jakarta. Azyumardi Azra formerly served as Chancellor of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta from 1998 until 2006. He worked as a journalist for *Panji Masyarakat* from 1979 to 1985, lecturer at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah's Adab and Tarbiyah faculties in Jakarta from 1992 to present, professor of history at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah's Adab faculty in Jakarta, and Assistant Chancellor I at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta (1998). He was also the first Southeast Asian to be awarded a Professor Fellow at the University of Melbourne in Australia (2004–2009), and a

member of the International Islamic University Islamabad Pakistan's Board of Trustees (2004-2009).

He served as Chair of the Student Senate of IAIN Jakarta's Tarbiyah Faculty (1979-1982), General Chair of the Islamic Student Association (HMI) Ciputat Branch (1981-1982), Member of the Toyota Foundation & The Japan Foundation Selection Committee (1998-1999), Member of the SC SEASREP (Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program) (1998), Member of the Indonesian Historian Society (MSI) (1998-present).

Azyumardi was not initially preoccupied with Islamic studies or wished to be active in them. Because he is more interested in pursuing a career in general education at IKIP. It was at his father's desire that

Azyumardi enroll at IAIN, establishing him as an intellectual icon of Indonesian Islam. He was born to the father of Azikar and the mother of Ramlah. Azyumardi Azra is currently recognized as an authority in Islamic history, sociology, and intellectualism, having authored no fewer than 18 volumes on Islam. His book collection now totals over 15,000 volumes.

After obtaining his Ph.D. at Columbia University, Azyumardi returned to Jakarta in 1993 and launched and served as editor-in-chief of *Studia Islamika*, an Indonesian magazine in English and Arabic devoted to Islamic studies in Southeast Asia. In 1994-1995, while teaching as a professor at St. Anthony College, he returned to the world as a PostDoctoral Fellow Southeast Asian Studies at the Oxford Center of Islamic Studies, Oxford University, England. Azyumardi has also served as a Visiting Professor at the University of the Philippines and the University of Malaya, both in the Philippines, in 1997. Additionally, he served on the Selection Committee for the Southeast Asian Regional Exchange Program (SEASREP), which was co-sponsored by the Toyota Foundation and the Japan Center in Tokyo, Japan, from 1997 to 1999.

Azyumardi Azra was appointed International Visiting Professor at New York University's Department of Middle Eastern Studies in 2001. (NYU). He has delivered lectures and seminars at New York University, Harvard University (at the Asia Center), and Columbia University. He is also trusted to supervise and evaluate theses and dissertations at the University of Malaya, the University Kebangsaan Malaysia, the University of Leiden, the University of Melbourne, and the Australian National University, among others.

Apart from writing, he is an active participant in several national and international seminars and workshops, delivering papers. The man who worked as a journalist for "Panji Masyarakat" from 1979 to 1985 has authored and published numerous books, including the *Ulama Network* (1994), *Islamic Political Upheaval* (1996), *Reformist Islam* (1999), *Context of Theology in Indonesia* (1999), *Islamic Education: Tradition and Modernization in the New Millennium* (1999), *Essays on Islamic Education*, and *Muslim Scholars* (1999), and *Islamic Renaissance in Southeast Asia* (a book that won a national award for best book) (2004).

Mizan Publishers presented him with the prize for Most Prolific Writer in 2002

### **3. Discussion (Islamic education in the twenty-first century: Traditions and Challenges)**

Azyumardi Azra. is a doctor and a history professor, yet his opinions on Islamic education are unwavering. He presented the fundamental notion of Islamic education in the first chapter of this work, drawing on the philosophy of past Islamic philosophers. That, in the context of Islamic education, encompassed Islam's fundamental teachings on humanity and the relevance of science. Humans are the most honorable and unique animals, according to Islam. In Islam, humans are both rational and animalistic creatures. Within the context of man's uniqueness and the numerous options available to him, science, in the broadest sense, plays a critical role in human existence. Knowledge in this wide sense is not only for the sake of perfecting life and its role as caliph on earth, but also for the purpose of fulfilling its existential obligation toward God.

Islamic education is merely one facet of Islam's overall teachings. As a result, the objective of Islamic education cannot be divorced from the purpose of Islam's human existence. In Islam, the aim of human existence is sometimes referred to as the ultimate objective of Islamic education.

Along with these broad purposes, there are also more specific objectives that detail what is to be accomplished via Islamic education. This objective is more pragmatic in nature, as it ensures that the concept of Islamic education is not only an idealization of Islamic principles in education. With a more pragmatic goal framework, it may be expressed as the expectations for success at various phases of the educational process, as well as the outcomes obtained.

Islamic education is founded on the fundamentals of Islamic teachings and all of its cultural apparatus, namely: The Koran and the Sunnah are the primary sources of Islamic education. The second pillar of Islamic education is social values that do not contradict the Qur'an and Sunnah's teachings on the idea of benefiting and avoiding damage to mankind. The third pillar of Islamic education is the Islamic intellectual legacy. In this instance, the views of intellectuals, philosophers, and Muslim scholars, particularly in the field of education.

From the fundamentals of Islamic education, an educational system was formed that is distinct from other educational systems. In a nutshell, Islamic education consists of the following features. The first distinguishing feature of Islamic education is the emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge, mastery, and progress as a means of worshiping Allah. The second element of Islamic education is the acknowledgement of an individual's potential and capacity for personality development. Each seeker of knowledge is viewed as a divine being who ought to be appreciated and nurtured in order for his potential to be realized to the fullest extent feasible. The third element of

Islamic education is the application of knowledge in accordance with God's and human society's responsibilities. Not only is information to be acquired and developed here, but it is also to be used in actual life.

It virtually becomes a matter of consensus that the civilization of the future will be dominated in many ways by science (particularly science), which will eventually evolve into technology on a practical and application level. As a result, the task for Muslim cultures in any area of the world to develop science and technology in the present and future is no less daunting.

Discussions on resurrecting Islamic culture through science and technology will inevitably include an examination of the role and tradition of science in Islam. In summary, Islam is doctrinally highly supportive of the advancement of science. As a consequence of the way science developed, the Muslim community in the past achieved civilizational advancement and took pleasure in its status as a center for technological intellectual study. Since the 15th century, only after defeat after defeat in the Muslim military field have Muslims begun to lose the primacy of scholarship and become conservative in order to preserve their fundamental identity, which they feared was endangered. Simultaneously, the Islamic sciences transferred to Europe began to bring western civilisation to the brink of a science and technological resurgence.

Discussions on Islamizing science and technology are not pointless. It might be the first step toward developing a more Islamic worldview, not just inside the Muslim community, but also on a worldwide scale.

Azumardi Azra recognized the primary impediments to the growth of science in Islamic education, including the following:

- a. Scientific community is frail.
- b. Incompatibility between national scientific policies
- c. Inadequate research budget
- d. Inadequate knowledge of the business sector on the value of scientific research
- e. Inadequate facilities for libraries, documentation, and information centers
- f. isolation of a scientist
- g. Bureaucracy, stifling regulations, and a dearth of incentives

Islamic studies have evolved from the Islamic world's inception. The expansion of educational institutions is motivated by Islamic principles. The premise behind the establishment of Islamic studies at a variety of higher education institutions generates debates over course content, curriculum, syllabus, and the recruitment of qualified faculty. Islamic educational institutions, as a hub of human advancement, must play a role in paving the way for mankind.

However, following the debate of the millennium's problems. Despite the fast advancement of science and technology in recent decades, an increasing number of individuals are interested in religions and spiritual teachings. Due to the twisted

scenario created by the accelerating pace of change in all spheres of life, many individuals feel the need for something to cling to.

In light of recent developments in the world's religions, there is no reason to be concerned about the future of Islamic educational institutions. However, Islamic education's system and content must be improved in order to meet the needs of the modern world. Islamic education, by enhancing certain facets, can be expected to make a greater contribution to humanity.

Meanwhile, this first chapter continues to address the presence of Islamic education and human resource development in a period of globalization. According to internal needs and worldwide external difficulties, one of the unquestionable advantages that the Indonesian nation and state have is scientific mastery and exceptional human resource quality (HR). Additionally, it exposed some of the difficulties encountered by pesantren in educating potential ulama with broad viewpoints.

Improving the quality of human resources via education is one of the most successful strategies for poverty alleviation, however it may take time.

Education in a contemporary society or one that is modernizing (modernizing) primarily serves to connect pupils to their continuously changing sociocultural environment. Education is frequently utilized purposefully as a tool for political and economic system change in a variety of ways. The advent of Islamic education modernisation in Indonesia is inextricably linked to the concept of Islamic modernism in this region. In the realm of education, Islamic modernism was accomplished via the development of modern educational institutions that followed the Dutch colonial education system. The pioneers in this direction were Islamic "modernist" organizations such as Jami'at Khair, allIrsyad, and Muhammadiyah.

According to him, the system of Islamic higher education institutions has to be revitalized and the curriculum expanded to include more diverse and intriguing subjects. Certain facets of Islamic beliefs and legacy can be viewed as major fields of humanities sciences, which include religion, philosophy, ethics, spirituality, literature, art, archeology, and history. The discipline of Islamic studies can be expanded to encompass other branches of the social sciences.

The fundamental premise for modernizing Islamic education in general is that modernizing Islamic philosophy and institutions is a necessary condition for the emergence of Muslims in the modern period. As a result, he believes that Islamic thought and institutions, including education, must be modernized, or in simple terms, renewed within the framework of "modernity." Maintaining "traditional" Islamic institutional thinking will only prolong Muslims' misery in dealing with the modern world's progress.

Azyumardi Azra examines the historical difficulties surrounding Indonesian Islamic education in the second section of this book. The existence of Islamic residential schools and surau to higher Islamic education are discussed. The

discussion of pesantren as a traditional Islamic educational institution that has survived to the present day is still a fundamental question worth observing. Although he subsequently began to emphasize the need of continuity and change.

The existence of the pesantren demonstrates that, despite the boom of modernisation, the traditional Islamic world has some relevance. In other words, he demonstrated that pesantren survived not just because to its capacity for modification and re-adjustment, but also due to its inherent nature as an institution that is not only identical with Islamic meaning, but also with Indonesian authenticity (indigenous). However, the ongoing wave of santrization has increased pesantren's expectations.

When Azra clearly explains the history of the surau and the state of the pesantren in the early days, Azra reveals the portrait of Islamic education from the old tradition to the present system. This state continues to evolve in response to the changing needs of the times, until Azra describes the birth of contemporary schools with novel conceptions that embody the community's ambitions. Al-Azhar, Madania High School, and Insan Scholar were among the top schools chosen.

Additionally, the chapter discusses empowerment and community engagement. According to this book, throughout Islamic education's history, Muslim communities have not only participated (merely joined in), but have taken a leadership role in establishing, developing, and empowering religious education . Although in the previous decade, the Muslim community has seen two further changes. The first trend is the Muslim community's increased desire and willingness to provide a greater percentage to the government in order to strengthen education in various ways. The second tendency is for the Muslim community to pool resources and cash in order to establish high-quality Islamic universities.

The fact that the Muslim community is involved in this viewpoint is demonstrated by a variety of statistics on Islamic schools, madrasas, and the commercial sector. This demonstrates that the Muslim community does not only 'participate' in Islamic education, but has taken on the lion's share of the duty. However, the Muslim community's participation cannot be emphasized enough. Azyumardi Azra summarizes the growth in empowering "participation" as follows:

- a. Increasing community participation in education management empowerment.
- b. Increasing community involvement in the development of highquality education, specifically high-quality education.
- c. Increasing community involvement in the management of other community-based learning resources.

Chapter III discusses the relationship between IAIN and Islamic Studies, focusing on the tension between tradition and renewal. Beginning with the concept of intellectuals (people who exhibit qualities that highlight the use of their intellect for purposes other than practical ones, but rather toward the growth of ideas), this chapter is essentially a discourse on the existence of Islamic colleges (in this perspective, IAIN). As an institution tasked with the responsibility of printing Islamic intellectuals, there

are still several faults and limitations, most notably in terms of the scientific quality of students and faculty.

Apart from the lack of proficiency in two foreign languages, a sufficient scientific level has not been established, in part because the IAIN academic community has not yet developed a suitable environment. Scientific relationships between lecturers and students, or between the two, have historically been characterized by bureaucracy and, worse, feudalism. Additionally, the school system and lectures continue to rely heavily on the banking model of teaching (bank-style education), rather than problem-solving education (critical education).

What should be recognized, however, is the role that extrainstitutional groups play in equipping its members (who include the bulk of IAIN students) with a variety of skills and other information not obtained during college. Their activities contribute significantly to the process of intellectual mobility among pupils.

This chapter's content elaborates on the significance of Islamic studies. As a distinct religious institution distinct from public universities, IAIN portrays itself as a center for Islamic studies, bringing together Islamic studies in three distinct locations (Western Europe, the Middle East, and Asia), each with its own set of strengths and shortcomings. While this is a difficult task, it is critical to develop Muslim specialists who are actually competent to observe, comprehend, and explain Islam in all of its facets in order to meet the demands of the modern world.

#### **4. Comments/Analysis**

As a history professor, the paper's central theme is continuity and change. To grasp Azra's thought, it is necessary to consider how to frame the difficulties of the twenty-first century as a challenge for Indonesian Islamic education as a whole. In this century, it is vital to change Islamic education's conceptualization via system and institutional reformation. One of them is shifting away from an anti-science and anti-technology stance.

At the outset of the debate of chapter I, we determined that there was sufficient previewing text to serve as a jumping-off point for this chapter. However, when we proceed through the subsequent sub-chapters and chapters, we see that the subject matter is repeated, and that, in addition to the repeating of part of the same information, the systematics suffer from a lack of coherence. The same is true when it comes to resolving challenges in certain disciplines. This is because the writings in this book are more global in scope than the author, and so, while there are different answers to issues at first look, they are neither practical or theoretical in character.

In Chapter I, Azyumardi discusses the fundamental understanding of Islamic education, as well as its general and specific purposes, although he does not discuss the fundamental understanding's issues. In Islam, the aim of human existence is sometimes referred to as the ultimate objective of Islamic education. As proposed by

the Islamic Education Conference I in Jeddah , the objective of Islamic education is to develop a holistic human personality capable of achieving progress in all of its dimensions in line with Islam's desires. This is seen as the realization of Allah's piety. Additionally, taqwa as a keyword is frequently not operationally specified in a way that makes determining educational assessment methods simple.

Thus, attempts to construct Islamic educational materials have always focused on the basic aim, namely pupils as creations of God with inherent potential, developed vertically and horizontally toward a joyful bodily and spiritual existence.

If Azra is correct in asserting that Islamic education has three features, then Abdurrahman An-Nahlawi asserts the following:

1. Possessing a teaching approach and instructional materials that are compatible with human nature.
2. Must accomplish the objectives of Islamic education
3. Must be commensurate with one's educational level.
4. Maintain a focus on achievable community goals.
5. Does not contradict Islamic principles.
6. Must be practical in order to be implemented within the State's capability.
7. Must adopt a practical strategy that is adaptable to a variety of circumstances.
8. Must be successful and capable of producing behavioristic educational results
9. Must be acceptable for pupils of diverse ages.
10. Pay close attention to education-related components of behavior that involve direct actions.

In order to increase community empowerment through "participation" in Islamic education, it is required to follow up on a more practical conceptual foundation. For instance, enhancing community engagement in education management empowerment. Because in fact, management implementation in Islamic organizations meets several hurdles on theological, political, and economic fronts.

Meanwhile, in reference to his belief that Islamic educational institutions "must be renewed in accordance with the framework of "modernity," he asserts that "continuing to think in terms of "traditional" Islamic institutions will only prolong the misery of Muslims' helplessness in dealing with the advancement of the modern world." In our perspective, he was significantly inspired by his idealism in attempting to abolish science's dichotomy. Azra's emphasis on upgrading pesantren and madrasah is an attempt to mainstream Islamic education into the national educational system.

For Azra, modernizing Islamic education is not only a theoretical exercise; it must also become a reality and be implemented. Azra believes that ideas and reality must coexist in order for an idea to feel meaningful.

That is why, upon taking office, he expanded the scope of his school, changing its name from IAIN to Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta in May 2002. He referred to this move as a continuation of the former Rector's vision,

Harun Nasution, who desires that IAIN graduates be reasonable, contemporary, democratic, and tolerant individuals. Graduates who do not distinguish religious knowledge from general science and who do not take religion literally become sensible Muslims, not madhhabi Muslims, or are confined to one school of thinking. To accomplish this goal, institutions must be strengthened to allow for interaction between general science and religion. And the only way forward is to transform IAIN into a university by establishing Faculties of Science, Economics, Technology, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Communication, and Mathematics.

On the other hand, when Azyumardi founded his campus, he stated that he did so "so that the scholarly Islamic understanding he produces will have an Indonesian flavor, as his campus life is based on Indonesia." Thus, the Islam that we will construct will be contextualized for Indonesia, as the difficulty for Muslims here is the Indonesian challenge." His approach to religion is one that is not based on fanaticism in mazhab and rather one that is based on a knowledge of religion.

Despite these attempts and reforms, there are still many detractors who claim that IAIN/UIN has not been able to modify the fundamental mindset of the majority of its students. The fact is that the campus atmosphere and educational programs do not yet have a strong connection to the community. This is demonstrated by the low percentage of engagement of IAIN/UIN students and graduates in promoting career possibilities and social independence. Indeed, because education is inextricably linked to social relationships, this explains why education may have a large impact on current social developments. Additionally, Azra's debate in the sub-chapter on IAIN's challenges resembles Amrullah Achmad's discussion in the book *Islamic Education in Indonesia between Cita and Facts*.

## **5. Closing**

Apart from a few omissions from the excellence of the book published by Azyumardi Azra we personally credit this effort. Contributions from a variety of parties are required to improve the world of our education. A written work is far more useful than a passing talk. We hope that this book will be utilized as a resource to further our understanding of the world of Islamic education.

Finally, I want to conclude this post with his statement that the Prophet Muhammad's fundamental objective is to increase the quality of human resources that are entirely intact, both physically and psychologically. To fulfill its ideal goal of enhancing the quality of human resources, the Islamic educational system must constantly be directed toward meeting the requirements and problems that occur naturally as a result of change. However, it is acknowledged that the majority of Islamic educational systems have not been competently administered. Finally, it was agreed that modifications to the Islamic educational system are necessary.

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